



**The Newsletter for  
Indiana Early Intervention**



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- Much more!

**Coming soon!**

***New First Steps data system***

Dear Stakeholders,

For years, we have heard from our First Steps stakeholders of the importance to modernize Indiana’s early intervention system to simplify our processes, improve communication across individualized family service plan teams, and make continued progress in fund recovery to best support quality, growth and sustainability.

In 2019, First Steps contracted with Public Consulting Group, Inc. to design, develop and implement a technology solution to accomplish all of these goals. We are thrilled to be able to share that, along with the PCG team, First Steps is wrapping up its development of the new comprehensive data system. This new system will be called **El Hub**. The new web-based Hub will benefit our entire early intervention system. Not only will El Hub include case management, data reporting, billing and claiming, but also provider enrollment and credentialing and a comprehensive learning/training management system. First Steps parents will even have access to a “parent portal” and will be able to see their child’s individualized family service plan and pay their co-pays through this new system! It will bring a statewide consistency to our business processes which include child referral and intake, evaluation and assessment, IFSP development and ongoing services through transition and exit.

The new system will support and enhance IFSP team collaboration and child outcome progress documentation, as well as serve to simplify the visit documentation process. The data we will be able to access will assist the state team in reporting federal compliance indicators and State Systemic Improvement Plan progress to the Office of Special Education Programs. This data is necessary to identify technical assistance and training needs and guide decision-making at both the state and local levels in regards to First Steps policies and procedures.

Our entire team, along with PCG, would like to thank everyone who participated in the design and development phases of this exciting project, and we look forward to partnering with each and every one of our stakeholders in implementing this transformational change and making the launch of El Hub as seamless and successful as possible.

Together, we will keep moving to ensure Indiana has a high-quality early intervention system for Hoosier children and families. “Always forward, never back.” —*Junipero Serra*

*Be well,  
Christina*

# EIHub

First Steps Early Intervention  
Case Management System

We will continue to share timely information with you, our valued stakeholders, regarding the highly anticipated First Steps Early Intervention Hub—EI Hub—in our quarterly newsletter.

We are pleased to announce we have added an EI Hub section to the homepage of our [First Steps website](#). There you will [find a link](#) to our recently published Frequently Asked Questions. The FAQ will be updated accordingly as necessary.

We have also posted a link to a [video](#) on YouTube called “EI Hub Introductory Series.” We are very excited about the video and hope you enjoy watching it and learning all about the new system.

Please review the FAQ and watch the introductory video. We would also like to encourage you to share the information with your personnel and colleagues. If you have any additional questions, please contact [Public Consulting Group](#).

## Fighting for the things we care about

“Fight for the things you care about.” —*Ruth Bader Ginsburg*

Federal Office of Special Education Programs Director Laurie VanderPloeg quotes the late Supreme Court justice in an inspirational letter to OSEP stakeholders. Read “Laurie’s Letter” and view the [September 2020 OSEP Update here](#).

## ICC update First Steps Interagency Coordinating Council

**virtual meeting notice: Nov. 4, 2020.** The First Steps Interagency Coordinating Council will host its next quarterly meeting on Nov. 4, 2020, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. EST. The meeting will be hosted virtually on Zoom and is open to the public. To join the meeting, [please click here](#). DDRS is a division of the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration. If you have questions about Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services programs and services, visit us online at [www.DDRS.in.gov](http://www.DDRS.in.gov).

## Welcome to OT doctoral student *Kaela Cousins will partner with First Steps*



The First Steps state office is privileged to be asked to participate in the IUPUI Occupational Therapy Doctoral Experiential Capstone project. We welcome Kaela Cousins, a third-year occupational therapy doctoral student at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

For her doctoral capstone project beginning in January 2021, she has partnered with First Steps to help improve outcomes with family engagement and cultural competence. Kaela is from Northwest Indiana and holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology obtained in 2018 from Indiana University – Bloomington. Ranging from her experience as a daycare teaching assistant

to her role as an aunt to 15 nieces and nephews, she has always enjoyed working with children and understands the value of family. In her free time, she enjoys reading and watching Netflix movies with her family.

Kaela is looking forward to partnering with the providers and families of First Steps this upcoming year.

# SAVE THE DATE!

## JUNE 10 & 11, 2021



## FIRST STEPS CONFERENCE



## IDEAL legislation enacted

### *Indiana Deaf Education and Assessments of Language*

Over the past several years, a group of stakeholders including parents, deaf and hard of hearing individuals, and professionals with varying backgrounds and areas of expertise came together to address a common concern.

This concern regarded a lack of monitoring of language development in young Hoosier children who are deaf and hard of hearing and the importance of parents' awareness of their child's needs and abilities.

The result of this work is the newly enacted [House Enrolled Act No. 1484](#) (now IC 20-35-12) or Indiana Deaf Education and Assessments of Language.

The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education was tasked with administering IDEAL. As such, they brought together an advisory committee made up of stakeholders to develop a parent document. This document included language milestones in American Sign Language and English language, technical assistance to professionals, and ways to identify and track language assessments.

The number of children identified annually as deaf or hard of hearing in Indiana is between 200 and 250. There is currently a national effort to spread awareness to monitor language in young deaf and hard of hearing children and to implement services as needed if communication is not progressing as should be expected. IDEAL is similar to legislation that has been enacted in several other states.

IDEAL has two main focuses: to provide information to parents in relation to language development, deaf education and supports for children who are deaf and hard of hearing; and to establish a mechanism to collect language monitoring data for children who are deaf and hard of hearing from infancy through age 10.

The goal of IDEAL is to provide information on the latest developments and trends for the education of deaf and hard of hearing children. The tools and resources that have been developed can be helpful to both providers and parents. We encourage all provid-

ers to review the available topics and find those that are of interest and most relevant to you and the children and families on your caseload.

First Steps service providers can ensure that language development is monitored in all deaf and hard of hearing children using the measures on the Tools and Assessments list. It is important to continually monitor goals and outcomes related to early intervention services, including insight into language development. With timely, specialized services and supports children can be expected to develop language like his/her peers.

The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Education will provide an annual report on all assessment results reported through the online Assessment Reporting

Portal. If you are a First Steps provider who works with a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, you can enter data for a child directly through this secure web portal. Parents of all young children can benefit from using the resources, information and strategies shared about language development to increase their child's communication skills.

Whether you are a parent, First Steps agency or provider, the Center for Deaf and

Hard of Hearing Education is here for you! The CDHHE Network is a partnership between the CDHHE Early Intervention program through the Indiana State Department of Health, St. Joseph's Institute and Indiana First Steps. If a family is interested, any IFSP team member may request the addition of a CDHHE Network First Steps provider.

For more information regarding the CDHHE Network, contact [cdhhenetwork@isdh.in.gov](mailto:cdhhenetwork@isdh.in.gov). The Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Network provides consultations, direct services and technical assistance. Please visit our website for more information and to see what our center has to offer.



# DDRS—First Steps Indiana statewide profile report

Reporting Period: July 2019 to June 2020

## I. Population Information

Population (U.S. Census Bureau)	6,376,792
Population Growth Percentage (U.S. Census Bureau)	4.00%

## II. Child Enrollment & Referral

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
One-day Count w/ IFSP—0 to 1 year old	1,532	
One-day Count w/ IFSP—All Children	11,379	
Annual Count of Children w/ IFSP	23,037	
Annual Count of Children Served (regardless of IFSP)	26,293	
Average Age at Referral (months)	14	
New IFSP 04/01/2019-06/30/2019	2,251	
Children with Referral to IFSP 45+ Days 04/01/2019-06/30/2019	201	

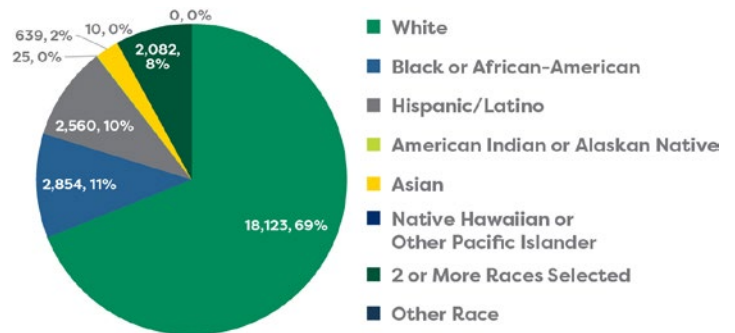
## III. Exits

	Number of Children	Percentage of Children
Children Moving to Preschool Special Education	5,414	48%
Children Under 3, Services No Longer Needed	264	2%
Eligible Children Who Declined Services	1,407	12%

## IV. Paid Services

	Amount	Percentage
Children w/IFSP Served Primarily in the Natural Environment	22,923	100%
Total Amount Paid on Behalf of Children Served	\$47,366,114.19	
Average Paid on Behalf of Each Child Served	\$1,801.47	

## V. Race Information



## VI. Children Receiving Each Service Type

Service Type	Number of Children Served	Percent Receiving Service
Assistive Technology	178	1%
Audiology	871	3%
Developmental Therapy	14,033	53%
Health Services	0	0%
Interpreter Services	561	2%
Medical	0	0%
Nursing	0	0%
Nutrition	326	1%
Occupational Therapy	14,978	57%
Other Services	31	0%
Physical Therapy	13,771	52%
Psychology	227	1%
Social Work	29	0%
Speech Therapy	16,664	63%
Vision	9	0%

Source: First SideHatch Database

# Understanding Part C federal indicators

## Federal indicator 8: Early childhood transition

Part C early intervention programs are designed to serve children until their third birthday. Therefore, it is our duty to ensure a seamless transition from early intervention services to programs that serve children 3 and older.

According to federal laws, every Part C program is required to:

- A. Develop IFSPs with transition steps and services;
- B. Notify the state education agency and local education agencies of the child's potential eligibility; and
- C. Conduct a transition conference between 9 months and 90 days of the child's third birthday.

The expectation as set forth by the Office of Special Education Programs for this indicator is 100% compliance for all three requirements. While the service coordinator and family hold the main responsibility for meeting these requirements, all IFSP team members should share their input in the transition process.

Let's look at each requirement of this indicator.

### 8A. Develop IFSPs with transition steps and services

When a child enters First Steps, we must constantly be thinking of how best to support their exit or transition from the early intervention system. We begin talking about what the transition process looks like for all children during the initial IFSP. As the child approaches their third birthday, we should be having more in-depth conversations about the exact steps for transition from the program. The steps and services of the transition process are included in section 6 of the IFSP and the Individualized Family Transition Plan completed during the transition meeting.

### 8B. Notify the SEA and LEA of the child's potential eligibility

The state First Steps office shares a list of basic directory information for all enrolled children age 30 months and older with the SEA/LEA to inform them that a child may be transitioning to public schools for special education services. This list is used by the SEA/LEA for planning purposes. With family consent, First Steps will submit a full referral to the LEA, upon which the service coordinator sends detailed information, including the child's eligibility, services and progress within the First Steps program.

### 8C. Conduct a transition conference between 9 months and 90 days of the child's third birthday

First Steps must conduct a transition conference for all enrolled children between 9 months and 90 days of their third birthday, regardless of the family's consent to provide information to the LEA. If the family chooses to include the LEA in the transition process, that person will be invited to the conference to discuss developmental preschool and Part B services. The purpose of the transition conference is to consider plans for the child and family after the child ages out of First Steps. The SC will help connect the family with any resources needed.

The First Steps state office has worked very closely with the Indiana Department of

Education's Preschool Special Education program or Part B services to streamline our processes and communications. We want to make this transition as easy and as uncomplicated as possible for families, whether it be to the local school district or other community programs.

## The 11 indicators

- 1 **Timely service delivery**
- 2 **Services provided in the natural environment**
- 3 **Child outcomes**
- 4 **Family outcomes**
- 5 **Child find (birth-to-1 population)**
- 6 **Child find (birth-to-3 population)**
- 7 **Initial IFSP complete within 45-day timeline**
- 8 **Early childhood transition**
- 9 **Hearing requests resolved**
- 10 **Mediation agreements**
- 11 **State systemic improvement plan**

## 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

Course documents can be downloaded on the First Steps website prior to the training. If you need accommodations for accessibility, email [FirstStepsWeb@fssa.in.gov](mailto:FirstStepsWeb@fssa.in.gov).

DSP 102	SC 102	AEPS part 2
DSP 103	SC 103	

## Professional development corner

Looking for online trainings for professional development hours? For a complete list of online webinars and trainings, please [visit this page](#). You may also go to [I-LEAD](#) and register for an account. When registering, you will use the category "early intervention provider." First Steps personnel must keep certificates of completion in their personal training records for seven years. If you have questions, contact an I-LEAD representative at **800-299-1627** and choose **option 5**, Monday through Thursday 8 a.m.–7 p.m. or Friday 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Eastern time.

## Event calendar



**The Indiana Deaf-Blind Services Project**, administered by the Blumberg Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Special Education at Indiana State University, is offering several family and early intervention events and trainings in October. For more information and to register, visit the [Trainings and Events](#) webpage.



**Indiana Head Start Association's Annual Fall Conference**, featuring family engagement and leadership tracks, is taking place Oct. 7–8, 2020, on Zoom. [Please register here](#).



**2020 Indiana Speech-Language-Hearing Association Fall Conference** is online this year. It is scheduled for Sat., Oct. 17, 2020, 8 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. (0.65 CEUs). This year's theme is *All Things Voice: Updates on Voice, Upper-Airway Research and Implementation*. [Register here](#).



**The Guide By Your Side "Fostering Joy" Parent-to-Parent Zoom** is on Oct. 23, 2020, at 11:00 EST. It will offer support for families with deaf and hard of hearing children. To register and for more information, [click here](#).



**Indiana Occupational Therapy Association Fall Conference** will be virtual on Sat., Dec. 5, 2020. For more information, visit the [IOTA website](#) or contact [amanda.l.baitz@gmail.com](mailto:amanda.l.baitz@gmail.com).

## Family expectations study

### *Stipend offered to families of young children with disabilities and providers for participation in research*

The Early Childhood Center at the Indiana Institute on Disability in the Community at Indiana University is conducting a research study on family expectations. This study is specifically focused on families of young children with disabilities ages 3-5. There is a substantial body of research showing a strong association between family expectations for children with disabilities and later outcomes (e.g., employment, college, independent living). The data gathered will support the development of future interventions designed to boost family expectations for their children.

IU researchers want to talk to families of young children

with disabilities and their providers. Each family and provider who participates will receive a \$30 check for participating.

We are actively seeking families and providers to participate in the study. The entire process can be done virtually and consists of a one-hour interview and a few brief questionnaires.

How can you participate? Share information about the study with your families and/or set up a time to do the interview yourself!

For more information, flyers to share with families or to set up an interview, email [kgherron@indiana.edu](mailto:kgherron@indiana.edu).

## Provider forums and national webinar series

First Steps will partner with Early Childhood Center staff and the Family Guided Routines-Based Intervention team led by Dr. Juliann Woods to offer a series of networking opportunities throughout the fall and spring.

### **National Webinar series**

On Oct. 6 and Nov. 9, a two-part First Steps Fall Webinar with Dr. Juliann Woods will be held from 12 to 1 p.m. ET.

The topic on Oct. 6 will be, "Strategies for Embedding Intervention in Everyday Routines in Tele-Intervention." What makes a tele-intervention session meaningful and functional? Join us to discuss strategies for organizing your session using the SS-OO-PP-RR framework from FGRBI

to support caregiver learning to embed within their everyday routines and activities. Explore ways to increase the sense that you are joining them in the comfort of their home! Video examples will be shared.

The topic on Nov. 9 will be, "Expanding Your Use of Coaching Strategies in Tele-Intervention with Caregivers." How do we get from talking about embedding intervention to actual practice during the session? Join us and share your ideas and experiences on coaching with caregivers. Video examples of providers coaching caregivers during the set up and practice in the routine will be shared.

[Click here to register](#) for both parts of this series.

### **Provider forums**

These webinars will focus on the issues encountered in the field, whether tele-intervention or in-person home visits. Providers of all disciplines will have the opportunity to pose questions and challenges and learn from one another. You are not alone—we hope you can join us!

Click dates to register:

[Nov. 30, 2020, 12-1 p.m. EST](#)

[Jan. 25, 2021, 12-1 p.m. EST](#)

[April 12, 2021, 12-1 p.m. EDT](#)

[June 21, 2021, 12-1 p.m. EDT](#)

If you need accommodations for any of the webinars, please contact [Joy Jones](#) at least 10 days prior to the event.



### **Juliann Woods, Ph.D.**

Juliann Woods, Ph.D., is principal investigator of the EPIC project. Dr. Woods is a Professor in the School of Communication Science and Disorders at Florida State University, and the Director of the Communication and Early Childhood Research and Practice Center. She is also the Associate Dean of Research for the College of Communication and Information and an Associate Director in the FSU Autism Institute. Dr. Woods has 40 years of experience as an EI provider or program director in early intervention and as a consultant to state programs.

# Family Guided Routines-Based Intervention update corner

## Guidelines to help you as you work with families in a virtual format

First Steps recently surveyed over 100 families of children currently receiving First Steps services to share their impressions of tele-intervention. The overwhelming response was one of gratitude for providers. Families stated how much they appreciated their providers being

flexible, innovative and supportive during this time of constant change.

We know this has been a hectic time filled with a lot of unknowns and new learning experiences. We wanted to share a list of guidelines, as supported by Family Guided Routines-Based Intervention, to help

you as you work with families in a virtual format.

We encourage you to use these coaching techniques during an in-person home visits as well. And of course, it is always important to approach this work from a family-centered perspective.

### WHAT TELE-INTERVENTION IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT...

#### Tele-Intervention IS:

- A safe way to continue working with families on the goals that are important to them.
- A chance to ask the caregiver questions about how things are going and really listening to what is working for them and what is not. Check out [these reflective questions](#) from the [Family Guided Routines Based Intervention coaching page](#).
- An opportunity to spend a few minutes quietly observing a typical family routine or activity and then reflecting with the caregiver about what you saw (asking questions, wondering how the strategy might work in a different routine, wondering what would happen to the interaction if the strategy were modified).
- A time to partner with families to problem-solve and plan. Ask questions to help caregivers understand why they are doing what they are doing, as well as when, where and how to do it.
- Share ways the family can embed meaningful intervention techniques into their daily lives. Really help the family feel confident.

- A chance to reflect and review with the family—what worked best during your visit. What do you think you might be able to work on before next time? When families are empowered to be front and center and do the work, they will feel more empowered to continue trying things throughout the week... and we know that it is family members embedding strategies into their routines that leads to change!

#### Tele-Intervention is NOT:

- A safe way for you to continue interacting with the child through a screen.
- A time to pull out all your most engaging toys and apps in an attempt to keep the child interacting with you—because if they wander away you aren't getting it right.
- A time for you to engage in a pre-planned activity that the family starts because you are there and finishes when you are done and is not part of their regular routine.
- A chance for you to share as much of your knowledge and expertise as possible so that the family feels that the time was well-spent.
- A time to squeeze in as much provider-child interaction as possible because you won't see the child again until next week.

Want more information? Check out some of [these videos on the FGRBI website](#) as well as [this blog post from Virginia's Early Intervention Program](#).

## Indiana Early Learning Foundations review survey



The Indiana Department of Education is conducting a review of the 2015 Early Learning Foundations and we would like your input! We have created a brief survey that examines the existing resources and accessibility. Your input on this survey is critical to the review process.

Please answer thoroughly and honestly so IDOE can work to continuously improve the resources provided to the field. None of this data will be published. The survey can be found [using this link](#) and will take no more than ten minutes to complete.

The survey will be open from Oct. 5 to Oct.30. The IDOE Early Learning Team greatly appreciates your time and feedback.





## 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](#).