

PARENT CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter for First Steps Families ♦ Summer 2011

Providing Timely Services to Missouri's Children and Families

As Missouri's early intervention system for infants and toddlers from birth to age 3, the First Steps program recognizes the importance of providing timely services to children and families. First Steps takes every action possible to ensure that services on a child's Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) begin as soon as possible (and no later than 30 days) after parental consent is obtained.

Each February, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is required to submit an annual performance report to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs on 14 indicators for Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Indicator 1 pertains to timely service delivery. The state provides data on the percentage of "infants and toddlers with IFSPs who receive the early intervention services on their IFSPs in a timely manner."

In February 2011, Missouri reported that 87.5 percent of infants and toddlers with IFSPs received all services in a timely manner for the 2009-10 school year. This fell short of the indicator's target of 100 percent. The First Steps program will continue to evaluate why the 100 percent target was not met and will take action to ensure that Missouri can reach the goal.

To determine whether a service is timely, the date each new service was first provided is compared to the date that written parental consent for the service was obtained by the family's service coordinator. The date of parental consent is typically the same date as the IFSP meeting. If one or more services on a child's IFSP began more than 30 days after the meeting date because of service-provider shortages or other delays not connected to the parent or child, then it is reported that the child did not receive all IFSP services in a timely manner.

When a service is not received in a timely manner, compensatory services should be offered to make up for any visits that were missed. The service coordinator and the IFSP team will discuss what compensatory services are needed and will implement as directed by the IFSP team.

Compensatory services should be offered if:

- The initial IFSP meeting date exceeds the 45-day timeline due to delays not connected to the parent or child.
- Early intervention services cannot begin because no service providers are available.
- The service provider is unable to provide services due to his or her own illness or other scheduling conflicts.



TO READ MORE ABOUT TIMELY SERVICES, PLEASE VISIT:

- dese.mo.gov/divspced/FirstSteps/documents/timelyservicesQAMarch2010.pdf
- dese.mo.gov/divspced/documents/mo-apr-2010cfinal4-10.pdf (See Indicator 1)



A Missouri Family's Story

By Scott of Sikeston, Mo.

Our 4-year-old daughter Megan, along with many of our other foster children, was a First Steps child. Megan came into our home at 7 months weighing 11 pounds. She couldn't roll over, couldn't sit up and didn't know her own name. Megan was never held or out of her seat; she would arch her back when you held her.

Speech, physical and occupational therapists began working with Megan to help her learn to roll, crawl and eventually walk. Our family made sure to do activities at home when the therapists weren't there. We used massages and toning exercises that helped Megan walk. The everyday exercises were deep massages for her arms and legs and flex extensions to help with muscle tone. The speech therapist taught us other techniques to massage Megan's mouth and throat muscles to help her swallow and to change her tongue thrust from sucking to eating.

I cannot say enough good things about First Steps. We have used the program every time we have taken in a baby who qualified for assistance.

Just for Fun (for Toddlers)

WALK-A-LOT

Purpose: Knowledge of what the body can do begins with learning to move it in different ways, at different paces and in ways that challenge emerging balance.

Activity time: 5-10 minutes

Materials needed: None

Directions: Encourage your toddler to walk in different ways with you throughout the day – in your house, outside at the park or into the grocery store. You can practice walking with heavy steps like an elephant, baby steps like an ant, waddle steps like a penguin or high steps like a marching band.

More ideas:

- * Follow any cues that your toddler gives for additional ways to play this game.
- * Use music of varying tempos to play the game.
- * Try the game in shoes and then barefoot, and talk about the difference.
- * When barefoot, try different surfaces – tile, soft carpet, grass, sand, muddy puddles, etc.

This activity is reprinted with permission from the Family Education Network. Visit www.familyeducation.com for more information and activities. Some revisions were made to this activity for clarification.



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