



The Newsletter for
Indiana Early Intervention

April 2024

FirstSteps.IN.gov

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Importance of data – progress notes and exit skills inventory

Early intervention colleagues,

As dedicated early intervention providers in Indiana, we all share a common goal: supporting the healthy development of infants and toddlers who receive First Steps. Data collection on child outcomes through progress reports and the exit skills inventory play a crucial role in achieving this goal, and I want to take a moment to explain its importance.



Christina Commons
First Steps director

- 1. Ensuring effective programming:** Collecting data on child outcomes isn't just about checking boxes; it's about **measuring the impact of our services**. This data helps us understand **what works**. By analyzing progress across children, we can identify effective intervention strategies and best practices to guide future programming. It helps us identify **what needs improvement**. Data can reveal areas where our programs might fall short, prompting adjustments. We are also required to demonstrate how Indiana is **meeting federal requirements**. As mandated by IDEA Part C, this data collection ensures compliance and accountability.
- 2. Supporting individualized care:** Data serves as a valuable tool for IFSP teams to tailor interventions to each child's unique needs. By tracking progress towards **Individualized Family Service Plan goals**, we can both **monitor progress and empower families**. It helps us pinpoint areas where children are succeeding and highlights areas where they need additional support. By sharing data with families, it helps them understand their child's developmental progress and fosters informed decision-making and collaboration.
- 3. Addressing equity and informing policy:** Analyzing data across populations helps us identify potential **disparities in access to services or child outcomes**. This information is crucial for **addressing inequities**. We can use data to identify and target interventions to ensure all children have equal access to quality early intervention. It **informs policy and resource allocation**. These insights help us allocate resources more effectively.
- 4. Building trust and transparency:** By being transparent about the data we collect and its purpose, we **build trust** with families and **demonstrate our commitment** to accountability.

The data we report in progress reports and exit skills inventory is not just about numbers; it represents the effectiveness of the program for each child we serve. It is necessary to ensure all Indiana's infants and toddlers with disabilities receive the support they need to reach their full potential.

Thank you for your dedication to this important work!

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 delays and/or disabilities, state agency groups, early intervention service providers, legislators and others. The ICC meetings are open to the public. The next ICC meeting will be hosted in person on **Wednesday, April 10, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. EDT**. We will also have an online option to attend virtually via Zoom. Please [click here for meeting details](#).



EI Hub update

When we set out to design our new data system, we had great hopes and dreams for how this change would make all our work lives easier, provide easily digestible and readily available data and allow us to do what we do best—work with children and families.

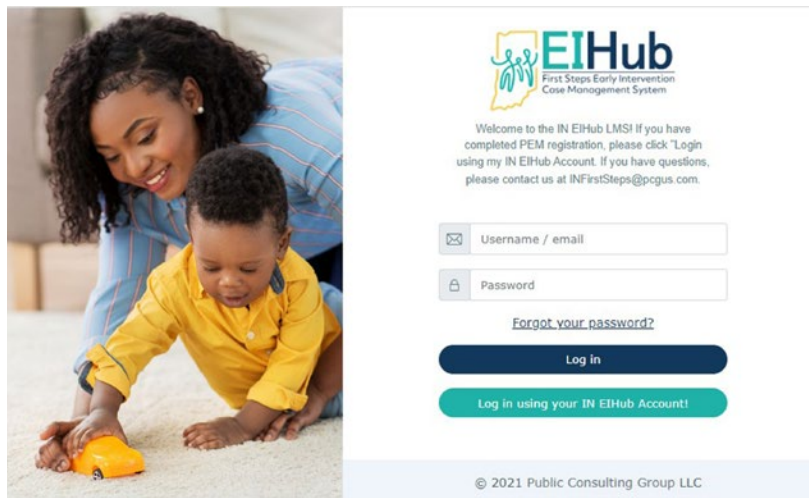
To be very clear, this is still the goal. We are currently working towards the largest release to the Case Management module since we went live in March 2021. The First Steps Quality Assurance Team has been hard at work testing for the last three months.


This upcoming release will have many items that users may not be able to see but will set us up to be in a better position to move more quickly with future improvements. With this release we will also update some drop-down menus, so the user

knows exactly what selection to make (e.g., eligibility status) and allow users to enter a new primary referral if a child returns to First Steps less than 45 days from their previous referral.

At the same time, we have also been testing a release for the Service Logging module. This will include correcting bugs that currently keep users from exporting reports, seeing authorizations assigned to the provider and assuring users can enter makeup visits according to policy.

Our state staff remains committed to transparency and accountability. Thank you for your understanding, patience and continued support as we navigate through these challenges together.





We are committed to dedicating resources to implementing these releases as soon as they are ready. We ask that EI Hub users contact the help desk by phone at **877-522-1065** or by email at [**infirststeps@pcgus.com**](mailto:infirststeps@pcgus.com) to submit a ticket as soon as possible when experiencing an issue. When direct users of the system report a problem, this helps us to identify the cause of the problem and prioritize the development work and updates.

Did you know?

IN EIHub Learning Management System empowers you on your professional journey

Attention all registered IN EIHub users! Did you know the First Steps EI Hub has a Learning Management System dedicated to the professional development and continuing education of Indiana's early intervention personnel?

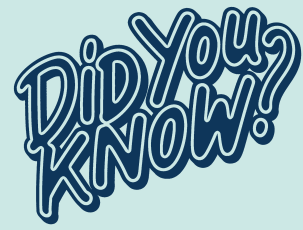
Dive into valuable professional development with the IN EI Hub Learning Management System!

You have access to a treasure trove of professional growth opportunities right at your fingertips! The IN EI Hub Learning Management System houses a vast library of over 100 First Steps webinars and training modules, designed to empower you on your professional journey.

Remember, the IN EI Hub Learning Management System is your

resource for continuous learning and advancement. Seize the opportunity to enhance your skills, stay ahead of the curve and, ultimately, make a positive impact on the lives you touch.

To access the LMS, just use your IN EIHub credentials. If you have any questions, contact the help desk for assistance at infirststeps@pcgus.com or by calling 877-522-1065, weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET.



Here's what awaits you:

Essential initial credentialing: Ensure you meet all the requirements with dedicated courses tailored to your specific field.

Stay up to date: Access the latest First Steps webinars and trainings, covering a wide range of topics relevant to your work.

Sharpen your skills: Expand your knowledge base and refine your techniques with diverse learning modules catering to different areas of expertise.

Convenient and accessible: Learn at your own pace, anytime, anywhere, with the flexible online format. The LMS tracks your progress! You will receive credentialing hours and a certificate for all completed courses in the LMS.



"You have access to a treasure trove of professional growth opportunities right at your fingertips!"



FGRBI: Active participation of families

Professional development will give you the tools

One of the [Division of Early Childhood recommended practices](#) is to “promote the active participation of families in decision-making related to their child (e.g., assessment, planning and intervention).” Professional development around Family Guided Routines Based Intervention will give you the tools to do just that!

Here are some upcoming FGRBI professional development opportunities:

Indiana Early Intervention Conference 2024: FGRBI Fast Track Pre-Conference session

If you are registered for the [2024 Early Intervention Conference](#) and are interested in attending the three-hour pre-conference session dedicated to FGRBI, please contact Joy Jones at jsj5@iu.edu. Registration for this session is limited!

2024 Family Guided Routines Based Intervention Professional Development Cohort

In August 2024, we will begin the 10-month professional development sequence that will lead a group of providers through the FGRBI online modules, a series of webinars and six Professional Learning Community meetings that meet once per month. Providers will complete the professional development sequence with the tools needed to effectively use evidence-based strategies to coach caregivers within early intervention.

Visit [The Early Childhood Center page](#) for more information about FGRBI. See the [2024 FGRBI Professional Development Cohort page](#) to find the calendar of events and information on currently available stipends. Contact your First Steps agency leader directly for a link to register.



Early Intervention Conference

Addressing research and best practices in Early Childhood Intervention

The 2024 Indiana Early Intervention Conference is June 13–14 in Bloomington. First Steps and Infancy Onward have partnered with the Early Childhood Center at Indiana University to bring together national and local experts in early childhood intervention.

The in-person option is sold out! A virtual option is available for \$50. There are student scholarship opportunities. We will share [information for keynoters](#). If you have any questions, please contact Janet Ballard at jaeball@indiana.edu or Joy Jones at jsj5@iu.edu.



Save the date for the 2024
Early Intervention Conference:
**Thursday and Friday,
June 13–14
Bloomington, Ind.**
We would love to have you!





Nurse-Family Partnership

Evidence-based community health program

Nurse-Family Partnership is an evidence-based community health program offering resources, education and care from specially trained nurses to first-time mothers in early pregnancy. These nurses support mothers from pregnancy through the child's second year of life. The mission of Nurse-Family Partnership is to positively transform the lives of vulnerable babies, mothers and families.

The three main goals of Nurse-Family Partnership include:

- Improving pregnancy outcomes
- Supporting child health and development
- Fostering family self-sufficiency for their future

Since 2011, the Indiana Department of Health has supported NFP programming in a number of counties. NFP is now expanding to provide services statewide and expects to be available in all 92 counties by mid-2024. IDOH has partnered with four local agencies to implement NFP statewide:

- Goodwill Industries of Michiana
- Indiana University Health Community Health
- Healthier Moms and Babies
- Goodwill of Central & Southern Indiana

Nurse-Family Partnership programs conduct assessments, provide information and connect families to resources

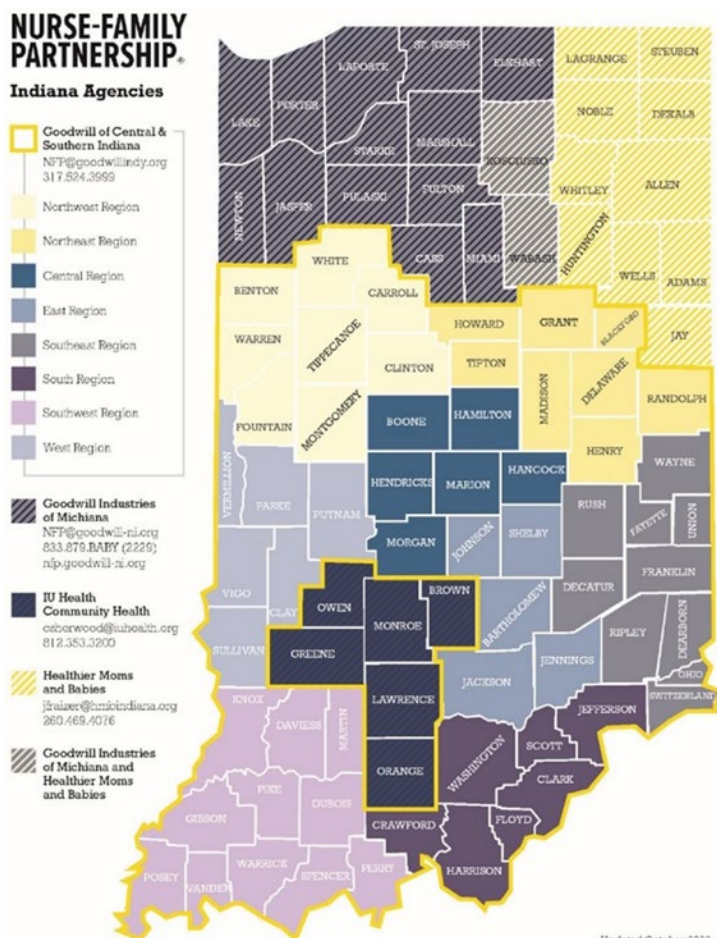
and services, including First Steps. Strong partnerships are essential to provide comprehensive supports for families. If your program is not currently connected with the NFP program in your county, please contact the Indiana Department of Health Home Visiting Program Manager Laura Doggett at ldoggett@health.in.gov for more information.

For additional information about NFP, visit:

The [Nurse-Family Partnership National Service Office](#) website

The [Nurse-Family Partnership overview](#)

The [Indiana Department of Health Nurse-Family Partnership website](#) (updates to come soon)



This map shows the service regions for local implementing agencies. New service areas include the Southwestern Region, the Western Region and parts of the Southern, Northeastern and Northwestern regions. The program is expanding from covering 46 counties to all Indiana counties. Services are currently available in 82 counties.

All registered IN EI Hub users have access to the Learning Management System in the [IN EI Hub!](#) First Steps webinars and trainings, including those required for initial credentialing, are located on the IN EI Hub Learning Management System. [Watch this video](#) to learn more about the LMS.

Look for exciting changes to come to the LMS in 2024, including brand-new service coordination and direct service provider trainings.

The Indiana Early Intervention Conference recorded webinars are now posted on the LMS and are a great way to obtain required First Steps credentialing hours!

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.

- **Indiana Deaf-Blind Services Early Identification and Intervention Virtual Training Series, April 18 and May 2.** 12:30 p.m.–2 p.m. EST. Presenter Dr. Susan M. Bashinski will explore why early identification is important, how deafblindness impacts early development and symptoms or behaviors that might lead you to identify a baby or toddler as having a dual sensory loss. Register at www.indbservices.org. Click on Trainings and Events. Questions? Contact Lisa Poff at Lisa.Poff@indstate.edu or 812-237-7679.
- **The Indiana Early Intervention Conference, June 13–14, 2024.** Plan to join your colleagues in Bloomington, Indiana at the Monroe Convention Center. First Steps and Infancy Onward have partnered with the Early Childhood Center at Indiana University to bring [keynote speakers](#) who are experts in early childhood intervention. To find out more [about the conference](#), please contact jaeball@indiana.edu or jsj5@iu.edu.
- **Perinatal Substance Use Conference, Sept. 11.** Join your Indiana peers for a day focused exclusively on perinatal substance use and its significant impact on families, caregivers and communities. We are honored to welcome some of the foremost experts from around the country to discuss innovative, supportive care approaches designed to improve outcomes for families and avoid staff burnout for those charged with caring for this vulnerable population. Learn more at ihaconnect.org.
- **59th Annual Riley Children’s Health Pediatric Conference, May 8 & 9.** This conference brings together more than 200 pediatric primary care providers from all over Indiana. Participants are those who have an interest in learning more about current evidence-based diagnostic and management tools pertinent to their pediatric practice. The first day of the conference will be virtual via Zoom and the second day will be in-person at University Tower in Indianapolis, Indiana. All registered attendees will receive a pre-conference email one week prior to the activity with the Zoom link and other important instructions. [Registration is open](#).
- **Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Conference, Aug. 22.** 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the 502 Event Center in Carmel. INAAP is excited to invite you to attend “Pediatrics and Pinot.” Learn more at www.inaap-conference.com.
- **Division for Early Childhood 40th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Disabilities and Their Families, Sept. 17 to 20.** Attend the premier annual international conference for professionals who work with young children with disabilities and their families. The conference provides professionals in early intervention, early childhood special education and related fields and family members of young children with disabilities an opportunity to learn, network and collaborate. Visit www.deconference.org to plan your conference.



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](#).



2024 Early Identification and Intervention virtual series

Webinar 1: Early Identification Overview
April 18, 2024, 12:30 p.m.–2 p.m.

Webinar 2: Moving from Early Identification to Early Intervention
May 2, 2024, 12:30 p.m.–2 p.m.

Presenter Dr. Susan M. Bashinski is a professor of special education at Missouri Western State University Graduate School with more than 40 years of experience working with learners who experience multiple disabilities. Learn more at [indbservices.org](#).