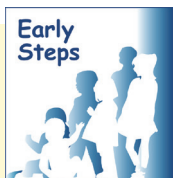


Thank you!

Early Steps has been ongoing for nearly 10 years, and we couldn't have done it without you!

Thank You for Your Dedication! We appreciate your years of support and we thank you for welcoming us into your home each year. During our work together, we have enjoyed visiting your family and getting to know you. It has been wonderful to see your children begin their school years and to talk



with you about the strengths and challenges your family experienced.

We Hope to Continue Home Visits!

Age 10 visits are now underway, and age 10 is the last visit for the current phase of the Early Steps project. We are applying

for funding so we can continue for another five years. We hope you will continue to participate with us. We want to learn more about youths in their early teen years and the role that friends play during this time.

Teachers, Schools, and After-School Care in the Early Steps Project. Let us tell you a little about what we learned at the age 8 home and school visits.

Teachers. 321 teachers participated from 296 schools in Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Virginia (and other areas when families moved). Facts about your children's teachers:

- Most teachers were female (90%) and most were Caucasian (91%).
- 33% were college graduates and 66% had a master's degree or beyond.

- The average teacher was 42 years old.
- The average number of children in each classroom was 21.

Parent-School Connection. At the home visit, we asked you a lot of questions about your thoughts on your child's school and after-school care settings. This is what we found:

- 57% of parents volunteered at their child's school.
- 86% had confidence in the people at their child's school, and 68% felt the school understood and was sensitive to the cultural background of its families.
- 74% of parents reported that they help their child with homework a lot of the time, and 22% of parents reported providing some help.

After-School Care

- 23% of children have received tutoring
- 23% have taken lessons in activities such as music, art, dance, and karate
- 33% of children have participated in organized sports teams
- 89% reported being satisfied with their child's after-school care setting.

The Importance of Friends. As children become teenagers, they will spend more and more time with friends, sometimes without grownups nearby.

The Up Side: Interacting with friends is a healthy way for youth to learn new activities and develop social skills. Youth can join clubs or sports teams at school, sign up for music lessons, and even volunteer their time for community service. After-school programs are another way to support your child in getting both social interaction with friends and help with homework.

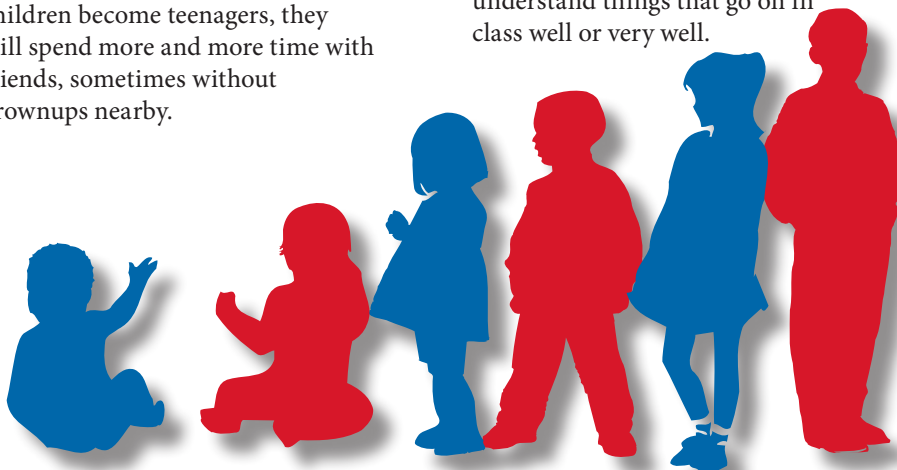
The Down Side: As youth spend more time with friends, avoiding the "wrong crowd" is important. Our research shows us that when kids spend time with other kids who get into trouble, they are more likely to get into trouble. Knowing who your child's friends are can help you steer them toward good friends.

All parents want their children to have good friends who care about them and support their positive growth. Early adolescence is a key time for helping your child make good choices about friends and activities.

How Do the Kids Think They Are Doing?

We asked each child how well s/he got along with family members, peers, and teachers, and how they did at school during the age 8 home visit. Here's what they had to say:

- 88% said they got along well or very well with their parents, and 87% said they got along well or very well with teachers.
- 59% said they got along well or very well with their brothers and sisters, and 87% said they got along well or very well with other kids.
- 90% said they do well or very well in school, and 81% said they understand things that go on in class well or very well.



Recent Findings

Child's Behavior Affects Academic

Achievement. Many studies have found that early childhood behaviors are linked to later achievement in school. Some of the behaviors studied include inattention, impulsivity/hyperactivity, opposition, and aggression. We wondered if specific behaviors have a greater effect on achievement than do others. We used parents' answers to questionnaires and the answers of the children during academic activities at home visits to test this question. The findings suggest that during the

toddler years, aggression is more strongly linked to later academic achievement than are the other early disruptive behaviors. Parents and researchers can use this finding to predict which children may be at more risk for having trouble in school and try to get them help early.

School and After-School Settings

Affect Child's Behavior. We used 340 observations of children at age 7 during their school lunch, recess, and after-school settings to find out more about how children behave. The findings suggest that children's

problem behaviors happen more often in less structured settings and are linked to children being left out by their peers. Parent involvement in school and after-school settings may help reduce problem behaviors. Many of you already help with this by volunteering at your child's school!

Keep us updated! If you contact us to give us an updated address or phone number, we will send you a \$10 payment as a thank you.



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Resources for Parents and Families

Charlottesville Local Resources

Dial 2-1-1: Free and confidential information about health care, counseling, food, housing, and employment.

www.211us.org (online search engine)

Crisis Line of Central Virginia

Provides 24-hour per day services (through mentoring and referral) to individuals who need to talk in times of need. 434-947-4357

<http://crisislineofcentralvirginia.org/>

National Resources

US Department of Education

<http://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/adolescence/index.html>

This website has links to many resources on numerous topics, from development and school issues, to help with finding after-school programs. Many printable materials are available, including a booklet titled, "Helping Your Child Through Early Adolescence" that may be of interest to you; simply download the PDF or click on the individual topics that are included in the booklet.

KidsHealth

<http://kidshealth.org/parent/>

http://kidshealth.org/teen/index.jsp?tracking=T_Home

These websites focus on children's health and development. Kids Health includes information for parents with children of all ages—from early childhood through adolescence. There are also tabs with information specifically for kids and teens.

Great Schools

<http://www.greatschools.org/>

This website allows you to search for schools by city, state, and zip code. It provides information to help you choose the best school for your child, including reviews, test scores, student-teacher ratios, ethnicity of student body, programs and extracurricular programs, and more. A key feature is the ability to compare specific schools.