

Taking it **ONE STEP AT A TIME**



August - December 2010

This newsletter is brought to you by the Early Steps Southernmost Coast Family Resource Specialists. Family Resource Specialists (FRS) provide assistance, information and support to families of children with special needs. For more details, please contact a representative in your area:

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This quarterly newsletter is also available online at:
www.mchpalmettobaycenter.com
under the Early Steps Southernmost Coast section.



Early Steps Evaluation Team (left to right). Melisa Brown (Speech Pathologist), Carmela Muñoz (Developmental Specialist), Monica Ragusa (Speech Pathologist), Christina Morgan, MD (Clinical Supervisor/Psychologist), Miguel Medina (Developmental Specialist), and Maria Anderson (Developmental Specialist).

Some Benefits Provided by Early Steps

- Brings services into the child's life rather than fitting the child into services.
- Maximizes the everyday natural learning opportunities of each child.
- Enhances the development of each child and their participation in community life.
- Provides each child with a consistent team for evaluation and services.
- Gives families options in service decisions and encourages active partnerships.
- Provides a primary service provider to work with you and your family.

From the Early Steps State Office

Dear Friends,

Early Steps is conducting a survey of families whose children recently received our services to ask how well the developmental needs of your child were met. Your opinions count and can help to further improve services and support for young children with developmental needs and their families throughout the state of Florida.

An Early Steps representative may contact you to request your participation with this survey between May 19, 2010 and July 31, 2010. Your assistance is important and greatly appreciated. The results of this survey will help make improvements in Early Steps and it will also be used to report Florida's progress in meeting the needs of young children and their families. The information you provide will be kept confidential, you will not be asked to sign your name, nor will it impact the services your family receives from Early Steps.

If you have any questions, please speak with your Service Coordinator or Family Resource Specialist. Thank you for your continued partnership with Florida's Early Steps system.

Sincerest Regards,

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Florida Department of Health Eligibility Changes to Early Steps



Effective July 1, 2010, Early Steps eligibility criteria for infants and toddlers under the age of 36 months will change in accordance with the following details.

Established conditions (which must be confirmed by written diagnosis) fall into one of the following areas:

- A. Genetic and metabolic disorders
- B. Neurological disorder
- C. Autism Spectrum Disorder
- D. Severe attachment disorder
- E. Significant sensory impairment (vision/hearing)
- F. Infants who weigh less than 1,200 grams at birth

Developmental delay as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures in the 5 developmental domains listed below.

- A. Cognitive
- B. Physical (including vision and hearing)

- C. Communication
- D. Social or Emotional
- E. Adaptive

The new eligibility criteria for all eligibility determination evaluations performed on or after July 1, 2010 are as follows:

- Meets or exceeds 2.0 standard deviations below the mean in one or more developmental domains.
- Meets or exceeds 1.5 standard deviations below the mean in two or more developmental domains

All children will be evaluated based on their chronological age; premature children will no longer be adjusted to gestational age. All children currently Early Steps eligible will remain Early Steps eligible, even if they do not meet the new eligibility criteria.

Families can be referred for our services using our statewide toll-free phone number **1-800-654-4440**.

Community Resources:

Parent to Parent of Miami

Is a community parent resource center for families of children and adults with disabilities. For more information, please contact them at: 7990 SW 117th Avenue, Suite 200 Miami, FL 33183 305-271-9797 Email: info@ptopmiami.org www.ptopmiami.org

CCDH

Offers services for individuals with disabilities and their families. For additional information, please contact them at: 9555 N. Kendall Drive, Suite 206 Miami, FL 33176 305-596-1160 Email: info@ccdhh.org www.ccdhh.org

Florida's Central Directory

Is a source to find information about community resources for kids with special needs. For more information, please call or visit their website: 1-800-654-4440 www.centraldirectory.org

Access Florida

The following website can assist with determining eligibility for food stamps, cash assistance, and Medicaid: www.myflorida.com/accessflorida

Family Central Nurturing Parenting Program

This program for families with infants and children up to age 4 is a 24-week, home based parenting education class offered at no cost to families in Miami-Dade County. Classes focus on various aspects of behavior and communication and how they play a role in enhancing family life and keeping a nurturing family environment. For more information, please call Jackie Ruisanchez at 305-749-8627. www.familycentral.org