

# PARENT CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter for First Steps Families ❖ Spring 2013

## 2012 First Steps Annual Family Survey

Each spring, the Missouri Office of Special Education mails a survey to parents of all children enrolled in the First Steps program. The purpose of the survey is to collect valuable feedback from parents about their experiences in First Steps and to provide families an opportunity to have their voices heard. In May 2012, 5,099 surveys were mailed to First Steps families, and 1,062 were returned (a response rate of 20 percent).

Responses from the 2012 First Steps Family survey showed an overall decrease in the number of “Does Not Apply” responses. Additionally, the questions below specifically demonstrated an increase in the number of *Strongly Agreed / Agreed* responses when compared with last year’s survey results.

### What percentage of families Strongly Agreed / Agreed?

- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| • It was easy to find out about First Steps.   | 92% |
| • It was easy to find out if my child was eligible for services.   | 97% |
| • It was easy to obtain the services that are needed for my child and family.  | 95% |
| • When my child was evaluated, all concerns about my child’s development raised by me and others were addressed.   | 98% |
| • The results of my child’s assessments or evaluations were explained to me in ways I understood.  | 99% |
| • In creating our Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP), I am asked about areas where our family feels things are fine and where we feel we need help. | 99% |
| • First Steps service providers were effective and knowledgeable in working with my child’s disability.  | 98% |

To view the complete 2012 survey results, please go to: <http://dese.mo.gov/se/fs/documents/StatewideReport2012COMBINED.pdf>

## 2013 Family Survey Information

First Steps families: Please watch your mailbox in April/May for the 2013 Family Survey.

This First Steps survey provides you with an opportunity to make your opinion known. Your responses will be completely anonymous and no one will be able to link your answers to you, unless you provide your name and contact information. There is no cost to return your completed survey; a self-addressed stamped envelope will be included.

The First Steps Program wants the survey results to represent all families in First Steps, so it is very important that you complete and return the survey. Thank you!



# A Missouri Family's Story

By Sonja of Bucklin, MO

I have found working with our First Steps Coordinator, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, instructional trainer and Speech Therapist invaluable in helping my son surmount many aspects of the rare chromosome disorder that he was born with. I am saying this not only because of his developmental growth, but also because of the support we receive as a family.

My son was diagnosed with Cri-du-chat when he was one month old. I am a very strong person, but this news shook me to my core. For the first 3 months, we felt very alone and as if there was no one who could help us. It was very encouraging to work with First Step providers who were not shocked by what he was experiencing, but instead were very positive that he WOULD progress and were able to navigate any challenge as a small hurdle rather than a huge mountain.

Don't get me wrong, it isn't only the providers who help your child grow and develop, as a parent you have to put into practice what you learn from your therapists each day. Some days you may not want to but you MUST. The strategies and activities your First Steps team teaches you are what will assist your child to be able to conquer the world in their own way.

First Steps has been so beneficial to our child and family I strongly encourage parents of young children with special needs to participate in the program.

## Just for Fun...The Parking Game

### Materials

- Small boxes (shoeboxes work well, as do some cereal boxes)
- 3-4 toy cars in different colors
- Scissors
- Construction paper
- Glue
- Paint (optional)
- Colored contact paper (optional)

### Directions

1. In one side of each box cut a garage door big enough to fit a toy car.
2. Cover each box with colored construction paper, matching the colors of the paper to the cars. (If you like, use colored contact paper or paint the boxes instead.)
3. Turn each box upside down so the bottom of the box is the roof of the garage.
4. Encourage your child to park each car in the garage of the same color.
5. Store the garages and cars in a larger box or plastic container when not in use.

This simple matching game is fun, even for toddlers who are just learning to recognize colors and shapes. Toddlers will enjoy parking the cars in the garages even if the colors do not match.

To read more about this and other activities from Family Education, go to: <http://fun.familyeducation.com/early-learning/activity/36958.html#ixzz1iMLiLd7D>



The First Steps Parent Connections newsletter is written in collaboration with MPACT, Missouri's Parent Training and Information Center.



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