

# INvision

## Indiana Division of Disability & Rehabilitative Services Newsletter

OUTGOING

### HOPE NOTES

## A message from Director Kylee Hope

*Jump off cliffs and develop your wings on the way down*



In his collection of speeches “If This Isn’t Nice, What Is? Advice for the Young,” Kurt Vonnegut said, “We have to continually be jumping off cliffs and developing our wings on the way down.” These are the perfect parting words from a fellow Hoosier as my last official day was June 4, 2021. To let you all know, it has been an honor, a privilege and a great opportunity to serve as director of the Division of Disability and Rehabilitation Services for the past five years.

Together we’ve built a culture of innovation, inclusion and intentional impact on an intersectional community that flourishes when empowered. We’ve seen the wings that unfurl when given the agency and the space to both fly and fail, and the freedom to live an existence

that includes the entire spectrum of human experiences and emotions.

May comfort, complacency, naysayers, mediocrity nor fear never keep us from jumping off the new cliffs we will inevitably face. And may our wings never be clipped in the pursuit of advocating for the rights of everyone to live a full life.

**Note:** In our next issue, you will meet our new DDRS director, Kim Opsahl, and learn about her vision for building on our collective culture of innovation and inclusion.

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### STORIES IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- **Bureau bits:** Updates from your First Steps, Bureau of Developmental Disabilities and Vocational Rehabilitation teams.
- **Making the LifeCourse work for you:** LifeCourseOnline is a life-planning solution that helps individuals and families of all abilities develop a unique vision for their future.
- **News you can use:** Family Voices Indiana’s Virtual Heart to Heart Conference is a day of learning and support for families who have children with special healthcare needs. The *Build, Learn, Grow* initiative is designed to help working families—regardless of income—connect to early care and education.
- **Featured story:** Erin McGuire is a self-advocate for the Arc of Indiana.
- **Events you don’t want to miss:** The quarterly Building Bridges events create direct avenues for individuals and families to share their feedback.

## First Steps: Advocacy and transition

The First Steps early intervention program serves children and their families from birth up until their third birthday. We help children meet their developmental milestones, by working alongside parents and caregivers to ensure that the infants and toddlers in First Steps have opportunities to succeed.



Some of the children in our program are with us upon leaving the hospital or the neonatal intensive care unit and some come into our program right before they turn 3 years old. In First Steps, we know our time with families is temporary, so one of our main goals is build strong advocacy skills in families so they can then become their child's best advocate. You are your child's most important caregiver; their first teacher and you know your child best.

From the very beginning of the early intervention process, parents are included in the program eligibility determination, family assessment tool completion and individual family service plan development. Early intervention is designed around the goals and outcomes chosen by the family for their child, and it is up to the service coordinators and ongoing providers to support the families and children to achieve those goals.

Another important occasion is the juncture at which a child exits or transitions from First Steps. This may be at any time a child is receiving services. It may be because they have met their milestones. It could be because the family is seeking support for different priorities for a while or it may be because the child

is turning three soon. Whatever the situation, plans need to be addressed and laid out to prepare for this transition. This may seem like an overwhelming and scary process for families, but our providers and service coordinators will help guide you and your family as you navigate your way.

There are several items to be aware of during this process. If your child is exiting the program before they turn three, your providers will complete an Exit Skills checklist. This is one of several reports that your service coordinator will share with you. It is also important to note that if you have any concerns that arise about your child's development you can always reach back out to your local system point of entry office and have your child evalu-

ated for eligibility at any time before the age of 3 years old. You are also entitled to a "service coordination only plan" so that the service coordinator can assist you with supports and services outside of First Steps.

In terms of transition to public school preschool services, our First Steps personnel want to ensure a "warm hand-off" and want to help you work with your local school district to make sure you know about the services they can provide for your child. This includes inviting the local special education services (IDEA Part B) representative or preschool coordinator to your child's transition planning meeting at least 90 days before your child's third birthday.

There will be some key differences between First Steps and preschool programs that are important for families to be aware of. First, the eligibility criteria for preschool services will be a change from the eligibility criteria used to determine First Steps services. More information can be found in "Navigating the Course," linked below.

There is some terminology that will change, too. What was once the IFSP will now be called an IEP, or Individualized Education Program, once in preschool. Services are provided to children in what was known in First Steps as the natural environment, but in preschool, it is called the least restrictive environment. Though there are pieces that will change, there are several that remain the same, but may feel a bit different. The most important constant between early intervention and preschool services is the role played by families to advocate for their children.

### Here are a few helpful links

[Navigating the Course: Finding Your Way through Indiana's Special Education Rules](#): The purpose of Navigating the Course is to provide an overview and a practical resource to help parents, advocates, school personnel and students understand the requirements of Indiana's special education rules, commonly known as Article 7. It is intended to serve as a companion guide and is not a substitute for Article 7.

[IN\\*SOURCE](#): IN\*SOURCE exists to help parents of children with disabilities navigate the complicated special education process in the state of Indiana.

[Understood For All](#): Understood is a non-profit dedicated to serving the millions of families of kids who learn and think differently. Since 2014, Understood has served millions of families of kids who learn and think differently. [Here are eight tips](#) to help you advocate for your child at school.

## Vocational Rehabilitation

On July 26, the Americans with Disabilities Act turned 31! This important legislation has been critical in ensuring individuals with disabilities are not discriminated against in several areas, including employment. Below are some helpful tips to consider if you need an accommodation in the workplace.

### When to disclose or ask for an accommodation

Generally, a person should disclose their disability when they need to request a reasonable accommodation for the workplace. Under the ADA, a person can request an accommodation at any time. This could be during the application process or while employed. There are situations when an applicant may need to disclose information about a disability during the early stage in the employment process. For example, if an accommodation is needed to complete an online application, participate in a job interview, or take an employment test, an applicant may need to disclose his or her disability to receive an accommodation.

### Pre-interview

If you have a visible disability, sharing the details pre-interview may be helpful.

Disclosing that you use a wheelchair may be helpful to the employer so the interview can be conducted in a meeting room with a door that is wide enough to accommodate the chair. Accommodations for interviews may include an accessible location for a person with a mobility impairment; a sign language interpreter for a person who is deaf; a reader for a person who is blind; and modified testing for a person with a learning disability.

### During the interview

Focus the interview on your qualifications and work experience. If you think your interviewers are wondering about your disability or worried if they will have to adjust responsibilities or the office layout it may be helpful to address those concerns. The interviewers cannot legally inquire if a person has a disability or medical conditions. If you'll need a wheelchair-friendly desk, a screen reader, a flexible schedule, or any changes to the office layout or supplies, it may make sense to share these with potential employers during the application process. Being specific can be helpful. After all, you may very well know more than

employers about what's required, and the costs involved. Before putting in an application, review the job description carefully to make sure you will be able to do the core responsibilities and to get a sense of any specific accommodations that will help you do your job.

### After the interview

If you land the job, congratulations! If there are accommodations that are needed it will be easier if your employers are aware. This is a good time to bring it up. For example, if you need daily breaks to administer medication giving your employer a heads-up is more helpful than surprising your new employer on the first day.

The above is not legal advice. It is impossible to nail down one right answer to the question about whether to disclose a disability during the application process. Content was compiled from the [Job Accommodation Network](#). You can obtain more information about the ADA and its requirements through the [U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission website](#).



## Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services

The Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services is excited to share information on our recent case management innovation project. As part of our waiver redesign efforts, we heard from several individuals and families whose experiences with case management varied greatly. One thing was clear, case management is a vital service that is responsible for supporting, connecting and empowering individuals and their families to live their vision of a good life. In an effort to make everyone's experience with case management a positive and impactful one, we are moving case management to a selective contracting waiver. This works in coordination of your current waiver and allows for greater consistency and quality in the delivery of case management services.

In addition to the administrative tasks that your case manager handles for you, quality case management involves:

- ▶ **Voice and choice**
  - Your voice and your choice are the most important and will be treated as such by your case manager.
  - Your case manager will recognize the importance of your long-term connections and relationships with others.
  - Your case manager will support you in making new connections and building more relationships.
  - Your case manager will support you in identifying your team.
  - Your case manager will support and encourage you in self-advocacy.
- ▶ **Person-centered**
  - Your case manager will advocate with you.
  - Your case manager will support you and the rest of your team in your journey toward your best life as you define it.
  - Your case manager will ensure that the focus of services and supports is about you and your desired outcomes.
  - Your case manager will help you understand your rights.
- ▶ **Strengths-based**
  - Your case manager will always think and talk about your strengths.
- Your case manager will assist you and your team in identifying and building on your strengths.
- Your case manager will ensure that your team focuses on your strengths and what you do well.
- Your case manager will help your team be collaborative, flexible and see value in differences.
- ▶ **Individualized**
  - Your case manager will ensure that your team develops and implements a set of strategies, supports and services that are unique to you.
  - Your case manager will problem solve with you and your team when there are bumps in the road.
  - Your case manager will help coordinate services and supports to achieve your good life.
  - Your case manager will help you access supports that are paid and non-paid.
- ▶ **Culturally competent**
  - Your case manager will always show respect for your values, beliefs, culture, identity and preferences.
  - Your case manager will interact in ways that demonstrate respect for diversity in expression, opinion and preference.
  - Your case manager will work with you and members of your team to ensure that culturally competent services and supports extend beyond the team meetings.
  - Your case manager will effectively and efficiently communicate with you by whatever means you prefer, including accommodating individuals with limited english proficiency.
- ▶ **Team-based collaboration**
  - Your case manager will coordinate and facilitate a team-based approach.
  - Your case manager will foster relationships and communication among all team members.
  - Your case manager will ensure that your team is supporting you in reaching your desired outcomes.
- ▶ **Improved connections**
  - Your case manager will be an advocate in supporting you.
- Your case manager will support you in navigating paid supports, non-paid supports and opportunities to form new connections, see new environments and allow for new experiences.
- Your case manager will be your partner in the process.
- ▶ **Unconditional**
  - Your case manager will not give up on you.
  - Your case manager will ensure your team's commitment to supporting you in your journey regardless of outside circumstances.
- ▶ **Outcome-based**
  - Your case manager will support you and your team in connecting your desired outcomes in your PCISP in your journey.
  - Your case manager will meet with you regularly to discuss what is currently happening in your life.
  - Your case manager will revise your PCISP as you achieve outcomes, grow or change your preferences.
  - Your case manager will be skilled in dispute resolution and be able to negotiate best solutions always keeping you first in mind.

BDDS believes that by moving to this model for case management, all individuals and families using waiver services can experience this type of quality case management. We do understand that change is scary so you may be asking what this means for you. It means:

- ▶ **You will continue to have a choice in your case management provider.**
- ▶ **Your waiver budget will not change nor be affected due to this change.**
- ▶ **The eligibility criteria for both waivers are not affected.**
- ▶ **You will not lose your waiver or any services as a result of this process.**

If you would like to learn more and to stay up to date on the process, please visit our Case Management Innovation webpage.

## LIFE DOMAINS AND STAGES

# LifeCourseOnline

*Subscription-based online format is a life-planning solution*

LifeCourseOnline is a life-planning solution that helps individuals and families of all abilities develop a unique vision for their future and identify what they need to pursue that vision to the fullest. This subscription-based online format is a tool to organize everything from your hope for the future to your daily schedule while helping you and your family find or better use existing supports and discover what it takes to live your good life.



When you first sign up for LifeCourseOnline you'll be guided through your LifeCourse charting session, a series of exercises designed to help you discover what it looks like to live your good life. You'll build your LifeCourse team, define your vision and identify the supports you need to take your next steps in life. LifeCourseOnline will then use these exercises to customize your account and will even create a series of resources that you and your team can access from your dashboard.

LifeCourseOnline can be used anywhere you have an internet connection and is designed to help people with supported-living needs of any age and ability. Check it out at [LifeCourseOnline](http://www.lifecourseonline.com).

LifeCourseOnline offers its users the ability to:

- ▶ Build your team and grant team members access to your account so you can work together to accomplish goals and make activities happen.
- ▶ Advocate for support using the “raise your hand” feature when you need support for an event and LifeCourseOnline will see who can lend a hand.
- ▶ Upload important documents and keep them stored on your dashboard with the ability to customize which team members can access them.
- ▶ Create and track personal goals so you and your team can reflect on your progress.
- ▶ Plan and schedule your events and activities with associated goals and see them in your built-in calendar.

**Daily Life and Employment:** What a person does as part of everyday life – school, employment, volunteering, communication, routines and life skills.

**Community Living:** Where and how someone lives—housing and living options, community access, transportation, home adaptation and modification.

**Safety and Security:** Staying safe and secure—finances, emergencies, well-being, decision making supports, legal rights and issues.

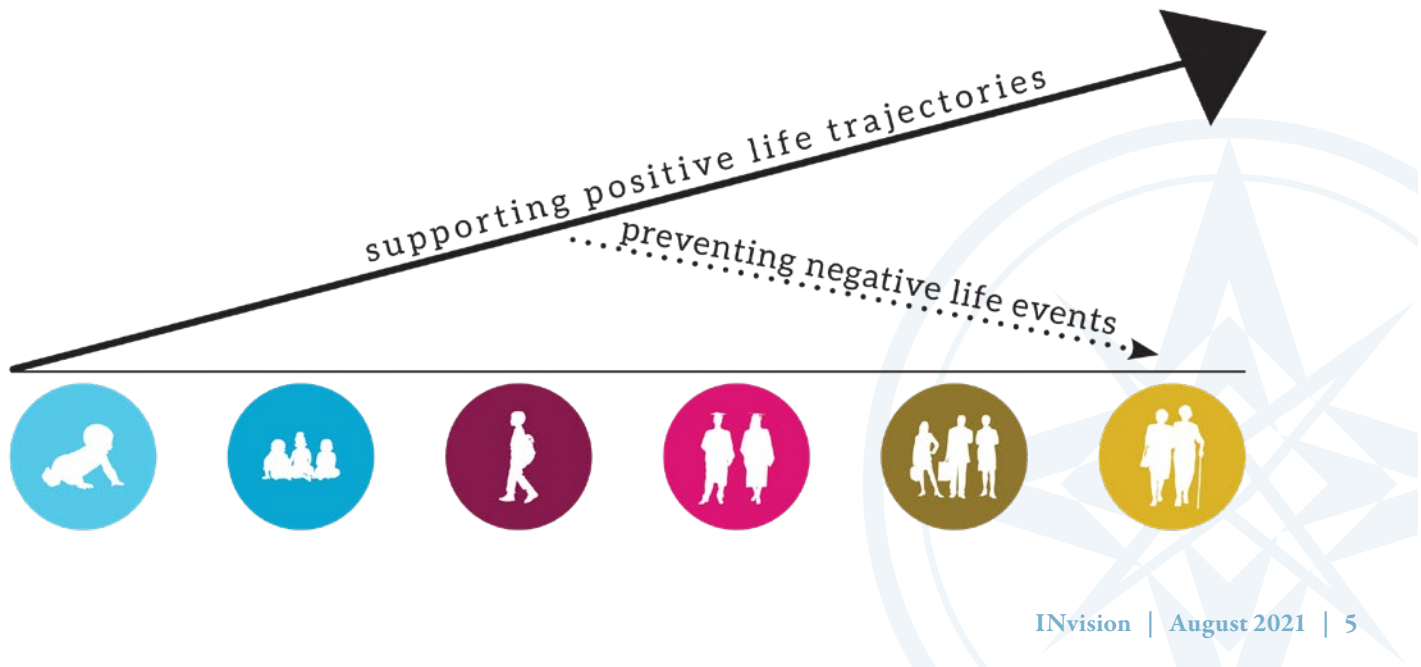
**Healthy Living:** Managing and accessing health care and staying well—medical, mental health, behavior, developmental, wellness and nutrition.

**Social and Spirituality:** Building friendships and relationships, leisure activities, personal networks and faith community.

**Advocacy and Engagement:** Building valued roles, making choices, setting goals, assuming responsibility and driving how one's own life is lived.

For more information on the LifeCourse framework and principles, visit: [www.lifecoursetools.com](http://www.lifecoursetools.com).

- ▶ Discover places by saving your favorite places and adding new ones suggested by other members of the LifeCourseOnline community.
- ▶ Keep growing by returning to your LifeCourse charting session at any time to update your vision and rechart your LifeCourse!



## Family Voices Indiana Heart to Heart Conference

*Virtual conference is a day of learning and support*

Family Voices Indiana provides information, training, and one-on-one support to families of children and youth with special health care needs. Family Voices Indiana's Virtual Heart to Heart Conference is a day of learning and support for families who have children with special healthcare needs and the professionals who serve them.

The day will start with our keynote speaker, Sue Badeau, then move

to 12 unique sessions throughout the day. You'll have the chance to network with other attendees by checking out the social groups. You'll also have the chance to interact with sponsors and exhibitors throughout the day.

Registration is now open and FREE for families. Spots are limited, so make sure you [register today](#).

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## Build, Learn, Grow initiative to help working families

*Regardless of income, families can connect to early care and education*

The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration *Build, Learn, Grow* initiative, has made 50,000 scholarships available to help get Hoosier children from families working in essential industries: regardless of income—enrolled in early care and education, summer learning or out-of-school care. Scholarships run from May through October 2021 and will cover up to 80% of the early care and education program's tuition for each child age 12 and younger. Information is available at [www.BuildLearnGrow.org](http://www.BuildLearnGrow.org).

For families to qualify for *Build, Learn, Grow* scholarships, an adult in the household must work in an essential business (examples include health care, human services, retail, restaurant and food service, essential infrastructure, media, manufacturing and

logistics, religious and charitable organizations and many others). Income guidelines are [outlined here](#). Families will qualify for The *Build, Learn, Grow* scholarship to cover 80% of their cost with incomes of up to 250% of the federal poverty level. Families with incomes between 251% and 400% of FPL will qualify for 60% of costs covered and those with incomes at 401% of FPL and above will qualify for 20% of costs covered.

Families should complete the *Build, Learn, Grow* Scholarship Fund application found here and submit it to their early care and education provider. Families not currently connected to an early care and education program will be able to find a list of participating programs on the *Build, Learn, Grow* website also on the eligibility page. All

providers who currently accept federal child care assistance are encouraged to enroll.

The scholarships are funded by more than \$101 million provided to Indiana by the federal Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, or CRRSA. To administer the *Build, Learn, Grow* scholarship program, the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning has partnered with Early Learning Indiana and Indiana Afterschool Network, the state's leading organizations supporting early care and education and out-of-school-time programs. Early care and education and out-of-school-time programs interested in receiving children with *Build, Learn, Grow* scholarships can learn more at [providers](#). [BuildLearnGrow.org](http://BuildLearnGrow.org).



## FEATURED STORY

# Advocacy has been a big part of Erin McGuire's life

*"People with intellectual disabilities should be able to stand up for themselves."*

My name is Erin McGuire. I am a person with an intellectual disability. I went to a private school in Wisconsin from 1990 until 1994. It was the school that Rosemary Kennedy went to. It was there that I decided I wanted to help people with disabilities. It was the influence from my time at this school that made we want to be an advocate.

I am a self-advocate for the Arc of Indiana. I serve on the Arc board of directors and many other boards and committees for the Arc of Indiana, including the Arc National Issues Committee, the Collaborative Workgroup and the Caregiver Advisory Committee for Oral Health for Hoosiers with Disabilities Project through Indiana Institute on Disability and Community Indiana University Bloomington.

Advocacy is important to me because people with intellectual disabilities should be able to exercise their rights and stand up for themselves. I love advocating for individuals with intellectual disabilities. I want to be their voice or help them find their own voice.

Part of advocacy is letting people know that they have a voice and that they have the right to use their voice. Not everyone with or without an intellectual disability knows that. People with intellectual disabilities should not be treated differently than anyone else. We should be listened to and treated the same as people without disabilities.

Advocacy has been a big part of my adult life. I am a single parent of a 22-year-old daughter with autism and epilepsy. I have been advocating for her since she was a little girl. I want my daughter to have the opportunities to build the life she wants for herself. I will continue to help create the opportunities for her.

I am inspired by other self-advocates locally and around the world. I started a self-advocacy group in west central Indiana that was paused due to the pandemic but will be resuming soon. I love to learn from other self-advocates and hope to one day advocate for individuals with intellectual disabilities on a national level.



## Survey participation needed from Hoosiers with disabilities

*Indiana Disability Justice wants to hear from you*



If you are a person with a disability in the state of Indiana, we want to hear from you. The Indiana Disability Justice has created a survey designed to identify whether people with disabilities in Indiana are experiencing sexual violence, sexual harassment and bodily restriction; and if people with disabilities in Indiana are experiencing access to information about bodily autonomy, sexuality and supported sexual and romantic decision-making.

The hope is that the preliminary assessment will shed light on the magnitude of healthful and harmful experiences people with disabilities in Indiana are experiencing, especially regarding sexual and romantic wellness. IDJ will work with

an advisory council and people with disabilities to develop strategies to address identified needs and enhance the strengths shared by Hoosiers with disabilities about their communities.

[Click here](#) for more information about the survey, who can take the survey, and participation options. Respond to the survey by [clicking here](#). You can reach Indiana Disability Justice by email at [INdisabilityjustice@gmail.com](mailto:INdisabilityjustice@gmail.com).



## Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration  
Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services  
402 W. Washington St., W453/MS 26  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

You can sign up to receive this newsletter by [clicking here](#).

For updated meeting information, as well as agendas and past meeting minutes, visit [the DDRS Commissions & Councils page](#).

The Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services is a program of the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration. If you have questions about DDRS programs and services, [visit us online](#).

Did you know that families can sign up to receive text messages and email updates from First Steps? Families will learn more about policy issues, how to become an effective advocate, how to be involved in your local planning and coordinating council, how to connect to events and groups, how to tell your family story and more. Go to [this site to sign up!](#)

## EVENTS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

Following are the current commission, council and public meetings that you may be interested in learning more about and/or attending in the future. To find the most current information, including next meeting dates and locations, [please click here](#).



## Building Bridges

These meetings are an opportunity for families and self-advocates to meet and speak with the Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services state staff. These sessions are an important part of the Bureau's efforts to create direct avenues for individuals and families to share their feedback. These meetings are solely for families and individuals with disabilities to provide a forum for constructive and valuable conversations on successes or concerns, as well as suggestions or input regarding BDDS programs and services. Keep an eye out for notice of the next scheduled meeting!

## INSILC public meeting

The Indiana Statewide Independent Living Council provides oversight of the Indiana State Plan for Independent Living and assists the Centers for Independent Living with the plan's implementation and coordination of services. For more information, visit [the Statewide Independent Living Council webpage](#).

## DDRS Advisory Council

The DDRS Advisory Council was established to assist the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services in ensuring that individuals with disabilities are as independent and self-sufficient as possible. For more information, visit the [DDRS Commissions & Councils webpage](#).

## ICC meetings

The Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities is the state's federally mandated early intervention council. The council is charged with advising and assisting DDRS in its responsibility to develop an early intervention system of the highest quality, balancing family-centered services with fiscal responsibility. The council is comprised of parents, state agency groups, early intervention service providers, legislators and others. For more information, visit [the DDRS Commissions & Councils webpage](#).

## Commission on Rehabilitation Services

The Commission on Rehabilitation Services works with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services' Vocational Rehabilitation Services on matters such as the effectiveness and customer satisfaction with the services provided to individuals participating in the VR program. The commission is also involved in matters affecting VR policies and procedures, goals and priorities, and the state plan. For more information, visit the [DDRS Commissions & Councils webpage](#).