

Family Cost Participation: Important Reminders

When your family entered the First Steps program, your service coordinator reviewed several documents with you, including information about Family Cost Participation. The following information is a reminder of important things to remember about Family Cost Participation. If you have questions concerning Family Cost Participation, please contact your service coordinator. Additional information is also available on the First Steps website at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/FCPmainpg.htm>.

What is Family Cost Participation?

In 2005, a Missouri law was passed that requires all families, except those specifically exempted, to contribute a small amount in order to participate in the First Steps program. A monthly fee is calculated for family participation in First Steps regardless of the number of children actually receiving services, the amount of services and/or which services are received.

Who is required to pay the monthly fee to participate in First Steps?

Families that have an annual adjusted gross income at or above 200 percent of the federally established poverty level will pay a monthly fee between \$5 and \$100. Each family's situation is reviewed to determine the monthly fee. The fee is based on the family's adjusted income, the number of family members in the household and enrollment in MO HealthNet (Medicaid). Families eligible and enrolled in Medicaid do not pay a monthly fee. Families must provide documentation to the service coordinator showing Medicaid enrollment.

How do I pay my monthly fee?

The Central Finance Office (CFO) will send a monthly statement that lists the fee to all families. Sometimes the balance due will be zero, and sometimes the statement will

list a fee applicable to your family. Monthly payments may be made by check or money order and mailed to the CFO at the address provided on the statement.

What financial information does First Steps review?

At initial and annual IFSP meetings, First Steps will request to review your family's current financial information, which may include the adjusted gross income calculation from your most recent federal tax return (typically Form 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ or an e-file form) or paycheck stubs.

Are there any other considerations that affect how much my family's monthly fee will be?

If your family encounters financial hardship, the monthly fee might be affected. *Financial hardship* is defined in First Steps as:

- Loss of home
- Loss of job (one or more income earners)
- Extensive medical costs incurred/ documented in the current year.

If one of these three events occurs, you should contact your service coordinator to reevaluate your existing monthly fee amount. Documentation must be provided. If financial hardship is determined, the lower fee would appear on the next monthly billing cycle.

What happens if I do not pay the calculated fee each month?

If your payment is more than 30 days late, the amount owed will be indicated on the monthly statement at 30 and 60 days. On the 75th day, a letter will be mailed to your home stating that early intervention services will end on the 90th day if no payment is received. No further services will be provided (except for service coordination, evaluation or assessment, and IFSP meetings) until all late payments are received.



A Missouri Family's Story

By Nabrina of Callaway County, Mo.

We received a 7-day-old foster baby that was born premature and with drugs in her system. As months went by, we noticed that her development was far behind other babies her age. After going to several doctors, our daughter was diagnosed with some medical issues. We contacted the First Steps program when she turned 6 months old. After her evaluation, they told us they couldn't guarantee if she would ever be able to crawl or walk. However, we received a lot of hard work and support from First Steps, including physical and occupational therapy. Not only did they help our baby crawl after 6 months, but later that year she took her own first steps!

When our daughter was finally able to walk, she needed a lot of help with her balance. Our PT gave us different suggestions: putting a large book on the floor and then having her step up and down on it, and taping a large piece of masking tape to the floor and having her follow it. Our daughter also had a number of sensory issues that affected her ability to pick up food and feed herself. The OT gave us practical suggestions to do on a daily basis: letting her play with Cool Whip using her fingers, playing with Play-Doh, using an electric toothbrush on her gums and tongue, and coming up with little games to make her want to use her fingers and hands. We did this every day, and it has made a big difference with her sensory issues over time.

Our family wouldn't have been able to go through this emotional time without the help and support of First Steps. Not only did they answer all our questions, but they even helped us with special doctor appointments. We will always be grateful. Early intervention is what helped our baby make progress. I can't imagine where she would be at today if it wasn't for them.



Where to Jump!

TIME
10-15 minutes

MATERIALS
Masking tape

DIRECTIONS

Toddlers love to jump but usually need help finding where to do it safely. This activity challenges your child to think before moving. Tape a square on the floor, and encourage jumping only inside of it.

OTHER IDEAS

- Tape down two lines 10-12 feet apart. Challenge your toddler to run back and forth, putting both feet on one line before returning to the other.
- Tape a small square. Have your toddler jump inside/outside of it.
- Let your toddler show you where to put two pieces of tape for both of you to run between.
- Have your toddler stand inside a large square and jump up and down with you.



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Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Office of Special Education
205 Jefferson St., P.O. Box 480
Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480

Phone: 866-583-2392
Web site: <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced>
(click on First Steps)

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