



First Steps Family Roles and Responsibilities – Early Intervention

First Steps is Missouri's Early Intervention system for infants and toddlers, birth to age 3, who have delayed development or diagnosed conditions that are associated with developmental disabilities. Families play an integral role in their child's development. The First Steps program provides families the tools they need to help their child be successful.

Early intervention offers parents a wonderful opportunity to work with a team of professionals to support their child and family. As the parent, you know your child better than anyone else. It is important that you share your feelings and observations, and give feedback to the other Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team members about the information and recommendations that work the best for your family.

As the parent, your roles and responsibilities throughout the time your child receives services in early intervention include:

Being Informed:

Research your child's specific areas of need or disability. Developmental milestone charts are useful guides in understanding the areas in which your child might be delayed. Completing and using developmental milestone charts to understand where your child should be or where you would like them to be will help you in expressing their needs. The more you know, the better informed you are to explain what you feel is necessary to meet your child's needs.

You must give your consent for any evaluations and interventions. Never give your consent until you have been fully informed of what you are agreeing to and what to expect.

Being Vocal:

If you don't understand what other team members are talking about, say something. If you don't ask, you won't have a full understanding of your child's IFSP. You don't need to learn all the technical terms when you describe what is happening with your child; however, you can ask for clarification and support from the IFSP team or through the First Steps website (<http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/first-steps>) or MPACT website (<http://www.ptimpact.org/>).

If you don't agree with other team members, say something. Ask to talk about it some more. If you accept something that you don't agree with, that will not be helpful when you and the rest of the team discuss what services your family needs. If you have a concern with a team member, contact your Service Coordinator.

Being Well Organized:

Document your concerns or questions as they come up and write them down so that you are prepared to discuss them with your Service Coordinator or First Steps provider. Ask for copies of reports and documents related to your child's early intervention and keep files of all your important documents – immunization reports, developmental milestone charts, etc. Read all the paperwork that is given to you and make sure the IFSP meets your child and your family's needs.

Being an Active Team Member:

Keep an eye on timelines. Your IFSP team will outline various timelines for services, but as a member of the team, you should also be aware of when certain meetings (like transition) are supposed to occur. When in doubt, ask!

Being Involved:

You are your child's first teacher so it is important to be an active participant in your child's intervention. The strategies and ideas the First Steps provider shows you during their visits should be reinforced throughout the week.