Frequently Asked Questions: Indiana First Steps Early Intervention Hub

In partnership with

This FAQ will be updated as needed and posted on the First Steps website at firststeps.in.gov. Please send any additional questions to PCG at INFirstSteps@pcgus.com.

Q1. **Why is First Steps building EI Hub?**

Over the last several years, we have heard First Steps providers, service coordinators, provider agencies, system points of entry and families express an overwhelming need for better communication, collaboration, consistency, and program policy. More specifically, this feedback has included the need to modernize outdated systems and processes and improve the uniformity and efficiencies with how the First Steps program operates across our state. The Indiana First Steps Early Intervention Hub (“EI Hub” or “INEI Hub”) is intended to reduce duplication of effort, reduce paperwork and redundancies in data collection, streamline key early intervention processes and support true IFSP team collaboration so that personnel can focus on what they do best—serving kids and families.

The First Steps state administration has also been looking diligently for opportunities to improve fund recovery from private and public insurance to support and sustain the First Steps program. Provider agencies, SPOEs and personnel all understand the importance of effective fund recovery and the EI Hub is a critical strategy for addressing this need.

Related to the above reasons but also important in its own way is the need for reliable, accurate and real-time data. Quality data is essential for our required state and federal reporting, program evaluation efforts and data-driven decision making at all levels. Along with FSSA and DDRS, the First Steps state administration hopes to foster a culture of inquiry that will translate to quality services and better outcomes for children, their families, and our workforce.
Q2. **How will EI Hub benefit First Steps families?**

The EI Hub maintains critical information in one system, which enhances communication between all IFSP team members. This means families will not have to repeat their story to each person on the IFSP team and providers and service coordinators can focus on the important work they do with families instead of filling out paperwork and sending multiple emails to share updated information to support IFSP team discussions and decisions. EI Hub also gives families improved access to their First Steps information and records, including cost participation information and the ability to pay copayments online.

Q3. **How will EI Hub benefit First Steps service providers and provider agencies?**

EI Hub is a unified and comprehensive system that supports communication and collaboration among all people and organizations on a child and family’s IFSP. For example, any child and family demographic information or other information captured by the SPOE will populate automatically wherever that information is needed, which will eliminate redundancies in data collection and duplication of effort. All members of an IFSP team will have access to better and more comprehensive information about the children and families they serve—so IFSP team discussions and decisions are more streamlined and better informed without the need for multiple phone calls, emails or text messages to share information. Service authorizations can be quickly approved once they are added to the IFSP. Dashboards will keep service providers aware of actions needed for families on their caseload.

EI-Hub also gives provider agencies access to improved information that will enhance their ability to manage productivity, team collaboration and services provided to children and their families. Agencies will have access to a variety of reports and will be supported to make data-driven decisions. Provider enrollment and credentialing requirements and timelines are managed in EI-Hub, and EI-Hub includes a Learning Management System which will streamline and improve access to training.

Q4. **How will EI Hub benefit service coordinators, evaluation teams and system points of entry?**

As a comprehensive case management system, EI Hub houses the complete early intervention record for each child and family that begins at referral and ends at program exit. EI Hub will make it easier to communicate and share information with families, evaluation teams, providers and agencies so that evaluations and assessments, IFSP reviews and IFSP team discussions and decisions are more streamlined and better informed without the need for multiple phone calls, emails or text messages.
SPOEs will have access to a variety of reports and will be supported to make data-driven decisions. Required timelines and other federal compliance indicators will be tracked in EI Hub so the SPOEs can focus on quality of services and dashboards will keep evaluation teams and service coordinators aware of actions needed for families on their caseload. Service coordinator and evaluation team enrollment and credentialing requirements and timelines are managed in EI Hub and EI Hub includes a Learning Management System or LMS which will streamline and improve access to training.

Q5. What features are part of the EI Hub?
The EI Hub will include:
- Case management, which includes data and educational record information related to referral, intake, evaluation, eligibility determination and assessment, IFSP, progress reporting and exit and transition,
- Service logging and billing, which includes face to face sheets (“service logs”) and all provider and provider agency billing functions,
- Provider enrollment, for personnel enrollment and credentialing and SPOE and provider agency enrollment,
- LMS or learning management system, where personnel can access training for the EI Hub and First Steps credentialing and
- Parent portal, where families can access invoices for their services and make cost participation payments.

Q6. Are there license fees or per-user fees associated with personnel, agencies, and SPOEs using the EI Hub?
No, there are no fees for personnel, agencies or SPOEs to use the EI Hub.

Q7. What type of equipment is required or needed to access the EI Hub?
Any equipment/device with a web browser will be able to access the EI Hub. This includes but is not limited to smart phones, tablets, laptops and Chromebooks.

Q8. Will I need internet access to access the EI Hub?
Yes, the EI Hub is a web-based system and an internet or Wi-Fi connection is required to access the system. There are many benefits to having a web-based system, including the fact that it can be accessed from anywhere at any time on any computer, tablet or mobile device without the need for hardwiring or connecting to a specific network. This allows for better collaboration between various users (SPOE, agencies, personnel) of the system.

Q9. Will I be required to use the EI Hub?
Yes. All aspects of a child’s early intervention record will be kept within the EI Hub. Billing, agency enrollment, and provider enrollment and credentialing will also be done through EI Hub. Personnel will use EI Hub to create and review child records such as
the IFSP, child/family notes and service logs, for example.

Q10. **How will authorizations be assigned in EI Hub?**
Authorizations will be given at the provider agency level instead of the individual provider level, allowing provider agencies to manage provider changes and substitutions. Independent providers will continue to have their own authorizations.

Q11. **Will I continue to be required to complete Face to Face sheets during my visits with children and families?**
Yes. These will be called “service logs” in the EI Hub. Service providers and evaluation and assessment providers must complete a service log for each face to face visit whether in-person or virtual. Any service log not entered at the time of service must be entered within five business days.

Q13. **Can I use fillable PDFs or paper?**
All data captured on paper or state-approved fillable PDFs must be entered into the EI Hub. You may continue to utilize current business processes, including the use of paper and state-approved fillable PDFs; however, all information must also be entered into EI Hub.

Q14. **What will the service logging and billing module look like?**
At a high level, providers will complete the service logs and submit for review, provider agencies will review and submit the service log for billing and the information will become a claim for billing to private and public insurance. Independent providers will submit their service logs directly for billing. Evaluation and assessment providers and SPOEs will also use service logging for evaluation and assessment activities. Provider agencies, independent providers and SPOEs will be able to run a variety of reports from this module.

Q15. **Will providers be required to assist the First Steps state office in correcting insurance claims after payment has already been provided for the services rendered?**
Yes. Providers and provider agencies will be required to make claims corrections identified by PCG and the First Steps state office within 15 business days. This will help insurance providers adjudicate First Steps claims and result in more effective fund recovery for the First Steps program.

Q16. **Will I be trained to use the EI Hub?**
Yes. All service providers, SPOEs and provider agencies will be trained to use EI Hub. Training will include webinars and videos, training manuals, train-the-trainers or early adopters who can help their peers and technical support provided by PCG.