



First Steps

*The Newsletter for
Indiana Early Intervention*



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Letter from Christina

Primary role of a First Steps provider is to work with and support caregivers

Dear Colleagues and Families,

Happy New Year!

Over the course of the past 18 months, much of the professional development endorsed by the state and provided by Indiana University’s Indiana Institute on Disability and Community’s Early Childhood Center has focused on early intervention best practices. Through these training opportunities many questions have emerged. I will attempt to address questions in each newsletter throughout 2019.

How does the state office feel about providers billing for time that was spent on family education activities?

While family education or “family training and support” is a distinct, reimbursable service under First Steps, what First Steps has been focusing on through the Home Visiting Series is reframing the concept of “direct child treatment” as something that includes family coaching and support. It is the position of First Steps that the provision of direct child treatment should incorporate family and caregiver coaching, and the service as a whole is billed as “direct child treatment.”

In December, we hosted a webinar featuring Dr. Robin McWilliam on routines-based early intervention and supporting young children and their families. If you missed it, you can find it on Training Central. I encourage you to seek it out; it is well worth your time. First Steps is promoting this evidence-based practice and believes that children make progress on their outcomes when early intervention professionals provide support and resources to the child’s family and/or caregivers which promote child development through familiar learning opportunities and experiences.

The primary role of the First Steps provider within early intervention is to work directly with, as well as support, family and caregivers. Children are more likely to demonstrate outcome attainment when we coach/scaffold skills in parents and caregivers so they can scaffold skills in their children. Dr. McWilliam has stated, “Therapy and instruction are not golf lessons—children cannot transfer skills well from one learning setting to everyday life.” This emphasizes the concept that intervention actually takes place between specialist/therapist visits.

I recently came across [this link to an early intervention blog](#) in my research of best practices. Changes in philosophies and approaches can be difficult, take time to master, and require practice and support. We hope to continue to provide all of these over the course of 2019.

Best, Christina





ICC Update

The Interagency Coordinating Council members are First Steps stakeholders appointed by the governor. The role of the ICC and its subcommittees is to advise the First Steps office on the state's early intervention system. We believe that adopting a shared vision and shared goals is essential to working together to improve services and outcomes for the children and families we serve.

All ICC meeting dates and minutes are posted on [the DDRS website](#).

2019 ICC meeting dates: **Jan. 9, March 13, May 8, July 10, Sept. 11, Nov. 13.**

All meetings are 10 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Eastern Time at:

Choices Coordinated Care Solutions
7941 Castleway Drive
Indianapolis, IN 46250

New First Steps Issue Clarifications and Memos

Recent memos have been written to clarify specific First Steps procedures. [Follow the link](#) to read more about:

- [Annual Evaluation Eligibility](#)
- [Confirmation Start of Service](#)
- [Transferring EI Records](#)
- [Request for Authorization B/LV Specialty Assessment](#)
- [Exit Skills, Transition and Discharge](#)

Please contact First Steps policy manager Meghan Smith at Meghan.Smith@fssa.IN.gov with questions or concerns.



2019 CONFERENCE

JUNE 13-14, 2019 • BLOOMINGTON, IN

Conference Registration Is Now Open!

Join your colleagues. Network. Be inspired!

\$75 early-bird conference registration opens Jan. 1, 2019. On March 15, 2019, registration will go up to \$90. Save your spot and some cash by registering early on [the event app](#).

Call for Proposals

Indiana First Steps is partnering with Indiana University's Early Childhood Center to bring together national and local experts on early intervention for a two-day conference on June 13-14, 2019, in Bloomington, Ind. [Submit a proposal](#) to present your evidence-based research or innovative ideas at the 2019 First Steps Conference. Submissions will be accepted until Jan. 15, 2019.



DDRS—First Steps Indiana Statewide Profile Report

Reporting Period: 10/01/2017–09/30/2018

I. Population Information

Population (U.S. Census Bureau)	6,376,792
Population Growth Percentage (U.S. Census Bureau)	4.0%

II. Child Enrollment & Referral

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
One-day Count w/ IFSP –0 to 1 year old	1,545	
One-day Count w/ IFSP –All Children	11,301	
Annual Count of Children w/ IFSP	22,147	
Annual Count of Children Served (regardless of IFSP)	26,387	
Average Age at Referral (months)	14	
New IFSP 07/01/2018 - 09/30/2018	2,886	
Children with Referral to IFSP 45+ Days 07/01/2018 - 09/30/2018	86	

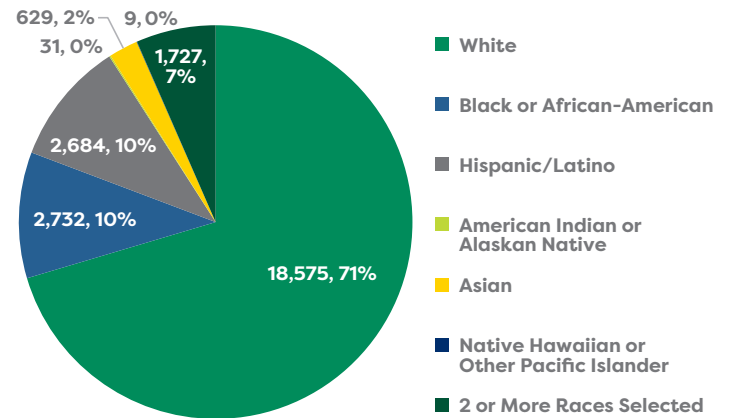
III. Exits

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
Children Moving to Preschool Special Education	4,660	46%
Children Under 3, Services No Longer Needed	237	2%
Eligible Children Who Declined Services	1,255	12%

IV. Paid Services

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
Children w/IFSP Served Primarily in the Natural Environment	21,814	98%
Total Amount Paid on Behalf of Children Served	\$40,109,784.23	
Average Paid on Behalf of Each Child Served	\$1,520.06	

V. Race Information



VI. Children Receiving Each Service Type

Service Type	Number of Children Served	Percent Receiving Service
Assistive Technology	191	1%
Audiology	1,023	4%
Developmental Therapy	14,111	53%
Health Services	0	0%
Interpreter Services	315	1%
Medical	0	0%
Nursing	0	0%
Nutrition	355	1%
Occupational Therapy	13,589	51%
Other Services	34	0%
Physical Therapy	12,837	49%
Psychology	147	1%
Social Work	38	0%
Speech Therapy	17,665	67%
Vision	0	0%

Source: First SideHatch Database

New Provider Orientation Training Information

To access ALL state required training registrations, [click here](#).

Recorded trainings for initial credential

DSP 101	AEPS part 1	Professional Boundaries and Ethics in Home Visiting
SC 101	The Science of Infant Brain Development	
Exit Skills Checklist		

Live webinar trainings

You must be able to access Adobe Connect on your computer to view the webinar. Course documents can be downloaded prior to training. If you need accommodations for accessibility, email FirstStepsWeb@fssa.in.gov. Follow registration links below. **Please note times will be Eastern Time (ET).**

DSP 102* DSP 103*

*DSP 102 and 103 will alternate Monday 4-6 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m.-12 p.m. times monthly:

In-person trainings

SC 102	SC 103	AEPS part 2
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Training Central

Visit Training Central to access a variety of posted online trainings

Looking for online trainings for professional development hours?

Go to [Partnerships for Early Learners](#) and register for an account. When registering, you will use the category “early intervention provider.” All trainings are free of charge and provide users with a certificate upon training completion. Certificates for all completed trainings are stored in each user’s account under “My Certificates.” First Steps personnel must keep these certificates in their personal training records for seven years.

If you have questions, contact the Training Central help desk at tcsupport@earlylearningindiana.org or 800-299-1627 and choose option 5.

Professional Development Corner

First Steps professional development national webinar series

“Introducing the Pyramid Model as a Framework for Supporting Social Emotional Learning in Early Intervention”

Friday, March 22, 12-1 p.m. EDT

Free and open to everyone

Attendees will receive one hour of credentialing

Presenter: Dr. Erin Barton, assistant professor of special education at Vanderbilt University



Dr. Barton is an associate professor in the Department of Special Education at Vanderbilt University. She teaches courses in early childhood special education on evidence-based assessment and intervention practices for young children with disabilities and their families. She is a board-certified behavior analyst and has worked with children and families in homes, schools and clinics. She directs research projects related to evidence-based practices for young children and professional development systems. To join, [click here](#).

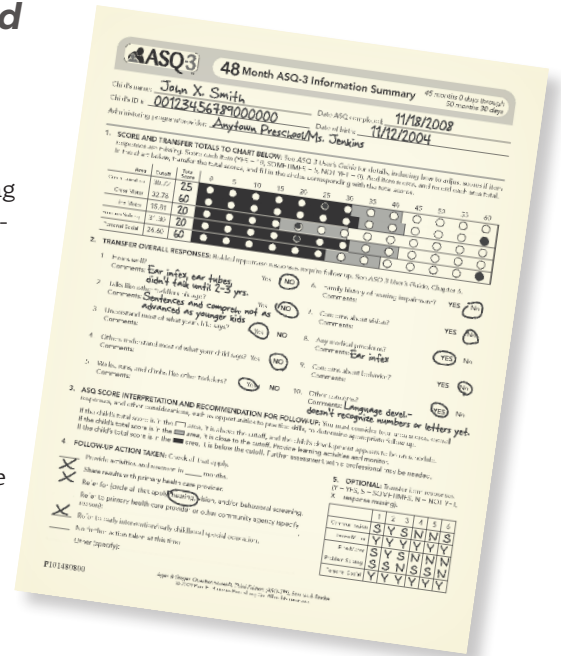
Help Me Grow – Indiana Launched in Nine Counties

Offers a Connection to Services that Families Need

First Steps is excited to share information on Help Me Grow – Indiana. Indiana has launched this model in Lake, La Porte, St. Joseph, Elkhart, Grant, Madison, Delaware, Marion and Scott counties. HMG Indiana has a toll-free number, **844-625-6667, option 3**, that connects families to local community resources and child development information. HMG Indiana is a free connection to services that families need to promote optimal development. HMG Indiana is an extra layer of support for providers; it is not



intended to replace what you as the provider are currently doing. HMG Indiana care coordinators are trained to give a developmental screening tool, called the Ages and Stages questionnaires. The care coordinators follow up with both families and providers to ensure that families have access to resources and services. If you want more information about child development, or are looking for community resources, families and/or providers may call **844-625-6667, option 3**.



Sharing the Joys of Working with Our First Steps Families

Outreach Manager Making Connections with Institutions of Higher Ed

First Steps Outreach Manager Connie Young has been busy making connections with institutions of higher education around the state. In an effort to increase recruitment of providers, Connie has created a Powerpoint to share with university students. The presentation includes the mission and vision of First Steps, an overview of what federal Part C services are and what they look like in the state of Indiana, current data, and our processes, from referral to eligibility and Indiana First Steps program development to ongoing services. Her presentations include a description of career possibilities and how to contact systems point of entries and provider agencies for further information.

Connie has formed relationships with the Indiana State, Ball State, Purdue, Purdue-Fort Wayne and Martin Universities. She is currently collaborating with IUPUI, IU-South Bend, Purdue Northwest and IU-Kokomo. These connections are helping to provide an opportunity for First Steps to meet with university professors and students in sharing the incredible experiences and joys of home visiting and working with our First Steps families. We are hopeful that this outreach will lead to successful recruitment of new early intervention providers to meet our growing list of referrals.



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If you have a personal connection with one of our Indiana schools and/or would like to visit a school with Connie to talk with students, please contact her at constance.young@fssa.in.gov.



The Puzzle of Deaf-Blindness

You Are a Critical Piece

The Indiana Deaf-Blind Services Project is a federally-funded grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The project provides technical assistance, training

and support for children and young adults who have a combined vision and hearing loss, their families, and educators who work with these individuals.



Meet Macie *Macie was born prematurely at 23 weeks and weighed 1 lb., 4 oz. She spent her first three months in the hospital. She did not pass the newborn hearing screening test and she has no vision in her left eye. Macie has just started to receive intervention from her First Steps team to help her learn and grow.*



Meet Josh *Josh is 6 months old. Josh has CHARGE syndrome which affects his heart, his hearing and vision, and causes blockages in his nasal passages. Josh's First Steps team is working hard to design his program to meet all of his multiple developmental and health needs.*



Meet Eduardo *Eduardo is 3 months old. He was born with Down Syndrome. He has a moderate hearing loss and weak eye muscles. Eduardo gets lots of support from his First Steps team to help him get stronger, to learn and to grow.*

Just knowing that each of these three children has a vision and hearing loss is not enough. In addition to the First Steps intervention they already receive, each of these young children also should be reported as deaf-blind to the Indiana Deaf-Blind Services Project for additional support and resources.

Why? Think about how most of us learn about the world; it is through our use of vision and hearing. Sensory abilities (smell, taste, hearing, sight and touch) begin in utero, and it is in the first months of life that a baby begins to organize sensory information. Hearing and vision are our strongest learning senses; they are the reinforcers for physical movement, cognitive, communicative and social connections. When babies have limited or no vision and hearing, the combined effect significantly limits the child's development of cognition and communication as well as the ability to be an active participant in everyday learning activities.

What can you do? Currently, in Indiana, there only are three children (birth through 2) who are reported to the Indiana Deaf-Blind Project as having a vision and hearing impairment. There should be 25–30 infants and toddlers on the Indiana Deaf-Blind Census.

In early March, when you receive a letter requesting your support in identifying infants and toddlers with combined vision and hearing losses in your area, please review the records for each of the children you serve. Does the child have a syndrome that includes vision and hearing loss (there are more than 80 syndromes linked to deaf-blindness)? Was the baby born prematurely? Was the baby exposed to maternal infections (drugs and alcohol)? Were there birth complications? Do you see words in their records like multiple disabilities, prematurity, anoxia, asphyxia, cerebral hemorrhage, cerebral palsy, meningitis or fetal alcohol syndrome? Any of these words are “red flags” that can signal

both vision and hearing issues.

Once referred, the Indiana Deaf-Blind Services Project can work with the First Steps team to help develop specific communication activities, environmental accommodations and systematic teaching strategies to address what are simple concepts and skills that can be missed or misunderstood in the absence of vision and hearing. Please help us better serve these young children during their critical early learning years when learning through their senses of vision and hearing is so critical.

Need help? Contact [Lisa Poff](#) at the [Indiana Deaf-Blind Services Project](#). She can answer your questions about referring infants and toddlers to the project. Just know that prompt referral to early intervention services with personnel trained to best address deaf-blindness will have a profound and positive impact on the child's development. Thank you, families!



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**Division of Disability and
Rehabilitative Services**

**Indiana Family and Social Services
Administration**
Bureau of Child Development Services
402 W. Washington Street, W453
Indianapolis, IN 46204

We would like to include ideas from First Steps providers in upcoming newsletters! If you have an idea that works well with families or an article to share, please submit to:
FirstStepsweb.fssa@fssa.in.gov.

Use your computer to read webpages out loud

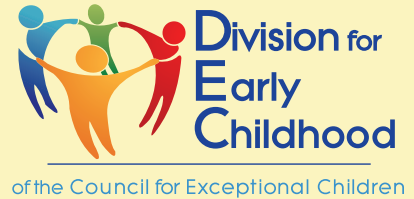
BrowseAloud is a suite of products that provides online reading support. BrowseAloud reads website content out loud, highlighting each word as it is spoken in a high-quality, human-sounding voice. Click on the BrowseAloud link that appears beside "Accessibility Tools" on the footer of the IN.gov website.

This will launch the BrowseAloud Plus toolbar. This toolbar provides speech at the touch of a button. For more information, visit [BrowseAloud](#).



DEC Recommended Practices

First Steps competency areas for professional development credential hours are aligned with DEC Recommended Practices. Please take a moment to read through the complete list with detailed definitions! Go to [Division for Early Childhood](#).



Save the Date for the Conference!

The second annual First Steps conference will be held on June 13–14, 2019, at the Monroe Convention Center in Bloomington. This one-and-a-half day conference will

feature keynote speakers, dozens of breakout sessions and opportunities for networking and resource-gathering. For information about sponsorships, submitting a proposal and more, go to [First Steps Conference 2019](#).



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