



Making family engagement a priority in Indiana early intervention

The Bureau of Child Development Services is committed to ensuring family voices are heard and strengthening the bridge between the state office and families. The families we serve in First Steps have invaluable experiences and insights to share with program leadership. BCDS believes these experiences should be used to shape policy decisions that directly impact our Hoosier families and children.

At the state level, we have an obligation to integrate the family voice within policy and plan to do so by reaching out to families through surveys and one-on-one conversations.

To facilitate open communication and rich discussions, our office will be hosting quarterly family town hall events. First Steps Family Town Halls will give families an opportunity to receive the latest updates on First Steps services, speak directly with the BCDS team, ask questions, and share their experiences so we can better serve children and families throughout Indiana. We also hope the town halls provide a time for First Steps families from across the state to connect with one another.

The next quarterly First Steps Family Town Hall will be held on Thursday, Oct. 24, 2024, at 1 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Eastern. Registration for the event is required via [the online form](#). We ask that personnel please share the invitation with current First Steps families.

Together, we can build a stronger First Steps program for all Indiana families!



*The Newsletter for
Indiana Early Intervention*

August 2024

FirstSteps.IN.gov

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Please like and follow us on Facebook  and Instagram 
You can find us by searching @FirstStepsIndiana.

The First Steps Interagency Coordinating Council is a governor-appointed body required by Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The role of the ICC is to advise and assist the state's early intervention team in developing and maintaining an early intervention system of the highest quality and balancing family-centered services with fiscal responsibility. Its membership is comprised of parents of children with delays and/or disabilities, state agency groups, early intervention service providers, legislators and others. The ICC meetings are open to the public. The next ICC meeting will be hosted in person on **Wednesday, Oct. 9, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. EDT**. There will also be an online option to attend virtually via Zoom. Please [click here for meeting details](#).



EIHub updates made this summer

The Bureau of Child Development Services and Public Consulting Group have spent the summer of 2024 hard at work on EIHub improvements!

Both teams have spent over 75 hours in meetings to identify, outline, and prioritize improvements needed to EIHub. We have reviewed 84 user stories to send to the development team and spent countless hours testing items. We are fully devoted to improving the system to meet the needs of our users and have had three significant system improvement releases in the last several months.

On May 30, a release was pushed to the EIHub Service Logging module. This release impacted the greatest number of EIHub users and included fixes to the process related to downloading a PDF copy of the provider summary of service form (face-to-face sheet). Our team collected input directly from system users and from those conversations we have created a step-by-step guidance document outlining the process. Once finalized, the document will be sent to all users.

The next release occurred on June 5 and was the largest to date. This release was specific to the Case Management module. From development to deployment, this release took nearly one year and included close to 1,000 items! On June 27, there was a release to correct issues found after the previous Case Management release. While the latest release did not include all items necessary to replace every paper/PDF form that we use to document a child's time in First Steps, it was a giant step in the right direction.

Releases to both the Service Logging and Case Management systems relied heavily on testing directly from EIHub end users. It is the goal of the state office to include actual

users of the system in the testing process whenever possible. If you are interested in being an EIHub tester in the future, please [submit your information here](#). We would greatly appreciate your input and may contact you when we have items to test specific to your role. We have a long road ahead of us but have seen significant improvements to the system this summer and will continue to see changes over the next year.

“ We have a long road ahead of us but have seen significant improvements to the system this summer. ”

Early Intervention Professional Development System

The Bureau of Child Development Services is pleased to announce our continued partnership with the Early Childhood Center at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community at Indiana University.

Our new professional development system contract kicked off July 1. It includes the continued development

of First Steps onboarding training modules, the national webinar series, and the annual Indiana Early Intervention Conference, which has become a cornerstone of professional development for First Steps personnel, as well as our partners and colleagues across the state. We are also very excited about the creation

and implementation of tiered technical assistance to help support early intervention personnel.

BCDS values our partnership with ECC and looks forward to great work to come in the next couple of years as we focus on professional development and support for Indiana's early intervention personnel.



Highlights from the 2024 Early Intervention Conference

Did You Know?

Newsletter survey results

We are listening! We wanted to hear from you about the First Steps newsletter, what you liked, didn't like and want to see, so we shared a link to a survey. Here are the results (71 respondents):

1. How often do you read the newsletter?

- 68%** Always
- 27%** Sometimes
- 5%** Never or no answer

Of the people who did not answer or said "never," most of them commented they were new to First Steps or just learned of the newsletter.

2. How useful do you find the First Steps newsletter?

- 38%** Moderately useful
- 27%** Very useful
- 20%** Slightly useful
- 1%** Extremely useful
- The rest did not answer.*

3. Most useful newsletter features (ranked according to popularity):

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. State Update | 5. IN Best Practice |
| 2. EI Hub Update | 6. FGRBI and EI Conference information (<i>tied</i>) |
| 3. Upcoming events and conference information | 7. DEC recommended practices |
| 4. Training information updates | |

4. What would you like to see in the First Steps newsletter (ranked according to popularity):

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Spotlight articles on agencies/SPOES/personnel/families and children | 3. Resources and supports for early interventionists |
| 2. Articles written by First Steps personnel about specific early intervention topics | 4. Medicaid/Billing/Data/Broader FSSA, DOE, IDOH initiatives |
| | 5. Information about other Part C programs across the country |

Additional comment: *"Keep continuing to share the important information, happenings, changes and updates in the newsletter."*

FGRBI: What is caregiver coaching?

Caregiver coaching is an interactive process to promote child's development

During early intervention visits, providers support the caregivers to identify strategies, practice those strategies during visits, and reflect on and problem solve successes and challenges.

Early intervention providers may use a variety of coaching strategies to support families. Family Guided Routines Based Intervention includes two different types of coaching strategies, general coaching strategies which includes information sharing and observation and specific coaching strategies which incorporates direct teaching, demonstration with narration, guided practice, caregiver practice, general and specific feedback, problem-solving and reflection. Check out the [FGRBI handout](#), which further identifies coaching strategies.

Which strategies are you already using? Which strategies feel less familiar? As early intervention providers, we want to individualize not only for the child but also for the learning preferences of the caregiver. Becoming comfortable with the use of multiple coaching strategies will support you in promoting caregiver competence and confidence with the intention of leading to expanded opportunities for the child.

For more information about caregiver coaching and Indiana's FGRBI training sequence, reach out to Katherine Hargreaves at khargre@iu.edu.



2024 First Steps Excellence in Service award winners

Abigail Powell
Allison Durrett
Amanda Criste
Angie Lacy
Anna Toovey
Ashton Glascock
Brittanie Fleck

Donna Turner
Emma Salyer
Erynn Mula
Ewa Baranska
Grace Lynch
Heidi Dougherty
Jaclyn Thread

Janet Burgess
Jennifer Melton
Joyce Cornelison
Kacey Matthews
Karen Cravotta
Kelly Cooper
Lily Osborn

Laura Wright
Lisa Powlen
Lori Gavorski
Marilyn Meyer
Nikki Gilles
Noel Weibel
Rachel Lieske

Robin Jones
Rose Larcom
Sarah Bishop
Shannon Berrisford
Sheila Klopfenstein

Stacie Watters
Yolanda Buenrostro



**Save the date for the 2025
Early Intervention Conference:
Thursday and Friday,
June 12 and 13
Bloomington, Ind.
We would love to have you!**



Please reach out to Joy Jones at jsj5@iu.edu if you are interested in being part of the conference planning committee.

IN*SOURCE provides info, training and support

IN*SOURCE, Indiana's resource center for families with special needs, can help support families. IN*SOURCE provides support to parents of children with disabilities from birth through age 26. They help families navigate the special education process in order to help children thrive. They strive to have all students with disabilities experience inclusive opportunities and equitable access.

IN*SOURCE:

- Assists families in navigating disability services.
- Provides all of services at no cost to the families or schools they serve.
- Empowers parents to actively participate in their children's education and development.
- Partners with professionals to enhance outcomes for all children with disabilities.
- Teaches youth with disabilities how to become their own best advocate.
- Trains parents and professionals on a host of disability-related topics.
- Serves the entire state of Indiana and has staff located throughout the state.

How IN*SOURCE can help First Steps families

IN*SOURCE's team of staff and volunteers, many of whose family members have disabilities, are able to:

- Provide education and resources on the early intervention and dispute resolution processes.
- Educate families about systems that support the disability community.
- Assist with the transition process out of First Steps.

IN*SOURCE has proudly served as Indiana's parent training and information center for nearly 50 years as one of the first five established in the nation. They are committed to delivering high-quality information, training and support to families of children and young adults with disabilities, and the individuals and organizations that serve them.

To learn more about IN*SOURCE, please visit their website at insource.org or follow them on your favorite social media platforms. Visit the [Get Help](#) webpages to find the special education liaison in your area who can provide you with individual assistance or for their [calendar of events](#). You may also view their [recorded trainings](#) on YouTube.

Indiana First Steps and IN*SOURCE look forward to opportunities to partner together to support the families we serve!



All registered IN EI Hub users have access to the Learning Management System in the [IN EI Hub!](#) First Steps webinars and trainings, including those required for initial credentialing, are located on the IN EI Hub Learning Management System. [Watch this video](#) to learn more about the LMS.

Look for exciting changes to come to the LMS, including brand-new service coordination and direct service provider trainings.

The Indiana Early Intervention Conference recorded webinars are now posted on the LMS and are a great way to obtain required First Steps credentialing hours!

As always, if you are looking for professional development hours, you may always take courses outside of the LMS. However, as documented in the [First Steps Policy Manual](#), you must retain your certificate of attendance documentation for a period of seven years.

To access over the over 100 trainings posted on the IN EIHub Learning Management System, First Steps-enrolled personnel can log into the [EIHub home page](#) and click on the Learning Management System. For assistance, you may contact the First Steps Training Manager, Amy Torres, at amy.torres@fssa.in.gov.

- **Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Conference, Aug. 22.** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the 502 Event Center in Carmel. INAAP is excited to invite you to attend “Pediatrics and Pinot.” This will be the biggest and best INAAP conference yet! Learn more at www.inaap-conference.com.
- **Perinatal Substance Use Conference, Sept. 11.** FORUM Events Center, Fishers, Ind. Join your Indiana peers for a day focused exclusively on perinatal substance use and its significant impact on families, caregivers, and communities. Some of the foremost experts from around the country will discuss approaches designed to improve outcomes for families and avoid staff burnout for those charged with caring for this vulnerable population. Visit www.ihconnect.org for more information.
- **Division for Early Childhood 40th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Disabilities and Their Families, Sept. 17 to 20.** New Orleans, La. Attend the premier annual international conference for professionals who work with young children with disabilities and their families. The conference provides professionals in early intervention, early childhood special education and related fields and family members of children with disabilities an opportunity to learn, network and collaborate. Visit www.deconference.org to plan your conference.
- **National Association for the Education of Young Children Conference, Nov. 6–9.** Anaheim, Calif. The largest early childhood education conference in the world gathers early childhood educators from around the globe to connect, collaborate and learn together. [Registration is now open.](#)
- **Indiana American Physical Therapy Association Fall Conference, Nov. 8 and 9.** University of Indianapolis Health Pavilion. Network with PTs, PTAs and students of physical therapy. [Registration is open.](#) Visit inapta.org/events for more information.
- **Indiana Occupational Therapy Association Fall Conference, Nov. 16.** IU Indianapolis. Join the [conference](#) for Indiana’s leading professional development organization for occupational therapists. If you are interested in presenting a session or poster, submissions are due no later than Aug. 16. For more [information about posters and sessions](#), reach out to Jessica Mason, VP & Conference Committee Chair, with questions at vp@inota.com.



Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services

Get First Steps information directly via email

Sign up for DDRS updates, First Steps newsletter and *INvision* parent newsletter. To register, [click FSSA Subscriber](#).

INvision newsletter

The Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services *INvision* newsletter shares news, information, tips and events from each of our bureaus to help families and individuals with disabilities stay connected and learn more about our services. Families can [view past editions and sign up here](#). Please feel free to sign up and share with the families you support.

Our mission, vision and values

Mission: To partner with Hoosier families whose young children are experiencing developmental delays and connect them with services that help them promote their child's development.

Vision: All Indiana families have a strong foundation to advocate for their infants and toddlers to grow and flourish to their highest potential.

Values:

- **Family-centered:** To support and enhance each family's capacity to promote their child's development.
- **Strengths-based:** To acknowledge families and children as fundamentally resourceful and resilient.
- **Relationship-based:** To embrace and promote the fact that children grow and learn in the context of positive relationships with caring adults.
- **Holistic:** To promote "whole child" development by recognizing the interconnectedness of physical, cognitive, social emotional and adaptive development.
- **Culturally competent:** To respect and be responsive to the cultures, beliefs, practices, strengths and needs of all families, children and individuals.
- **Routines-based:** To embed services and supports into a child and family's daily activities in their home or other community-based environments.
- **Individualized:** To adapt services and supports in response to the unique strengths and needs of each child and family.

Use your computer to read webpages out loud

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