

# PROVIDER CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter for First Steps Service Providers • Winter/Spring 2012

## First.... A Big Thank You!

The Missouri First Steps program has experienced several changes in recent years, including the transition to Early Intervention Teams and an enhanced Web-based system. Change can be challenging, and your support during this time is appreciated and essential to the families we serve. Thank you for your commitment and dedication to the First Steps program.

## Annual Performance Report

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is the lead agency for implementing Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (First Steps program). DESE is required to submit an annual performance report (APR) to the U.S. Department of Education – Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) each year. Part C programs in all states are required to report on 14 indicators in the APR. For each of these indicators, a target is set in which performance can be measured, and OSEP rates each state on an annual basis.

This edition of *Provider Connections* focuses on two of the APR indicators: the 45-day timeline (indicator 7) and delivering timely services (indicator 1).

### Part One: The 45-day Timeline and What it Means for Providers

The target set in the APR for indicator 7 is 100 percent. This means each infant or toddler eligible for Part C services must have an initial individualized family service plan (IFSP) meeting conducted within 45 days of the referral date. There are a variety of crucial activities included in the 45-day timeline, including the initial evaluation and assessment of the child.

Missouri's most recent APR submission reported timely services at 96 percent, which did not meet the target of 100 percent. As a provider, your continued efforts can help First Steps reach the target of 100 percent. Here are some suggestions to help service coordinators with the 45-day timeline:

- Be realistic regarding your availability to complete an evaluation or assessment within the given timelines considering travel distances and previous commitments.
- Review the provider service request (PSR) form in WebSPOE and make note of when the written report is due.
- Attempt to schedule an appointment with the family as soon you receive contact information.
- If you are unable to reach the family within three business days of receiving the PSR, please contact the service coordinator immediately.
- Document every attempt to contact families, including the time of day, the name of the person you spoke with, and how contact was made (e.g., by phone, voice mail, etc).
- If the family is unable to be reached, try contacting at a different time of the day.
- If several attempts to provide services result in no-show visits with the family, please inform the service coordinator immediately.
- Once you have scheduled with the family and administered an evaluation or assessment as requested, upload the report into WebSPOE as soon as possible. Be sure to check the report for errors prior to uploading to avoid any further delays.

More information about the 45-day timeline is available at:

- [dese.mo.gov/se/documents/se-fs-45daytimelineqamarch2010.pdf](http://dese.mo.gov/se/documents/se-fs-45daytimelineqamarch2010.pdf) (Guidance document)
- [dese.mo.gov/se/fs/WebSPOE2.html](http://dese.mo.gov/se/fs/WebSPOE2.html) (WebSPOE system)





## Part 2: Providing Timely Services to Children and Families

The target set for indicator 1 in the APR is also 100 percent. This means all infants and toddlers must begin each new early intervention service within 30 days of the IFSP meeting in which parental consent was given for the service.

When a service is identified as “untimely,” the service coordinator receives a note in WebSPOE and is then required to describe the reason for the delay. Acceptable reasons for a delay include: parent/child delays for exceptional family circumstances, authorization/billing issues or an IFSP team decision. Unacceptable reasons for a delay include: provider delay, service coordinator delay or no provider available.

Missouri’s most recent APR submission reported timely services at 91.6 percent, which did not meet the target of 100 percent. As a provider, your continued efforts can help First Steps reach the target of 100 percent.

Here are some suggestions to help provide timely services:

- Keep the service coordinator informed of your availability to see children and families for services.
- When participating in an IFSP meeting, be realistic about the first time you will be able to see the child and family for services. It is important to consider travel distances and other commitments.

- Do not cancel appointments for services unless absolutely necessary.
- Monitor your message center in WebSPOE frequently for new service authorizations.
- Inform the service coordinator if you do not receive timely authorizations or if there is a data entry error.
- The provider service request form should contain information regarding when the first visit with the family must occur to meet the timely service requirement. If you do not receive a provider service request, inform the service coordinator.
- If you have been unable to contact the family within three days of receiving the PSR, please contact the service coordinator immediately.
- Clearly document in a progress note if a family cancels a visit. If the services are not timely, this information will help determine if the delay was due to an acceptable or unacceptable reason.
- Stay informed of changes in First Steps guidance.

More information about timely services can be found at: [dese.mo.gov/se/documents/se-fs-timelyservicesqamarch2010.pdf](http://dese.mo.gov/se/documents/se-fs-timelyservicesqamarch2010.pdf) (Guidance document).

**More information on Missouri’s Part C APR is available at: [dese.mo.gov/se/SPPpage.html](http://dese.mo.gov/se/SPPpage.html).**



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