



SPEECH AND LANGUAGE CENTER, INC.

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FIRST STEP™

Intensive, individualized program designed
to meet the needs of our children
with Developmental Challenges

- **What is FIRST STEP™?**

FIRST STEP™ is an intensive intervention program for children diagnosed with a variety of developmental challenges. The program created is tailored individually based on the child's needs. The program is designed to be intensive. Intervention is scheduled a minimum of fourteen hours per week. Family support and training are included in our program. (Additional intervention time is available for **FIRST STEP™** participants upon request.)

- **Who is Involved in FIRST STEP™?**

Children diagnosed with developmental challenges that have been assessed by the staff of the Kendall Speech and Language Center are considered candidates for this program. Our professional team consists of Speech-Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Board Certified Behavior Analysts and Assistant Behavior Analysts, Speech-Language Pathology Assistants, Certified Handwriting Without Tears specialists, Interactive Metronome and Listening Program instructors, Play Interventionists, trained TECHnicians and Academic Specialists.

The children range from age of diagnosis through until we have met our goals. The children are seen by our trained professional staff and Technicians. The children are monitored by our professional team.

- **How does FIRST STEP™ work?**

Each program meets Monday through Friday. The individualized program plans for each child are based on their specific needs and goals. Each child's program includes a focus on specific skills. Our staff uses a variety of methods depending on the child's needs. Some programs incorporate Applied Behavior Analysis/Verbal Behavior (ABA/VB) intervention, *if needed*, Pivotal Response Training, Incidental teaching and other methods deemed necessary and appropriate for that child. Additionally, included in the daily programs are group social times, play, song and movement, the Listening Program®, independent training, ALERT programming, and implementation of prescribed sensory diets.

Parent training is considered an important piece of our work with the child. Parents are scheduled for observation and training weekly. We schedule Educational Series for parents to attend to learn about many different subject areas that pertain to their children.

▪ **What are the goals of FIRST STEP™?**

The goals for the **FIRST STEP™** program are designed to build foundation skills for successful learning, build a communication system for the child, foster peer interaction, and teach independence. A typical day fosters the following goals.

- Participating in multi-sensory activities
- Encouraging children to move and use their bodies through activities and song
- Teaching play
- Structured approach that promotes cognitive and language growth
- Learning through ABA/VB
- Learning through Incidental teaching
- Learning with Pivotal Response Training
- Developing independent toileting skills
- Developing independence in dressing, tooth brushing and feeding
- Developing a communication avenue to connect with their environment
- Learning to play independently and with others
- Learning academic concepts needed for further schooling
- Developing phonemic awareness
- Develop an alternative or augmentative system for communication, *if needed*.

▪ **Do all children receive individual therapy sessions by the Professional Staff?**

Our Professional Staff is involved in overseeing all the children. They are involved in creating the goals and updating the goals *daily*.

If it is felt that a child's individual needs in regards to speech, oral motor, feeding, behavior, sensory and/or fine motor are beyond the scope of the program that we offer, we will recommend additional services in the area of need. These services are available each day and goals set during these sessions are carried over into the child's program plans. Priority is given to the scheduling of these appointments to accommodate our **FIRST STEP™** families.

▪ **What are the requirements to begin?**

A child referred for the **FIRST STEP™** program:

- is diagnosed with challenges in communication
- is determined by our professional staff to benefit from an intensive program
- has parents who support and have a willingness to work with us