

PARENT CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter for First Steps Families ♦ Spring 2011

First Steps Annual Family Survey

Each year, the Missouri First Steps program mails a family survey to all families currently participating in the program. The purpose of the survey is to get valuable feedback from parents about their experiences with First Steps and to provide families an opportunity to have their voices heard. In April 2010, 4,351 surveys were mailed to families, and 1,165 were returned (a return rate of 27 percent). To view the 2010 survey results, please go to dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/documents/CombinedSurvey2010.pdf.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM LAST YEAR'S FAMILY SURVEY

- **97 percent** of respondents said that First Steps service providers were effective and knowledgeable in working with their child's disability.
- **97 percent** of respondents said that First Steps services helped them be more optimistic about their child's future.
- **97 percent** of respondents said that First Steps services helped them and/or their family to participate in everyday routines even though they have a child with special needs.
- **98 percent** of respondents said that First Steps service providers listened to them and respected their opinions.
- **98 percent** of respondents said that First Steps services gave their family the tools to directly improve their child's development.
- **98 percent** of respondents said that First Steps services helped them and/or their family to feel more confident in their skills as a parent/guardian.

Upcoming MPACT Trainings

As the state's parent training and information center, MPACT offers instruction to parents regarding First Steps, the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) process and their rights. Mark your calendar with these upcoming trainings.

- **March 4:** 9-11 a.m. in Harrisonville
Steps to Success: IDEA Part C to B
CHOICES of Cass County, 1700 W. Mechanic, Harrisonville, MO, 64701
- **March 17:** 10-11:30 a.m. in Camdenton
Steps to Success: Understanding the IFSP Process
Camdenton Public Library, 89 Rodeo Drive, Camdenton, MO, 65020
- **March 17:** 12:30-2:30 p.m. in Camdenton
Steps to Success: Understanding First Steps Parental Rights
Camdenton Public Library, 89 Rodeo Drive, Camdenton, MO, 65020
- **April 9:** 1-4 p.m. in Kirksville
Steps to Success: IDEA Part C to B
SB40/Adair County PACT Center, 1107 Country Club Drive, Kirksville, MO, 63501

For more information, to register for trainings or to speak with a parent advisor, please visit the MPACT website at www.ptimpact.org, or call 800-743-7634.





A Missouri Family's Story

By Rick and Diane of Excelsior Springs, Mo.

Our son, Shane, was diagnosed at 11 months with cerebral palsy. After the First Steps program was referred to us, we met with our service coordinator, Susan, to see what we would need for Shane. Susan often checked in to make sure he was getting along OK, and she was always there if we needed to increase therapy time or if we just needed to talk. Susan was a tremendous help in supporting our son and our family.

Our son's physical therapist was Sheree. She was fantastic in helping Shane meet and accomplish goals using his legs. She certainly had her work cut out for her – when she met Shane, he was just this little boy who lay on the floor with no movements or words. Now, there is no stopping him! Our occupational therapist was Valerie, who brought Shane a long way in being able to use his hands and fingers for everyday routines, such as picking up objects and playing with them.

Shane's speech has improved quickly with the help of his speech therapist, Chris. Shane began with identifying objects and worked up to two-word sentences. At this point, Shane can comprehend what is being said to him and respond or answer appropriately. Dana, our nutritionist, came onboard later and did a great job giving us tips on how to increase his weight. Shane has not yet gained the weight we had hoped for, but we are making progress.

Shane has made great advances with the tremendous support of the First Steps staff. There are no words that can express our thanks and appreciation for what they have done for our son.

JUST FOR FUN!



Item Needed

Find a large photo of your child. (You can use a regular-size photo, but an 8-by-10 picture makes a bigger puzzle.)

Steps

Before you start this activity, you need to cut up a photo of your toddler into five pieces (one head, two arms and two legs). Then sit with your toddler, and ask your toddler to find each piece and show where it goes. Start with the head; then work on the arms and legs. This way you are teaching your toddler about his or her body while also teaching him or her how to do a puzzle.

Tips/Suggestions

- Use a picture with several people in it, and cut it into more pieces.
- Use a thin magnet sheet to stick the photo on it, and then cut up the picture. This way your toddler can play with it on the refrigerator while you are in the kitchen.

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