



early steps

Children's Medical Services

The Early Steps Approach: An Overview for Families

The relationships children have with their parents and other caregivers are important to early childhood development. These relationships are the foundation of the Early Steps approach to promoting child development.

Early Steps uses a parent education approach that recognizes:

- Daily interactions between children and their parents or caregivers have the greatest impact on child development.
- Children learn best during the activities and routines that they experience every day where they live and play.

How does the parent education approach work?

Early Steps provides a professional to coach you on how to use routine daily activities like meal times, bath time, playtime, bedtime and outings as opportunities for your child to practice important developmental skills. Coaching sessions take place in the home, as well as childcare and community settings where children live, play and learn.

What are the benefits of the parent education approach?

- Your child will have many more opportunities to practice important developmental skills. For example, if your coach works with you and your child on feeding issues one time a week, he or she will also give you ideas you can use during all your child's meal times on a daily basis.
- Your child will be better able to apply the skills he or she learns in a variety of ways.

What is my role as a parent or caregiver?

Daily interactions between children and their parents or caregivers have the greatest impact on child development. As a parent or caregiver, you are expected to:

- Participate during your family's coaching sessions and ask questions.
- Use the strategies your coach suggests during your child's daily routines between sessions.
- Share strategies with your child's other caregivers.

How long will my child receive Early Steps services?

Children under the age of 3 leave the Early Steps program once they have met their developmental goals and no longer need early intervention services. Children who continue to need developmental services after age 3 will transition to services provided through the school district or other community organizations.



For more information, visit www.cms-kids.com or call Florida's Central Directory at 1-800-654-4440 to be connected to your local Early Steps office.

