

First Steps and ECSE Comparison Chart

Components	First Steps	Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE)
Ages Served	Birth to age 3	3 to 5 years olds
Program Goals	Support the family to meet the developmental needs of their child with a delay or disability as identified in the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP).	Support the child with a disability to meet his/her educational goals as identified in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).
Eligibility	Infants and toddlers who have a newborn condition, diagnosed medical condition or a developmental delay.	Preschool-age children who have a disability that meets one of 13 categorical disabilities (see Missouri State Plan for Special Education).
Services	Services are provided to support the family's ability to meet their child's developmental needs.	Services are specially designed instruction to support the child's educational needs.
Location	Services are provided in natural environments, such as a child's home or other places in the community.	Services are provided in the "least restrictive environment" or alongside children who are not disabled. Removal of the child from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.
Plans	An IFSP is developed by the team, including the parents, and includes outcomes based on the family's concerns and priorities. The plan is reviewed every six months.	An IEP is developed by the team, including the parents, and includes the child's educational goals, services and placement, including how progress will be measured. The plan is reviewed at least once per school year.
Cost	Parents may pay a monthly family cost participation fee.	Services listed in the IEP are the responsibility of the school district and are provided at no cost to the parent.

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