



This brochure was developed in collaboration with the **University of Missouri-Kansas City Institute for Human Development.**

Contact your local First Steps System Point of Entry (SPOE) office for more information by calling toll free:

**(866) 583-2392**

# First Steps & Early Intervention Teams

## First Steps Belief Statement

**SERVICES ARE PROVIDED  
IN THE CONTEXT OF THE  
CHILD'S AND FAMILY'S  
NATURAL ROUTINES**

Children learn and develop best when participating in learning opportunities that occur naturally in everyday routines and activities. Therefore, early intervention strategies and activities should be embedded into these routines. It means coaching and consulting with families and children where they live, learn and play.



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**Missouri First Steps Early Intervention**  
Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

## Who Helps Families in the First Steps Program?

**THE SERVICE COORDINATOR:** At the beginning, the **System Point of Entry (SPOE)** assigns a First Steps **service coordinator** to work with the family. This person explains the program and guides the family through the eligibility process. The service coordinator learns about the family, including daily activities and the family's hopes and priorities for the child. The service coordinator also arranges evaluations, assessments, services and meetings. If the child is eligible for the program, the service coordinator continues to guide the family through the process.

**THE PRIMARY PROVIDER:** Once a family is in the First Steps program, a **primary provider** visits regularly, often in the home or at other community places. At each visit, the family and the primary provider work on the family's concerns and questions regarding the child's development. Together they find ways to support the child in everyday activities. Other providers may visit the family with the primary provider; they are called **supporting providers**.

## What Are First Steps Teams?

Two teams of people work with families in First Steps: the **Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team** and the **Early Intervention Team (EIT)**. These are separate teams, but some people (including the service coordinator and the primary provider) are on both teams.



### INDIVIDUALIZED FAMILY SERVICE PLAN (IFSP)

**TEAM:** The family is an essential part of the IFSP team. Together the family and the service coordinator select the other team members. These may include family members, friends and people who provide services. The IFSP team also chooses the person who will be the primary provider, and this person then becomes a member of the team.

The IFSP team creates an **Individualized Family Service Plan** for the family and child. Family members play an important role by sharing their concerns and priorities with the team. Together the family and the team make decisions on activities to help reach the desired outcomes. At future meetings, the family and the primary provider tell the IFSP team about progress made and any changes they would like to see. The team

*The First Steps program provides the tools families need to help their children be successful.*

then updates the outcomes and the decisions about how to achieve them. The IFSP team may determine a supporting provider is needed. The IFSP team decides how often the supporting provider visits the family and child.

**EARLY INTERVENTION TEAM (EIT):** The EIT is the other team that supports the child with a developmental disability and his or her family. EIT members include the service coordinator, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, a speech therapist and a special instructor. (The primary provider is a professional from one of these fields.) The **primary provider** represents the family at regular EIT meetings and shares the child's progress. Together they find answers to the family's questions and new ways to address any concerns. The primary provider makes sure that the EIT and IFSP teams are working together.



## Building Teams

In the First Steps program, all team members play an important role:

- Family members know their needs best and have the greatest influence on their child's development.
- Extended family and friends also provide support.
- The service coordinator helps guide the family through First Steps.
- The IFSP team members bring experience and knowledge to the plan for the child and family.
- The primary provider and supporting providers share ideas and suggestions through home visits.
- The EIT members add their training and experience to help the family.

## Advantages of Having Teams

Families experience the following advantages from the team approach in early intervention:

- The family builds a strong relationship and works side by side with the primary provider.
- The family and the primary provider discuss the family's daily activities. This makes it easier for the family to help the child between home visits.
- The family benefits from having other providers on the EIT. The primary provider gets new ideas about ways to help the family and child.
- The family's time is respected. Needs and concerns are shared with one person – the primary provider.