

PROVIDER CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter for First Steps Service Providers ♦ Spring 2008

Welcome to the First Edition of Provider Connections!

This newsletter will be published quarterly by the First Steps program, part of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Early intervention service providers play an essential role in the integrity and quality of the First Steps program. As a provider for First Steps, you are required to sign a provider and payee agreement with DESE indicating that you understand the obligations and expectations of the program, and that you will provide quality services to eligible children and their families. The following is additional clarification on four components of that agreement:

- 1. Provider progress notes:** Providers with direct service authorizations must complete a monthly progress note in each child's file. The progress note may be completed electronically in the Child Care Management system, or it may be sent in writing to the System Point of Entry (SPOE) for inclusion in the child's official record. For providers with consultation authorizations, a progress note must be completed (as defined above) immediately following the consultation.
- 2. Evaluations and assessments:** At a minimum, the provider must supply the SPOE with an evaluation/assessment report. The SPOE will

ensure that the family receives a copy of the report. The provider or service coordinator may discuss the evaluation results with the family by phone or in person.

- 3. Therapy scripts or recommendations:** It is primarily the responsibility of service providers (OTs, PTs and speech therapists) to obtain physician scripts for evaluation and ongoing services when the child has Medicaid. PTs are required to obtain physician scripts for evaluation and ongoing services regardless of whether the child has Medicaid. Providers may be assisted with obtaining scripts by the child's service coordinator or family. However, the original script should remain with the provider, and a copy must be placed in the child's official record at the SPOE.
- 4. Provision of services:** Services must be provided according to the frequency and intensity indicated on the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP). Any change in services requires an IFSP team meeting and prior authorization by the service coordinator. Service providers should not proceed with services until the receipt of an electronic authorization from the Central Finance Office to verify the correct service amounts.

Strategies to Support Transition for Children with Special Needs

In 2006, the National Early Childhood Transition Center completed a series of focus groups with families, practitioners and administrators. The purpose was to identify strategies being used to support the transition of young children with special needs from early intervention to preschool. Participants represented 18 different states and worked in a variety of settings.

According to the results, strategies that work include:

- a supportive infrastructure to guide the transition process.
- attention to relationships and communication among agencies.
- continuity and alignment between sending and receiving programs.
- preparation of families and children for transition.
- program visitation.
- instructional activities designed to help children and families with transition.
- community resources that strengthen the relationship of children and families to schools.

The full, technical report of findings is available at <http://www.ihdi.uky.edu/nectc>.



WebSPOE Tip

To view archived electronic mailing list messages from DESE, select *provider account management* and then *messages*. This takes you to detailed messages sent by DESE about different topics.

Home	Child Care Management	Provider Account Management	Reports	User Options	Help	Logoff
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List Messages			
Detail	Subject	▼ Effective Date	End Date
	First Steps Rate Increase	08/13/2007	02/01/2008
	Provider Rate Increase	08/07/2007	02/01/2008
	Autism Spectrum Disorder	08/03/2007	
	Eligibility Determinations for Children Placed on High Humidity Nasal Cannula (HHNC) as a Form of Ventilator Support	07/31/2007	
	State Performance Plan and OSEP's Evaluation of Missouri's Part C Program	06/20/2007	
	Location of Mileage Invoice Copies	05/02/2007	
	RE: First Steps Program Update	04/02/2007	
	Enrolling in Medicaid	02/28/2007	
1			8 records

Online Resources

- **National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center** (<http://www.nectac.org>) – Provides information about a variety of topics; has links to programs from different states
- **Coaching in Early Childhood** (<http://www.coachinginearlychildhood.org>) – Using evidence-based practices to provide supports within the context of natural learning environments
- **Vanderbilt University** (<http://www.vanderbiltchilddevelopment.us>) – Information about the routines-based interview, natural environments, Ecomap development and more

Meet the First Steps Area Directors

In July 2007, five individuals began working as area directors for DESE. (They were formerly known as regional consultants who were contracted through the Missouri Child Care Resource and Referral Network.) Each area director provides direction, training and problem-solving for two contiguous SPOE regions. Area directors also function as the statewide technical-assistance unit; this enables the lead agency to provide a consistent message to the early intervention community.

- Marcy Morrison (Regions 1 & 2) Contact: (314) 340-5731 or marcy.morrison@dese.mo.gov
- Charla Myers (Regions 9 & 10) Contact: (573) 290-5999 or charla.myers@dese.mo.gov
- Stacey Ismail (Regions 7 & 8) Contact: (573) 434-9671 or stacey.ismail@dese.mo.gov
- Michele Schall (Regions 4 & 5) Contact: (816) 350-5292 or michele.schall@dese.mo.gov
- Pam Thomas (Regions 3 & 6) Contact: (573) 822-2522 or pam.thomas@dese.mo.gov



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The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. Inquiries related to Department programs may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Title IX Coordinator, 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-751-4212.

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