

# The Indiana Department of Education

At the 2019 First Steps Conference on June 13–14, Christina Commons moderated an informative panel session with state partners and stakeholders who work alongside the First Steps program to provide needed

services for children and families. Each partner shared information about their program and how it intersects with First Steps. See below to read a summary of answers from the Indiana Department of Education.

**A brief description of the program** The Department of Education's Office of Special Education is responsible for ensuring a free, appropriate public education to each student beginning at age 3 and through age 22. We also ensure students who are in early intervention services are receiving a smooth transition to developmental preschool.

## Are there common misunderstandings or misconceptions of the Department of Education that should be corrected?

We are here to support not only schools, but parents and guardians as well. We also offer free professional development!

## How does the Department of Education intersect with First Steps?

The Department of Education works closely with First Steps not only on fulfilling the federal requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, ensuring a smooth transition from early intervention to developmental preschool, but also on a variety of initiatives and projects. We work on transition values, collaborate and contribute together with national early childhood organizations in the development of leadership competencies and support one another in communities of practice. The Department of Education is present on the First Steps Interagency Coordinating Council and supports the professional development efforts of First Steps.

## What is one thing First Steps providers should share with families about the Department of Education's Preschool Special Education services?

We want families to know that developmental preschool services exist. We want to answer parent's questions, provide opportunities to put worry at ease, and work alongside the family throughout their educational journey.

## How can First Steps providers work more effectively with the Department of Education?

It is so important that we continue to communicate and to do so effectively. The Case Conference Committee will determine the needs of the student, and to do this it is important to have involvement from providers who have come to know a child so well.



## 2019 FIRST STEPS CONFERENCE

STAKEHOLDER PANEL

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