



**The Newsletter for
Indiana Early Intervention**

Early Intervention Conference

Record 800 people in attendance

Dear Stakeholders,

We were thrilled so many were able to join us for the 2022 Indiana Early Intervention Conference last month. First Steps partnered with Infancy Onward to host this event. We had a record 800 people in attendance, which included First Steps personnel and leadership, infant and early childhood mental health professionals and champions, early care and education professionals, as well as many families of children receiving or have received early intervention services. First Steps and Infancy Onward would like to thank the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community's Early Childhood Center team, IU Conferencing, the conference committee members, sponsors and all our presenters and keynote speakers. We believe strongly it is important to create an experience where professionals and family members can come together, learn from one another, share ideas and best practices, network and continue to enhance their early intervention knowledge and skills. We hope all those who attended enjoyed the more than 90 speakers and 60 breakout sessions, enriching their practice and taking time to recharge. We truly appreciate the work you do with infants, toddlers and their families.

As has been tradition at our statewide conference, we took time to recognize many individuals for their leadership, dedication and excellence in service to First Steps this past year. We thank you all for your outstanding leadership, support and partnership. Congratulations to the 2022 First Steps Excellence in Service Award winners. For a complete list of this year's winners, see [page 6](#).

We also awarded Dr. Michael Conn-Powers a First Steps Lifetime Achievement Award for his years of service to early intervention and early childhood education. We are honored to call Dr. Conn-Powers colleague, mentor and friend. He is a great thought partner, willing to think big, bold and different and push back and provide alternative solutions as appropriate. He has spent his career as a fierce advocate for children and families and the early intervention and early care and education systems. Dr. Conn-Powers is retiring as the director of the Early Childhood Center at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, Indiana University, Bloomington. Please join me in thanking and honoring Dr. Michael Conn-Powers. We wish you well in your retirement. On behalf of all my early intervention colleagues and Hoosier children and families, a huge thank you!

Best,

Christina



Christina Commons
First Steps director

First Steps
state team

Christina Commons
Director

Jessica Tomasino
Assistant director

David Brandon-Friedman
Policy director

Maggie McCall
Director of Quality Assurance

Sondra Tarter
Program services

Constance Young
Director of Training and Outreach

In this issue:

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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 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 **Wednesday, Sept. 14 at 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m. EDT.**



EIHub

First Steps Early Intervention Case Management System

EIHub updates

We would like to keep our stakeholders informed of the work we are doing behind the scenes to enhance the First Steps case management system.

We are currently in the development stage of adding progress reports and reviewing the process to enter the Individual Family Service Plan in the IN EIHub. Once IFSPs are added to EIHub, services will be linked to child and family outcomes. Those outcomes will then populate directly onto service logs.

Regarding the speed of the IN EIHub, the development team continues to monitor the system for speed issues and make adjustments when possible.

And finally, as we work to remove R63.3 as an available ICD code selection in the system, users should not add R63.3 to a child's record in Case Management or select it as a code in Service Logging. To update ICD codes associated with the child's record, EIHub users are asked to contact their System Point of Entry office or the EIHub Helpdesk.

When users experience issues in terms of system speed or another matter related to the EIHub, they may notify the help desk by emailing infirststeps@pcgus.com or calling 877-522-1065 weekdays, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET. The help desk is open extended hours on Tuesday and Wednesday from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. ET.

New staff team member

Welcome, David Brandon-Friedman



David graduated with a Bachelor of English from Indiana University Purdue University, Fort Wayne and is currently pursuing a Master of Public Affairs in Policy Analysis degree. He began his career with the state eight years ago as part of the First Steps team primarily addressing dispute

resolution and federal reporting. Most recently David worked as a Procurement Consultant within the Indiana Department of Administration. Most of his work focused on negotiating bids and managing projects on behalf of social service agencies such as, Family and Social Services Administration and the Department of Child Services.

David is excited to be able to integrate his experience and knowledge of various State and Federally mandated programs with his familiarity of First Steps.

David also keeps up with his busy family: his husband, Richard, a very active social work professor and their extremely energetic ten-year-old son, Edwin. David's personal passion is literature, and he can be seen carrying a novel everywhere he goes to sneak in just a few more pages when time permits. He encourages anyone looking for a book recommendation to reach out!

Welcome back, David!

FGRBI: What's happening now?

Professional development sequence activities

The Early Childhood Center at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community is working with Florida State University to roll out the Family Guided Routines Based professional development sequence with Indiana First Steps providers. Here is a list of activities and events that have been happening.

Fall 2021

An introductory FGRBI presentation was offered to all agencies.

A limited number of providers associated with agencies that expressed interest and demonstrated readiness were invited to begin the very first cohort of the professional development sequence.

January 2022

Cohort 1A of the FGRBI Professional Development sequence kicked off with a welcome webinar.

Spring 2022

Cohort 1A participants completed online modules and participated in a series of webinars to begin learning the principles of FGRBI.

May 2022

An introductory webinar was offered for service coordinators and eligibility determination team members which is now available on the Learning Management System.

June 2022

Cohort 1A participants have joined Professional Learning Communities, where they meet monthly through November with peers to collaborate around the implementation of FGRBI practices and key indicators.

A second cohort of providers from the initial group of agencies that expressed interest and demonstrated readiness kicked off Cohort 1B with a welcome webinar.

Ongoing

Three Early Childhood Center staff members are continuing their training to reach the level of FGRBI master coach and are recruiting individual providers to engage in smaller group opportunities to work toward fidelity in the implementation of their FGRBI practice (trios).

Are you an agency leader that still needs to schedule an introductory webinar for your providers? Please contact Nancy Simmons at nasimmon@iu.edu. Perhaps you are an agency leader who is interested in enrolling a small group of providers in a future cohort. If so, please contact Katherine Hargreaves at khargre@iu.edu.

If you are intrigued and want to learn more information on FGRBI, please visit the [FGRBI website](http://fgrbi.com) (fgrbi.com) or the [First Steps website](#).

DEC RECOMMENDED PRACTICE

Teaming and collaboration

Then assessment, instruction and transition

Indiana's First Steps program places a high value on teaming and collaboration. It is important for service coordinators, eligibility determination team members, direct service providers, the child's physician, and family members to work together on behalf of the child and their family. Communication is the utmost of importance in the provision of home- and community-based services. The Division of Early Childhood of the national Council for Exceptional Children identifies teaming and collaboration as one of the recognized recommended practices for early intervention and in this issue of the First Steps newsletter we will outline those crucial practices.

Educational programs and services for young children who have or are at risk for developmental delays and disabilities naturally require the involvement of multiple adults to ensure a child has what she/he needs to be successful. The quality of the relationships and interactions among these adults affects the success of these programs. Teaming and collaboration practices are those that promote and sustain collaborative adult partnerships, relationships and ongoing interactions to ensure that programs and services achieve desired child and family outcomes.

The most effective early intervention teams include families as an essential member along with practitioners from multiple disciplines as needed. The teaming and collaboration practices we present incorporate strategies for interacting and sharing knowledge and expertise in ways that are respectful, supportive, enhance capacity and are culturally sensitive.

Recommended practices for teaming and collaboration

Service coordinators and early intervention providers representing multiple disciplines and families work together as a team to plan and implement supports and services to meet the unique needs of each child and family.

Service coordinators, early interventionists and families work together as a team to systematically and regularly exchange expertise, knowledge and information



to build team capacity and jointly solve problems, plan and implement interventions.

Service coordinators and early interventionists use communication and group facilitation strategies to enhance team functioning and interpersonal relationships with and among team members.

Team members assist each other to discover and access community-based services and other informal and formal resources to meet

family-identified child or family needs.

Service coordinators, early interventionists and families may collaborate with each other to identify one practitioner from the team who serves as the primary liaison between the family and other team members based on child and family priorities and needs.

So don't be afraid to reach out to an eligibility determination team member, fellow provider or service coordinator when you see a family may need support or assistance. Email, call or text when you want to touch base or have concerns. Often, great ideas are transferred among teammates and the family during IFSP meetings, so, by all means, plan to attend!

And always remember, "teamwork makes the dream work!"

"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team." —Phil Jackson

Open for interpretation

The role of interpretation and translation in early intervention

This new feature of our *First Steps* newsletter will be dedicated to the oftentimes overlooked role of interpretation and translation in early intervention.

As many are aware, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act defines “native language” and establishes standards for when conversations and written documents must be conveyed in the language that is used by the family and their child. As we explore this wide-ranging topic, we spoke with Magda Novoa, a certified medical interpreter who has been working with First Steps families since 2014. Magda shared insights regarding a few key aspects that set the stage for deeper discussions that this feature will explore in the future.

One aspect to be aware of is the language we use around the need for interpretive services. As Magda pointed out, phrases such as “he/she doesn’t speak English” or “he/she doesn’t know English” are not appropriate and instead, one ought to utilize limited English proficiency. When working with families and individuals with limited English proficiency, it may be helpful to have an interpreter present. It is the interpreter’s role to convey information accurately and clearly to providers and/or the families with whom we work. These services can be provided either on-site in person or via video or by telephone.

Magda also pointed out that there are some roles and concepts that should be explained more explicitly. First, she noted that it is important to “keep in mind that an interpreter is not the same as a translator.” They

are commonly confused; however, an interpreter is “interpreting” via listening and speech, whereas a translator “translates” written documents.

It is essential to note that not all interpreters can also do translation

interpreter has specific training and education to be able to provide clear and transparent information.

This feature will be ongoing and we will continue to explore interpretation services further. In our next issue, we will share some

tips about how to work with an interpreter. If you have any questions regarding language interpretation, you may email First Steps at firststeps.fssa@fssa.in.gov or

“When working with families and individuals with limited English proficiency, it may be helpful to have an interpreter present. It is the interpreter’s role to convey information accurately and clearly to providers and/or the families with whom we work.”

and not all translators can offer interpretation services. Additionally, it should be noted that bilingual speakers can be an auxiliary “interpreter” in First Steps but a certified medical

Magda Novoa at crazyhorsefan@hotmail.com. For more information, please visit [the National Board of Certified Medical Interpreters](#) or [the American Translators Association](#).





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 currently. We will notify personnel when those become available. Stay tuned!

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 trainings posted on the [I-LEAD platform](#) hosted by the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning, visit I-LEAD and register for an account with Access Indiana. 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–Thursday, 8 a.m.–7 p.m., or Friday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m. ET.

Excellence in Service Award winners

The Annual “Excellence in Service Award” is given to First Steps early intervention professionals who are nominated and recognized by their peers for being professional, dedicated and compassionate. They continuously go above and beyond for children and families, agencies and SPOEs. They are team players and great collaborators. They serve as resources and mentors to new providers and support their colleagues in learning new technology and are known for having positive attitudes, especially when it is not easy. They have also been acknowledged for ensuring children and families are cared for and for teaching families valuable advocacy skills.

This year’s awardees represent a variety of roles in early intervention, from managers to directors, to providers representing a variety of disciplines, schedulers, data entry and credential specialists, and a mentor team. We are honored to have the following individuals working in First Steps. Our 2022 recipients of the Excellence in Service Award are:



Kimmi Arnold	Kirsten Elliott	Angela Jarboe	Morna McCall	Melody Schoemann
Allison Baum	Kelly Ely	Kelsey Keefer	Pamala Mlagan	Mary Ellen Schreck
Nancy Beaty	Kelly Fairris	Kathy Kessler	Kjari Newell	Jeanna Sheriff
Lauren Clark	Jacqueline Frain	Megan Kochvar	Amy Nichols	Brandy Strubell
Rhonda Collier	Caitlin Frederick	Christa Kohne	Carrie Patterson	Darci Thordarson
Janell Collins	Lindi Gubbins	Morgan Langston	Lesley Pearson	Kathy VanSickle
Joanne Dean	Jennifer Hagemeyer	Lynette Leombruni	Christal Precht	Kailey Yocca
Angie Dick	Kathleen Hardy	Janet Manning	Nadine Risman	

- *Check out these early intervention podcasts!* Each episode of [EI on the Fly](#) focuses on an important topic discussed by two experienced EI professional development specialists. [The Earliest](#), by Zero to Three, takes a deep and personal look into mental health in the earliest years of life.
- **Hybrid Vision Impaired Inservice in America Project training course, August–December 2022.** Training for early intervention and early childhood personnel serving young children with blindness and visual impairments. Participants will meet virtually for four 3.5-hour sessions and participate in two in-person sessions for two full days each. [Register](#) by Aug. 2. For more information, contact Lisa Poff at lisa.poff@indstate.edu.
- **2022 Institute for Strengthening Families, Aug. 9–11.** [Registration for this virtual event](#) will be \$40 per person. Andrew Campbell presents “Stuck In the Middle With You: Shared Risks for Children and Pets in Domestically Violent Homes” and “More Than Words: The Emotional Maltreatment of Children.”
- **Indiana of Speech Language Hearing Association webinars, Aug. 19 and Nov. 3.** Free quarterly professional development events for ISHA members. [These ASHA-certified CEU events](#) are one hour long and cover a variety of topics.
- Save the dates... **First Steps Speaker Series, Aug. 31 and Nov. 30, 2022.** Aug. 31 from 12–1 p.m. EDT, Stephan A. Viehweg, MSW, ACSW, LCSW, IMH-E presents “Parent-engaged developmental monitoring using CDC’s developmental milestone checklists.” Nov. 30 from 12–1 p.m. EDT, Erin E. Barton, PhD, BCBA-D, presents “Supporting families with young children: Addressing and preventing challenging behaviors.” Contact FirstStepsWeb@fssa.in.gov for more info.
- **Run FASD virtual 5k, Sept. 9–25, 2022.** Bring awareness to Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders. This virtual 5k can be completed at a walk, run or roll or donate to support FASD. [Registration is open now!](#)
- **The ZERO TO THREE LEARN Conference, Sept. 12–15.** [The conference](#) welcomes early childhood professionals from across disciplines, geographies and backgrounds. This virtual experience is your opportunity to build relationships, reignite your passion and strengthen your practice. Early Bird [registration](#) ends on July 26.
- **38th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Disabilities and their Families, Sept. 27–30, 2022, Chicago.** Attend the premier [annual international conference](#) for professionals who work with young children with disabilities and their families. This is a joint conference from the International Society on Early Intervention Conference and the Division for Early Childhood. [Registration is now open!](#)
- **“No Small Matter,” Friday, Oct. 7, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. EST and “Social Emotional Learning for Early Childhood,” Friday, Oct. 28, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. EST.** Save the date for our two upcoming virtual viewing and discussion events, presented by Infancy Onward and sponsored by Indiana DEC. For questions, email idec.sped@gmail.com.
- **Infancy Onward’s 2nd Annual Silent Auction and Networking Event: “Supporting First Relationships Together,” Oct. 21.** [Come join us](#) from 6–8 p.m. EST at the Indiana Historical Society to network, eat, drink and bid on our silent-auction items to support babies!
- **2022 APTA Indiana Fall Conference, Ft. Wayne, Oct. 21–22.** The theme for [this year’s conference](#) is “Innovation.” Please contact APTA Indiana with questions at info@inapta.org.

Infancy Onward's 2nd Annual Networking Night

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10.21.2022
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Come join us to network, eat, drink
and bid to support babies!

.....
Dinner buffet + non-alcoholic drinks
included w/ ticket

(Full cash bar also available)

.....
Indiana Historical Society
450 West Ohio Street, Indianapolis, IN 46202
.....

Purchase tickets [HERE](#)

Infancy 
Onward



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](#).