



**The Newsletter for
Indiana Early Intervention**



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**Making an investment
in our people**

***Grant will recognize all dedicated
early intervention personnel***

Dear First Steps personnel,

We would like to recognize and thank all dedicated early intervention personnel for their tremendous response and continued dedication to serving and supporting infants, toddlers and their families over the past two years. You have met every challenge and persevered in learning a new service delivery method, navigating a new data system, remaining flexible with numerous cancellations due to illness and incurring higher gas prices to provide home- and community-based services.

First Steps is pleased to announce that it has released a grant opportunity for agencies, SPOEs and independent providers as an effort to address recruitment and retention. Utilizing \$2.3 million of Indiana's appropriation of American Rescue Plan Act funding for IDEA Part C, First Steps has created a grant to recognize and support Indiana's early intervention workforce for their hard work in maintaining continuity of services for all children and their families during the public health emergency and their continued commitment to First Steps.

The purpose of this grant is to retroactively address COVID-19 related expenses and challenges. These include costs related to compensation and benefits, COVID-19 testing, personal protective equipment and other pandemic-related expenses. This grant is intended to provide agencies, SPOEs and independent providers the opportunity to stabilize their operations and address the difficulty in recruiting and retaining a highly skilled workforce.

Agencies, SPOEs and independent providers are required to attest that upon receipt of the grant, 75% of the total amount received will be passed through and utilized for workforce stabilization activities. These include retention bonuses for enrolled First Steps personnel (employees and independent contractors), recruitment of new personnel and other related retention activities.

We are excited for this opportunity to make such an investment in our personnel. Thank you again for your dedication to the infants, toddlers and families we support through First Steps.

Best,

Christina

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 special needs, state agency groups, early intervention service providers, legislators and others. [Click here to learn more about the ICC](#) and to view agendas and minutes of previous meetings, in both English and Spanish. The [next ICC meeting is May 11 at 10 a.m. Eastern Time](#) ([the ICC agenda](#) is also posted on the [DDRS Commissions & Councils page](#)).



EI Hub

First Steps Early Intervention Case Management System

IN EI Hub rolls out Phase II

Please continue to contact the EI Hub help desk should you have questions or need assistance by emailing infirststeps@pcgus.com or calling 877-522-1065 weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time. The help desk is open extended hours on Tuesday and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern time.



Check out all the updates to our First Steps website! We have added outreach materials and information on steps for those interested in seeking a career in First Steps. Visit www.Firststeps.in.gov.

Differentiated Monitoring and Support 2.0

Throughout the upcoming year, Indiana will be participating in federal monitoring

Throughout the upcoming year, Indiana will be participating in Differentiated Monitoring and Support by the Office of Special Education Programs. We have added this new feature in our newsletter to update you, our stakeholders, on our progress. To begin, we would like to share some very helpful and informative websites the state office relies on as the lead agency. We would encourage you to visit these websites, as they are a wealth of information.

The Office of Special Education programs

The Office of Special Education Programs is dedicated to improving results for infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities ages birth through 21 by providing leadership and financial support to assist states and local districts.

The Infant Toddler Coordinators Association

ITCA offers resources that help to improve the lives of infants and toddlers with special needs. ITCA's mission is carefully structured to support the Early Intervention System for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities of the IDEA Part C.

The Early Childhood Personnel Center

ECPC is focused on building awareness of an integrated, comprehensive system of personnel development for the early childhood workforce in every state.

The Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center

The ECTA Center supports state Part C and Section 619 programs in developing high-quality early intervention and preschool special education service systems, increasing local implementation of evidence-based practices, and enhancing outcomes for young children with disabilities and their families.

FGRBI professional development is underway!

Uses caregiver coaching to support parent and child interactions

Family Guided Routines Based Intervention, or FGRBI, professional development is underway in Indiana! This opportunity for early intervention providers utilizes caregiver coaching to support parent and child interactions. Early intervention providers encourage parent-implemented intervention that is meaningful to each family and embedded within a family's routines and daily activities. As part of the training process, providers work through interactive online learning modules to learn the FGRBI frameworks of SS-OO-PP-RR and the Family 5Q.

The first module includes content on setting the stage, observation and opportunities to embed, problem-solving and planning, and reflection and review. The Family 5Q module encourages participants to consider a set of questions that

support family engagement by tailoring information and practices to create a "just right" fit for each family. A series of webinars support participants in processing the



module information and in preparing for smaller professional learning communities. In these communities, providers will take part in interactive learning and discussion in small

groups. Participants will submit home visit video clips for review among the PLC members and work with facilitators to evaluate and adjust their own early intervention practices.

The first cohort of participants kicked off their professional development experience in January with a second group to begin in May. We are excited to begin this training and grow our network of FGRBI trained providers throughout Indiana's First Steps early intervention system!

Looking for more information? Check out the FGRBI topics at the June conference! Take a look the resource materials on the IU Early Childhood Center FGRBI

resource page. Visit the [FGRBI website](#) or the [First Steps website](#). Contact Katherine Hargreaves at khargre@iu.edu.

SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 9-10, 2022

INDIANA EARLY INTERVENTION CONFERENCE



First Steps is partnering with Infancy Onward to bring together national and local experts on early intervention for the virtual [two-day conference](#).

[Register here.](#)





CDC's "Learn the Signs. Act Early" Milestones

The Centers for Disease Control recently released an updated version of the developmental milestones for children from birth to age five. The evidence-based process used to review and update these materials is described in full detail in an article published in the *Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics*.

The updates accomplish several goals. First, there are two additional developmental checklists, at ages 15 and 30 months, which provide a timely resource for physicians and pediatricians at all AAP-recommended well child visits.

Second, developmental milestones are assigned to ages when most children, 75% or more, would have reached them and thereby reducing the "wait and see" approach to taking action on missed milestones.

Finally, the revisions address parents' and early childhood professionals' feedback that having very similar milestones across checklist ages was confusing. It is also important to remember the difference between surveillance, which is what these milestones are, and screening, which requires the use of an evidence-based tool.

The updates will be integrated into new print versions of the CDC materials to be distributed throughout the state. In the meantime, as always, these free materials are available online at www.cdc.gov/actearly.

To download the free [CDC Milestone Tracker app](#) on mobile devices, search "CDC Milestone Tracker." The app and all CDC [Learn the Signs, Act Early materials](#) are currently available in both English and Spanish with other translations planned. They are a great resource for parents of young children and professionals alike.

You may also visit the [Child Care Answers website](#) for more information. You can find information specific to Indiana at the [Act Early Indiana program website](#). We welcome you to follow and like [ActEarlyIndiana](#) on Facebook.

MILESTONES MATTER: LET'S TALK ABOUT THEM!

MILESTONES AT 4 MONTHS

- Begins to babble
- Responds to affection



MILESTONES AT 6 MONTHS

- Likes to play with others
- Responds to own name



MILESTONES AT 9 MONTHS

- Has favorite toys
- Understands "no"



MILESTONES AT 1 YEAR

- Tries to say words you say
- Waves "bye-bye"



MILESTONES AT 2 YEARS

- Begins to run
- Begins to sort shapes, colors



MILESTONES AT 3 YEARS

- Knows name and age
- Climbs and runs well



Get free milestone checklists for these ages and more at www.cdc.gov/Milestones or by calling 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636).

DEC RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

Everyday interactions matter*

Interactions are the basis for all children's learning

There are seven professional practices as recommended by the Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Early Childhood. In this issue of *First Steps*, we will share information about a very important practice in the lives of young children, that of interaction.

It is crucial to a young child's development that interactions be sensitive and responsive. Interactions with family members, caregivers, peers and their environment lay the foundation for promoting social emotional competency, thinking and play skills and language development.

Interactions are the basis for all children's learning. These recommended practices for interactions are critical strategies to foster healthy social-emotional development, cognitive development, problem solving skills, self-help skills and determination for children who have or are at risk for developmental delays and/or disabilities.

The Division of Early Childhood recommends the following specific practices related to interaction to support and promote specific child outcomes across a variety of environments, routines and activities with young children. Best practice dictates that providers will coach family members, caregivers, siblings and peers in using sensitive and responsive ways to interact with the child and encourage social emotional development.

The practices will vary according to the child's developmental levels

and cultural and linguistic background:

- ▶ Early intervention providers will promote the child's social-emotional development by observing, interpreting and responding to the child's emotional expressions.
- ▶ Early intervention providers will promote and guide the child's social development by encouraging the child to initiate and/or sustain positive interactions with other children and adults during routines and activities through modeling, teaching and feedback.
- ▶ Early intervention providers will promote the child's receptive and expressive communication development by observing, interpreting, responding to and providing natural consequences for the child's verbal and non-verbal communication and by using language to label and expand the child's requests, needs, preferences or interests.
- ▶ Early intervention providers will promote the child's cognitive development by observing, interpreting and responding intentionally to the child's exploration, play and social activity by joining in and expanding on the child's focus, actions and intent.



- ▶ Early intervention providers will promote the child's problem-solving skills by observing, interpreting and scaffolding in response to the child's own levels of autonomy and self-regulation.

*This article has been adapted from the DEC Recommended Practices. For more information, please visit [the DEC website](#). To learn about the Indiana DEC chapter, you may contact the chapter president at idec.sped@gmail.com and follow [Indiana DEC on Facebook](#).



First Steps webinars and trainings, including those required for initial credentialing, are now located on the [IN EI Hub Learning Management System](#). All registered IN EI Hub users are encouraged to visit the [Learning Management System](#) often, as we will be posting new trainings and professional development opportunities. [Watch this video](#) to learn more about the LMS!

Great news! The Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System, or AEPS, recorded webinar is available on the [IN EIHub LMS](#). The Assessment, Evaluation and Programming System 2 live online training required for all eligibility determination team members is scheduled for Friday, June 24 from 9 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Eastern time. You may register via the IN EIHub LMS. If you have any questions, you may email bblain@pediplay.com.

As we continue to refine the processes and procedures in our First Steps program, we are not currently offering Service Coordination 102/103 and Direct Service Provider 102/103 trainings at this time. We will notify personnel when those become available. Stay tuned!

You may still access trainings posted on the [I-LEAD platform](#) hosted by the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning and other applicable early intervention professional development trainings outside of the LMS. However, as documented in the First Steps Policy Manual, please remember to retain your certificate of attendance documentation for a period of seven years.

If you are looking for online trainings for professional development hours, you may [visit I-LEAD](#) and register for an account. When registering, identify as an “early intervention provider.” If you have questions regarding I-LEAD, contact their customer services representatives directly 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., Eastern time.

- **May trainings and events** by the Indiana Deaf-Blind Services. The [Indiana Deaf-Blind Services Project](#) provides technical assistance, training and support for children and young adults who have a combined vision and hearing loss, their families and educators who work with these individuals.
- **CMI extended hours event, May 10.** On Tuesday, May 10, from 4–7 p.m., the Children’s Museum of Indianapolis will be hosting their second extended hours event for visitors with disabilities and/or sensory sensitivities. Some music will be turned down or off, there will be edited lighting effects in some areas and quiet areas with fidget items. There is a limited capacity of 250 and [registration is required](#) by Monday, May 9. The museum will be open to the public until 5 p.m. The cost is \$6 per person (museum members and children under 2 are free).
- **57th Annual Riley Children’s Health Pediatric Conference, May 11–12.** This [virtual conference](#) brings together pediatric primary care providers to learn more about current evidence-based diagnostic and management tools pertinent to their pediatric practice. [Please register online.](#)
- **2022 Indiana Early Intervention Conference, June 9–10.** First Steps, Infancy Onward and the Early Childhood Center will be holding an [annual statewide conference](#) for their dedicated personnel. This special conference brings Indiana’s early interventionists and families together to share, learn and network. The conference will be held virtually on June 9–10, 2022—[register today!](#) The cost is \$30.



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

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](#).

Indiana First Steps is on social media!

Please like and follow us on Facebook  and Instagram 

You can find us by searching **@FirstStepsIndiana**. For other outreach and marketing materials, please visit our [online toolkit](#).