

INvision

Indiana Division of Disability & Rehabilitative Services Newsletter

HOPE NOTES

A message from Director Kylee Hope

At DDRS, we attempt to engage families and self-advocates through a variety of methods



As a sibling of a person with a disability, I understand the importance of having families and self-advocates be part of the conversations and influence the development, implementation and evaluation of services that support individuals with disabilities. The phrase which has been coined as the disability movement mantra “nothing about us without us” is an excellent reminder to leaders and decision-makers that individuals know what is best for them and it is up to us to listen. At the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services, we value people with disabilities and their families as an integral part of the communities in which we all live. We recognize

that everyone has something to contribute to their family, their friends, their work or school, their community and society as a whole. It is because of these values we attempt to engage families and self-advocates through a variety of methods. Our DDRS advisory council, which includes professionals, state staff, advocacy organizations and self-advocates, serves as just one way that I get to hear about current concerns, successes and recommendations. These meetings are held monthly and are open to the public. For information, [visit this site](#).

We also understand that attending formal meetings is not always possible so we now have [an email address](mailto:ddrsuccessstories@fssa.in.gov) where you can share your success stories: ddrsuccessstories@fssa.in.gov. You can also find contact information for each of our bureaus by [visiting here](#).

I encourage you to always feel comfortable sharing your thoughts, concerns and ideas. Through collaboration, understanding and mutual learning, I believe we can work to develop services that are meaningful and propel you towards your vision of a good life.

Kylee B. Hope



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STORIES IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- **Bureau bits:** Updates from your First Steps, Bureau of Developmental Disabilities and Vocational Rehabilitation teams.
- **Featured story:** Telling your story can be a powerful and effective way to influence change.
- **Making the LifeCourse work for you:** Every program, organization, system and policymaker must always think about a person in the context of a family. The individuals and families utilizing supports and services should be involved in policymaking.
- **News you can use:** Work to Include Coalition will focus on state and local systems change, employer outreach and leadership, capacity building for sustainability, and tracking employment outcomes to promote change.
- **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 early intervention program

First Steps' mission is 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. We believe all infants and toddlers have the right to live, love, play, learn and participate in their communities. To ensure we are meeting the needs of families and children in Indiana, First Steps needs help from you. We encourage family members to become involved and help move First Steps forward. Families can become involved by attending the local planning and coordinating council in the area in which they live. The LPCC helps identify concerns, issues, resources and strengths that are unique to each First Steps service area. Families are always welcome to voice their concerns, ideas and what they feel is working well at LPCC meetings. [Follow this link](#) to find out more about the LPCC in your area.

Families are also invited to attend the Interagency Coordinating Council meetings. The ICC is a federally required early intervention council that is comprised of First Steps parents, providers and other stakeholders appointed by the governor. We welcome families to participate in these meetings as a member of the public. All 2019 ICC meetings will be held at Choices Coordinated Care Solutions, located at 7941 Castleway Drive, Indianapolis. If special accommodations or interpretative services are needed, please contact Sue Dixon at sudixon@indiana.edu. Families can find meeting dates and previous meeting minutes [at this site](#).

Families are also encouraged to contact their service coordinator directly or their local First Steps office with any issues, concerns or suggestions for First Steps. If family members believe an issue related to First Steps needs to be escalated, they can email the state First Steps office at FirstStepsWeb@fssa.IN.gov.

Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services

The Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services has embarked on a two-year waiver redesign project. The goal is to encourage greater community integration through supports that are purposeful and meaningful to the individual receiving services on a waiver and their family. Throughout this process, there will be opportunities for self-advocates and families to share their experiences, ideas and suggestions of what would assist them in living their vision of a good life. Today, we would like to get your feedback on the key themes that have been identified through past input from individuals and families. You can provide this feedback by using [this survey link](#) to review the themes and provide your thoughts. The survey should take only a few minutes to complete.

Building Bridges are gatherings specifically for families and self-advocates to speak directly with BDDS leadership on the issues that are important to them. These gatherings allow the individuals using BDDS services, their families and state leadership to learn from each other, gain clarity and collaborate on ideas and solutions. Building Bridges are held quarterly all over the state to allow an opportunity for each community to participate. For upcoming dates and locations, see Events You Don't Want to Miss.

When having difficulty accessing BDDS services such as waivers, group homes or caregivers supports, families and individuals should first contact their local BDDS office for assistance. To find a local office, [visit this site](#). Families and individuals may also contact the BDDS family engagement specialist, Heather Dane, by emailing heather.dane@fssa.in.gov.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Appointed by the governor, members of Indiana's Commission on Rehabilitation Services are knowledgeable of, and have concern for, rehabilitation and disability issues. A majority of the members are people with disabilities. Commission members represent the disability community in matters pertaining to the quality and effectiveness of Indiana's Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Serving in an advisory capacity, the commission provides oversight of VR programs, policies and procedures by:

- Partnering with VR to develop goals and priorities;
- Making recommendations on program policies;
- Reviewing and providing comments on the state plan for VR;

- Collaborating with other governor-appointed councils;
- Increasing public awareness of disability issues such as employment, education, and independent living in the community;
- Assisting VR staff in the administration of a consumer satisfaction survey;
- Monitoring and evaluating the VR program; and
- Producing an annual report that addresses the effectiveness of VR services.

Get involved

Attend commission meetings and share your views. The commission has at least four business meetings each year. We invite you to share your comments about VR services during

the open forum, which is scheduled during each meeting. If you would like information about the meeting dates, times and locations, please contact us or [visit our website](#).



FEATURED STORY

Telling your story

Learn how to be clear, thought-provoking and effective

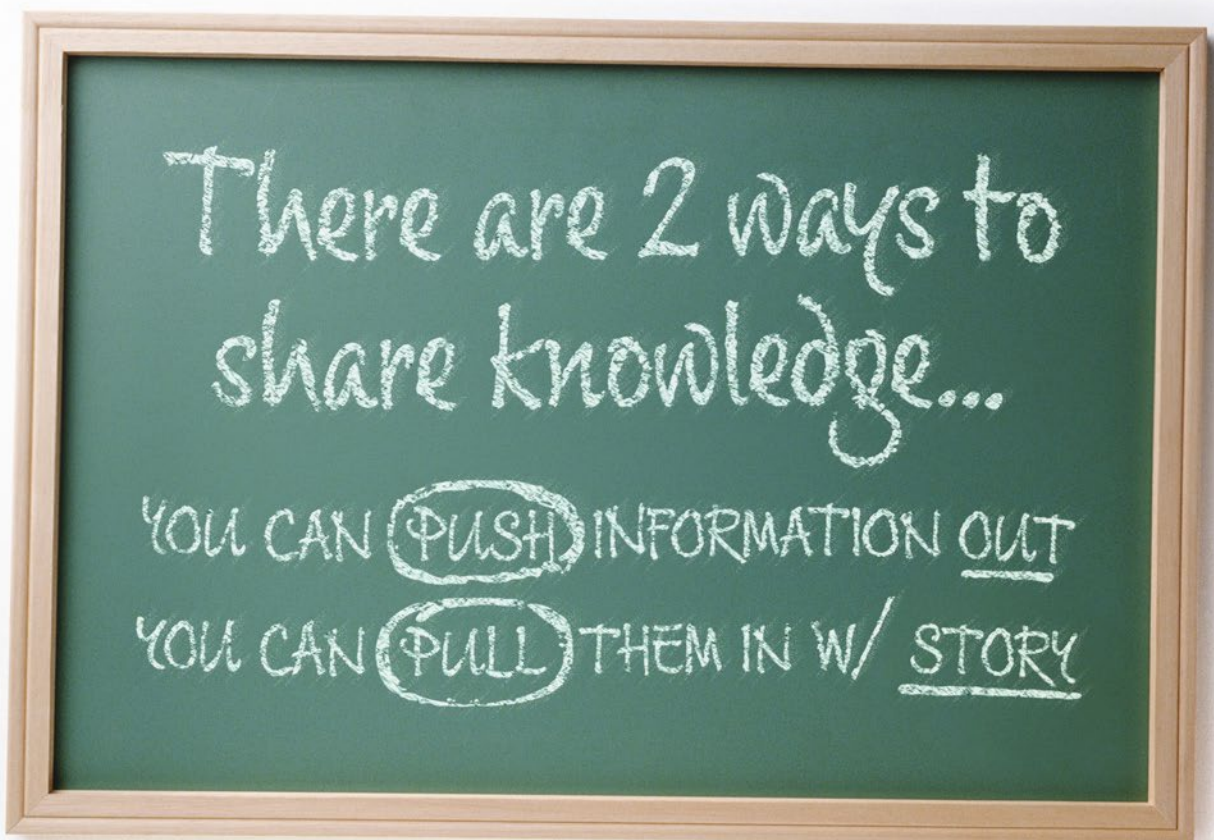
Telling your story can be a powerful and effective way to influence change. Whether you are speaking to your legislator, participating in a team meeting or providing public comment, knowing how to effectively tell your story increases your advocacy efforts. Real-life stories are able to bring about a more powerful response than just facts and figures. Stories help to reinforce the knowledge that decisions affect real lives. Because stories can be so powerful, it is important to know how to tell your story in way that is clear, thought-provoking and effective. Following are a few helpful hints to consider as you share your personal experiences:

- **Your story cannot be wrong.** It is your own personal experiences that have real value and meaning.
- **Determine what your goals are when sharing your story.** Are you trying to affect change to solve a problem or change a policy? Are you trying to provide information that will result in the evaluation and improvement of a current service or policy? Are you wanting to present new ideas? Understanding your role and your goals will help you to craft a message that is clear and concise.
- **Know your audience.** Understanding who is in your audience, their value base and what role they play will allow you to be strategic in your approach and can avoid defensiveness or unhealthy conflict.

- **Have an ask.** You are sharing your story because you want your audience to understand your experiences and learn from them. Follow up your story with what you hope your audience does in response to hearing your story.
- **Timing is everything.** Be sure when sharing your story, opinion and suggestions that you are clear and to the point. Too many unnecessary details can muddy your message, and you may lose the attention of your audience.
- **Practice.** Sharing personal experiences and stories can be an overwhelming and emotional experience. The more you practice, the more confident you will feel.

Building Family Leaders is a free web-based training to give families access to the tools they need to be empowered to lead, advocate and engage as partners in the systems that serve their children. The four modules for this training include: Defining Parent Leadership; Critical Elements of Collaboration; Building Blocks of Effective Meetings; and A Framework for Advocacy. [To register, visit this site.](#)

The Minnesota Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities has created a free app, titled "Telling Your Story." This tool is for persons with disabilities, family members and others to help them compose and practice their personal story. It is available for phone and tablets through Google Play, Apple App Store and Amazon. For more information and additional online learning opportunities, [click here.](#)



LIFE DOMAINS AND STAGES

Making the LifeCourse work for you

Policy and systems

One of the key principles of the LifeCourse Framework focuses on Policy and Systems. It states that every program, organization, system and policymaker must always think about a person in the context of a family. The individuals and families utilizing supports and services should be involved in policy-making so that they influence planning, policy, implementation, evaluation and revision of the practices that most affect them. Individuals and families can influence policy and systems in a number of different ways depending on their comfort level, interests



and availability. Those who are interested in participating activities that may affect policy can serve on formal committees and/or workgroups, attend public meetings and provide input on items out for public comment. You can also respond to surveys, share your story with local and state leadership, join advocacy organizations and/or speak to your legislators on the issues that are important to you. Your story is powerful and can be a path to inform decision-makers who are creating, revising or implementing services and supports that are important to your success.



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.



Citizenship and Advocacy: 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.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

Work to Include Coalition launched

Goal is to increase the voice and engagement of individuals with disabilities

Indiana passed Employment First legislation in 2017. Employment First is a national movement to advance competitive integrated employment for people with disabilities, including individuals with significant disabilities. This legislation mandates that real jobs in the general workforce with fair wages be the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all working age Hoosiers with disabilities, regardless of disability. Indiana is one of 35 states that currently have Employment First legislation, an executive order or directive, or both.

In response to the Employment First legislative mandate and the desire to significantly increase employment outcomes for people with disabilities, the Work to Include Coalition was launched with the support of the Governor's Council for People with Disabilities and in partnership with IN-APSE and the IUPUI School of Education. The primary purpose of the Work to Include Coalition is to increase the voice and engagement of individuals with disabilities in decision-making about state policies and practices to promote employment.

Town hall meetings and local action teams

In the past five months, 11 Employment First town hall meetings were held throughout Indiana, involving over 400 people with disabilities, family members and other advocates. The participants generated recommendations to address barriers to employment and established teams which are now engaged in action plans to improve employment outcomes locally. The themes of those recommendations included:

- Ensure competitive, integrated employment is the first and preferred outcome in Indiana;

- Develop comprehensive transportation options for individuals with disabilities;
- Promote hiring goals for business and educate employers about resources;
- Collect and share service provider employment outcomes for the individuals they serve;
- Invest in school to adult life transition services and track student employment outcomes; and
- Expand knowledge of all who work with individuals with disabilities about possible work incentives available through public assistance programs.

Social media

Through a social media initiative, coalition members connect to each other by sharing information, resources and success stories. With over 300 active participants, this effort will enable members to promote Employment First goals throughout the state. Go to Facebook "Worktoinclude" and watch for the Employment First website at www.worktoinclude.com.

Next steps

In the coming months, the Work to Include Coalition will focus on state and local systems change, employer outreach and leadership, capacity building for sustainability, and tracking employment outcomes to promote change. The coalition is working with the governor's office to set goals to hire and support more individuals with disabilities in state government, making Indiana a model employer.

For more information, contact [Pat Rogan](#) or [Susan Rinne](#).



Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
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You can sign up to receive this newsletter by [clicking here](#).

You can receive other updates from DDRS by visiting [here](#).

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](#).

EVENTS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS



Quarterly Building Bridges events

Don't miss the upcoming quarterly Building Bridges events! 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. All meetings are held from 6–8 p.m. local time.

Oct. 1, 2019
Jasper Library Annex Meeting Room
1103 Main St.
Jasper, Ind.

Oct. 8, 2019
Madison Public Library Auditorium
420 W. Main St.
Madison, Ind.

Oct. 16, 2019
Bedford County Public Library Program Room
1323 K St.
Bedford, Ind.

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. The meetings are open to the public. For more information, visit [the DDRS Commissions & Councils webpage](#).

Dates: Sept. 11, 2019

Time: 10 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

Location: Choices Coordinated Care Solutions, 7941 Castleway Drive, Indianapolis

INSILC Sept. meeting & listening session

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 SPIL's implementation and coordination of services. For more information, visit [the Statewide Independent Living Council webpage](#).

Location: Salesforce – Cloud City, 433 N. Capital Ave., Indianapolis.

Date: September 11; **Time:** INSILC Public Meeting: 1 p.m.; Listening session for people with disabilities: 5:30–7:30 p.m.

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. The council meets monthly and meetings are open to the public. For upcoming meeting information, visit the [DDRS Commissions & Councils webpage](#). DDRS Councils and Commissions meeting information such as agendas, updates and past meeting minutes can be found there as well.

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.

Location: BOSMA Enterprises, 7225 Woodland Drive, Indianapolis

Date: September 13; **Time:** 10 a.m.–1 p.m.