

Subject: First Steps Update

Source: Pam Thomas, Coordinator, First Steps Program

Intended Audience: System Points of Entry (SPOE) directors, Service Coordinators, Service Providers and State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) members

Date: May 10, 2013

The purpose of this message is to respond to questions that have arisen regarding the action to change the funding source of Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) and First Steps. In an effort to assure that sufficient funds for First Steps and for ECSE will be available in FY14, it will be necessary for the General Assembly to establish the Missouri Senior Services Protection Fund during the final week of the 2013 legislative session. The Missouri Senior Services Protection Fund will provide the funding stream through which General Revenue will flow to these programs. It is our understanding that without this being accomplished; the ability for the state to sufficiently fund to these programs will be impacted.

You may want to closely monitor the progress of this legislative action. Members of the General Assembly have been working diligently to resolve barriers to ensure the legislation is passed. We remain confident that the General Assembly and Governor's Office will maintain their commitment to the ECSE and First Steps Programs.