



## ■ First Steps

**Mission:** To partner with Hoosier families whose young children are experiencing developmental delays and connect them with services that help them promote their child's development.

**Vision:** All Indiana families have a strong foundation to advocate for their infants and toddlers so they grow and flourish to their highest potential.

**Values:** Family-centered, routines-based, relationship-based, holistic, individualized and culturally competent.

### **Who is eligible for First Steps services?**

First Steps early intervention services are for families with children under the age of 3 who are experiencing a developmental delay.

A child must exhibit a delay of 25% in one area of development or a 20% delay in two or more areas of development. These areas are:

- Cognitive development
- Communication development
- Physical development (gross motor, fine motor)
- Social/emotional development
- Adaptive/self-help skills

Or have a diagnosed physical or medical condition that makes it likely that they will develop a delay, such as:

- Chromosomal abnormalities or genetic disorders
- Neurological disorders
- Congenital disorders
- Sensory impairments, including vision and hearing
- Severe toxic exposure (pre- and post-natal exposure)
- Neurological abnormality in the newborn period
- Low birth weight (1500 grams/3.1 pounds)

### **Are there fees associated with being enrolled in the program?**

There is never a fee for eligibility evaluation or service coordination. First Steps bills private and public insurance for ongoing services. Depending on family income and insurance coverage, families may be responsible for cost participation fees associated with ongoing services.

### **What services are available through the program?**

Early intervention services are specifically designed to support the developmental needs of the child and family. Services are provided within the natural routines and environments of the child and family and involve the primary caregiver. Services that may be offered through the program are:

- Assistive technology
- Audiology
- Developmental therapy
- Nutrition
- Occupational therapy
- Physical therapy



- Psychological services
- Social work services
- Transportation\*
- Service coordination
- Speech therapy
- Vision

*\*Transportation is offered only when needed to access early intervention services*

If you encounter any terms or program names you do not understand, refer to the FSSA glossary of terms on page 126 or at [www.in.gov/fssa/4999.htm](http://www.in.gov/fssa/4999.htm).

### **How does someone refer a child for First Steps?**

Anyone can make a referral to First Steps. To make a referral, select “Make a referral” in the Family Information box on the First Steps home page at [www.firststeps.in.gov](http://www.firststeps.in.gov) to see an interactive map and a list of First Steps System Point of Entry offices. For more information, you may also call **800-545-7763** or email us at [firststepsweb@fssa.in.gov](mailto:firststepsweb@fssa.in.gov).

## **■ Head Start and Early Head Start**

**Head Start** is a federal program that promotes the school readiness of children age 5 and under from low-income families by enhancing their cognitive, social and emotional development. Head Start programs provide a learning environment that supports children’s growth in many areas such as language, literacy and social and emotional development. Head Start emphasizes the role of parents as their child’s first and most important teacher. These programs help build relationships with families that support family well-being and many other important areas.

**Early Head Start** programs serve infants, toddlers, birth to age 3, and pregnant women and their families who have incomes below the federal poverty level. Early Head Start programs were established in recognition of the mounting evidence that the earliest years matter a great deal to a child’s growth and development. For more information on Head Start and Early Head Start grantees in your community, please visit [www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder](http://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder) and select “Head Start / Early Head Start” in the “Programs / Services” box.

### **Who is served by Head Start and Early Head Start?**

- Children with disabilities; regardless of income, 10% of a program’s seats are reserved for children with disabilities
- Children from families whose income is below the Federal Poverty Level
- Children from homeless families
- Children from families who receive public assistance such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or Supplemental Security Income
- Children in foster care, regardless of income
- Early Head Start services are also available for pregnant women with incomes below the Federal Poverty Level



# First Steps clusters

