



May 13, 2020 ICC Update

Dear Interagency Coordinating Council,

I hope this update finds each of you well, and your families safe and healthy. We thank you for your continued support and partnership and look forward to seeing you all in July. I write to provide you an update on the status of the First Steps system. In this letter you will find an update on our and partner agency COVID-19 responses, 2020 legislation, and continued work with PCG.

First Steps

As a result of the novel coronavirus, COVID-19, First Steps like many other programs needed to react and adjust. To date we have taken and completed the following steps in order to continue to provide the necessary early intervention services to children and families in Indiana:

- March 16, 2020—First Steps issued new policies, procedures, forms and guidance which can be found at www.firststeps.in.gov
- Hosted weekly calls with SPOEs, agencies, and independent providers to support all personnel in implementing new policies and procedures
- Issued an FAQ and continuous updates to this document as new questions arise, policies are revised, and procedures are amended
- Developed a best practice guide for implementing virtual early intervention
- Developed a resource guide for all stakeholders
- Hosted webinar trainings with IU, highlighting national early intervention coaching experts and First Steps personnel to support the implementation of tele-intervention
- Collaborated with IU and distributed tip sheets for personnel on how to talk with families about tele-intervention or remote early intervention services
- Collaborated with IU and distributed tip sheet for families on what they can expect from tele-intervention or remote early intervention services
- Worked with the Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning on reaching childcare workers and families to let them know that First Steps is open and accepting new referrals
- Collaborated with the Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning on Medicaid reimbursement for Family Counseling and Training procedures
- Developed a workgroup of early intervention stakeholders to begin discussing and developing thoughtful guidance around the successful gradual movement toward face to face services in First Steps
- Please visit www.fssa.in.gov for all information regarding FSSA's response to COVID-19 and www.ddrs.in.gov for specific information related DDRS program guidance.

Indiana Department of Education (IDOE)

IDOE has launched a website to support local education agencies (LEAs) and communities around the State of Indiana during the COVID-19 pandemic. Below, you will find the COVID-19 landing site for the Department of Education as well as the Office of Special Education (OSE) website addressing support for the special education population at this time. On the COVID-19 site, you will find a variety of resources ranging from Dr. McCormick's weekly webinars, continuous learning plan resources, weekly challenges, remote learning resources, and FAQs. On the OSE site you will find resources for continuous learning accommodations, individualized education program (IEP) guidance, as well as a memo regarding initial evaluations and Part C to Part B transitions. Soon the two sites will be linked, but until then, please use the OSE link to access information for the special education population. For both sites, the FAQs are updated regularly, and the continuous learning accommodations will also be updated.

- Please direct COVID-19 related inquiries to: idoecovid-19@doe.in.gov
- Please direct COVID-19 Special Education related inquiries to: specialeducation@doe.in.gov
- Links:
- [Office of Special Education – COVID-19 Guidance and Resources](#)
- [IDOE COVID-19](#)
- [Initial Evaluation and Transition Guidance](#)

Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECOSL)

OECOSL continues to issue news and update guidance to partners and stakeholders in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Listed below is the guidance released to date by OECOSL All FSSA COVID-19 announcements can be found [here](#).

- <https://www.in.gov/fssa/carefinder/5761.htm>

Office of Medicaid Policy and Planning (OMPP)

- [Update on Medicaid policy changes re: COVID-19](#) (April 1, 2020)
- [IHCP issues telemedicine billing guidance for providers during COVID-19 outbreak](#) (March 19, 2020)
- [Indiana Medicaid allows telemedicine and telephone options for most health care and mental health interactions](#) (March 19, 2020)

Division of Family Resources (DFR)

- [DFR policy changes and actions](#) (April 17, 2020)
- [Indiana SNAP recipients will begin receiving maximum benefit amounts next week](#) (April 3, 2020)
- [New statewide map available for Hoosiers seeking food assistance during COVID-19 pandemic](#) (March 27, 2020)
- [Food assistance availability map](#) (March 27, 2020)
- [FSSA calls on Indiana food pantries to stay open and keep serving Hoosiers](#) (March 23, 2020)
- [Division of Family Resources offices to close to the public indefinitely to protect the health and safety of clients and staff](#) (March 20, 2020)

Division of Mental Health and Addition (DMHA)

- [Update on Psychological First Aid Training](#) (March 26, 2020)
- [Child Mental Health Wraparound service delivery related to the COVID-19 pandemic](#) (March 24, 2020)
- [Indiana to offer Psychological First Aid training in response to COVID-19 epidemic](#) (March 16, 2020)
- [COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) guidance for mental health care providers](#) (March 12, 2020)

Department of Child Services (DCS)

DCS continues to issue news and update guidance to program partners and stakeholders regarding many of the programs it oversees as our state responds to the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are links to current guidance:

Anyone having trouble obtaining enough food for themselves or their families should call 2-1-1 for help.

COVID-19: DCS provider Q&As (updated 4/15/20)

- [Community-Based Services](#)
- [Residential Services](#)
- [LCPAs](#)

Resource page for foster families:

<https://www.indianafostercare.org/s/article/COVID-19-Foster-Parent-Resources>

Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH)

The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) is coordinating the response to the coronavirus pandemic for the state under the leadership of Governor Eric Holcomb. The coordinated response is bringing together staff from many state, local and federal agencies to address the many aspects of health, life and the economy that are impacted by the disease.

ISDH has established an official state website that is a one-stop shop for updates, information, guidance and official policies. Citizens are encouraged to monitor the site, which is updated daily, for the latest information on the situation, as well as policies.

- <https://coronavirus.in.gov/>
- ISDH COVID-19 Call Center has been established to help citizens and healthcare providers and may be reached, toll-free, at 877-826-0011 (available 24/7).

2020 Legislative Session

Representative Clere championed HEA 1176 and it was signed into law in March. You may remember reviewing this legislation at the January ICC meeting. This legislation can be found in its entirety at <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/2020/bills/house/1176>.

The First Steps Policy Manager, Meghan Smith, and ICC staff, Janet Ballard, are working to implement 1176 as it pertains to the ICC by-laws. These by-laws are being drafted to include the new provisions and will be distributed to council members for review, comment, and revision. If you would like to participate in drafting the by-laws please email Janet Ballard at Jaeball@indiana.edu.

These include the following bolded phrases:

- 1) The governor will appoint council members and stagger appointments from 1-3 years, **however, a member shall continue to serve until a successor is appointed;**
- 2) The governor's council shall annually elect a chairperson **and vice chairperson from within its membership;**
- 3) A member of the council who is a representative of the division may not serve as chairperson **or vice chairperson** of the council; (c) A chairperson and vice chairperson may be **reelected for succeeding terms.**
- 4) **The vice chairperson may call a meeting if the chairperson is unavailable;**
- 5) The council **shall** prepare and approve a budget;
- 6) **Pay compensation per diem and travel and other expenses as provided in section 14.5 of this chapter to members of the council;**
- 7) **Sec. 14.5. (a) Any member of the council who is not a state employee is entitled to the minimum salary per diem provided by IC 4-10-11-2.1 (b). The member is to reimbursement for traveling expenses under IC 4-13-1-4 and other expenses actually incurred in connection with the member's duties as provided in the state policies and procedures established by the Indiana department of administration and approved by the budget agency. (b) Any member of the council who is a state employee but who is not a member of the general assembly is entitled to reimbursement for traveling expenses under IC 4-13-1-4 and other expenses actually incurred in connection with the member's duties as provided in the state policies and procedures established by the Indiana department of administration and approved by the budget agency. (c) Any member of the council who is a member of the general assembly is entitled to receive the same per diem, mileage, and travel allowances paid to members of the general assembly serving on interim study committees established by the legislative council.**

The First Steps team looks forward to evolving its claims submission and will be working with insurance companies on processing early intervention claims to fully funded or Non-ERISA insurance plans. Conversations with Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield of Indiana have already begun. These changes are being discussed as part of our design, development, and implementation of the new EI HUB with PCG.

Thank you Representative Clere for listening to the ICC over the past several years and continuing to champion steps to improve the First Steps early intervention system.

EI HUB—PCG Update from PCG Program Manager John Worth:

PCG is excited to be fully engaged with the state on the First Steps Early Intervention System and CRO project. We're pleased that we have not experienced any delays to this point and are ahead of schedule. Prior to the COVID crisis PCG completed requirements sessions on all core elements of the system, including provider credentialing, case management, and billing and claiming; eleven of the planned twelve sessions have been completed and the final session (System Roles) is planned to be held once documentation is complete on all configuration and development items. Contract deliverables related to these sessions is due to be delivered later in May. We continue to have weekly meetings and have started configuration of the system to meet the business requirements captured in the sessions.

The bulk of the thanks goes to the state, SPOE, and agency staff who to this point have engaged with us to convey their business needs so that PCG can deliver a system that meets or exceeds their expectations.

If you have questions regarding this project please email INFirstSteps@pcgus.com

Professional Development:

First Steps is committed to providing a comprehensive system of personnel development and continues to deliver quality professional development opportunities to all First Steps personnel. The following is an update on First Steps professional development:

- In late March the difficult decision to cancel the Annual First Steps Conference was made. We swiftly began collaborating with IU on developing opportunities to ensure our personnel would continue to receive quality PD that would support their annual credentialing.
- As you may recall, in January the ICC was provided a presentation on 3 early intervention coaching models. The ICC and public in attendance were asked to respond to a survey and “vote” on the model they felt would be the best fit for First Steps as the system works to make continuous improvement on its State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP). The results of the survey indicated an almost unanimous support for the Family Guided Routines Based Intervention (FGRBI) model. Due to First Steps’ implementation of a tele-intervention service model during this time and service providers working to coach families over video conferencing, we felt introducing agencies to Juliann Woods, founder of FGRBI was important. The First Steps team met with Juliann in early April and developed a draft plan for introducing and implementation of FGRBI. On May 1, 2020 Juliann attended the provider agency meeting where she introduced herself and the model. Another opportunity for SPOEs and agencies to meet and hear from Juliann is June 5, 2020.
- Please see the professional development flier that accompanied this update for a list of all professional development offered in May and June.

First Steps COVID-19 Data:

First steps remains committed to collecting quality and meaningful programmatic data. We began tracking a variety of data points and analyzing the effects the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the system in early March. We anticipated the shelter-in-place order would have an impact on:

- the number of physician offices open for well child checks;
- the number of families cancelling their appointments even if their physicians remained open;
- the number of families addressing their concerns with their child’s development with the many other life stressors they were experiencing;

as well as other portions of our system.

Below is a snapshot of data showing a comparison from April to April and the potential impact on First Steps.

First Steps: April 2020



Number of Referrals

1,347



Number of Evaluations

669



Number of New IFSPs

660



Number of Children Receiving Service

3/15 - 4/15 2020: 6,774
3/15 - 4/15 2019: 10,519



Number of Providers Billed for Services

899 (2020) vs 1,220 (2019)

Number of Hours of Service Provided

20,770 (2020) vs 49,168 (2019)

Percentage change in number of children referred from April 2019 to April 2020

