

PARENT CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter for First Steps Families ❖ Fall 2015

Back-To-School: Time to Get Organized

As the school bus drives by and children go back to school, it's a great time to get organized and check that all of your child's First Steps records are in order. It is important to gather and review records as a refresher about how things are going and where they are headed. It also helps you to be prepared for future meetings about your child.



First, gather the First Steps records you already have such as your child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), progress notes, evaluations, and doctor's reports. It is helpful to keep these records together so you can easily find them. It is also important to keep records that are clean of notes and highlighting. If there is anything that you are missing or already has notes written on it, request copies from the professionals and add them to your file.

Keep a list of names and contact information for those who help your child. This list could be handwritten, typed or a page of business cards. You may want to include pediatrician, medical specialists, therapists, service coordinator, preschool teachers, etc. Include information about dates when that professional saw your child. As you review your child's records, you can update this list each year.

You may want to organize your child's records by topic although chronologically may be more helpful when you have something that covers more than one topic. You could use a three ring binder, box, folder, drawer, or file cabinet with hanging folders. Just be certain it allows quick, easy access to all the information needed under any set of circumstances.



Once you have everything together, take time to review your child's records. As you are reminded of your child's abilities last year, you will be able to identify progress, current accomplishments and plan to address concerns for the future.

To find more information and helpful tips, check out MPACT Steps to Success training series, which includes Family Record Keeping, Parental Rights, Understanding the IFSP Process, Effectively Communicating Your Child's Needs and IDEA Part C to B at <http://ptimpact.org/Training/Training.aspx>



A Missouri Family's Story

By Laree of St. Peters, MO

My daughter had been a bit slow to hit all her milestones, but also went from beginning to mastery very fast (as in from first step to running in 3 days). I thought her speech would be the same. One day I realized I had been waiting for over 6 months for her speech to “catch up”, and I knew we needed some help. I was referred to First Steps for testing, and was impressed at how fast they responded. Everyone I worked with was knowledgeable, easy to talk to, and helped with all my concerns.

Our Speech Language Pathologist (SLP) was a dream to work with. Every Friday she came to my house, sat on my floor with me and my daughter, and slowly coaxed language from her. I will never forget the glee in my daughter's eye the first time she figured out how to add a final consonant sound (and the thrilled spark in our SLP's eye too!). In the 12 months that my daughter received services, she went from having 17 words (9 of which were signs) to speaking 3 word sentences. The SLP even came with me to our first Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting when we switched over to the Early Childhood program to help me understand all that needed to happen to ensure my daughter continued to receive the care she needed. I will be forever grateful for all First Steps did to help my family.

Activity Corner

Promoting Retention and Recall of Environmental Information

By Rebecca, First Steps Special Instructor

The best way to assist infants and toddlers to retain and recall information about their surroundings is to provide them with routines and predictable environments.

Incorporate Routines and Predictability

Make sure that you try to maintain routines with your infant or toddler and leave familiar objects (toys, cups, hairbrushes, etc.) in predictable places so that your child can learn the locations of them. Routines provide your child with predictability. The repetition and consistency of routines will help your child establish a foundation of understanding that can be expanded by adding new or different concepts.

Change it Up

After your child is developmentally ready and has learned where an object is consistently located, have your child help you find a new place for the object and move the object. Then, when the object is needed, have your toddler find the object in its new location. Gradually introducing new events into a routine like this is not only fun for your child, but also ensures that your child remains interested!



The First Steps Parent Connections newsletter is written in collaboration with MPACT, Missouri's Parent Training and Information Center.



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