



EARLYSTEPS FAMILY ORIENTATION





EarlySteps is....

- **A system of supports and services designed to enable families to help their child progress *developmentally* and to improve their child's *functioning* within the daily routines of the family.**





Who is Eligible?

- The child must be birth to 3 years of age, but not passed the 3rd birthday.
- The child must live in Louisiana.
- The child must have a diagnosed *medical condition* that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay.

OR

- The child is experiencing *developmental delays as measured by a developmental assessment* [Battelle Developmental Inventory—(BDI-2)] in the following areas:





Who is Eligible?

- Physical Development (crawling, walking, seeing, hearing)-*fine/gross motor*.
- Cognitive Development (learning skills or problem solving)
- Social and Emotional Development (playing with others, showing feelings)
- Adaptive Development (feeding, getting dressed)
- Communication (listening, talking, expressing self)-*receptive/expressive language*





Autism Spectrum Disorders Screening

Part of the eligibility/evaluation process includes:

- A screening process to identify a child's risk for autism. When a child has a "positive" screening, the family will receive options for addressing the "next steps" including referrals for evaluation for diagnosis of an Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Completed at the initial, annual, and exit evaluations for children 18 months and older
- OR at the request of families.
- The tool is called the BISCUIT.





Family Cost Participation

Effective October 1, EarlySteps implemented Family Cost Participation (FCP) in an effort to support the EarlySteps budget. Cost participation allows families to share in some of the cost for early intervention services their child receives. Funds received from families will only be used for EarlySteps services.

Financial information is gathered at the beginning of the IFSP process. A family's size and income will be used to determine if families will have a share in cost to pay for services. An FCP/Explanation of Benefits statement will be mailed monthly to all families. The FCP/Explanation of Benefits (EOB) statement will show the services billed for that month and the services that are subject to cost participation if the family must pay.

For more information please refer to Chapter 15 of the practice manual at

www.dhh.la.gov



How does the EarlySteps system support families with eligible children?

By working with you to achieve 4 Goals specifically for families:

1. To help you understand how to help your child develop and learn
2. To help you communicate your child's needs
3. To help you understand your rights in the early intervention system.
4. To have successful transition from EarlySteps at age 3 or at exit





Goal 1: To help you understand how to help your child develop and learn

To meet this goal your child's team, which includes you, will design supports to address the needs of your child and family to include one or more of the following as needed. . .





Support System

There are 17 early intervention supports/services that may be accessed through EarlySteps based on the child's and family's needs:

- Assistive Technology devices and services
- Audiology Services
- Family Training, counseling and home visits
- Health Services (family education and to assist with other EarlySteps services only)
- Medical Services (for diagnostic & evaluation purposes only)
- Nursing Services (family education and to assist with other EarlySteps services only)





Support System

- Nutrition Services
- Special Instruction
- Speech Language Pathology
- Transportation (to and from EarlySteps services only)
- Translation/Interpreter Services (Foreign Language and Sign Language)
- Vision Services
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Psychological Services
- Service Coordination
- Social Work Services





Goal 2: To help you understand your Rights in EarlySteps

Every family in EarlySteps is guaranteed the following rights and it is the Goal of EarlySteps to assure that you understand these rights:

- Written prior notice
- Use of Parent's native language or preferred mode of communication
- Parent Consent
- Confidentiality, Privacy, and Release of Information
- Examination of records
- Accept or decline services without jeopardy/Refuse to complete or sign documents
- Resolution of Disputes
- Child's right to a Surrogate Parent





Parent's Rights

Written Prior Notice is provided within a reasonable time before EarlySteps proposes, refuses, or initiates any activity or change for the child or the family

Written notice applies to evaluation, location of a service, providing a service, or changing or discontinuing a service.

The written notice must explain the specific action and what you can do if you disagree with the action.

Remember—nothing can be proposed or changed unless it is given to you in writing before it happens.





Parent's Rights

Native language: the language or mode of communication normally used by the parent of an eligible child. Every attempt must be made to obtain interpreter services if the family's native language is not English or if the family uses another mode of communication (e.g., Braille, American Sign Language) unless it is clearly not feasible to do so. An evaluation may be conducted in the language used by the child if developmentally appropriate. If the native language (or other mode of communication of the parent) is not a written language, the public agency or designated service provider shall take steps to ensure that:

1. The notice is translated orally or by other means to the parent in the parent's native language or other mode of communication;
2. The parent acknowledges understanding of the notice; and
3. There is written evidence that these requirements have been met.





Parent's Rights

Consent means that ---

- The parent has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought. This information was provided in the parent's native language or by another appropriate mode of communication;
- The parent understands and agrees **in writing** to the carrying out of an activity for which consent is sought, and the consent form describes that activity and lists records (if any) that will be released and to whom the records will be sent; and
- The parent understands that the granting of consent is voluntary on their part and may be revoked at any time.
- Consent must be obtained before activities take place (such as services, for example) and before records are released





Parent's Rights

Confidentiality—EarlySteps ensures that information about your child and family is protected. Including any personally identifiable information which includes:

- The name of the child, the child's parent(s), or other family member;
- The address of the child or child's parents;
- A personal identifier, such as the child's or parent's social security number; or
- A list of personal characteristics or other information that would make it possible to identify the child with reasonable certainty.





Parent's Rights

Examination of Records—parents have the right to inspect and review any record relating to their child. EarlySteps must respond to any review request no later than 10 days.

- Copies of some information, such as an evaluation and an IFSP are provided to you at no cost.
- Parents may also request that records are amended if they believe that the information is inaccurate or misleading. EarlySteps will consider the request and make a decision in a timely manner





Parent's Rights

Accept/Decline Services—

- Parents of eligible children have the right to determine whether they, their child, or other family members will accept or decline any early intervention service. They may also decline services after first accepting them without jeopardizing other early intervention services.
- Parents can change their minds. They do not have to accept all services recommended by the IFSP team. **Support Coordination is the exception**—EarlySteps requires that every child receives support coordination. If a family refuses Support Coordination, they must understand that this means they are choosing **not to participate** in EarlySteps.





Parent's Rights

Dispute Resolution: EarlySteps offers 3 ways for families to resolve disagreements:

1. Complaint Process

Parents, service providers, advocates, service coordinators, members of the SICCC, or employees of public agencies may file an individual complaint. A complaint **must be filed in writing and must contain the following** information:

- A statement that the State has violated a requirement of Part C of IDEA or the regulations thereof;
- The facts describing the alleged complaint; and
- The name, address, and phone number of the complainant (person filing complaint) and any applicable identifying information regarding the involved child.
- A proposed resolution of the problem

The alleged violation must have occurred not more than one year before the date that the complaint is received by EarlySteps unless a longer period is reasonable.





Parent's Rights

Dispute Resolution: EarlySteps offers 3 ways for families to resolve disagreements:

2. **Mediation**—is an attempt to resolve a concern between two or more parties through the objective intervention of a neutral party.

Families are offered to have their concerns addressed by an impartial mediator. The Department of Health and Hospitals offers mediation through the Division of Administrative Law. Mediation is also referred to as an Administrative Conference.

Mediation is voluntary and may result in a binding agreement by both parties.

Any discussions that occur during mediation are confidential.





Parent's Rights

Dispute Resolution: EarlySteps offers 3 ways for families to resolve disagreements:

3. **Due Process Hearing** —is an administrative hearing where an impartial, trained hearing officer presides over presentation of a complaint and decides how to resolve it. DHH also calls this an *appeal* or *fair hearing*.

At the hearing, evidence is presented by both parties and both parties may be represented by their attorney and witnesses may be called. The written decision will be given within 60 days and a record of the proceedings will be provided at no cost.

For any type of dispute resolution process, the child may continue to receive any services that are not in dispute.

Information about all parent rights are provided to families throughout their time in EarlySteps.





Parent's Rights

The Right of a child to a Surrogate Parent—Children's rights in EarlySteps are also protected if:

- No parent can be identified
- A parent cannot be located for a period of time
- The child is a ward of the State of Louisiana

In these situations and according to the laws of Louisiana, the Lead Agency might assign someone to act as a surrogate parent.

This individual's role is to represent the child in EarlySteps. The person selected can have no personal or professional interest that conflicts with the child's interests and has the knowledge and skills that ensure adequate representation of the child.





Goal 3: To Help Families effectively communicate their child's needs

A main focus for early intervention is to meet the needs of your child and family. To accomplish this, you are asked to participate as a team member with others in the early intervention system.

As a team member you will participate in the development of the service plan designed to meet your child and family needs: the **Individualized Family Service Plan or IFSP**

As a team member you will identify your Concerns, Priorities and Resources regarding your child and family through a **Family Assessment**. EarlySteps refers to the family assessment as the **“CPR”**

The role of the other team members is to assist you in communicating the needs of your child and family.





The Individualized Family Service Plan IFSP

Each eligible child and their family must have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) developed no later than 45 days from the date of receipt of the referral at the SPOE.

The IFSP must:

- Be developed jointly by the family and appropriately qualified personnel involved in the provision of early intervention services;
- Be based on the multidisciplinary evaluation and assessment of the child and a family-directed assessment of the family to identify concerns, priorities and resources (CPR) of the family and the identification of the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of the child; and
- Include supports necessary to enhance the development of the child and the capacity of the family to meet the special needs of the child.





The Individualized Family Service Plan IFSP

Each eligible child and their family must have an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) developed no later than 45 days from the date of receipt of the referral at the SPOE.

The IFSP must:

- Be developed at a meeting
- Be reviewed every six months or more often if needed
- Be evaluated and revised at an annual meeting
- Follow a standard format designed by EarlySteps that has required components
- Address transition of a child at age 3 or at exit
- Obtain a parent's consent before being conducted or before services are provided





Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)

IFSP Team

- Parent(s) or Guardian(s) of the child;
- Other family members, as requested by the family;
- An advocate or person outside of the family, if requested by the parent(s);
- Intake Coordinator (initial only);
- Ongoing service coordinator—FSC (required to attend in person—initial and annual);
- Person(s) directly involved in conducting the evaluations and assessments; and
- Person(s) who will be providing early intervention services
- The EarlySteps EI Consultant may also participate in the IFSP meeting either in person or by review of records/information prior to the meeting, as appropriate, to assist in interpreting the developmental information.





Family Concerns, Priorities, & Resources (CPR): saying what you need

Families of all children eligible for EarlySteps are offered the opportunity to identify their unique needs through the completion of a Family-Directed Assessment of Concerns, Priorities and Resources called the **CPR**. This family-directed assessment must be-

- Conducted by qualified persons to identify a families' concerns, priorities and resources and the supports and services necessary to enhance the family's capacity to meet the developmental needs of the child.
- Conducted through the use of the CPR tool and through an interview with you.

The intent of early intervention is to build upon the natural routines and supports of families and children within their communities and to support families in their abilities to meet the health and developmental needs of their child. The CPR is a crucial part of gathering the right information to design the best outcomes for your child and family.

Your child's team is responsible for collecting the information about your concerns and needs to include in the IFSP.





IFSP Outcomes

- IFSP outcomes are broad statements that describe what the family and team have discussed and want to achieve and include measurement statements of what the team hopes to achieve for the child and family .
- The Family Assessment (CPR) process is vital for developing appropriate outcomes for the child and family.
- Families and professionals collaborate to develop outcomes, discuss completing priorities, and look at all alternatives.
- Once an outcome has been written for the IFSP, it is then necessary to identify the strategies and activities that will support achievement of the outcome and each team member's role in supporting the outcome. Strategies and activities are built upon the routines of the family, in the natural environment.





Examples of IFSP Outcomes

Family Priority: My child is potty trained
Daniel will participate by indicating he is wet or soiled.
Our team will be satisfied that we are finished with this outcome when he pats or points to his diaper or says “potty” at least 3 times a day for 2 consecutive weeks.

Family Priority: My child will sit and look at a book with a family member

Sally will participate in story time by sitting and looking at a book.

Our team will be satisfied we are finished with this outcome when she can point to pictures in the book and can turn pages without help at least 5 times while she is being read a story each day for 2 weeks.





When should I make changes to the IFSP?

You have the right to request an IFSP team meeting at any time—they will be held at least quarterly.

Request a meeting if:

- If your child is not making progress after several months of service
- If your family feels overwhelmed with the amount of service provided
- If your child has made progress and does not need as many services





Parent's Roles and

Responsibilities as a Team Member

- Participate in the IFSP process—participate with service providers to plan and carry out activities with your child, and share your knowledge and observations with them.
- Inform your support coordinator of issues that may affect your child's services.
- Schedule your visit during times that are best for your child and family. Be present and actively participate in all visits.
- Be on time for scheduled appointments and notify your service provider as soon as possible if you are unable to keep an appointment. Provide reasonable notice if you need to cancel or reschedule a visit.
- Write down any questions you may have and be prepared to discuss what has happened since your last visit.





Parent's Roles and

Responsibilities as a Team Member

- Ask to be shown anything you do not completely understand and practice the strategies together during the visit.
- Review the monthly Family Cost Participation/Explanation of Benefits statement and submit payment if applicable.
- Review and sign each provider contact note for each session. These verify your participation and that the provider conducted the session.
- Use the strategies throughout the day with your child and make notes of what is working and what is not.
- Be open and honest with your service providers. Don't be afraid to ask questions or tell the service provider if something is not going well.
- Participate in EarlySteps activities such as the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) and/or Regional Interagency Coordinating Council (RICC) or through giving input to your Regional Community Outreach Specialist.





Goal 4: To have a successful transition *out of EarlySteps* when it is time to exit

EarlySteps is committed to supporting your child and family:

- through exit at age 3**
- when your child is no longer eligible**
- If you re-locate out of state or leave the system for other reasons**

How do we reach this goal?





Goal 4: To have a successful transition *out of EarlySteps* when it is time to exit:

- Intake and Family Support Coordinators (FSC) **discuss transition at every IFSP—even the 1st one—there is a page on the IFSP that *just* addresses transition.**
- **Ask you what supports you need to make transition successful**
- **Design steps to meet the needs you identify**
- **Have a transition conference prior to exit and invite school system or other representatives to attend and provide information to you**





The Family Support Coordinator (FSC)

Support Coordination means the activities carried out by an individual to assist and enable an eligible child and the child's family to receive the rights, procedural safeguards and services that are authorized to be provided

FSC's work for agencies enrolled with EarlySteps. The FSC's have backgrounds in human service-related areas and defined responsibilities with EarlySteps

FSC Responsibilities

- Provide on-going support coordination for as long as the child is eligible for Part C services as part of the IFSP process.
- Coordinating ongoing evaluations and assessments of the child's and family's needs





Family Support Coordinator (FSC)

- Coordinating the provision of early intervention services
- Consult with other service providers and representatives from community agencies to ensure the effective provision of services and to make sure that IFSP services are being provided
- Informing families of their rights and procedural safeguards
- Collect and verify a family's financial information.
- Arrange for and conduct team meetings
- Understand and effectively represent the Best Practice guidelines as developed by a committee of the SICC
- Facilitating the development of the Transition Plan to enter the child into appropriate community services when the child reaches age three; and refer the child to the local education agency for services after EarlySteps
- Review the child's IFSP with the family quarterly, every 6 months, annually and on an as needed basis, when requested by the family
- Assist the family in accessing other services, supports and resources in the community, including making referrals to providers for needed services





Provider Roles & Responsibilities

EarlySteps-enrolled providers are trained and credentialed in their specialty areas—they have defined responsibilities with your family to:

- Educate and involve parents on strategies/skills, which the child needs to learn to accomplish an outcome.
- Assess and evaluate a child per the request from an FSC
- Provide ongoing supports & services in accordance with the IFSP
- Consult with parents and other providers to ensure the effective provision of supports & services.
- Attend IFSP Team Meetings in person (preferred), phone conference, or by written report
- Submit Monthly Progress Report to FSC by 10th of the month and to parent/guardian by the next visit to family after completion of report.





What should your EarlySteps Services look like?

Example #1

The Service Provider meets the family at the grocery store and helps mom by:

- Showing how to seat the child in the cart for good support.
- Encouraging mom to talk to the child while shopping (talk about the colors of foods, shapes, labels and smells.

How This Helps:

This visit at the store can help the child to strengthen upper body muscles and learn new words. It also teaches mom how to continue working with the child in her regular shopping routine.





Example #2

The Service Provider works with the toddler and child care provider at the child care center by:

- Arriving during lunch or snack time to work on feeding skills.
- Including other children in the class as well as the child care provider in the activities.
- Using classroom toys during sessions.

How this Helps:

This visit to the child care center helps with the child's feeding skills and helps promote the child's social interactions in their everyday life. This also provides the supports the child care provider needs to continue practicing skills daily.





Helpful Tips to get the most out of your child's services:

Provider should show the parent or caregiver how everyday activities can help their child.

Why this is important:

- By working with the parent the provider can teach skills that the parent can continue to use in the child's daily activities.

Using the activities between visits is equally important as the visit itself—this is where progress occurs.

Why this is important:

- At this age children learn best from their parents or caregivers. Children also learn best through repetition and in the environment where the activity occurs.





Helpful Tips to get the most out of your child's services:

It is important that there be open communication between the parent and provider.

Why this is important:

- To keep the provider updated on any changing needs or concerns of the child and the family.

Early intervention services should be provided during the child's daily routine and in the natural environment(s).

Why this is important

- Research shows that babies learn best in an environment that they are familiar with .





Helpful Tips to get the most out of your child's services: review the Family Cost Participation (FCP)\ Explanation of Benefits (EOB) statement

What is an EarlySteps Explanation of Benefits (EOB)?

- The FCP\EOB statement is a detailed description of the services that were billed by and paid to your EarlySteps providers. In addition, it will include the family cost participation amount.
- EarlySteps providers have up to 60 days to bill from the date a service is rendered. Therefore, there is a 60 day lag in the statements you receive. If there is a cost share owed, you will have 30 calendar days from the issuance of the statement to pay the cost share amount.

Why is the EOB important to you?

- The EOB lists key information such as the name of the provider, the actual date you received the service, the amount paid to your provider, and the cost share amount. This information is important because you can verify whether or not these services are occurring for your child.





Helpful Tips to get the most out of your child's services: Participate in the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC)

- Roles—advise and assist Lead Agency, including:
 - Identify sources of funding
 - - Assign Financial Responsibility
 - Promote interagency agreements
 - Prepare annual report to Governor and US Secretary of Education
- Required part of the Early Intervention System
- Members are appointed by the Governor
- Required members should include 20% parent participation
- Meets at least quarterly

WEBSITE: <http://gov.state.la.us/SICC>





Helpful Tips to get the most out of your child's services: participate in the Regional Interagency Coordinating Council (RICC)

- An essential component of the EarlySteps system at the local level.
- Each Region within the state has an Interagency Coordinating Council (RICC) that is scheduled and held with the EarlySteps Regional Coordinator and Community Outreach Specialist.
- Parents, guardians, caregivers, providers, stakeholders, and all interested parties are encouraged to attend RICC meetings to stay current with the latest information and provide valuable feedback.





“Who Do I Contact”

- When I have questions about services on the IFSP or my providers? – Family Support Coordinator (FSC)
- When I want to schedule a team meeting? – FSC
- If I need information about resources in the community? – FSC, Community Outreach Specialist (COS), Families Helping Families Center (FHF)
- If I need information about my child’s disability or developmental needs? – FSC, COS, FHF





“Who Do I Contact”

- If I would like to attend the State Interagency Coordinating Council (SICC) and Regional Interagency Coordinating Council (RICC) meetings? – Regional Coordinator, COS
- If I want to meet other parents of children in EarlySteps, or join a support group? – FSC, COS, FHF
- To file a complaint about anyone or anything involving EarlySteps, or about services for your child and family? – Regional Human Services District/Authority or OCDD Office





Tell us if we met our Goals

To Review: EarlySteps has 4 main goals for families

- Help your family be able to help your child develop and learn
- Help your family communicate your child's needs to EarlySteps and to others
- Help your family understand your rights.
- Help your family experience a successful transition at exit or age 3.





Tell us if we met our Goals

To know if we met our goals you will be asked

- To give us feedback through a survey about meeting these goals at your child's exit
- To give us feedback *at any time* by participating in an online survey at:

<http://new.dhh.louisiana.gov/index.cfm/page/215>





EarlySteps believes:

- The child supplies the power but the parents have to do the steering.

*Benjamin Spock,
Dr. Spock's Baby and Child Care*

