



Mike Braun, Governor  
State of Indiana

## ***Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services***

### ***First Steps***

402 W. WASHINGTON STREET, P.O. BOX 7083  
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46207-7083  
800-545-7763

#### **First Steps Interagency Coordinating Council Meeting**

January 16, 2026

10 a.m. - 1 p.m. EDT

#### **Attending ICC Members:**

Deanna Woodruff (ICC Chair), Jennifer Owens (ICC Vice Chair), Cory Best, Jason Berty, Laura Burklew, Mariann Frigo, Alexandra Hall, Charie Jones, Kristi Linson, Jennifer Owens, Courtney Willis, Alyssa Christy, Robyn Duffy, Dr. Megan Purcell, Stacey Williams, Laurel Austin, Naomi Dollens, and Representative Edward Clere

#### **Attending First Steps State Staff:**

Christina Commons, Danielle Ruffino, Constance Young, Amy Torres, Robyn Morton, Regina Snyder, Jamie Le Sesne Spears, Rachel Turner, Marie-Therse Smith

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Deanna Woodruff, ICC Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. All ICC members introduced themselves via roll call.

#### **Family Story**

The scheduled Family Story participants were unable to attend due to an emergency. ICC Chair Deanna Woodruff shared her First Steps story in their place.

#### **Approval of November 2025 Minutes**

Deanna Woodruff called for a motion to approve the November meeting minutes. Dr. Megan Purcell moved to approve the minutes, the motion was seconded by Mariann Frigo and passed unanimously.

#### **First Steps Update**

Christina Commons delivered a high-level quarterly First Steps Update. Danielle Ruffino, Director of Quality Assurance (BDDS), provided additional context regarding quality oversight and assurance efforts. Discussion focused on recent program developments and ongoing operational considerations, including next steps such as forming a workgroup to annotate progress notes to strengthen quality, developing personnel safety guidance, sharing transition information for families, and hosting data lunch-and-learns. Updates were also shared on RFPs, noting that Caregiver Coaching was awarded to Indiana University and that the Professional Development System award is forthcoming. FFY25 state monitoring activities are nearly complete for SPOEs and Provider Agencies (Cohort 1), and preparations are underway for the FFY24 APR submission due 2/1/2026.

#### **2026 Legislative Session Update**

Representative Clere provided a legislative update, noting that the General Assembly is currently in session and expected to continue through late January into early spring. Discussion focused on several key issues, including HB 1012, which centers on Medicaid-related provisions and potential funding sources. ICC members raised questions about long-term sustainability and fiscal impacts. ABA therapy reimbursement and coverage were also discussed, with concerns expressed about possible service cuts and access implications. In addition, Senate Bill 1 and its potential effects on Medicaid and SNAP participants were reviewed. Members were encouraged to contact Representative Clere directly with any follow-up questions.

## **ICC Bylaws**

An update on ICC bylaws was provided, including areas under review and potential next steps for Council consideration.

## **Q1 Strategic Work Session: ICC Advocacy**

During the Strategic Work Session on ICC Advocacy, Dr. Renae Azziz led a discussion of advocacy priorities using shared slides. The conversation focused on the big-picture policy impacts affecting infants and toddlers, emphasized the importance of coordinated messaging and sustained advocacy efforts, and explored priority issues where ICC involvement could have the greatest impact.

## **Public Comment**

Deanna Woodruff opened the floor for council members' comments and no public comments were made.

## **Adjournment**

Deanna Woodruff requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made and seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

## **Next Meeting**

May 6, 2026

10 a.m. - 1 p.m. EDT

Location: Easterseals Crossroads 4740 Kingsway Drive Indianapolis, IN 46205 Conf. Room 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

Minutes were respectfully submitted by Megan Hershey, Transform Consulting Group

*This meeting of the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) is being recorded in accordance with Indiana Code IC 5-14-1.5 (Open Door Law). A recording of the meeting will be made publicly available on the Indiana FSSA website.*

