



**The Newsletter for
Indiana Early Intervention**



Christina Commons
First Steps director

**First Steps
state team**

Christina Commons
Director

Maggie McCall
Quality assurance/
data

Meghan Smith
Policy

Sondra Tarter
Program services

Constance Young
Outreach

In this issue:

- 2020 Excellence in Service Award
- New Indiana First Steps branding
- GCPD's five-year state plan
- ICC update
- PCG update
- IU Family expectations study
- FGRBI in Indiana
- Profile report
- Federal indicators: 45-day timeline
- Training page
- Event calendar

And how are the children?

Supporting the family is key

Dear Stakeholders,

As I prepared to write to you in this July 2020 newsletter, FSSA Secretary Dr. Sullivan's weekly staff email "Broken Pieces" popped into my inbox. In the email was the letter below from Dr. Sullivan and DCS Director Stigdon; a profound message I thought we all need to hear.

And How Are the Children?

By Jennifer Sullivan and Terry Stigdon

Africa's Masai warriors greet each other with the phrase "Kasse-rian Ingera," which translates to, "And how are the children?" This greeting underscores the importance of children's well-being as a marker of success in their community. The traditional response translates to "All the children are well."

As we assess the ongoing COVID-19 response, reopening and recovery plans of our states, we need to move children to the top of the list of considerations. As clinicians, and as moms, we felt a huge sense of relief when early data suggested that the novel coronavirus was less severe in children and when we didn't see a large volume of critically ill children in our hospitals.

However, children are not completely immune from the physical, economic or social effects of COVID-19, and without specific attention and strategy, the well-being of kids will be the ultimate lagging indicator of our collective success or failure. In fact, the recent global demographic shift of infection to younger people indicates we may already be behind.

Even more profound are the social impacts children feel when fragile support systems are disrupted. This pandemic has put that fragility on full display. Dr. Sullivan was honored to represent Indiana by testifying at a recent congressional hearing about our state's efforts to support child care services during the pandemic to keep them available for essential workers, while protecting children, families and child care employees.

To read the rest of Sec. Sullivan and Director Stigdon's article, [click here.](#)

Thank you all for the work you have done in the last several months to ensure that children's social emotional development is a focus and the mental wellness of their families critical. Our work has never seemed so vitally important.

Be well, Christina

2020 Excellence in Service Award winners

First Steps personnel, ranging from data entry specialists, schedulers, managers, service coordinators, assessment team members and ongoing early intervention providers, were honored with the Excellence in Service Award for their hard work and dedication to the program. Some of the characteristics shared in their nominations included: being team players and great collaborators; going above and beyond to make sure families are cared for and supported; being resources and mentors for new providers; and being dedicated, compassionate and professional.

Congratulations!

Andrea Polman	Janet Mota	Moriah Pate
Anne Dimmett	Jim Cooley	Sarah Crupe
Arlene Graffitti-Glass	Joanna Hileman	Sarah Dilts
Becky Kemper	Kara Stoehr	Sarah Lambert
Chris Stacker	Kimberly Moreno	Stacey Wilcox
David Sterne	Kristen Elliott	Sue Tribolet
Debbie Wink	Kristin Sosa	Teri Conrad
Eleni Shea	Mandy Nutley	Urszula Krygowski
Erika Hall	Megan Perria	
Erin Graves	Melissa Gingerich	

Rolling out the new Indiana First Steps branding

Modernized identity to align with our mission, vision and values

Over the past two years, First Steps has been working to update its child find and referral system in order to develop a more consistent statewide network. As part of this work, First Steps found it important to refresh its brand. We are very excited to unveil our new Indiana First Steps logo! As you may know, the previous First Steps logo has been around for nearly three decades and, while we have fond feelings for it, we recognize that as an early intervention program it was necessary to modernize our brand identity to align with First Steps' mission, vision and values.

First Steps leadership and the FSSA communications teams have been working very closely with our talented design partners at Caldwell VanRiper. After months of research and input from a variety of stakeholders, including many of you, we are very proud to share our new First

Steps brand identity!

Inclusive of the new logo, we felt that it was important to show that First Steps is a statewide program,

hence the outline of the state of Indiana and the blue and yellow colors used. But more importantly, we believe that the adults and young child in the center represent the fact families are at the center of everything we do. This aligns with our First Steps mission: to empower Hoosier families whose young children are experiencing developmental delays by supporting them and connecting them to the resources they need to promote their child's development.

We appreciate your support and hope you

share in our excitement as we move forward in revitalizing and improving our state's early intervention program!



New Early Intervention technology solution

In early 2021, First Steps will be launching a new data management system designed specifically to support early intervention processes across the state. The new system is called Early Intervention – Hub and will replace iSPOE, PAM and other systems currently used to support families, service coordinators and on-going providers. EI-Hub users will be able to collect and maintain child and family information from referral to transition, including logging service hours, submitting claims and receiving payments for services. Providers will also be able to manage their enrollment and credentialing. The goal is for EI-Hub to fully and efficiently support agencies and providers as they continue to help children and families connect with essential services and resources that are available to them.

PCG continues to work with First Steps personnel and stakeholders to discuss specific design, functionality and roles associated with EI-Hub. The collected feedback will be incorporated into the new system's features, and implementation. We look forward to sharing more specifics and benefits of EI-Hub with you over the next few months!

Thank you to everyone who completed the recent survey on change readiness. Your responses will be used to guide the ongoing development of the implementation and training activities associated with the new system. Stay tuned for additional communications about upcoming events and focus groups. We understand that a new system will involve significant changes for all First Steps stakeholders. To make the transition to EI-Hub smooth and successful, we are committed to collaborating with you to help you succeed. If you have any questions or comments regarding this project, please email INFirstSteps@pcgus.com. We always welcome your feedback!

ICC update First Steps Interagency Coordinating Council

virtual meeting notice: July 8, 2020. The First Steps Interagency Coordinating Council will host its next quarterly meeting on July 8, 2020, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. EDT. The meeting will be hosted virtually on Zoom and is open to the public. To join the meeting, [please click here](#). The DDRS is a program of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. If you have questions about Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services programs and services, visit us online at www.DDRS.in.gov.

We need your input!

Help identify the issues we will work on

The mission of the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities is to advance the independence, productivity and inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of society. To do this, the council identifies problems or needs that should be addressed. These problems or needs are agreed upon by our board members and identified in GCPD's five-year state plan. This state plan is used to create specific grant proposals.

The five-year state plan public survey will be the first step in identifying problems and needs. The council believes it is important to know what people like you find important.

The surveys are here:

- [Survey for People with Disabilities](#)
- [Survey for Parents, Family Members and Guardians](#)
- [Survey for Disability Professionals and Other Stakeholders](#)

Thank you for your time, your input and your comments!



WE NEED YOUR INPUT!

Family expectations study

IU conducting research on families of young children with disabilities

The Early Childhood Center at the Indiana Institute on Disability in the Community at Indiana University is conducting a research study on family expectations. This study is specifically focused on families of young children with disabilities. There is a substantial body of research showing a strong association between family expectations for children with disabilities and later outcomes (e.g., employment, college, independent living).

Surprisingly, there have been very few studies examining the expectations families have of their young children with disabilities. The study will explore how families develop expectations, and who and what have influenced them. As a direct service provider in the state's early intervention system, you work with families at a critical time in their young child's life and fostering high expectations early could have an impact across the life course.



IU researchers want to talk to families of young children with disabilities. Recruitment has been slow due to COVID-19 but we are actively seeking families and providers to participate in the study. The entire process can be done virtually and consists of a one-hour interview and a few brief questionnaires.

How can you help? Share information about the study with your families.

Would you like to participate? We'd love to talk to set up an interview time. Each family and provider who participates will receive a \$30

check for participating.

Please consider supporting this important research; the data gathered will support the development of future interventions designed to boost family expectations for their children.

For more information, flyers to share with families or to set up an interview, email kgherron@indiana.edu.

Family-Guided Routines Based Intervention update

Resources available to learn about this evidence-informed model

As the First Steps leadership team pursues the adoption of Family-Guided Routines Based Intervention in Indiana, there are several resources available for you to learn more about this evidence-informed model.

You can learn more about the history and background of the practice, read articles and watch helpful videos about FGRBI by [visiting this site](#). The information under the "FGRBI for Providers" and "Mobile Coaching" headings are excellent resources and may be of particular interest to you in your early intervention practice.

The founder and director of FGRBI, Dr. Juliann Woods, has hosted two introductory webinars for First Steps personnel, which have been posted on the [I-LEAD learning platform](#).

As Indiana continues to develop new resources to

support tele-intervention and the transition back to in-person services, you'll notice that we are incorporating the FGRBI coaching language. By now, some of you may have heard of the SS-OO-PP-RR, a framework for home-visiting that includes Setting the Stage, Observation and Opportunities to embed, Problem-Solving and Planning, and Reflection and Review. You may find these resources [on our website](#) under the COVID-19 policies information.

If you have any questions or would like more information about implementation of Family Guided Routines Based Intervention in Indiana, please contact [Katie](#)

[Herron](#) and/or [Constance Young](#).

Watch for more FGRBI professional development opportunities over the next year!



DDRS—First Steps Indiana statewide profile report

Reporting Period: 04/01/2019 - 03/31/2020

I. Population Information

Population (U.S. Census Bureau)	6,376,792
Population Growth Percentage (U.S. Census Bureau)	4.00%

II. Child Enrollment & Referral

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
One-day Count w/ IFSP—0 to 1 year old	1,569	
One-day Count w/ IFSP—All Children	12,111	
Annual Count of Children w/ IFSP	23,708	
Annual Count of Children Served (regardless of IFSP)	27,318	
Average Age at Referral (months)	14	
New IFSP 04/01/2019-06/30/2019	3,082	
Children with Referral to IFSP 45+ Days 04/01/2019-06/30/2019	501	

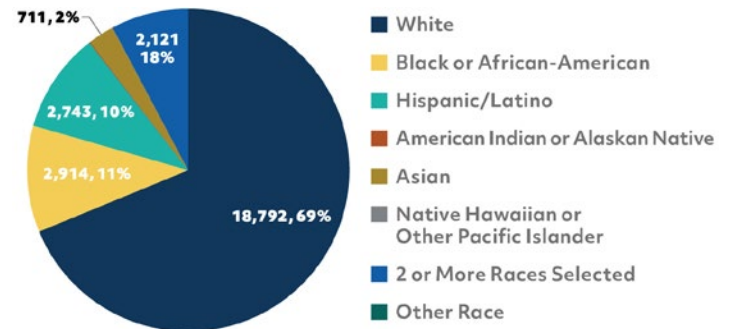
III. Exits

Children Moving to Preschool Special Education	5,230	47%
Children Under 3, Services No Longer Needed	251	2%
Eligible Children Who Declined Services	1,353	12%

IV. Paid Services

Children w/IFSP Served Primarily in the Natural Environment	23,584	99%
Total Amount Paid on Behalf of Children Served	\$47,805,262.33	
Average Paid on Behalf of Each Child Served	\$1,749.95	

V. Race Information



VI. Children Receiving Each Service Type

Service Type	Number of Children Served	Percent Receiving Service
Assistive Technology	190	1%
Audiology	1,034	4%
Developmental Therapy	14,620	54%
Health Services	0	0%
Interpreter Services	593	2%
Medical	0	0%
Nursing	0	0%
Nutrition	333	1%
Occupational Therapy	15,570	57%
Other Services	21	0%
Physical Therapy	14,335	52%
Psychology	230	1%
Social Work	28	0%
Speech Therapy	17,120	63%
Vision	5	0%

Source: First SideHatch Database

Understanding Part C federal indicators

Federal indicator 7: The 45-day timeline

As part of the annual performance report, we must identify the percentage of eligible infants and toddlers with an individualized family service plans for whom an evaluation and assessment and an initial IFSP meeting were conducted within the 45-day timeline.

The target for this indicator as set by the Office of Special Education Programs is 100%. Our goal is to complete the initial evaluation and assessment, determine eligibility, and write the IFSP within 45 calendar days from the child's date of referral 100% of the time. Day one is the date the referral was received by First Steps. As reported in FFY 2018, First Steps met this requirement 94.36% of the time. While close to meeting our target, we still have room to improve.

Here is how First Steps personnel can collaborate so eligible children receive services as soon as possible and we can meet this target.

It all starts with data entry. It is imperative that data entry personnel enter the referral information as soon as possible. It is important to verify that the contact information for the child's parent/guardian is correct to ensure the service coordinator can contact the family. It is also important that all intake, evaluation and assessment, eligibility, and IFSP information is entered into the system in a timely manner so that reports for this indicator are correct.

Service coordinators need to make contact with families as soon as the referral is assigned. Best practice is to contact the family within two business days of receiving the referral. The SC should make three attempts to contact the family on three separate days in order to schedule the intake meeting. After the second failed attempt to make contact, a letter may be sent to the family requesting they contact the SC within 10 days in order to proceed. The SC should make a third and final attempt to contact the family. All attempts to contact the family must be documented as part of the child's early intervention record.

The intake meeting should be completed within two weeks of the referral. In the essence of time, it is recommended that the assessment team scheduler be contacted during the intake meeting or shortly thereafter, in order to schedule the evaluation and assessment. If possible, it is also helpful to set the date for the IFSP meeting during the intake meeting.

It is vital that all First Steps personnel work together in order to identify the days and times that are available to schedule appointments. If the evaluation and assessment was not scheduled during the intake meeting, best practice is to contact the family within two business days of that meeting. The scheduler should make three attempts on three separate days to contact the family in order to schedule the assessment. After the second failed attempt to contact the family, the scheduler should contact the SC to verify the contact information. In the event that the family cannot be reached via phone/email, a letter may be sent to the family requesting they contact the SC within ten days in order to proceed. The scheduler should make a third and final attempt to contact the family by phone or email. Again, all attempts to contact the family must be documented as part of the child's early intervention record. It is recommended that the family be reminded of their appointments to ensure they are aware and prepared. In the event that the evaluation and assessment appointment is cancelled and must be rescheduled, it is important to

let the SC know as soon as possible in case the IFSP meeting needs to be changed as well.

The collaboration between team members and the necessary processes are essential to ensuring families are able to move forward with First Steps services. Everyone plays an important role in making sure Hoosier children receive early intervention services in a timely fashion.

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**

New provider orientation training information

To access ALL state required training registrations, [click here](#).

Recorded trainings for initial credential

DSP 101	AEPS part 1	Professional Boundaries and Ethics in Home Visiting
SC 101	The Science of Infant Brain Development	
Exit Skills Checklist		

Live webinar trainings

Course documents can be downloaded on the First Steps website prior to the training. If you need accommodations for accessibility, email FirstStepsWeb@fssa.in.gov.

DSP 102	SC 102	AEPS part 2
DSP 103	SC 103	

Professional development corner

Looking for online trainings for professional development hours? For a complete list of online webinars and trainings, please [visit this page](#). You may also go to [I-LEAD](#) and register for an account. When registering, you will use the category "early intervention provider." First Steps personnel must keep certificates of completion in their personal training records for seven years. If you have questions, contact an I-LEAD representative at **800-299-1627** and choose **option 5**, Monday through Thursday 8 a.m.–7 p.m. or Friday 8 a.m.–5 p.m. EDT.

Event calendar



Infancy Onward will host their Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Conference on Aug. 6–7. The theme this year is *Families, Children and ACES: Making the Best of the Hands We are Dealt*. Please [follow their Facebook page](#) for more information on registration.



The HMG National Center is hosting a virtual **Help Me Grow National Forum** on Aug. 10–12. The Virtual Forum will be accessible to all members of the National Affiliate Network and free of charge. Information regarding sessions, speakers and registration is forthcoming. For additional information or questions, please contact [Cassandra Therriault](#).



The August 2020 **Institute for Strengthening Families** is going virtual! Save the Dates: Aug. 18–20, Aug. 25–26. Registration will be free! [Watch for more information](#) in the coming weeks.



Family Voices Indiana live keynote presentation and 12 breakout sessions will take place Thursday, Oct. 1, 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. EDT. Registration is free for families and professionals. Stay tuned to FVI's [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for more info about session breakouts and presenters, or check out the [Heart to Heart conference website](#). Questions? Feel free to [contact us](#).



Get First Steps information directly via email

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

Sign up for text messages!

Did you know we offer text message updates to First Steps providers? You will get information about policy changes, professional development opportunities, local planning and coordinating council news, and more. All you have to do is go to [this site](#) and enter your cell phone number!

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

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](#).