

# Taking it **ONE STEP AT A TIME**

  
**early steps**  
**Children's Medical Services**

at   
**MIAMI CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL**  
Palmetto Bay Center

October-November-December 2009

This newsletter is brought to you by the Early Steps Southernmost Coast Family Resource Specialists. Family Resource Specialists (FRS) provide assistance, information, and support to families of children with special needs. For more details, please contact one of our representatives closest to your neighborhood:

• In Miami-Dade County:

**Joan Holcomb**

Phone: 786-268-2639

Fax: 305-252-2778

Email: Joan.Holcomb@mch.com

• In Monroe County:

**Dorothy Clever**

Phone: 305-294-1089

Fax: 305-296-1530

Email: Dorothy.Clever@mch.com

It is with great pleasure that we announce the expansion of Miami Children's Hospital Early Steps Southernmost Coast, serving the southern half of Miami-Dade, and now also the Florida Keys. Early Steps provides early intervention services to eligible children from birth to three years old with special needs, and their families. We will work with providers throughout the Florida Keys to provide quality direct services to children eligible for Early Steps in Monroe County.

For any questions, please call us at our toll-free number: **1-888-MCH-STEPS**.

## Florida Keys Down Syndrome Educational Trust

Children with Down Syndrome now have a much greater potential than many have ever imagined possible due to funding available for children with Down Syndrome to take part in any educational (private or public), therapeutic, or extra-curricular activity offered in the Florida Keys.

To learn more or apply for funding, please visit the Florida Keys Down Syndrome Educational Trust website at [www.fkdset.org](http://www.fkdset.org). If you have questions, please call us at 305- 942-3967 or email us at: [contactus@fkdset.org](mailto:contactus@fkdset.org).

The Florida Keys Down Syndrome Educational Trust is a 501 (c) (3) organization.



## Early Steps Family Involvement Workgroup



Our Family Involvement Workgroup is looking for parents, caregivers,

and family members of young children with special needs to promote family participation by empowering parents and caregivers to have a voice through the use of education, resources, and opportunities in our community.

For more information, please call your Early Steps representative:

Joan Holcomb: 786-268-2611

Julieta Romano: 305-576-5001

Cindy Borroto: 305-349-1330

## Holiday Fire Safety Tips

- Keep matches, lighters, and candles out of reach from children.
- Avoid smoking near flammable materials.
- Practice an emergency plan with your family to use if a fire breaks out in your home.
- Avoid wearing loose flowing clothes - particularly long, open sleeves - near open flames, - such as a fireplace, stove, or candlelit table.
- Be aware and take caution to never leave things such as candles, fireplaces, stoves, and holiday décor requiring an electrical connection unattended.

## The History of Thanksgiving and its Celebrations

### The United States



In 1621, after a hard and devastating first year in the New World, the Pilgrims' fall harvest was very successful and plentiful. There was corn, fruits, vegetables, along with fish which was packed in salt, and meat that was smoke-cured over fires. They found they had enough food to put away for the winter.

The Pilgrims had beaten the odds. They built homes in

the wilderness, they raised enough crops to keep them alive during the long coming winter, and they were at peace with their Indian neighbors. Their Governor, William Bradford, proclaimed a day of thanksgiving that was to be shared by all the colonists and the neighboring Native American Indians.

The custom of an annually celebrated thanksgiving, held after the harvest, continued through the years. During the American Revolution (late 1770s), a day of national thanksgiving was suggested by the Continental Congress.

In 1817, New York State adopted Thanksgiving Day as an annual custom. By the middle of the 19th century, many other states also celebrated Thanksgiving Day. In 1863, President Abraham Lincoln appointed a national day of thanksgiving. Since then, each president has issued a Thanksgiving Day proclamation, usually designating the fourth Thursday of each November as the holiday. Information courtesy of Holidays on the net: [www.holidays.net](http://www.holidays.net)

## From the Early Steps State Office

Dear Friends,

Early Steps is conducting a survey of families whose children recently received our services to ask how well the developmental needs of your child were met. Your opinions count and can help to further improve services and support for young children with developmental needs and their families throughout the state of Florida.

An Early Steps representative may contact you to request your participation with this survey between October 19, 2009 and November 19, 2009. Your assistance is important and greatly appreciated. The results of this survey will help make improvements in Early Steps and it will also be used to report Florida's progress in meeting the needs of young children and their families. The information you provide will be kept confidential, you will not be asked to sign your name, nor will it impact the services your family receives from Early Steps. A summary of the surveys will be posted on our website at: <http://www.cms-kids.com/earlysteps/index.html> by February 1, 2010.

If you have any questions, please speak with your Service Coordinator or Family Resource Specialist. Thank you for your continued partnership with Florida's Early Steps system.

Sincerest Regards,

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## Daily Child Language Development Activities

Being able to communicate needs and wants ensures personal safety, social skills, and learning overall. You can never start too early!

Reading is an invaluable part of our everyday lives. Reading to your child at an early age and as often as possible by simply going through picture books is helpful. To encourage older children, start with simple books and progress to more advanced reading levels when your child is ready. Activities such as reading every day promotes speech and cognitive development.



Another strategy to help children develop their speech is to imitate them. When your infant/toddler makes sounds, repeat them. This reinforces what they are doing, and often encourages them to continue "talking." Activities can be as simple as going through the fruit and vegetable aisle while at the grocery store and saying the names of produce. Involving your toddler to choose a fruit and/or vegetable to have as a snack is one of many ways to practice language development.

Information courtesy of content provided by Kelly Kaiser Borning, OTR/L to [www.yeahbaby.com](http://www.yeahbaby.com)