



First Steps

*The Newsletter for
Indiana Early Intervention*



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Letter from Christina

Families and children benefit when the systems in which they are engaged coordinate and work together

Dear Colleagues and Families,

Happy spring!

As mentioned in the January 2019 newsletter, I will be addressing common questions that have emerged over the past year during various professional development opportunities in each newsletter.

“How is the state team working with other state agencies to streamline services, reduce overlap and ensure that families are getting to the right program at the right time?”

The state office has been and will continue to coordinate and collaborate with the state’s early childhood system. Indiana was recently awarded a Preschool Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Education. This grant aims to help state agencies develop, design and implement a coordinated strategic plan for their birth-to-5 system. First Steps is just one partner who will work closely with the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning on Indiana’s initiative.

The mission of First Steps is to partner with families and connect them to the services that will assist them in supporting their child’s development. Implementation of the family assessment is one step in this process. This tool guides the Individualized Family Service Plan team in identifying areas where families might benefit from additional supports.

Another avenue to ensure families are connected with the best community resources for their specific needs is the Help Me Grow framework the Indiana State Department of Health and the Department of Child Services are implementing in nine pilot counties. At this time, 2-1-1 and the Mom’s Helpline have two resource specialists that are providing Ages & Stages Questionnaire® screenings, referral linkages and follow-up for a more complete care coordination experience. First Steps personnel can also access Help Me Grow directly in order to better connect and support families within their communities. For more information, call 844-624-6667, option 3.

Families are often engaged in services provided by multiple state agencies. In an effort to streamline these services, First Steps providers are encouraged to collaborate with other home visiting services, such as Healthy Families Indiana, Nurse Family Partnership and Early Head Start to address child and family outcomes as written in the IFSP. Families and children benefit when the systems in which they are engaged coordinate and work together. As always, prior to sharing child and family information, verify that a consent is signed and educate families on the reason collaboration is important to the success of their child’s development. Please see the Health and Human Services and Office of Special Education Programs [joint statement on collaboration and coordination](#) for more information.

First Steps local planning and coordinating councils are valuable resources. The professionals coordinating these councils as well as their members can support you in building relationships across systems. To learn more about the LPCCs and how to contact the coordinator in your region, [click here](#).

Best, Christina



ICC update

The Interagency Coordinating Council members are First Steps stakeholders appointed by the governor. The role of the ICC and its subcommittees is to advise the First Steps office on the state's early intervention system. We believe that adopting a shared vision and shared goals is essential to working together to improve services and outcomes for the children and families we serve.

All ICC meeting dates and minutes are posted on [the DDRS website](#).

2019 ICC meeting dates: **May 8, July 10, Sept. 11, Nov. 13.**

All meetings are from 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time at:

Choices Coordinated Care Solutions
7941 Castleway Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46250

21st Century CURES Act funding update

First Steps educated and trained nearly 1,000 home visitors for free or at reduced cost through CURES grant

There's an effort to address an information gap around the opioid crisis in Indiana and how best to support those children and families affected who are receiving First Steps. First Steps submitted a proposal to the Division on Mental Health and Addiction to utilize funding from their 21st Century CURES Act grant. This grant is provided to DMHA through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to aid Indiana in expanding its efforts to train and support a variety of professionals. First Steps proposed to utilize the funding to provide quality training opportunities to its workforce and early childhood partners on substance use disorder and, more specifically, opioid use.

We encourage you to read [this amazing article](#) published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to gain more information about how home visitors can better support families impacted by opioid use disorder and neonatal abstinence syndrome.

This funding allowed First Steps to provide lower registration fees for the 2018 First Steps conference and supported



the fees for the national keynote speakers.

In September, First Steps provided seven in-person trainings and nine follow-up reflective webinars on working with families affected by substance use disorder, trauma and extreme poverty from an infant mental health perspective, which was created and facilitated by national trainers from Zero to Three. There were 313 home visiting personnel from Healthy Families, Early Head Start and First Steps trained across the state.

The funding also provided training and certification in the Zero to Three Growing Brain training to our professional development partners at IU. As a result, we are proud to offer three Growing Brain trainings in Evansville, Indianapolis and Merrillville this spring.

To register for the Merrillville training on April 11, [click here](#).

Most recently, First Steps has been working closely with the Indiana University School of Medicine and their ECHO team to present four collaborative learning sessions centered on supporting families who have been touched by the opioid crisis or are experiencing opioid use disorder. These ECHO sessions bring together a team of experts to present relevant and research-based information and provide suggestions, support and resources. Each session focuses on a real-life case presented by a home visitor.

As a result of this funding, First Steps has been able to educate and train nearly 1,000 home visitors for free or at a reduced cost. We are grateful to be able to offer this professional development and will be investigating options for future opportunities.



2019 CONFERENCE

JUNE 13-14, 2019 • BLOOMINGTON, IN

Conference Registration Is Open! Join your colleagues. Network. Be inspired!

Conference registration is \$90. Save your spot by registering on [the event app](#).



Professional development pre-conference workshop

Supporting social emotional development: making the most of our time with infants, toddlers and their families



Tweety Yates, Ph.D.

Research continues to show the significant impact of the first three years of a child's life on their overall development and how important the child's family factors into this developmental process. YOU also have the opportunity to impact the growth and development of the children and families you work with. What are you doing in your practice to ensure that parents feel competent and confident in supporting their child's development? This workshop will use Parents Interacting with Infants as a framework for reflecting on our practices. PIWI focuses on

strategies for enhancing the development of infants and toddlers by expanding on and strengthening parent-child interactions and relationships. Dyadic strategies that adults can use to promote child development through parent-child interactions, triadic strategies for promoting parent competence and a structure for conveying developmental information will be shared. We only have a short time to work with infants, toddlers and their families—let's make the most of it.

Presented by Dr. Tweety Yates

Monroe County Convention Center, Bloomington, Ind.

June 13, 2019, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.

\$25 registration fee includes lunch. Attendees will receive three hours of credentialing. [Register here](#).

Call for poster presentations

Addressing research and best practices in early childhood intervention

In this inaugural poster session for the First Steps Conference, we are looking for poster proposals that provide practical information on research and/or best practice in the field of early childhood intervention. If accepted for the session, presenters should prepare a poster for display as well as be able to talk briefly about their information and answer participant questions. Handouts are welcome but not required.

Proposals are due by the end of business on April 30, 2019. Notification of acceptance will occur no later than May 15, 2019.

Presenters should provide:

- Title of poster presentation
- A brief abstract of the information to be presented
- Contact information for all presenters
- Proposals should be sent to jsj5@iu.edu.



DDRS—First Steps Indiana statewide profile report

Reporting Period: 01/01/2018–12/31/2018

I. Population Information

Population (U.S. Census Bureau)	6,376,792
Population Growth Percentage (U.S. Census Bureau)	4.0%

II. Child Enrollment & Referral

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
One-day Count w/ IFSP –0 to 1 year old	1,443	
One-day Count w/ IFSP –All Children	11,332	
Annual Count of Children w/ IFSP	22,263	
Annual Count of Children Served (regardless of IFSP)	26,292	
Average Age at Referral (months)	14	
New IFSP 01/01/2018–12/31/2018	2,817	
Children with Referral to IFSP 45+ Days 01/01/2018–12/31/2018	101	

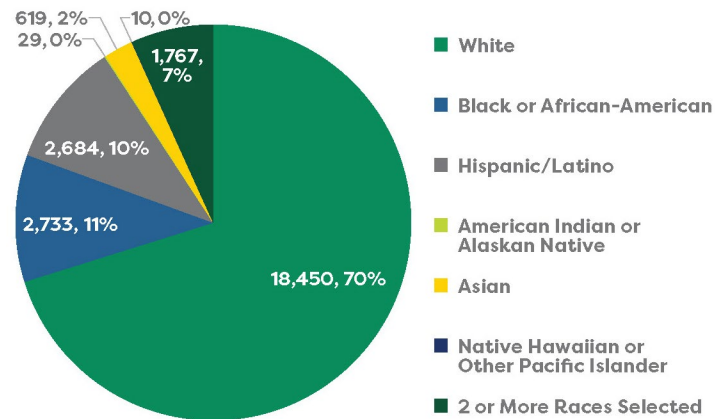
III. Exits

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
Children Moving to Preschool Special Education	4,796	46%
Children Under 3, Services No Longer Needed	225	2%
Eligible Children Who Declined Services	1,255	12%

IV. Paid Services

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
Children w/IFSP Served Primarily in the Natural Environment	22,091	99%
Total Amount Paid on Behalf of Children Served	\$40,360,194.79	
Average Paid on Behalf of Each Child Served	\$1,535.08	

V. Race Information



VI. Children Receiving Each Service Type

Service Type	Number of Children Served	Percent Receiving Service
Assistive Technology	186	1%
Audiology	1,033	4%
Developmental Therapy	14,139	54%
Health Services	0	0%
Interpreter Services	335	1%
Medical	0	0%
Nursing	0	0%
Nutrition	364	1%
Occupational Therapy	13,681	52%
Other Services	29	0%
Physical Therapy	12,861	49%
Psychology	160	1%
Social Work	38	0%
Speech Therapy	17,389	66%
Vision	0	0%

Source: First SideHatch Database

Understanding Part C federal indicators

Federal indicator 1: Timely service delivery

As a Part C program, Indiana First Steps is required to provide an annual report to the Office of Special Education Programs. This report is called the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report, more commonly referred to as the APR. In the APR, we must report on Indiana's performance of the 11 federal indicators.

In each issue of this newsletter, we will explore a different indicator and the roles First Steps personnel play in meeting compliance for the indicator.

Federal indicator 1: Timely service delivery

Federal law denotes "the projected date for the initiation of each early intervention service... must be as soon as possible after the parent consents to the service" (34 CFR 303.344 (f) (1)). Indiana has defined "as soon as possible" to be within 30 days of the parent signature on the initial IFSP, or anticipated start dates as signed by the parent on the annual IFSP or service change page.

The target for this indicator as set by OSEP is 100 percent, meaning all ongoing services added to the child's Individual Family Service Plan, whether this be at initial, annual or in-between using a change page, must start within 30 days of parent signature or listed anticipated start date. This indicator is counted as "all or nothing," meaning all services must start on time for each child during the review period. To confirm that services begin, the Confirmation of Start of IFSP Services form (State Form 55678) must be completed and filed as part of the child's early intervention record.

So, what can you do to ensure services start on time?

Direct service providers

- Contact the family as soon as you can to schedule the first session.
- While you are scheduling the session, ask the family for additional contact information, such as their email address, and confirm the contact information and address you have as part of the child's file.

- Document all attempts to contact the family and the result of the attempt. Did you speak with parent on the phone and schedule your session? Did you speak with the parent but they asked to call back later? Did you call and leave a voicemail? Did you call but were unable to leave a voicemail? Did you call but the number was disconnected?

- Contact the service coordinator and ask for assistance if you are having difficulties scheduling with or connecting with the family.

- Count out 30 days. Remember that for initial IFSPs, the date of the parent signature is day one.
- Follow your agency's procedure to remind the family of your session and confirm the address of where you will meet them.
- Send confirmation of start of service to the service coordinator as soon as possible after your first visit. If service started late, please include documentation of contact with the family and the reason as to why service did not start within 30 days.

The 11 indicators

- 1 **Timely service delivery**
- 2 **Services provided in the natural environment**
- 3 **Child outcomes**
- 4 **Family outcomes**
- 5 **Child find (birth-to-1 population)**
- 6 **Child find (birth-to-3 population)**
- 7 **Initial IFSP complete within 45-day timeline**
- 8 **Early childhood transition**
- 9 **Hearing requests resolved**
- 10 **Mediation agreements**
- 11 **State systemic improvement plan**

Service coordinators

- Share the information with the agency/provider as soon as possible after the IFSP meeting.
- Send the IFSP for the physician's signature as soon as possible following the IFSP meeting. Call the physician if you have not received a signed service page. Follow System Point of Entry procedures to alert the family and service provider of any issues that arise.
- Let the agency/provider know once you receive the signed service page from the physician.
- Contact the family if the service provider asks for assistance.

While our goal is to have all services start on time, we understand that sometimes this is not possible. For any service that starts late, we must determine the reason for the delay. The key to making this determination is documentation from the direct service provider and service coordinator.

If you have questions about how to document your contact with the family or other pieces related to start of service, please contact your agency/SPOE supervisor.



Evaluating infant-toddler mental health

Psychological services often overlooked in early intervention

Infant-toddler mental health is the ability of the child to regulate and express emotions, form secure interpersonal relationships, and explore the environment and learn. Psychological services through First Steps can often be an overlooked or underused treatment modality in the early intervention model.

Psychological services focus on enhancing the child's learning and social-emotional development. Infants and toddlers benefit tremendously from early experiences that allow them to develop, not only their knowledge but also their social, emotional and behavioral health.

Psychological services may consist of any of the following:

- Administering psychological or other assessment tools to determine the need for developmental psychological services
- Interpreting information about a child's behavior and family conditions as it regards to learning, mental health and development
- Creating and supporting behavior intervention plans
- Helping family members and other caregivers understand the unique needs of the child through consultation and training

Assessment team members, service coordinators, ongoing service providers and System Point of Entry and agency directors all are an integral part of making sure that referrals are generated and forwarded expeditiously to a psychologist. All team members, especially ongoing service providers, are an essential part in noticing signs that may indicate a psychological evaluation and possibly subsequent ongoing psychological services may be appropriate.

Environmental factors or behaviors to look out for may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Parenting & Relationships

- Strained parent-child relationship
- Discord between parents over child parenting practices (e.g., lack of household unity around parenting practices)
- Poor social skills (e.g., difficulty with friendships; understanding social cues; uninterested in social interactions)
- Extreme sibling rivalry
- Struggles with social communication

Environmental

- Exposure to trauma (e.g., experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse; exposure to domestic violence; neglect)
- A family history of mental illness or substance abuse
- Separation from the birth parent or guardian or changes in foster-care placement

Behavioral & Emotional Reactivity

- Extreme difficulty with adapting to an activity of daily living (e.g., feeding; diaper changes; potty training; bath time)
- Self-injurious behaviors (e.g., head banging; hair pulling)

- Concerns regarding attachment with parent or caregivers
- Sleeping concerns (e.g., inconsistent sleep patterns; problems going down for bed or naps; frequent nightmares)
- Frequent, intense tantrums
- Physical or verbal aggression (e.g., arguing; fighting, hitting, biting; destructive)
- Anxious, nervous, fearful, clingy or easily frightened
- High activity level, fidgety and impulsive
- Difficulty with imaginative and pretend play
- Distress with transitions (e.g., inability to handle changes in routine or unexpected changes)
- Mood problems (e.g., rarely joyful and happy; displays moods that are not appropriate for the context; irritable, frequently angry or defiant)

If you feel that a child you are working with may benefit from a psychological evaluation, please reach out to the service coordinator and the agency administrator to initiate the referral process.



Kimi Walker is a practicing school psychologist who primarily serves infants, toddlers, children and adults ages 0 through 21 in a variety of developmental, educational and vocational settings. Her areas of interest are psycho-educational testing, early childhood development, infant-toddler mental health, ADHD/executive functioning, behavior modification, parent training, advocacy and developmental disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder. Kimi's training and expertise give her a cutting-edge perspective on problem-solving and early accountability that assists parents, schools, teams and organizations with the implementation of highly responsive functional supports for their children, students or clients.



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**Division of Disability and
Rehabilitative Services**

**Indiana Family and Social Services
Administration**

Bureau of Child Development Services
402 W. Washington Street, W453
Indianapolis, IN 46204

We would like to include ideas from First Steps providers in upcoming newsletters! If you have an idea that works well with families or an article to share, please submit to: FirstStepsweb.fssa@fssa.in.gov.

Use your computer to read webpages out loud

BrowseAloud is a suite of products that provides online reading support. BrowseAloud reads website content out loud, highlighting each word as it is spoken in a high-quality, human-sounding voice. Click on the BrowseAloud link that appears beside "Accessibility Tools" on the footer of the IN.gov website.

This will launch the BrowseAloud Plus toolbar. This toolbar provides speech at the touch of a button. For more information, visit [BrowseAloud](#).



DEC recommended practices

First Steps competency areas for professional development credential hours are aligned with Division for Early Childhood recommended



of the Council for Exceptional Children

practices. Please take a moment to read the complete list with detailed definitions at [Division for Early Childhood](#).

Register now for the conference!

The second annual First Steps conference will be held on June 13–14, 2019, at the Monroe Convention Center in Bloomington. This 1 1/2 day conference

will feature keynote speakers, dozens of breakout sessions and opportunities for networking and resource-gathering. For information about sponsorships and more, go to [First Steps Conference 2019](#).



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