

INvision

Indiana Division of Disability &
Rehabilitative Services Newsletter

HOPE NOTES

A message from Director Kylee Hope

Let your children bring their own strengths and perspectives to the holiday celebrations



As the holidays come into full swing, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season.

Growing up, the holidays were a blissful time filled with family, friends, good food and joyous celebrations. I always loved this time of year, even more now as a mom of a young child. It is not without saying though that this can also be a very stressful time of year. Children get overly tired and over-stimulated. Adults are always in a hurry to complete their to-do and shopping lists. Family members who you don't see often may not readily understand the accommodations that

you or your child may need to participate in activities.

Growing up with my brother Kurt, I watched my parents try, fail and learn what they needed to do to set up Kurt for success so that he could meaningfully participate in our holiday traditions. Things didn't always go as planned but they took those opportunities to learn where and how they could do better. They never allowed Kurt's disability to define him or his place in the family. Kurt was and will always be an active member of our family who brings his own strengths and perspective to our gatherings, celebrations and traditions not just during the holidays but year-round.

People are not perfect. Families are not perfect. Holiday celebrations are rarely perfect. Keep that in mind as you are feeling stress over how you or child will participate this year in the holiday season. Build on their strengths, plan ahead, make accommodations and learn from failures then try again. Turn moments into memories and most of all enjoy yourself, your child and your family. Happiest holidays to you and your family from me and the entire DDRS family.

Kylee B. Hope

NOVEMBER 2019
ISSUE 4, VOLUME 2

STORIES IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- **Bureau bits:** Updates from your First Steps, Bureau of Developmental Disabilities and Vocational Rehabilitation teams.
- **Featured story:** Tips and tricks to add predictability and stability to an otherwise busy holiday season.
- **Making the LifeCourse work for you:** Social and Spirituality—the holidays can be a great time to connect to friends and family that we don't see often throughout the year.
- **News you can use:** The Talking Book and Braille Library is a free service to residents of Indiana who are unable to read or use regular print.
- **Events you don't want to miss:** The quarterly Building Bridges events create direct avenues for individuals and families to share their feedback.

First Steps early intervention program

As adults, we know the holiday season can be hectic. During this busy time of year, schedules often change rapidly, places may change and people come and go.

For small children, this can be a very difficult time as they deal with new sights, sounds, smells, people and environments.

It is the vision of First Steps that all infants and toddlers have the right to live, love, play, learn and participate in their communities.



We strive to ensure the families with whom we work have individualized support plans for their daily life. While you can never prepare for everything, we encourage families to have discussions with their service coordinator and

ongoing direct service providers on ways to help their child navigate the holiday season. These conversations can be around activities for long car rides or ways to help adjust to a new schedule or upcoming event. Talking with your early interventionist can help provide an individualized plan for your child to help everyone better enjoy the holiday season. Remember to take time to savor this time with your little ones.

Although it may seem hectic now, these moments are more precious than we know.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Earlier this year, Vocational Rehabilitation asked for your feedback on the need for services or gaps in services for individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities and those who are unserved or underserved.

While Indiana's formal comprehensive statewide needs assessment is conducted every three years, data is gathered continuously. The triennial comprehensive statewide needs assessment is a joint effort of VR and the Commission on Rehabilitative Services.

The results are in and the 2019 comprehensive statewide needs assessment is now available. [Click here](#) to view the results.

Vision for Indiana VR



Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services

The holidays are a time where traveling to family gatherings may include going out of state.

For individuals receiving a Home- and Community-Based waiver, they may request that their support staff accompany them to their family gathering if the provider allows. Effective Oct. 18, 2019, BDDS

updated their policy for reimbursement for home- and community-based services provided out of state. The policy now states:

Reimbursement is allowable for the following activities and services when provided outside of Indiana, if they are documented in an individual's person-centered individualized support plan.



- Day trip activities that cross Indiana's borders
- Overnight trips within the United States
- Direct support staff accompanying individuals residing in border areas to appointments to receive Medicaid state plan services outside of Indiana, if the medical service is covered by Medicaid in accordance with 405 IAC 5
- Services to individuals who attend undergraduate and graduate programs in states contiguous to Indiana while remaining Indiana residents

For the full policy, please visit [the DDRS policy page](#).

Make the season merry and bright

Tips and tricks to help the holidays go smoothly

As we enter the holiday season, we are entering a time of the year that lends itself towards changes in schedules, little sleep, long car trips and food. Whether you have a young child, school age child or are an adult with a developmental disability, these tips and tricks may add some predictability and stability to an otherwise busy time.

Routine is king

Develop routines around everyday tasks that always stay the same even if you are traveling, staying home for “pajama days” or running a million errands. Routines help us feel grounded and calm. If there is a particular routine that is critical to a successful day, make sure to find ways to work that routine into your altered scheduled. For instance, if meal time routine involves using a particular bowl or cup be sure to bring that with you to holiday gatherings where you will be eating a meal.

Bringing a favorite toy, book or blanket that provides comfort and familiarity can help your child when adjusting to new surroundings.

Sleeping

Don't enter the holiday season in “sleep debt.” Make sure that you and your child are getting to bed on time with a familiar routine before the holidays are in full swing! Once the holidays begin, encourage nap time or rest time when you can. Giving yourself or your child a time to regroup and rest in the middle of the day may be all they need to get through and enjoy any planned activities.

Mealtime

Holidays meals can challenge our senses with the differing smells, looks and tastes. While it can be a great time to explore different foods, some of our children are not ready or willing to try new foods yet. To ease mealtimes, bring familiar foods to pair with the new holiday foods. Consider eating in a quieter room which may allow for a smoother meal-time. Having a snack or small meal before you head to your family gathering may ward off the “hangry” and help the day be more enjoyable for both you and your child.

Traveling

When traveling long distances we all can get a little antsy. Here are a few tips to help your child get the fidgets out during long car rides.

- If your young child is kicking the front seat, try putting a larger travel case on the floor in front of them so they can push their feet into the case, getting the deep pressure and joint compressions to improve neurochemical production and enhance calming.
- If your child is throwing things like a sippy cup or toy, provide a resistant band loop around the back of the seat in front of them so that they can pull and stretch. A heavy bean stuffed animal they can “hide” under their hip, lay on their lap or squeeze between their legs can provide needed sensory input.
- If your child is biting, bring some heavy chewies like Twizzlers left open so they are dense and leather-like, which provides great joint compressions to their jaw as they chew on them. Other chewies can be a vibrating toothbrush, specialty chewy tubes, straws or simple chewing gum.
- Plan on intervals where the whole car sings, counts, labels. Alternate quiet/whisper, loud/bossy or sonic loud/scream as you play the game. This helps to modulate volume, follow the leader/directions and feel in control.

Before arriving at your destination, try to plan ahead with family members who are ready to care for your child when you first arrive. This will allow time for you to get a hot shower and maybe even a power nap.

Communication is key

- Make sure that relatives and hosts know of your plans and how long you plan to stay. If you plan to leave early, make sure they know what parts of the celebration are important for you and your child to be able to participate in. If there are any health concerns or accommodations that need to be considered, be sure to let your host know in plenty of time.
- Talk with your child and prepare them as much as possible for the upcoming events and celebrations. Let them know what to expect. Creating a social story or visual schedule can help your child adjust to the change in schedules and daily routines.
- Give your child an escape word or signal that they can use with you to indicate that they need a break or if the activities are more than they can handle.
- Don't force affection. For children and adults who struggle with social interactions forced affection can bring on strong emotions, fear and behaviors. Allow them to choose who and how they show affection. It may be a hug, high five or a smile.
- Don't be afraid to say no. If the schedules or activities are too much or not of interest, express that to your friends and family. You don't have to do everything.

Most importantly, enjoy these moments with your child and family. Happy holidays!



LIFE DOMAINS AND STAGES

Making the LifeCourse work for you

Social and Spirituality

The holidays can be a great time to connect to friends and family that we don't see often throughout the year. Having friends and personal connections in one's life is key to having a happy and successful life. Individuals and families should take this time to share with their case manager, team members and therapists the people, the traditions,



the beliefs and the cultural celebrations that are important to them. Be sure to tell your team if you need extra support at this time to participate in activities, celebrations or spiritual services.

Communicating what is important to you and how you wish to connect with family and friends during this time will allow your team to better support you in your vision of a good life.



Daily Life and Employment: What a person does as part of everyday life—school, employment, volunteering, communication, routines and life skills.



Community Living: Where and how someone lives—housing and living options, community access, transportation, home adaptation and modification.



Safety and Security: Staying safe and secure—finances, emergencies, well-being, decision making supports, legal rights and issues.



Healthy Living: Managing and accessing health care and staying well—medical, mental health, behavior, developmental, wellness and nutrition.



Social and Spirituality: Building friendships and relationships, leisure activities, personal networks and faith community.



Citizenship and Advocacy: Building valued roles, making choices, setting goals, assuming responsibility and driving how one's own life is lived.

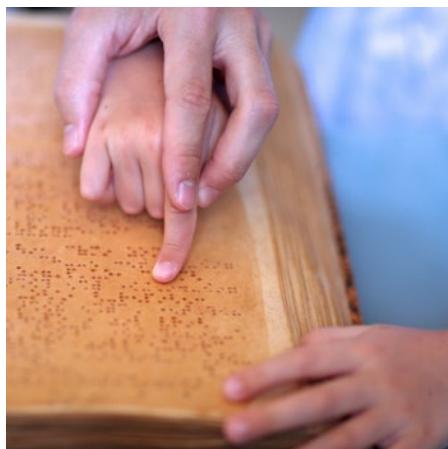
For more information on the LifeCourse framework and principles, visit: www.lifecoursetools.com.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Talking Book and Braille Library

A free service to those residents of Indiana who are unable to read or use regular print

From the Indiana State Library, the Talking Book and Braille Library is a free service to those residents of Indiana who are unable to read or use regular print. This may be due to a visual impairment or a physical condition and may be temporary or permanent.



Audio, large print and Braille books are distributed through the U.S. Postal Service and players are loaned, free of charge, to patrons. Patrons may also establish a Braille and Audio Reading Download account, which allows downloading of books from the National Library Services for the Blind and Print Disabled collection. For more information, [visit this site](#), email tbbl@library.in.gov or call 800-622-4970.

Winter Wonderland Story Hour

A snowy morning—regardless of the weather outside—is just what kids are ready for by the middle of December. So why not join the fun at the Indiana State Library on the Dec. 14, 2019, from 10:30–11:30 a.m. EST? The Talking Book and Braille Library and the Indiana Young Readers Center have put together a Winter Wonderland Story Hour that will be filled with books, activities and a wintery snack. While the program has been designed for readers who are blind or vision-impaired, all children are encouraged to attend. Stories, read by ISL staff and Talking Book patrons, will be interactive. Children will follow along as “An Old Lady Swallows Some Snow,” and help an assortment of stuffed animals take shelter in a lost mitten.

Snacks will be provided in the Great Hall, which will be decked out in its holiday best.

Parents or guardians should plan on being present for the duration of the event and older siblings, grandparents and other adults are welcome to come along; there are 20 spaces available for children and registration is required. This event will be most appropriate for children in grade 3 and under.

[Click here](#) for more details and to register.



Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
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You can sign up to receive this newsletter by [clicking here](#).

You can receive other updates from DDRS by visiting [here](#).

The Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services is a program of the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration. If you have questions about DDRS programs and services, [visit us online](#).

EVENTS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS



Quarterly Building Bridges events

Don't miss the upcoming quarterly Building Bridges events! These meetings are an opportunity for families and self-advocates to meet and speak with the Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services state staff. These sessions are an important part of the bureau's efforts to create direct avenues for individuals and families to share their feedback. The meetings are solely for families and individuals with disabilities to provide a forum for constructive and valuable conversations on successes or concerns, as well as suggestions or input regarding BDDS programs and services. All meetings are held from 6–8 p.m. local time.

Jan. 6, 2020
Greenfield
Intermediate School
204 W. Park St.
Greenfield

Jan. 22, 2020
Crawfordsville
Public Library
205 S. Washington St.
Crawfordsville

Jan. 28, 2020
Johnson County Public
Library White River Branch
1664 Library Blvd.
Greenwood

ICC meetings

The Interagency Coordinating Council for infants and toddlers with disabilities is the state's federally mandated early intervention council. The council is charged with advising and assisting DDRS in its responsibility to develop an early intervention system of the highest quality, balancing family-centered services with fiscal responsibility. The council is comprised of parents, state agency groups, early intervention service providers, legislators and others. The meetings are open to the public. For more information, visit [the DDRS Commissions & Councils webpage](#).

Dates: Nov. 13, 2019
Time: 10 a.m.–2:30 p.m. EST
Location: Choices Coordinated Care Solutions, 7941 Castleway Drive, Indianapolis

INSILC December meeting and listening session

The Indiana Statewide Independent Living Council provides oversight of the Indiana State Plan for Independent Living and assists the Centers for Independent Living with the SPIL's implementation and coordination of services. For more information, visit [the Statewide Independent Living Council webpage](#).

Location: CICOA Aging and In-Home Services, 8440 Woodfield Crossing Blvd., Suite 175, Indianapolis
Date: Dec. 11; **Time:** Public Meeting: 1 p.m. EST; Listening session for people with disabilities: 5:30–7:30 p.m. EST.

DDRS Advisory Council

The DDRS Advisory Council was established to assist the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services in ensuring that individuals with disabilities are as independent and self-sufficient as possible. The council meets monthly and meetings are open to the public. For upcoming meeting information, visit the [DDRS Commissions & Councils webpage](#). DDRS Councils and Commissions meeting information such as agendas, updates and past meeting minutes can be found there as well.

Commission on Rehabilitation Services

The Commission on Rehabilitation Services works with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services' Vocational Rehabilitation Services on matters such as the effectiveness and customer satisfaction with the services provided to individuals participating in the VR program. The commission is also involved in matters affecting VR policies and procedures, goals and priorities, and the state plan.

Location: BOSMA Enterprises, 7225 Woodland Drive, Indianapolis
Date: Nov. 1; **Time:** 10 a.m.–1 p.m. EST.