

Annex A

Georgia Division of Family and Children Services - Office of Prevention and Family Support

First Steps Overview

All parents can benefit from support around the time of birth of a child and during the early years of a child's life. In recognition of the needs of all families, a universal, early intervention parent support plan should be included as part of community strategies to improve outcomes for families.

The goal of First Steps Georgia (FSG) is to engage communities in planning, implementing, and sustaining universal parent support services through contract funding of FSG in their communities. FSG is one component of a larger Georgia initiative called Great Start Georgia (GSG). GSG represents the development and implementation of a comprehensive, community-based system for expectant parents and for families with children ages birth to five in Georgia. GSG is first and foremost a *vision* for how communities can provide a welcome to every child; make available natural supports for all expectant parents and for all families with children birth to five; provide basic parenting information and resources; and link families with more intensive services when needed and available. At its heart, GSG creates a community culture of caring, encouragement, and support for all families before and after the birth of a child to age five. For more information, please visit the GSG website: <http://www.greatstartgeorgia.com>.

Mission:

To provide universal, free and voluntary support services for all expectant parents and children birth to five and their families.

Goals:

- 1) Provide current information on topics of interest and relevance to expectant parents and parents of children birth to five.
- 2) Provide information on community resources relevant to expectant parents and parents of children birth to five.
- 3) Strengthen the protective factor of concrete connections to promote maternal and infant health for expectant parents and parents of children birth to five.

Essential Service (Function) Requirements

Identification and Referral:

Establish and maintain service delivery location(s) and processes.

Screening:

Screen each family served utilizing the GSG Central Intake Core Screen.

Parent Education:

Provide parents with relevant and age-appropriate educational materials from reliable sources in each of the following categories:

- a. Maternal Health
- b. Newborn/Child Health
- c. Home and Child Safety
- d. Community and Family Safety
- e. School Readiness
- f. Family Economics/Self-sufficiency

Provide each family served with a localized, annually updated community resource guide that includes resources appropriate to all expectant parents and families with children birth to five years of age.

Linkage:

Based on identified family need, provide linkages to available services and resources.

Essential Practice Requirements

An approved local sponsor will ensure the following:

- a. All direct service providers will complete required FSG training prior to serving families.
- b. The GSG Central Intake Core Screen shall be administered in accordance with FSG training.
- c. Annually at a minimum, families shall be offered an opportunity to provide feedback on the services they receive through FSG using the FSG Family Satisfaction survey.
- d. Parent packet educational materials will be selected from the state list of pre-approved resources or approval must be obtained prior to use.
- e. Staff will participate with Technical Assistance and networking activities as requested.

Essential Structure Requirements

An approved local sponsor will ensure the following:

- a. Develop a state approved FSG community plan.
- b. Oversee the implementation of FSG services according to the requirements and expectations of the approved FSG community plan.
- c. Designate one person to provide leadership in the implementation of the FSG community plan.
- d. Provide appropriate staff for the implementation of the FSG community plan.
- e. Ensure data is entered into the appropriate GSG data management system(s) as prescribed by the GSG Framework in a timely manner.
- f. Create and implement an ongoing funding strategy for FSG services.

Guide to Appropriate Staffing

Every community plan will be different, but will include a goal for the number of families who will be served by First Steps each year. In an effort to assist in planning, the following information is offered as a guide to appropriate staffing and goal setting:

Weekly staff hours dedicated to First Steps	Minimum annual expectation	Midpoint annual expectation	High annual expectation
Greater than 40	750	1000	Based on staffing
Up to 40	500	750	900
20	250	500	650
Less than 20*	125	250	400

*This level of staff hours is reserved for special circumstances. Consultation is required and this level must be pre-approved by the GSG Community Outreach Coordinator prior to submitting application. Approval based on community-specific situations including low capacity.