



Florida Interagency Coordinating Council
for **Infants and Toddlers—FICCIT**

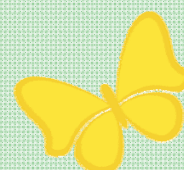
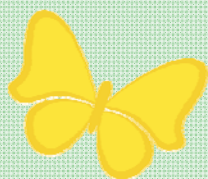
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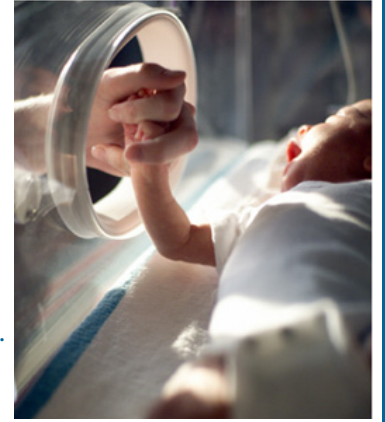
State of Florida

Annual Report

Early Intervention Services

(Fiscal Year 2009-2010)





Dear Governor Scott and fellow Floridians:

The Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT) is pleased to submit this annual report for the Birth to Three System (Florida's Early Steps). The Council is charged by Federal law to advise and assist the state lead agency in making decisions that affect Florida's system of early intervention. This report covers the period from July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

Early Steps is a collaborative partnership between providers, families, local Early Steps, state agencies and the Council to provide services for infants and toddlers with established conditions or developmental delay that supports children's well-being and development where they live, learn, and play.

In these difficult economic times when funds are limited, we hope that this report will serve as a reminder of the cost benefits of early intervention. More importantly, we hope it illustrates early intervention's positive impacts on children and families. On behalf of Florida's infants and toddlers and their families, we thank you for your continued support of Early Steps.

Sincerely,
Roni Bader-Tables,
FICCIT Acting Chair, 2009-2010

Mission Statement

The mission of the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers is to enhance opportunities for Florida's infants and toddlers with special needs and their families. To accomplish this mission, the council will:

- Advise and assist the state lead agency and other entities in the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and procedures;
- Educate decision-makers, service providers, families, and all Floridians;
- Facilitate communication across local, state, and federal levels;
- Foster partnerships; and
- Explore new trends and research validated practices.

One Family's Story

At the age of 15 months, Jacob was a happy, fun loving child; however, we noticed that his use of words was at a standstill. When Jacob qualified for services with Early Steps we learned that the Early Steps mandate is to provide early intervention services in the Natural Environment. The Natural Environment concept empowered my husband and I to take an active lead in Jacob's services. Our Early Interventionist continually gave us tools to use in our everyday activities that would promote Jacob's speech and articulation. She travelled to our home to provide services to Jacob. This provided a very safe and comfortable environment for him to learn and for me to observe. Together we worked as a team to accomplish Jacob's speech goals. Today he has a diverse vocabulary and a sense of accomplishment because he can be understood by his peer group.

-Michelle Vizzaccaro

The Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers

Acting Chair: Roni Bader-Tables

Members 2009 & 2010

Lorraine Allen
Dr. Brittany Birken
Laurie Blades
Judith Corso
Cynthia Fuller
Dr. Patricia Grosz
Karen Hartz
Bambi Lockman

Lois Maroney
Lucy Morillo
Sharon Paul
Frank Platt
Dr. Lori Massey-Romano
Deborah Russo
Phyllis Sloyer





early steps

early growth... early help... early steps

Florida's **Early Steps** offers early intervention services to families with infants and toddlers (birth to 36 months) who have developmental delays or an established condition likely to result in a developmental delay. Services are based on the concerns, priorities and resources identified by the child's family as part of their Individualized Family Support Plan team. Early Steps coordinates available resources and is the payer of last resort.

Many types of specialized services are available through Early Steps for eligible children and their families, such as:

- identification
- multidisciplinary evaluations
- service coordination
- individualized family support planning
- intervention services, therapy, and supports
- hearing and vision services

Early Steps services are provided by contracted local offices across the state that coordinate with community agencies and providers for the delivery of needed supports and services. The services are delivered within the everyday routines, activities, and places of the child and family. The Early Steps system is administered by The Florida Department of Health, Children's Medical Services Network in accordance with the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part C.

2009-2010 Early Steps Updates

Early Steps awarded \$24,291,623 of American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) funds for utilization in the 2009-10 and 2010-11 fiscal years. The intent of this funding to enhance each state's system and implement innovative strategies to improve outcomes for infant and toddlers. Because the growth of funding for Early Steps has not kept pace with the growth in infants and toddlers served, Florida had to choose to use approximately \$18 million of the ARRA funding to sustain the program. The remaining \$6.2 million is being used on program enhancements and training.

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council awarded Early Steps Sustainability Study contract to the Ounce of Prevention Fund of Florida. The intent of the study, due in December 2010, is to produce a strategic plan to ensure Early Steps survives the end of the ARRA funding and continues to serve children and families in need of critical services. The goal of the plan is to identify opportunities for expanding funding sources and increasing system-wide efficiencies in service delivery so the program can continue to meet the needs of this vulnerable population in the years ahead.

Early Steps Eligibility Criteria Change: The new developmental delay criteria has been in the "works" for several years to more closely align with the Florida IDEA Part B eligibility criteria and to help with sustainability of the program. Since inception of IDEA Part C in 1994, through June 30, 2010, Early Steps has experienced an average growth in enrolled children of 5.19%, with only an average growth of funding since inception of 3.54%. The Early Steps eligibility criteria effective July 1, 2010 can be read in detail at: http://www.cms-kids.com/home/resources/es_policy_0710/PolicyOverviewForJuly2010.pdf

A Family Success Story

We started our journey with Early Steps when my daughter, Sophia, was two. Before starting, I was at a loss as to how to be a parent to a non verbal child that had difficulty doing every day things like going to a grocery store without melting down. I was very isolated and remember crying when I realized my daughter would not be able to attend preschool.

That all changed when we met our team of early interventionists. Within a very short period of time, I was empowered as a parent. Having interventionists come into our home and teach me how to address Sophia's sensory and communication issues gave me the parenting tools I so desperately needed. When Sophia turned three it was hard to say goodbye to all the incredible professionals that had become an extension of our family. I now have a fulfilling relationship with my daughter that I never thought would be possible and I attribute the majority of it to everyone that I was so privileged to meet through Early Steps.

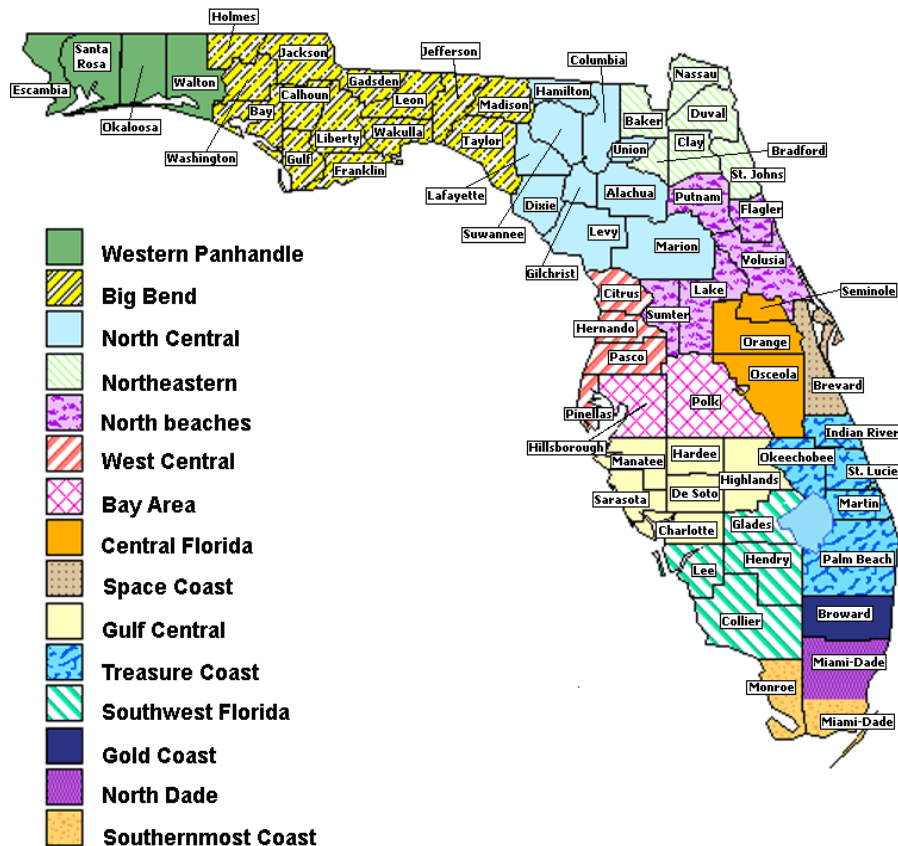
-Julie Clymer & Eben Plettner



Number of Children Receiving Early Steps Services by County

<u>Western Panhandle: 1494</u>	Taylor: 45	Clay: 386	Polk: 1380	Okeechobee: 109
Escambia: 739	Wakulla: 67	Duval: 1902	<u>Central Florida: 3520</u>	Palm Beach: 3453
Okaloosa: 406	Washington: 59	Nassau: 114	Orange: 2389	St. Lucie: 518
Santa Rosa: 270	<u>North Central: 1395</u>	St. Johns: 315	Osceola: 463	<u>Southwest Florida: 1741</u>
Walton: 79	Alachua: 430	<u>North Beaches: 1554</u>	Seminole: 668	Collier: 551
<u>Big Bend: 1753</u>	Columbia: 166	Flagler: 176	<u>Space Coast: 1529</u>	Glades: 27
Bay: 439	Dixie: 18	Lake: 459	Brevard: 1529	Hendry: 123
Calhoun: 29	Gilchrist: 22	Putnam: 157	<u>Gulf Central: 2764</u>	Lee: 1040
Franklin: 22	Hamilton: 24	Sumter: 41	Charlotte: 310	<u>Gold Coast: 5308</u>
Gadsden: 149	Lafayette: 10	Volusia: 721	Desoto: 161	Broward: 5308
Gulf: 37	Levy: 67	<u>West Central: 3425</u>	Hardee: 82	<u>North Dade & Southernmost Coast: 6318</u>
Holmes: 34	Marion: 556	Citrus: 113	Highlands: 320	Dade: 6204
Jackson: 80	Suwannee: 84	Hernando: 303	Manatee: 928	Monroe: 114
Jefferson: 12	Union: 18	Pasco: 1142	Sarasota: 963	
Leon: 731	<u>Northeastern: 2769</u>	Pinellas: 1867	<u>Treasure Coast: 4533</u>	<u>No County ID: 12</u>
Liberty: 18	Baker: 30	<u>Bay Area: 5207</u>	Indian River: 219	<u>Other U.S. County: 18</u>
Madison: 31	Bradford: 22	Hillsborough: 3827	Martin: 234	

Florida's Early Steps Service Areas



43,340 children received Early Steps services in Florida during the past year.

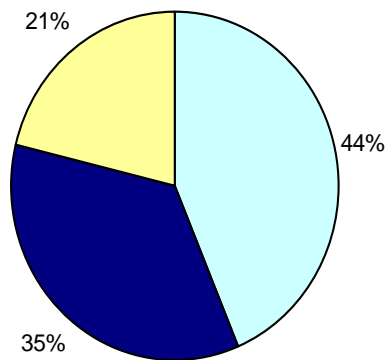


The Economic Benefit of Early Steps

*The World Health Organization's Commission on the Social Determinants of Health published a study that cites early identification and treatment of children who are at risk of developmental delay produces economic **benefits up to \$17 for each \$1 spent on the programs.** The earlier the intervention, the lower the overall cost.*

Because early intervention programs help children to improve their thinking skills and develop socially, children lead more successful lives and are less dependent on future government assistance. High-quality early childhood programs can keep children out of expensive special education programs, reduce the number of students who must repeat a grade in school, and increase high school graduation rates.

Number of Children Receiving Services by Age of Referral (in months)



□ 0-12 months ■ 13-24 months ◻ 25-36 months

A Family-Centered Approach

Early Steps recognizes parents are a child's first teacher, and the involvement of family is essential to supporting a child's development. Early intervention increases opportunities for infants and toddlers with disabilities to integrate into their communities and enhances the ability of families to meet their child's developmental needs.

Early Steps partners with parents, focusing on the family as a unit. Families and caregivers are involved in all aspects of decision making, provided sufficient information to make informed decisions, and supported in developing the skills necessary to meet their child's needs.

A Family Resource Specialist (FRS), knowledgeable in all of the services available to the family both within and outside of Early Steps, is assigned to each family. From arranging specialists for the child to identifying respite opportunities for parents and assisting with the transition out of Early Steps, the Family Resource Specialist is key to the Early Steps approach, empowering families with training and support to increase the learning opportunities for their children.

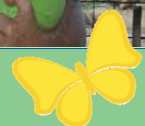
A Family Success Story

Jillian was a perfectly normal child until 15 months. We noticed that she had a fogged look on her face and was not talking at all. I took my daughter to the pediatrician and she recommended the Early Steps program.

We began Early Steps with an early interventionist who gave us advice and guidance in trying to understand what was happening with Jillian. She then recommended speech services, which helped us understand how to teach sign language, then move to sounds and words. Now my Jillian is speaking five word sentences.

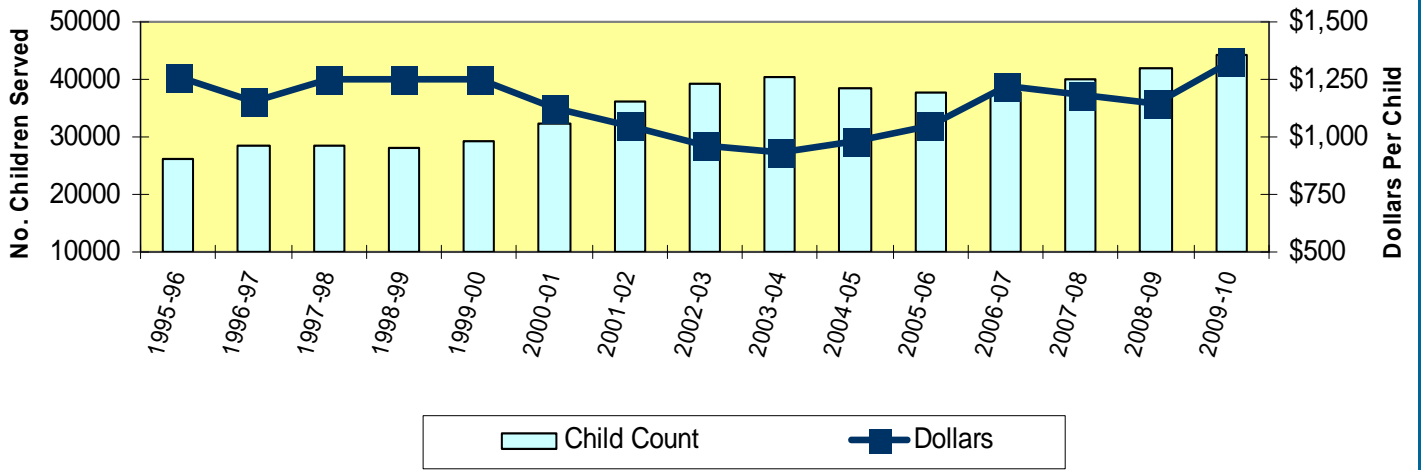
Jillian is nearing three years old - our early interventionists are confident that Jillian will not require additional services and that she will go on to lead a healthy, happy and most of all normal life. Our family is so grateful for Early Steps.

- Jennifer Lombardo



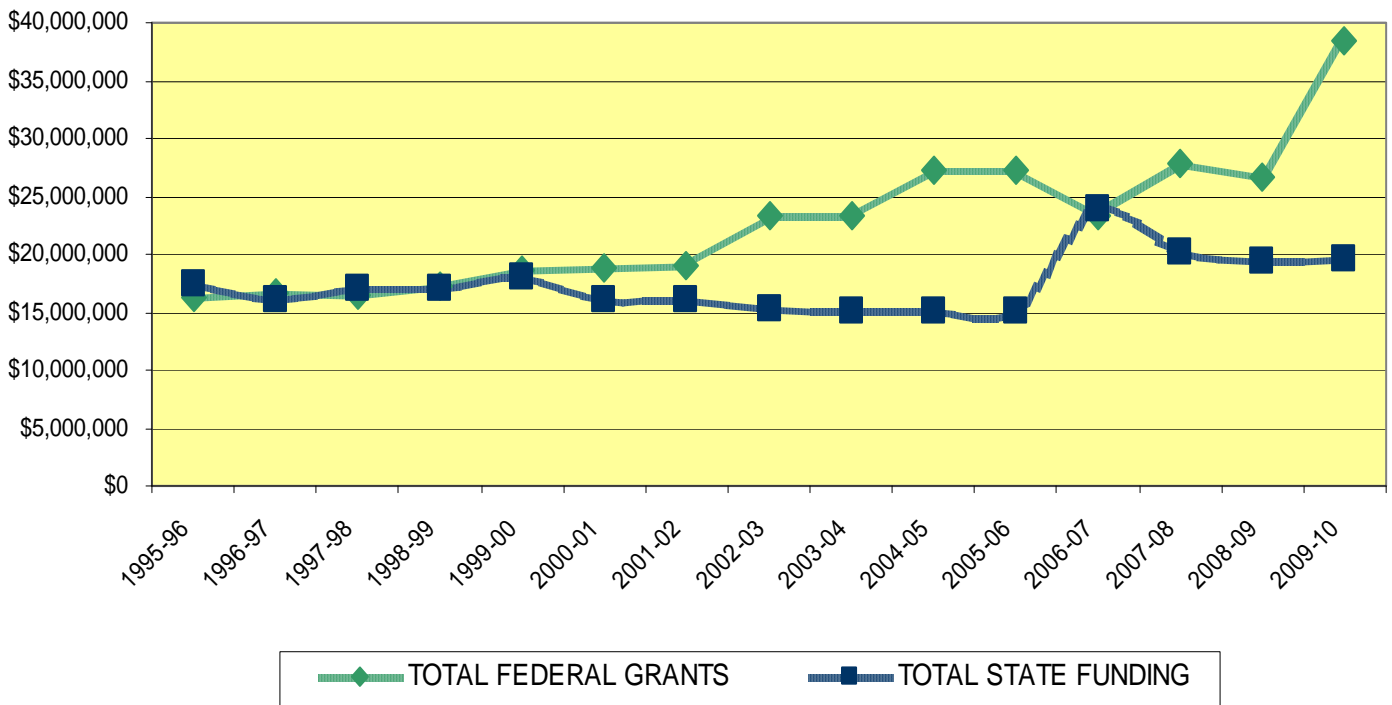


History of Per Child Early Steps Funding



2009-10 Federal Grants include one time ARRA funding.

Early Steps State Appropriations and Federal Funding



2009-10 Federal Grants include one time ARRA funding.





Another Family Success Story



Our son Tristin was born at 30 weeks. We had some complications during the pregnancy which resulted in dislocated hips and hypo plastic lungs. We are fortunate that he has healed from the hypo plastic lungs. All in all, he is our little miracle.

He does have some challenges still to overcome, but with the help of Early Steps he has made great strides. Through the help of his Early Interventionists, Tristin is learning how to walk and communicate and is developing other skills that preemies can be delayed in. Tristin needs hip surgery next month and is blessed with his physical therapist. She is helping him be as strong as possible beforehand so that he heals more easily. Tristin looks forward to his play time with his Early Interventionist. She works with him on forming his social skills and follows his progress.

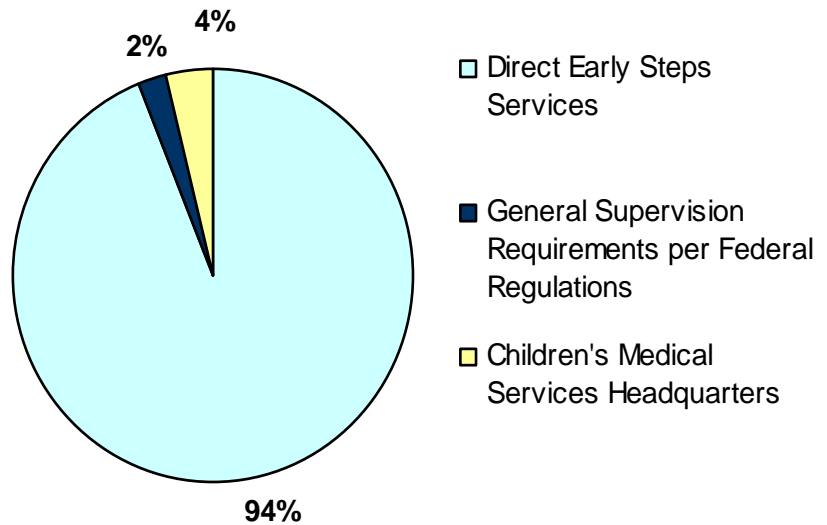
We couldn't imagine where Tristin would be if it weren't for the help of Early Steps. They have not been educating just Tristin, but me and my husband on what we can do to best help our son. We are grateful for all their continued help as he grows. I was asked to submit a single photo but that wouldn't show how much they have helped. Thank you Early Steps!

-The Korben Family

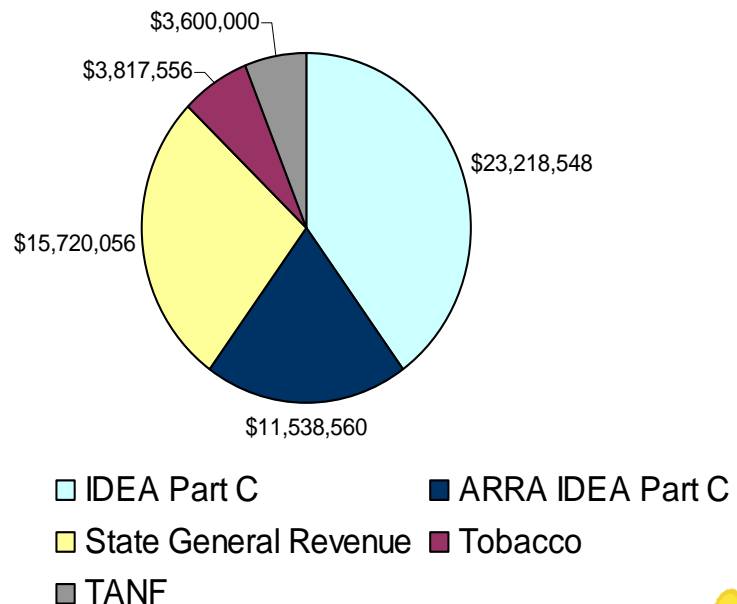


Allocation of Early Steps Dollars 2009-2010

Total \$56,583,318



Early Steps Funding by Source 2010-2011



EARLY STEPS STATE/REGIONAL CONTACTS

Western Panhandle

(Counties served: Escambia, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa & Walton)
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Penny Geiger, Early Steps Program Coordinator
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jmcafee@shhpens.org
pgeiger@shhpens.org

Big Bend

(Counties served: Bay, Calhoun, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Washington, Franklin, Gadsden, Jefferson, Leon, Liberty, Madison, Taylor & Wakulla)
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Children's Home Society/Early Steps
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La'Tasha Dullivan, Program Director
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(850) 747-5411
cheryl.fitzgerald@chsfl.org

North Central

(Counties served: Alachua, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Marion, Suwannee & Union)
Fonda Davis-Eyler, Early Steps Director
Mary Lou Behnke, EIP Medical Director
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Northeastern

(Counties served: Baker, Bradford, Clay, Duval, Nassau & St. Johns)
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West Central

(Counties served: Citrus, Hernando, Pasco & Pinellas)
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Bay Area

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Annalise Campisi, Early Steps Coordinator
John Landi, Early Steps Coordinator
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Central Florida

(Counties served: Orange, Osceola & Seminole)
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mary.grimmer@orhs.org

North Beaches

(Counties served: Flagler, Lake, Putnam, Sumter & Volusia)
Gayla Clark, Early Steps Coordinator
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Space Coast

(County served: Brevard)
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Gulf Central

(Counties served: Charlotte, Desoto, Hardee, Highlands, Manatee & Sarasota)
Judith Corso, Program Manager
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Southwest Florida

(Counties served: Collier, Lee, Hendry & Glades)
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Treasure Coast

(Counties Served: Palm Beach, Indian River, Martin, Okeechobee & St. Lucie)
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Marissa Barrera, ES Program Coordinator
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Gold Coast

(County served: Broward)
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North Dade

(County served: North Dade)
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Southernmost Coast

(Counties served: South Dade & Monroe)
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For further information, please visit the Early Steps website:

www.cms-kids.com/families/early_steps/early_steps.html

**Statewide
Family Referral Line:
1-800-654-4440**



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www.floridaicc.org

