

PARENT CONNECTIONS

A Newsletter for First Steps Families ♦ Winter 2012

Early Intervention Teams

Over the past year, Missouri First Steps has been implementing a team approach to service delivery, a model called Early Intervention Teams (EI Teams). The team model is based on literature about how young children learn in their daily routines and how families receive information from professionals. Some areas of the state have established teams where all new First Steps referrals are assigned to a team, while other areas of the state are working toward the completion of teams.

The Team Approach

Two teams of people may be working with your family: the Individualized Family Service Plan Team (IFSP Team) and the Early Intervention Team (EI Team). These are separate teams, but some people (including your service coordinator and your primary provider) are on both teams. It is important for families to know the difference between these two teams.



Individualized Family Service Plan Team

You are an essential member of the IFSP Team. Together, you and your service coordinator select the other members of this team. These may include family members, friends and people who provide services. The IFSP Team also chooses the person who will be your primary provider, and this person then becomes a member of the team. The team creates an Individualized Family Service Plan for your child and family. An important part of your role on the IFSP Team is sharing your concerns and priorities for your family. The IFSP Team listens to the outcomes you want, and together, you make decisions about activities to help reach those outcomes. At future meetings, you and your primary provider will tell the IFSP Team about progress made and any changes you would like to see. Your team will then update the outcomes and the decisions about how to achieve those outcomes. The IFSP Team may determine that a supporting provider is needed. The team also will decide how often the supporting provider will visit you and your child.

Early Intervention Team

The EI Team is the other team that supports you and your family. EI Team members include your service coordinator, a physical therapist, an occupational therapist, a speech therapist and a special instructor. Your primary provider is a professional from one of these fields. The primary provider represents your family at regular EI Team meetings and shares your child's progress. Together, team members find answers to your questions and new ways to address your concerns. Your primary provider makes sure the EI Teams and IFSP Teams are working together.

How do EI Teams help you and your child?

- You build a strong relationship with your primary provider, who works side by side with your family.
- You and your primary provider discuss your family's daily activities. This makes it easier for you to help your child between home visits.
- Your family benefits from having other providers on the EI Team. Your primary provider gets new ideas from them about ways to help you and your child.
- Your family's time is respected. You share your family's needs and concerns with one person — your primary provider.

For more information about Early Intervention Teams, visit dese.mo.gov/se/FirstSteps/EITEAM.htm.



A Missouri Family's Story

By Kim of Glasgow, Mo.

My son, George, was born at 6 pounds, 2 ounces. When we brought him home we noticed that he made lots of noises, more than just typical baby noises; he had what is called a "strider." At 1 week, George had not gained any weight, he was continuing to projectile vomit, and the noise of his breathing was getting louder. At 12 weeks, George finally weighed 8 pounds, but we were still concerned because he was so small and weak. After seeing several specialists and undergoing surgery to remove excess tissue, George began to gain weight.

George was slow to develop physically because of the growth delay during his first four months of life. After following up with doctors and specialists, we were referred to First Steps. Our biggest concerns were that George was not feeding himself and developing as he should, especially since he gained the weight he needed since having surgery. George was found eligible for services, and we began to receive help from our provider, Beth, a speech pathologist.

My husband and I were not able to help George in all of the ways that we wanted. The stress level in our home was tremendous. Sitting at the dinner table was usually a wonderful time for our family to get together at the end of the day, but with George at the table dinnertime became the most stressful time in our everyday lives. We spent an hour at the table with George screaming. Whether he was screaming because he was happy or because he was sad, a lot of times we didn't know. We just knew he was screaming, and our older sons just knew we weren't helping or sitting with them. They ended up going to the couch a lot of nights and asking if they could eat their meal there versus at the table with us. We knew something needed to change.

Beth has been an excellent and wonderful person to have in our lives. She serves in many capacities within our family. The biggest one for my husband and me is that she coordinates all of our meetings with other First Steps personnel. She takes care of everything for us so that all we have to focus on is taking care of our family. She also works with the other children in our household, Alex and AJ, who have had some issues with jealousy during this time. Beth has given us strategies to work with George and have one-on-one time with our other children to help our family function again.

George is now feeding himself and eating a variety of foods — on his terms. Some issues still exist, but they are fewer than before. George is no longer screaming at the table, and we are all able to sit at the table together. Those are things that First Steps has helped us accomplish. George and I thank all of our providers and everyone in the First Steps program who have helped him survive and succeed in life.



JUST FOR FUN

Michelangelo's Bathroom

Try this idea if your child hates getting water on his face when you wash his hair.

Materials: Colorful pictures and tape

Directions: 1. Tape colorful pictures to the ceiling over your bathtub. (Old calendars are a great source for these.)

2. Your child can look at the pictures and talk with you about them as you wash his hair.

3. Unless your child has a favorite, change the pictures often to maintain interest.

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