



# First Steps Parental Rights

First Steps, Missouri's early intervention system for children birth through 36 months, provides a document entitled "Missouri First Steps Parental Rights Statement," which explains the rights of children and parents who participate in early intervention. To download a copy of the complete Missouri First Steps Parental Rights Statement, please visit: <https://dese.mo.gov/media/pdf/first-steps-parental-rights-statement>

If you have specific questions about First Steps or the special education process, please contact MPACT at 800-743-7634 or visit our website at [www.missouriparentsact.org](http://www.missouriparentsact.org)

The main idea of each parental right is described below.

## **An Evaluation**

Parents of children referred for First Steps services have a right to a timely, multidisciplinary evaluation.

## **An Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP)**

If eligible, an Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) is written for each family and includes the family's concerns, priorities and early intervention services.

## **Provide Consent**

Parents must provide written consent before First Steps can: conduct an evaluation and assessment of a child, initiate the provision of early intervention services, change any early intervention service or share personally identifiable information with someone outside of the First Steps system.

## **Privacy**

Parents can expect that the confidentiality of personally-identifiable information will be protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) 34 CFR Part 99, which can be reviewed at: <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html>

## **Destruction of Records**

Parents are notified when destruction of records will occur and parents have the opportunity to obtain the records when they are no longer needed to provide early intervention services.

## **Prior Notice**

Parents must receive written notice at the time First Steps proposes or refuses an initial evaluation, at the time First Steps proposes or refuses an ongoing assessment or a service, and at the time First Steps notifies the family of the child's ineligibility. This notice must inform the parent of the action(s) being proposed or refused and the reason(s) for the action(s).

## **Review of Records**

Parents must be allowed to examine, inspect, and review records relating to their child and family. Parents can request the correction of these records.

## **Request a Due Process Hearing**

Parents have the right to resolve, through a procedure called due process, concerns about a child's identification (eligibility), evaluation, placement, or the provision of early intervention services.

## **File a Child Complaint**

If any person or organization believes a responsible public agency has violated any state or federal regulation implementing Part C of the IDEA, a signed, written child complaint may be filed with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

## **Educational Surrogate Services**

The First Steps System Point of Entry (SPOE) must determine if a child is a ward of the state or does not have a parent that can be identified or found, so that a person will be assigned to act as an Educational Surrogate. An Educational Surrogate may represent the child in all matters related to the evaluation and assessment of the child, the development and implementation of the IFSP, and periodic reviews of the provision of early intervention services.