

FIRST STEPS COVER LETTER (CD-21C) INSTRUCTIONS

PURPOSE:

The CD-21C is used as a cover letter by Children's Division staff for notifying the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education - First Steps Program of a referral being made to the First Steps Program by the Children's Division regarding children under the age of three who have been found to be a victim of child abuse and/or neglect. This is a requirement pursuant to the federal mandate of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (42 U.S.C. 5101 et seq.), and is a collaborative effort to facilitate early intervention services for children in need.

The CD-21C is sent in conjunction with the Missouri First Steps Early Intervention System Referral form (*reference website* - <http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/first-steps/how-make-referral>)

NUMBER OF COPIES AND DISTRIBUTION:

The CD-21C, and the Missouri First Steps Early Intervention System Referral form are completed by the investigative worker and **mailed within fifteen (15) days** of investigation status determination. The original copy is mailed to the local First Steps Agency, (*reference website* – (<http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/first-steps>) a copy is sent to the custodial parent (and/or a copy sent to the foster/relative/kinship provider if applicable), and a copy is retained in the Investigation record.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

The investigative worker completes the form after a child abuse/neglect investigation is completed, **and** whenever a determination is made that child abuse or neglect has occurred by a “preponderance of evidence” regarding any child **under the age of three**, and after a supervisor has approved and signed in agreement with the determination. The worker then mails the referral within fifteen (15) days of the determination as specified above.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION:

Date: The top of the form allows for a date to be entered. Enter the date the referral form is ready for mailing.

Address: Enter the name, address, City, State and Zip Code of the local First Steps System Point Of Entry (SPOE) Regional contact. This information can be obtained (and if desired, cut and pasted from the web-link into the address field on the CD-21C form), using the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website, (*reference*

website - (<http://dese.mo.gov/special-education/first-steps>).

Dear (*Agency Contact Name*): Enter the actual name of the local First Steps System Point Of Entry (SPOE) contact person as addressed above.

Child's Name: Enter the name of the child who was determined to be a victim of child abuse or neglect **by a preponderance of evidence**, who is under the age of three, who is being referred to the First Steps Program.

Your county office phone number: Enter the area code and phone number where you may be reached.

Worker's Name: Type in your name, Job Title.

CC: Type in the name(s) of the custodial and/or foster/relative/kinship parent who will be receiving a copy of the CD-21C and referral form. (This field will need to be added, as needed, by the worker completing the form).

ADDITIONAL SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:

Consultation with the worker's supervisor should occur to determine if it is in the child's best interest or a safety concern to include any foster/relative/kinship parent's name in the cc: section at the bottom of the form when the form will be mailed to a biological parent of any child in alternative care. If warranted, the foster/relative/kinship parent's name should be excluded.

MEMORANDUM HISTORY: [CD06-15](#)