

**First Steps South East  
LPCC Quarterly Meeting  
Cluster J  
February 18, 2022**

- I. Call to Order  
Called to order at 9:35 by Tillie Allgood, Chairperson
  
- II. Introductions and Inspirational Story  
Two new attendees were introduced – Aaron Brown is with Bedford Outpatient Therapy Services and will be replacing Janice Hensley upon Janice’s upcoming retirement. Kim Fledderman welcomed Aaron and asked if Aaron’s contact info can be shared with the other area therapy groups. Mandy Morton is a pediatric nurse with Major Hospital in Shelbyville. Mandy’s young son is attending with her. There was no inspirational story.
  
- III. Consent Agenda Items  
Consent agenda items reviewed. Ella motioned to accept the consent agenda including the minutes. Sara moved to second. Approved by consensus.
  
- IV. Financial Report  
SPOE Financial report handout reviewed by Becky Haymond. The report shows the program is over budget in personnel costs which Becky states is due to higher insurance costs. The SPOE office is looking to rearrange expenses planned for upcoming months to make up for the deficit. Hoping supply costs will be less than anticipated with less paper, ink, and copying costs incurred while keeping records digitally.
  
- V. Other Business
  - Cluster Oversight and System Updates
    - Provider Networks-
      - A few of the network representatives will be joining late today due to another training that is ending at 10:00 this morning, so this agenda item will be moved to another part of the agenda today.
    - Training Opportunities –
      - Registration is now open for the Early Intervention Conference. There are sessions being offered for professionals as well as parents. Connie Young spoke about what is planned at the conference which will include keynote speakers Rachel Giannini and Dr. Iheoma U. Iruka as well as sessions on the Lifecourse Framework, Child Abuse & Neglect, and Reflective Supervision, and a panel with the topic of equity. To review, this is the annual First Steps Conference that will be held for the first time in collaboration with Infancy Onward and has been renamed “Indiana’s Early Intervention Conference”. The conference will be held June 9-10, 2022 with a combination of in person and remote access to sessions. The event registration website is: <https://earlyintervention.iu.edu>
      - The Promoting Positive Outcomes Early Childhood Special Education Conference is coming up April 19-20. Becky will be part of a panel discussing early childhood transition from early intervention to preschool services. Website for more info: [www.iidc.indiana.edu/ecc/news-and events/preschool-conference.html](http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/ecc/news-and-events/preschool-conference.html)
      - The Head Start conference is coming up March 2-3 in Noblesville. Janet Ballard shared a website link for more info: <https://indianaheadstartassociation.sched.com/>
    - Statistics – Referrals, Evaluation, and IFSPs counts for 2021 are provided on the statistical handout. A number of statistical reports, including the profile reports produced in the past by the state, have not been available yet after the launch of EI Hub in March of 2021. The state is aware of our interest in using more of the data that is entered into EI Hub to see and track more statistics. Aaron asked if historical data was available comparing referrals, how many children

- qualify at assessment, and number that pursue services. Anne remembers a report she created related to that question a few years ago before EI Hub and will follow-up with Aaron.
- Staffing Update – Sherry Brandenburg has been hired as a Service Coordinator for Decatur and Franklin counties to replace Leann Gauck. Shirley Huntsman has been hired as a Service Coordinator for Hancock County to replace Autumn Fletcher. The SPOE is fully staffed in Cluster J. There is one open position for a Service Coordinator in Muncie in Cluster H.
  - COVID Procedures –
    - Becky Haymond shared that the SPOE office recently moved all child evaluations back to virtual format. This was done as a result of the high positivity rates of COVID in the community as well as the high number of cancellations occurring recently due to family and evaluation team exposure as well as illness. The virtual format option will be reevaluated at the end of March by our local SPOE. The SPOE does have loaner laptops if needing a device is an obstacle. Service Coordinators have been given the option to remain meeting with families in person or to decide to meet virtually or by phone depending on health circumstances and family preference. SPOE still uses policy of staff using protocols for sanitizing, masks, and social distancing along with asking safety questions. Funmi understands the need for virtual evaluations, but would like to get a sense if kids are being missed as a result of virtual format for assessments. Becky stated that there is some research nationally, but nothing local. Missy shared that her therapists across several clusters have seen the opposite of missing kids with more kids found eligible via virtual assessment who didn't seem to really need services when a therapist went to see them in person for their first visit. Funmi says she just wants to make sure no one is missed. Becky added that for annual eligibility, therapists do provide progress details to the evaluation team. Janet shared that nationally, there is a trend of more language delays experienced by kids during the pandemic. Connie shared that in an efforts to put heads together to figure out best practices, there is currently a state workgroup for policy and training related to use of virtual services to address questions about quality and appropriate use. Sara asked that parents are included on the state policy group please.
  - EI Hub –
    - It has been almost one year since the launch of the implementation of EI Hub. The first group of Service Coordinators from our local SPOE has been trained by local SPOE staff in logging in to EI Hub Case Management to look around and verify family and child information. Next, the first group will learn to enter authorizations. A second group of local SCs will begin training soon. There is a focus group of 4 Service Coordinators entering IFSPs in order to give feedback to the vendor PCG about issues to resolve before training all SCs on IFSPs. Over time, EI Hub functionality continues to improve, but local data entry staff still has to rely on many workaround processes for identified EI Hub issues, and it doesn't make sense to train all SCs to use the workaround process, when PCG is going to be changing the processes to fix issues and everyone would need to be retrained. In the last quarter, families have started getting billing statements from the new system and are able, in many cases, to sign-in to EI Hub to pay online if needed. Local SPOE staff member Christal Precht has been designated as a liaison to the PCG Helpdesk to correct family e-mail addresses when needed. The SPOE office is still evaluating if any enhanced data plans are going to be needed for the cell phones issued to Service Coordinators since those will be the hotspots used for EI Hub access. The provider networks shared their recent experiences using EI Hub. Missy says EI Hub is mostly going smoothly, though there is still an issue of disappearing service logs. Molly agrees that it is smooth. Terri also said it seems smooth as long as DX codes can get entered into the system prior to a therapists first visit. Kim says she really appreciates that Rachel from the SPOE data entry team does a great job getting in DX codes quickly when the network agency sends them to her.
  - Provider Networks/Recruitment –

- IU-ECC Study: Janet Ballard, Research Associate, shared a presentation about the research study she has been conducting to learn more about the successes and challenges that networks are having in recruiting and retaining the therapist workforce around the state. Also included in the information gathered are impressions from networks and therapists on what drew them to the job and what helped them to stay. Janet looked for themes in answers from participating networks and therapists and stated she was still processing the gathered information and hoped to complete the summary of findings in 3-4 weeks.
- Old Business
  - Council Meeting Schedule 2022 – Reviewed 2022 meeting schedule. The First Steps South East Cluster J LPCC meetings for 2022 are scheduled for
    - 9:30 Friday, May 20<sup>th</sup>
    - 9:30 Friday, August 19<sup>th</sup>
    - 9:30 Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>
 Next meeting will be virtual. Future meetings will have virtual option if held in person, but in person option yet to be determined.
- New Business
  - Resilience Project – Anne Dolan shared a request for input from the LPCC to identify programs that have been helpful to build and support resilience in families and children during the COVID-19 pandemic. The request came from Dr. Stephen Viehweg from the IU Child Development Center who is compiling a resource list to be shared around the state. Those present today mentioned Parent Café’s and One Community One Family in Ripley County. Any additional suggestions can be sent to Anne in the coming weeks.

## VI. Announcements and Updates

- Federal Appropriations for Early Childhood Legislative Handouts – Anne Dolan shared that Congress will be voting on the national budget in the coming weeks and money and policy language related to Early Childhood programs is being considered. Dolan received handouts prepared by ECTAC explaining some of the policies under consideration. Dolan will be sending the handouts to the LPCC so that LPCC members can form their own opinions and share ideas with their legislative representatives if they wish. Kim Fledderman is keen to review the findings of Janet Ballard’s provider recruitment and retention study to see if there are implications for system legislative advocacy such as pay rate increases for therapists.
- FUSE, Inc. – Sara Cummins shared updates from FUSE. The Spring Inspiring Abilities Expo will be happening March 26<sup>th</sup> in Greenfield. There will be exhibitors and vendors with information on a wide variety of services for disability supports. There will also be special presentations including a speaker on the topic of Social Security appeals. FUSE has resumed monthly in-person Parent Nights in Hancock and Shelby Counties. FUSE continues to utilize virtual options and has produced some videos for their YouTube channel.
- FSSA, First Steps State Team – Connie Young shared that the First Steps state team has developed new First Steps brochures.
- Arc of Indiana – Ella Boyd shared that the Arc of Indiana now has online virtual training. New material continues to be added. Training Certificates are currently offered on many topics including Social Security, LifeCourse Framework, and CHOICES. Ella will share a website link with Anne to send to the LPCC group.

## VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned. Next meeting May 20, 2022.

Attendees:

Aaron Brown	Bedford Outpatient Therapy Specialists
Amanda Hardin-Morton	Major Hospital
Angid Ortiz-Rivera	First Steps South East
Anne Dolan	First Steps South East
Becky Haymond	First Steps South East
Connie Hempstead	Greensburg Community Schools
Connie Young	FSSA- First Steps Indiana
Deb Miller	Accord
Ella Boyd	Arc of Indiana
Funmi Ige-Wright	Parent
Janell Foley	First Steps South East
Janet Ballard	Early Childhood Center - IU
Kim Amberger-Fledderman	Developmental Services
Lorien Konetzka	Unlocking the Spectrum
Maggie Matthews	First Steps South East
Michaela Martin	All Kids Can
Missy Myers	Collaborating for Kids
Molly Cleek	Kids Only
Sara Cummins	FUSE, Inc.
Sarah Bishop	First Steps South East
Sherry Brandenburg	First Steps South East
Shirley Huntsman	First Steps South East
Sue Ann Nuñez	First Steps South East
Teri Williams	Pediplay
Tillie Allgood	SCCAP Headstart
Whitney Austin	First Steps South East