



Family Member Transportation Reimbursement

According to the Missouri State Plan for Special Education regulations implementing Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) First Steps program, Transportation and Related Costs includes the cost of travel (e.g., mileage, or travel by taxi, common carrier, or other means) and related costs (e.g., tolls and parking expenses) that are necessary to enable a child eligible for the program and the child's family to receive early intervention services.

The following information is intended to provide clarification on the issue of when to discuss family member transportation reimbursement. Additional clarification is provided addressing how families are paid for travel reimbursement to a setting that is not a natural environment.

1) When must a discussion of family member transportation reimbursement occur?

The Service Coordinator must discuss family member transportation with the Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) team any time the team decides that a service will be provided in a special purpose center. For example, in the event a service cannot be provided in the natural environment, such as an audiology service or there is no provider available.

When the IFSP team discusses family member transportation, if the family states that they would like reimbursement for transporting their child to/from a special purpose clinic, then the IFSP team must decide whether or not to add family member transportation to the IFSP. The results of the transportation reimbursement conversation must be documented in the Service Coordinator's case notes or in the IFSP (under strategies to support the outcome). If the IFSP team decides to add Family Member Transportation as a First Steps service, a completed Notice of Action/Consent listing transportation must be signed by the parent.

NOTE: Families cannot be given transportation reimbursement to travel to a special purpose clinic when the child is receiving services outside of First Steps. For example, transportation reimbursement should not be provided to the family if the child is going to the hospital for treatment that is not authorized in the IFSP.

Also, families cannot be given transportation reimbursement to travel to a location that is not a special purpose clinic. For example, reimbursement is not paid for the family to travel to services that occur in a center where the child attends child care, since the child care center is a natural environment.

2) What if the IFSP team determines transportation is not necessary?

The Service Coordinator must document, in case notes or in the IFSP, the discussion regarding family member transportation and the IFSP team decision that transportation was not necessary to receive First Steps services in accordance with the IFSP.

3) How do family members get reimbursed for transportation?

Once the IFSP determines transportation reimbursement is necessary for the family to receive First Steps services, and the family has access to an automobile, then First Steps can reimburse the family for mileage to travel to a First Steps service in a special purpose clinic. In order to be paid, a family member will enroll with the Central Finance Office (CFO) as a First Steps provider. *Please note that the family member will not appear on the Provider Matrix.*

Once the IFSP team determines transportation reimbursement is necessary for the family to receive First Steps services in accordance with the IFSP, it is essential that the family completes the enrollment paperwork immediately in order for authorizations to be generated.

The forms required to enroll as a family member transportation provider are available on the First Steps website at: <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/FirstSteps/provenrollforms.html>

In order to enroll, the family member must submit the following information:

- Completed and signed Transportation Provider Payee Agreement
- W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification
- Proof of automobile insurance
- Copy of a valid Missouri driver's license

When enrollment paperwork is received at the CFO, the date of enrollment will be backdated for 30 days to accommodate the time to complete and mail in enrollment paperwork. NOTE: Service Coordinators should keep a blank copy of the family member enrollment paperwork for situations when the IFSP team determines this service is needed.

Once the enrollment paperwork is complete, a form to request reimbursement will be sent to the family. The CFO will only send the family one copy of the form, so the family will need to make copies of the form for future submissions. Once the Service Coordinator receives confirmation of the family's enrollment with the CFO, s/he will enter a transportation authorization in the IFSP. This authorization will list the maximum number of miles the family may travel to transport the child to and from IFSP services in a special purpose center.

4) Who can enroll to receive family member transportation reimbursement?

If the IFSP team determines family member transportation reimbursement is a needed service in the IFSP, the family decides who will enroll with the CFO to receive the mileage reimbursement. It is acceptable for the family to identify a parent, grandparent, other relative or close family friend to enroll. It is also acceptable for a parent to enroll and claim the mileage but the parent can ask someone else to transport the child when necessary, and the parent would pay that person for transportation.

5) What is the rate at which family member transportation is reimbursed?

The rate for mileage paid for family member transportation is the same as the First Steps provider rate for mileage reimbursement. Parents can check with their Service Coordinator regarding the rate of reimbursement.

6) If a family does not have access to an automobile, how does First Steps reimburse them for transportation?

The WebSPOE system only allows transportation authorizations to be entered in miles; therefore, if a family must take a bus, taxi or other mode of transportation to a First Steps service in a special purpose clinic, then the System Point of Entry (SPOE) would pay for the transportation services and submit a letter requesting reimbursement for family transportation to the lead agency. The letter must detail the service that was provided, including the date, type and amount.

It is critical that the Service Coordinator documents, in case notes or in the IFSP (under strategies to support the outcome), the discussion regarding transportation reimbursement and the method of payment by the SPOE.

NOTE: First Steps will only reimburse families for transportation related to First Steps services. For example, if a family already purchases a monthly bus pass as their normal mode of transportation and the route to the First Steps service in a special purpose clinic is included in the bus pass, then First Steps would not purchase the bus pass for the family to take the child to the First Steps services.