

Family Involvement Funds



Kiersta at the 2012 Family Cafe

Interested in attending a conference, workshop, or playgroup?

Early Steps has a unique scholarship program for families to participate in activities that enhance family involvement and education.

Empower yourself!

USF Bay Area Early Steps Program

Division of General Pediatrics

Family Resource Specialist

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Bay Area Early Steps



Family Resource Specialist



Alex DeMolina with her daughter, Kiersta (3 years old)



State of Florida
Department of Health

What is a Family Resource Specialist?

- A parent of a child with varying abilities
- A resource for families served through Bay Area Early Steps
 - An advocate for families by expressing their views, perspectives, and needs
- A creator for a local system of support for families to network with each other, receive information, and participate in training opportunities
- An organizer and facilitator for the Bay Area Early Steps Family Advisory Council in which the parent's voices can be heard



Listening to music at Sertoma Youth Ranch with her 2 "special" ears.

Dear Bay Area Early Steps Families,

I am so honored to be your Family Resource Specialist (FRS). I have traveled down the road that you are on and have felt all the highs and lows that you might be experiencing.

I am a mommy of a beautiful little girl who was born with a bilateral severe-to-profound hearing loss. That means that sound has to be as loud as a lawnmower for her to hear it. Kiersta was born at 35.5 weeks and spent time in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) for 13 days for suck, swallow, breathe. When she was getting ready to be discharged, she was given the Newborn Hearing Screening and failed it 3 times. At 4 weeks, she was given an Auditory Brain Stem Response (ABR) and that was when we were given the confirmation that she was not hearing our voices say "I love you". Brian, Kiersta's daddy, and I instantly went into parent advocate roles. We started researching cochlear implants and knew that we wanted to give her the best options for listening and spoken language. Kiersta received her hearing aids at 4 months, her first cochlear implant at 16 months, and her second cochlear at 3 years. She is completely oral and uses her words to communicate with her family and friends. Kiersta is truly a product of early intervention. I am so grateful that a program like Early Steps was able to provide her with the support and services that she needed.

I would like to extend my encouragement to you as you take this journey with your child. I know it is not always going to be easy and I am here to provide your family with support. I want to offer you options so that you can make the best informed decisions for your child and family. Please feel free to contact me at any time.

With warmest regards,

Alex DeMolina



Mommy and Kiersta, 16 months, at TGH getting ready for cochlear implant surgery