

First Steps: From Referral to Services



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Agenda

- Welcome
- First Steps: Program Overview
- Making a Referral to First Steps
- First Steps Eligibility Criteria and Determination
- Individualized Family Service Plan and Early Intervention Services
- Transition from First Steps
- Wrap Up and Questions

First Steps Program Overview



- First Steps serves children ages birth to three.
- First Steps is a family centered program.
- First Steps is available statewide.
- Children must meet established eligibility criteria to obtain services.

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First Steps Eligibility Criteria



Newborn Condition	Diagnosed Conditions	Developmental Delay
Referred prior to 12 months of age with a birth weight less than 1,500 grams (3.49 pounds), with one or more of the following conditions diagnosed at birth or within 30 days post birth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • APGAR of 6 or less at 5 minutes • Intraventricular hemorrhage (IVH) (Grade II, III, or IV) • Any Positive Pressure Ventilation greater than 48 hours, including ventilator or oscillator • Resuscitation/code-event requiring chest compressions 	Referred prior to 36 months of age with a diagnosed condition including, but not limited to, the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autism Spectrum Disorders • Chromosomal Trisomy • Craniofacial Anomalies • Disorders of the Nervous System • Disorders Related to Exposure to Toxic Substances • Infections/Viruses/Bacteria • Other Chromosomal Abnormalities • Other Genetic/Congenital/ Metabolic Conditions • Sensory Impairments • Severe Attachment Disorders 	Referred prior to 36 months of age, with a half-age developmental delay, as measured by appropriate diagnostic measures, in one or more of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cognitive development • Communication development • Adaptive development • Physical development, including vision and hearing • Social or emotional development

Available on the DESE First Steps website at:
<https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/se-fs-eligibility-criteria.pdf>

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Missouri First Steps System Point of Entry (SPOE) Regions




For referrals and/or eligibility information, call 1-866-980-2392.

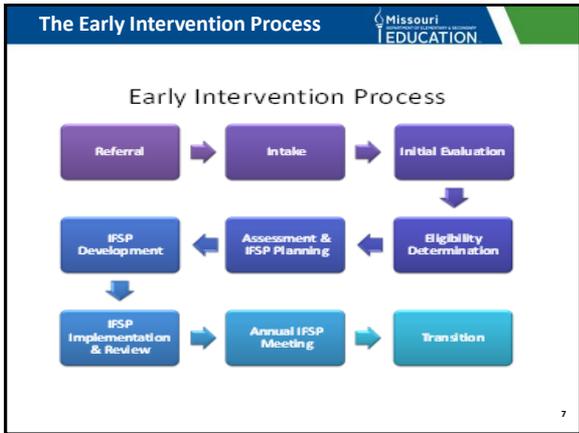
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First Steps Program Brochure




Available on the DESE First Steps website at:
<https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/se-fs-firststepsgeneralbrochuresept2011.pdf>

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- ### Who Can Refer a Child to First Steps?
- #### Primary Referral Sources
- Hospitals, including prenatal and postnatal care facilities;
 - Physicians;
 - Parents;
 - Child-care and early learning programs;
 - Local educational agencies, including special education and Parents as Teachers (PAT), and schools;
 - Public health facilities;
 - Other public health or social service agencies;
 - Other clinics and health care providers;
 - Public agencies and staff in the child welfare system, including child protective service and foster care;
 - Homeless family shelters; and,
 - Domestic violence shelters and agencies.

First Steps Referral Form

Available on the DESE First Steps website at:
http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/dac_forms/MO5003029.pdf

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- ### How to Make a First Steps Referral
- There are two ways to make a referral to First Steps**
- Call **866-583-2392** to be connected to the SPOE in your area
 - Make an online referral at <https://www.mofirststeps.com>
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- ### Considerations When Making a Referral
- What is the significance of the behaviors?
 - What is the severity of the behaviors?
 - What is the family's capacity?
 - Does the family have concerns and/or have you discussed the concerns with the family?
 - Are there cultural or demographic factors influencing the child's development?
 - How long have you been working with the child?
 - Has the family tried activities you shared with them?
 - What community resources are the family already utilizing (e.g., PAT, Early Head Start)?
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Options for Processing the First Steps Referral

- Proceeding with the Referral** The SPOE is responsible for assigning a Service Coordinator as soon as possible once a referral is received. If the referral was made by a primary referral source other than the parent, an initial contact with the parent is made to explain the reason for the referral. This initial contact with the parent occurs within two business days of the referral.
- Refusing the Referral** In rare occasions, the SPOE can refuse a referral when there is no reason to suspect a developmental delay, newborn or medical condition.

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The Intake Visit and Evaluation of the Child



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First Steps Intake Visit

- The purpose of the intake visit is to introduce parents to the First Steps .
- The Service Coordinator explains the First Steps Philosophy, including the First Steps Mission Statement, Belief Statements, Parental Rights and the model of service delivery.
- At the intake visit, the Service Coordinator completes enrollment information and obtains parental consent to determine eligibility for First Steps.
- Following the intake visit and obtaining parental consent the Service Coordinator begins the process to determine whether the child is eligible for First Steps.

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Eligibility Determination



Newborn Condition

Children whose birth records confirm a Newborn Condition are automatically eligible for First Steps. They skip an evaluation and move to an initial assessment for IFSP Planning.



Diagnosed Condition

Children whose medical records confirm a Diagnosed Condition are automatically eligible for First Steps. They skip an evaluation and move to an initial assessment for IFSP Planning.



Developmental Delay

Children whose history indicates there is a suspected developmental delay are required to have an evaluation to determine the child's eligibility for First Steps.

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First Steps Evaluation Components

- Taking the child's history
- Gathering information from other sources
- Reviewing medical, educational or other records
- Administering an instrument
- Identifying the child's level of functioning in adaptive, cognition, communication, physical, social emotional development

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If the child is found **Ineligible**, the Service Coordinator will:

- Provide the family with a copy of the evaluation
- Refer the family to other resources, such as Parents as Teachers, Early Head Start, Head Start, other service providers accessible via private/public insurance, etc.

If the child is found **Eligible**, the Service Coordinator will:

- Notify the parent of child's eligibility
- Conduct the Family Assessment
- Develop an Individual Family Service Plan within 45 days of the referral date
- Review the Individual Family Service Plan regularly
- Support the family's transition from First Steps
- Refer to community resources, when appropriate



- Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)
- Early Intervention Services
- Transition from First Steps

- The IFSP is a document that reflects the parent's concerns, priorities and resources.
- The IFSP is unique to each child and family.
- Family members collaborate with the team to create the IFSP.
- The IFSP includes sections regarding the child's health and medical information, the child's present level of development and involvement in the family's daily routines and activities.
- Outcomes should enhance the child's development, be meaningful and useful to the family.
- The IFSP is reviewed at minimum every six months.

- Early Intervention Services are delivered through home visits or in a community setting (e.g., a child care program).
- Parents /caregivers participate in each home visit to learn strategies to help the child and family reach their IFSP outcomes.
- Families have a Primary Provider who visits the family regularly and works with other supporting providers, as needed, to deliver comprehensive services.
- Together these providers work to address the families concerns, answer questions and make sure the family has all the resources to help their child in everyday routines.



- First Steps supports children and families at numerous points of transition.
- First Steps providers work to prepare families for transition out of First Steps at age three.
- At age three, most children transition into Early Childhood Special Education, early childhood programs or other community services.
- First Steps works with local school districts and early childhood programs to provide smooth transitions for families.



Contact Us

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<https://dese.mo.gov/special-education/first-steps>

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