

- PD Opportunities
- State Lead Agency Updates

*Children will get the services they need...  
Families will get the supports they need...  
First Steps will be within budget...*

### **Professional Development Opportunity:**

#### ***The Traffic Jam in my Brain: A New and Innovative Sensory Processing Approach***

Presented by **Genevieve Jereb**, OTR,

Singer/Songwriter of the much-loved children's albums *Say G'day!*, *Cool Bananas* and *Jumpin' Jellybeans*

**When:** October 8, 2010 from 9:00-5:00

**Where:** Christ Lutheran Church, 9212 Taylorsville Road, Louisville, KY

For more information about this training opportunity and information on registration please visit [www.sensorytools.net](http://www.sensorytools.net) or contact Janette Wolak of *Come To Your Senses* at 502-526-3840 or [cometoyoursenses2@yahoo.com](mailto:cometoyoursenses2@yahoo.com)

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### **State Lead Agency Updates:**

#### **Budget Reductions**

In the last eighteen months, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) has undergone several budget reduction rounds that have not affected First Steps. The unwavering support and protection of First Steps by CHFS has resulted in few visible changes to First Steps. However, First Steps must now implement budget reductions that impact the First Steps infrastructure. All technical assistance (TA) contracts will be terminated as of October 15, 2010. This includes the TA teams housed at the University of Kentucky, University of Louisville, Western Kentucky University and Murray State University. The termination of the contract means that CHFS will not be financially supporting the technical assistance program staff and parent consultants positions associated with these contracts.

This decision was not made lightly. CHFS's highest priority in achieving the identified savings was to avoid any disruption to services for children and families. Points of Entry (POE) contracts and service provider rates are currently not affected; other First Steps infrastructure contracts had been either level funded or reduced when the new contracts were let in June. We are very saddened by this development and will be challenged to provide TA over the next several months. The TAs represent over 100 years of combined experience in early intervention. TA is important to the continuous improvement of this complex early intervention system. The TA services provided by our team of consultants have been critical to the improvements in the system over the last few years. Please join us in thanking these dedicated people for their service.

### Will there be future Budget Reductions?

Kentucky is not the only state with budget issues—several other states have had to implement strategies to maintain their early intervention systems such as making eligibility more restrictive, cutting funds that support training and TA, and reducing and/or delaying provider payments. First Steps operates in large part on state funds. State Leadership continues to be very supportive of First Steps, but the state budget is what it is and further cuts are possible. If there are additional budget reductions required of First Steps this fiscal year, everything will potentially be on the table.

All of us have to be cognizant of this fact so that children and families get the services that they need. We must be true to the intent of Part C, fully implement the primary service delivery model, and remember that First Steps is the payor of last resort. We must all do our part to keep going in these difficult financial times.

### Family Surveys

Your State Lead Agency staff and three of our State Technical Assistants have been hard at work this week folding surveys and letters, stuffing envelopes, placing stickers on envelopes, and sealing envelopes. Approximately 10,000 Family Surveys left Frankfort from Monday through Thursday headed to families all across the state. Please recognize that while this work was being done your phone calls or emails may have gone unanswered. Bear with us as we now strive to catch up on all work that was left waiting. Your calls and emails are important to us and we will respond as quickly as possible.

### Family Share News

#### **FAMILY SHARE GOES LIVE!**



Family Share billing is now being generated through

What does this mean for families? More accurate and timely billing! TOTS will now be able to “tell” when early intervention has been provided for a child and thus an invoice will be generated accordingly! In addition, billing will now be for the last calendar month. For example: By October 5, invoicing for September participation will be generated! The first wave of billing will hit homes next week – and it will be for July and August participation.

### Changes to Language Access Services

A second change to the operational structure of First Steps is a new fiscal agent for the provision of language access services, specifically interpreting services. Seven Counties has faithfully administered this service since the beginning of the program, but due to the demands of rapid growth in these services in the last few years, Seven Counties has asked we find a different administrative agent. The Commission for Children with Special Health Care Needs (CCSHCN) will become the fiscal agent for interpreting services effective October 1, 2010. We believe that the partnership between CCSHCN will afford efficiencies that will help with the

fiscal pressures we are experiencing in First Steps. We appreciate the years of service that Seven Counties Services, Inc. has provided to First Steps and look forward to this new partnership with the Commission. It is our hope that this will further enhance the availability of language access for families in First Steps, and reassure providers of our commitment to cover language access services.

Families who require interpretation services to achieve meaningful language access will be assigned a Cabinet qualified interpreter who will provide the services needed for all contacts. We believe this continuity will enhance First Steps services for each family as all early intervention providers will be meeting with the family and the same interpreter. Both the State Lead Agency and the Commission are busy making the necessary changes to data management systems and developing the procedures for POE staffs and early intervention providers to meet the October 1 deadline.

### Training

#### Attention PLE and DCES staff:

First Steps Child Evaluator Videoconference (TRAIN #1024186) is scheduled for October 12, 2010 from 1:30-3:30 pm. Registration deadline is October 5, 2010. If you have any agenda items for the videoconference please e-mail Paula Goff at [paula.goff@ky.gov](mailto:paula.goff@ky.gov).