



**The Newsletter for
Indiana Early Intervention**



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**Spreading the word
about First Steps**

*Working to promote early intervention
and aid in the important work you do*

Dear Stakeholders,

Since the exciting launch of the new First Steps brand, we have been exploring ideas for how to best share information about the program and connect with our stakeholders, personnel and, most importantly, our families. We are thrilled to announce the logo and milestone handout were just the beginning of our work to promote First Steps on a large scale. We know how critical it is for children to receive early intervention as soon as possible. Our goal is to find all eligible children and have them referred to First Steps at the first signs of delay so they and their families can get the most out of our services and supports. To achieve this initial goal, we are working with marketing and communications professionals to spread the word about First Steps.

Not only will the state office be using social media for the first time ever, but we will also use advertisements and news media to reach Hoosier families at a level that has never been done before. Throughout the coming months, we will be working to create and unveil videos, outreach materials and social media posts to both promote First Steps and aid in the important work you all do.

Thank you all for your partnership!

Best,

Christina

Let's get social!
Follow us on Facebook 
and Instagram 
@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 special needs, state agency groups, early intervention service providers, legislators and others. To learn more about the ICC and to view agendas and minutes of previous meetings, in both English and Spanish, [click here](#). The ICC will host its **next quarterly meeting on Nov. 10, 2021**, From 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., Eastern time. The meeting will be hosted virtually on Zoom and is open to the public. All are welcome. To join the meeting, please [click this Zoom link](#).



EI Hub

First Steps Early Intervention Case Management System

Indiana Early Intervention Hub continues to roll out and we are excited to announce that Phase II is coming soon!

Phase II of the EI Hub will consist of expanding the functionalities and capturing the full individual family service plan, including outcomes and child progress. Phase II will also allow for provider agencies to access the case management module and assign providers to authorizations.

The most exciting piece of Phase II is the launch of the family portal, which will allow families to review services provided and pay their cost participation fee online.

We want to thank all of our partners for their patience and continued support as we expand the EI Hub.

As always, if you have questions or need assistance, please contact the EI Hub helpdesk at 877-522-1065 or email infirststeps@pcgus.com weekdays 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Eastern time, with extended hours Tuesday and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Eastern time.

Family-Guided Routines-Based Intervention update

Planning a January 2022 rollout for 100 participants in the initial cohort

As we hope most of you have heard, we are moving ahead with Indiana's adoption of the Family-Guided Routines-Based Intervention practices of family and provider coaching and setting our plans in motion for a January rollout for a select 100 participants in this initial cohort.

Part C assistant director Jessica Tomasino and outreach manager Connie Young have recently met with agency directors across the state to explain the implementation process from a state leadership perspective and the team from the Early Childhood Center at the Institute for Disability and Community at Indiana University are currently hosting presentations for direct service personnel at the agency level. We hope these presentations are informative and clearly explain the state's commitment to FGRBI and outline the details of the plan moving forward. At this point, we are gathering interest from agencies and will further define who will participate in the first cohort in January.

For more information about FGRBI, please [visit the FGRBI home page](#) or look for information and handouts on the [First Steps FGRBI page on our website](#).





Membership in professional associations

What is the importance of professional associations and why should someone consider being a member? Professional associations are important hubs for “like-minded” people with common goals and interests to come together to network, share their voice on public policies and receive updates on best practice. Professional associations need you, too.

Members are the lifeblood and keep the association alive and strong. The [website CauseIQ](#) declares there are more than 45,000 trade or professional associations in the United States. One of the biggest benefits of a professional association is that the many members can act as one voice to advocate and give substance to issues that pertain to their field. According to an [article in Naylor Association Solutions](#), the reasons people join professional associations vary. For example, many members join for the access to resources, conferences and professional development opportunities.



Others may join to network with their colleagues. Many professional associations offer job banks with postings specifically centered in a particular field. It can look very impressive on a resume if you are able to list that you are a member of your professional organization or even that you hold a role on the association’s governing board. Some associations offer professional liability insurance and student memberships which can be less expensive. Joining as a student is a great time and opportunity to learn about your chosen field and make important professional contacts.

Membership in a professional association can definitely have its benefits. However, it is completely voluntary and it is up to you to join or not. Below is a list of early intervention-related professional associations:



[The Division for Early Childhood](#)

The Division for Early Childhood is an international membership organization for those who work with or on behalf of young children with disabilities and other special needs and their families.



[Zero to Three](#)

The mission of Zero to Three is to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life by supporting the caring adults who touch the lives of infants and toddlers.



[National Association of Social Workers](#)

The National Association of Social Workers works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards and to advance sound social policies.



[Indiana Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#)

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world’s largest organization of food and dietetics practitioners with an array of benefits to meet the needs of members.



[Indiana Psychological Association](#)

The Indiana Psychological Association advances psychology as a science, profession and means of promoting public welfare. IPA is the largest organization representing scientific and professional psychology in Indiana.



[Indiana Physical Therapy Association](#)

APTA is a community of 100,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and physical therapy students which serves through advocacy and public awareness and connects thought leaders and peers.



[Indiana Occupational Therapy Association](#)

The Indiana Occupational Therapy Association provides professional support for members to promote health, prevent disability and to enhance quality of life and life satisfaction in the community at large.



[Indiana Speech-Language-Hearing Association](#)

Indiana Speech-Language-Hearing Association advocates for the right of communication and empowers members to provide life-changing communication, swallowing and hearing services to the people of Indiana.

DEC RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

Family engagement

Promoting the active participation of families in decision-making related to their child

In each issue of the *First Steps* newsletter, we will be featuring a specific recommended practice of the Division of Early Childhood of the Council for Exceptional Children. Grounded in evidence-based research and best practices, the purpose of the DEC recommended practices is to guide families and early interventionists in the most effective ways to promote the development of young children, birth through five years of age, who have or are at-risk for developmental delays or disabilities and to improve their learning outcomes. The recommended practices support the family and children's access and participation in inclusive settings and natural environments, as well as address cultural, linguistic and ability diversity.

There are eight recommended practices: Leadership, assessment, environment, family, instruction, interaction, teaming and collaboration and transition. This first installment will include family engagement. We are particularly excited about this topic as we are currently rolling out the family-

guided routines-based intervention training statewide and, as our new logo highlights, the family is central to everything thing we do in early intervention in Indiana.

Family practices refer to ongoing activities that promote the active participation of families in decision-making related to their child, lead to the development of a service plan or support families in achieving the goals they hold for their child and the other family members.

Family practices encompass three themes:

- ▶ **Family-centered practices:** Practices that treat families with dignity and respect; are individualized, flexible and responsive to each family's unique circumstance; provide family members complete and unbiased information to make informed decisions; and involve family members in acting on choices to strengthen child, parent and family functioning.
- ▶ **Family capacity-building practices:** Practices that include the participatory opportunities and



DEC Recommended Practices



Enhancing Services
for Young Children
With Disabilities
and Their Families

experiences afforded to families to strengthen existing parenting knowledge and skills and promote the development of new parenting abilities that enhance parenting self-efficacy beliefs and practices.

- ▶ **Family and professional collaboration:** Practices that build relationships between families and professionals who work together to achieve mutually agreed upon outcomes and goals that promote family competencies and support the development of the child.

For more information on the DEC recommended practices, please visit the [DEC website](#).

SAVE THE DATE: JUNE 9-10, 2022

FIRST STEPS CONFERENCE



First Steps is looking for conference committee planning members! Volunteer to be a part of this fun committee to plan the 2022 First Steps Conference. We need your voice! Committee members help to recruit exhibitors and sponsors and make decisions about keynote speakers, conference breakout sessions, swag items and food. We would love to have you join us! Contact Anto Barces at abarces@iu.edu or Joy Jones at jsj5@iu.edu for more information and/or to let us know you would like to be involved.



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!

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.

- **Infancy Onward Celebrating Babies social and networking event, Oct. 22, 2021.** Join [Infancy Onward](#) Friday, Oct. 22 from 6 to 8 p.m. Eastern time at Tinker House Events for an in-person [silent auction and networking event](#), “Supporting first relationships together,” supporting infant and early childhood mental health!
- **HANDS in Autism one-day Intensive Paraprofessional, Assistant and Support Personnel Training, Friday, Nov. 12, 2021.** Description Join the HANDS in Autism® team for an intensive workshop for paraprofessionals, assistants and support personnel that focuses on providing hands-on experience and coaching in a simulated setting. While the program includes traditional instructional methods such as lectures and discussion, the emphasis of the workshop is building increased knowledge and skill of the process to support students with varying level of disability and need in achieving maximum success. [Learn more about this one-day training on our website.](#)
- **HANDS in Autism Transition to Adulthood, Employability and Post-Secondary Inclusive Practices, Dec. 1–3, 2021.** This three-day intensive training for specialists supporting individuals with ASD and related disabilities across community settings includes topics such as proactive supports, workplace and community accommodations, goal setting, skills assessment and teaching hands-on practice, coaching and feedback within simulated and live job settings. [Learn more about this three-day training on our website.](#)
- **Save the date! The Early Childhood Special Education Promoting Positive Outcomes conference, April 19-20, 2022. Call for proposals!** “Shaping a Better Future Through Effective Inclusion, Collaboration and Transition” will be held [in person in Bloomington, Ind.](#) Consider submitting a proposal for a traditional 75-minute session or a poster presentation. Proposals focused on inclusion, collaboration or transition are preferred in keeping with the conference theme, but other topics will be considered. Practitioners are particularly encouraged to submit a proposal to present. Proposals are due by Wednesday, Dec. 1, 2021. To submit a proposal or if you have additional questions, please contact Sue Dixon at sudixon@iu.edu.
- **Indiana First Steps Conference, June 9–10, 2022. Call for proposals!** First Steps is partnering with Indiana University’s Early Childhood Center to bring together national and local experts on early intervention for a two-day conference on in Bloomington, Ind. To present your evidence-based research or innovative ideas at the conference, please submit a proposal. Submissions will be accepted until Dec. 15, 2021. [Submit a proposal here.](#)

Indiana Pregnancy Promise Program

Aims to identify pregnant Medicaid beneficiaries with OUD as early as possible

The Indiana Pregnancy Promise Program is a new statewide initiative implemented by the Family and Social Services Administration on July 1, 2021. The goal of the Pregnancy Promise Program is to achieve positive outcomes for parents and infants impacted by opioid use disorder by offering services and support beginning in pregnancy and extending through 12 months postpartum.

Indiana was one of only 10 states to receive this grant award, and the program is fully funded by the centers for Medicare and Medicaid services and the department of health and human services. The Pregnancy Promise Program is a free, voluntary program which aims to identify pregnant Medicaid beneficiaries with OUD as early as possible in their pregnancy.

The program offers comprehensive case management and care coordination services and connects partici-

pants with prenatal and postpartum care, mental health support, OUD treatment/recovery services and addresses health related social needs such as housing, nutrition, transportation and other safety needs. To be eligible for the Pregnancy Promise Program, an individual must be pregnant or within 90 days of the end of their pregnancy, have current or past opioid use, and must be eligible for Medicaid health coverage.

Anyone can make a referral to the Pregnancy Promise Program at any time by visiting www.pregnancypromise.in.gov and completing the brief [online referral form](#) or by calling the toll-free number 888-467-2717 or local 317-234-5336. Individuals may self-refer to the program or a family member, friend or loved one could make a referral. Professionals and health care providers are encouraged to refer individuals to this program.

Once the referral is received, the individual will be contacted and asked to provide their consent to participate. When an individual is enrolled in the Pregnancy Promise Program, they will be matched with a case manager through their managed care health plan with Anthem, CareSource, MDwise or Managed Health Services. The Pregnancy Promise Program case managers provide screenings, assessments and develop individualized care plans to help participants access the medical and social supports they and their infants need to be healthy and well.

Additional information regarding this program and referrals can be found at www.pregnancypromise.in.gov, through email at pregnancy-promise@fssa.in.gov or by calling toll-free at 888-467-2717 or local at 317-234-5336.

Indiana Pregnancy Promise Program

**Promoting Recovery from Opioid use:
Maternal Infant Support and Engagement**



How can the Pregnancy Promise Program and First Steps work together?

- ▶ The Pregnancy Promise Program case managers can refer infants impacted by opioid use to their local First Steps services.
- ▶ First Steps providers can share Pregnancy Promise Program outreach materials with families and make referrals when needed.
- ▶ Pregnancy Promise Program case managers and First Steps providers can collaborate on behalf of families to ensure alignment of services and the best possible outcomes for parents and infants.
- ▶ First Steps staff and Pregnancy Promise Program staff can participate together in the virtual provider trainings offered by Indiana University Project Echo trainings for best practices supporting infants and pregnant individuals impacted by opioid use disorder.



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](#).



Celebrate Babies Week

October 18–22, 2021

Take time out of your busy schedule to celebrate the incredible work you do supporting and advocating for infants, toddlers and their families!

#Celebratebabies2021