

## REFERRAL Q/A – January 2009

### **Question 1: Can a professional refer a family to First Steps without approval from the family?**

**A:** Individuals suspecting that a child has a developmental delay or disability do not need parental consent prior to referral to First Steps. The regulations for Part C do not require parental consent for referral of child that is suspected to meet the eligibility for First Steps. Primary referral sources include hospitals, physicians, parents, child care providers, schools (Parents as Teachers), social service agencies, and other health agencies. These entities are required to make referrals within two days of identifying a child who potentially meets eligibility.

We encourage referral sources to talk with families about First Steps before referring.

### **Question 2: How is the date of referral determined by the SPOE?**

**A:** Date of referral is the date the SPOE is made aware by a primary referral source (parent, physician, NICU, PAT, etc.) that the referral source would like to refer the child for an eligibility determination.

Example: If the SPOE received a fax from a physician and NICU , etc., SPOE staff picks it up on a Monday morning out of the fax machine, but it was faxed late Friday afternoon, the referral date is the date that someone in the SPOE picks up that fax-not the date it was faxed by the referral source.

If a parent or other referral source calls and leaves a message and it is apparent they just want general information, or it is not clear that they want to make a referral, the SPOE does not need to record this as a referral date. In that case, the referral date is the date the SPOE confirms that the primary referral source would like to make a referral to First Steps. The SPOE should respond to all referrals and potential referrals in a timely manner.