



# Good News!

## We are continuing the Early Steps Project for five more years.

**Early Steps has been re-funded, so we will be able to continue our project for another five years. This means that you will have the opportunity to continue your participation with us and that we can follow your child through the early school years. This is an exciting time for us and an opportunity to let you know how much we appreciate your support and participation.**

### Thank You for Your Participation!

During the past four years, we have enjoyed visiting you and your children

and have appreciated getting to know you. It has been a wonderful opportunity to see your children grow and learn, and now we will be able to watch them progress into their school years.

This study would not be possible without you! We appreciate your valuable time and support and thank you for welcoming us into your home each year. With

your help, we have learned a lot about families with young children and hope that you have, too. Now that we know our project is continuing for the next five years, your valuable support will help us continue learning about young children and the transition of starting school.

### More about the Families of the Early Steps Project

Let us tell you a little bit about the Early Steps families. Families come from three main locations: Eugene, Oregon; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Charlottesville, Virginia. In all, there are 731 families who participate in our project! Thanks to all of you, we have been able to identify things that you have told us are important in your lives. For example, when your children were 2 years old, nearly 90% reported that your relationship with your child was a source of strength, 78% said that your employment situation was an area of strength, and nearly 70% reported that you draw strength from your church, religion, and/or spirituality. Because of your dedication to our project, we are able to find out what is important to families, and we hope to support these areas in order to promote happy, healthy families. We wish you and your families much happiness and success!



If you'd like to learn more about this and our other studies, you can visit our websites: <http://cfc.uoregon.edu/> and <http://www.pitt.edu/~ppcl/>

### Another Opportunity for Your Family – Children at School and in the Community

We are excited about expanding the Early Steps Project! There are so many factors outside of the home that influence your child's development, including the places where your child spends a lot of his or her time. For this reason, we will be studying children in school, after-school care, and the neighborhood.

We will be contacting you sometime around your child's 7th birthday to invite you to participate in this next phase of the Early Steps Project. If you decide to participate, we will visit you in your home and ask you to complete questionnaires about your child's home, school, neighborhood, and afterschool settings. We will also ask permission from you to observe your child at school and at his/her after-school care site, including your home if your child usually comes home directly after school.

This new extension of the Early Steps study presents another opportunity for us to learn more about families and how children are influenced by their environments, and we won't be able to do it without your help!

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## Recent Findings

### Child Effects on Parents' Depression

Many studies have found that when mothers are depressed, their kids have more problems with their behavior, emotions, school, and friends. A few studies (but not many) have also found that when fathers are sad, their kids have more difficulties. We looked at the Early Steps families to see if the behaviors of very young children might have an effect on the amounts of depression their mothers and fathers have. We used the behaviors that we saw on videotapes from the Early Steps Project when children were only 2 years old.

We found that when 2-year-olds were defiant and didn't follow directions, their mothers and fathers were more likely to show signs of depression. We also found that when parents felt more depressed, their children showed more sadness and anxiety at age 4. This is one of the only studies to look at these types of questions, using mothers and fathers. Our results showed that it's not just parents who affect their children. Children can also influence the way their mothers and fathers feel and act!

### Risk Factors and Parenting

We used the data collected from the Early Steps participants to learn

about the number of family risk factors and how these risk factors affect parenting and child behavior. The family risk factors included living in a dangerous neighborhood, being a single parent, being a teen parent, and other challenges. In families with many of these risk factors, parents had difficulty providing supportive parenting. Also, when parenting was less supportive, children had more behavior problems at later ages. These results tell us that reducing the number of family risk factors can help parents provide more supportive parenting and prevent child behavior problems.



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## Community Resources

### United Way of Allegheny County

1250 Penn Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15222  
Phone: (412) 261-6010  
United Way HelpLine: (412) 255-1155  
<http://www.unitedwaypittsburgh.org/>

A great resource for everything from your child's development to schools and afterschool programs, energy assistance, housing, and food assistance needs. If you have a particular question or problem that you need assistance with, you can use their website or call their helpline to get the information you need.

### PTA Parent Teacher Association

[http://www.pta.org/ap\\_who\\_we\\_are.html](http://www.pta.org/ap_who_we_are.html)

Local Parent Teacher Association groups form a national network to promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship. A major focus of this organization is to increase the cooperation between parent and teacher for the benefit of the child in school.

### Some helpful websites for parents:

#### Official Resources for Parents from the US Government

<http://www.usa.gov/Topics/Parents.shtml>  
Provides a comprehensive list of resources for parents on a wide range

of topics, including childcare, health, education, safety, grandparents raising grandchildren, employment, child support, bullying, development, and more.

#### The Family Education Network

<http://www.familyeducation.com/home/>

This website provides information about education, child development, fun activities, and more.

#### Today's Parent

<http://www.todayparent.com/schoolage/index.jsp>

Provides information on behavior and development, health and safety, crafts and creativity.