

**First Steps South East  
LPCC Quarterly Meeting  
Cluster J  
May 21, 2021**

- I. Call to Order  
Called to order at 9:37 by Sara Cummins, Chairperson
- II. Introductions and Inspirational Story.
  - Ella Boyd, Arc of Indiana, shared a story of a recent success with a former First Steps family. The child has been seizure free for two years and no longer takes seizure medication.
- III. Consent agenda items reviewed.  
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Missy Myers, Collab for Kids, motioned to approve consent agenda items. Kim Fledderman, Developmental Services, seconded. Motion approved.
- IV. Financial Report  
Financial report reviewed by Becky Haymond. Becky explained that the financial reporting year in First Steps runs from July 1st to June 30<sup>th</sup>. The current financial report distributed for the SPOE shows that there is currently a lot of money in the budget “leftover”. The amount of money is largely the result of a COVID grant obtained by our fiscal agent Thrive Alliance that has benefited the First Steps budget with two months of salary and rent. With the salary and rent covered, money was available in the budget to allow for equipment updates needed for implementing EI Hub and general replacements as needed. The SPOE is currently working toward ending the grant year budget to spend money and move money between line items as appropriate. The SPOE contract with the state has been extended for a two year period to start this coming July 1. Becky is happy that the allocation is remaining consistent without a decrease. There were no questions.
- V. Other Business
  - Cluster Oversight and System Updates
    - Provider Networks:
      - Kim Fledderman, DSI, states that DSI is still needing additional providers. Kim reports that it seems referrals have picked up recently and that DSI is trying to cover needs even while two staff are on leave for medical and maternity reasons. Kim states that using the new EI Hub has been very challenging for therapists, and resulted in a few therapists leaving First Steps, however, EI Hub has been going a little better recently which is reducing stress and anxiety for therapists.
      - Missy Myers, Collab for Kids, reports that the transition to the EI Hub has been a challenge for therapists with her agency as well. Some providers are not adding new kids until they are more familiar with EI Hub. While most providers are seeing families in the home, Collab for Kids has a few providers still completing visits virtually. Collab for Kids needs more providers, especially Speech Therapy.
      - Teri Williams, Peditplay, reports that 2 full-time staff have resigned recently, but it was not related to the EI Hub - both are moving out of state. Teri states using EI Hub has been going okay for some therapists with hardly any problems, but other therapists are really struggling and are barely hanging on trying to use EI Hub. Peditplay has been offering a lot of support to the struggling therapists.
      - Robin Klaycamp, A Step Ahead, reports that 3 full-time providers are moving. One new OT has been hired, but especially struggling with speech therapy recruitment.
      - Ben Faulstick, All Kids Can, reports they have two on maternity leave, but have hired a couple of new people in the meantime. One therapist would like to come back from maternity leave but is having trouble finding childcare.

- Deb Miller, Accord, states her agency may be able to help the other agencies with PT depending on the location of the need - in Decatur, Jennings, and Rush Counties.

Sara Cummins, FUSE, wants Teri to contact her regarding the need for providers in the Hancock County area so that Sara can share information in the community about the employment opportunity.

The SPOE has been contacted by one OT looking to join a network as a therapist and the SPOE passed along that information to the networks.

- Training Opportunities –
  - The 2021 First Steps State Conference is coming up June 10-11. There is a track for families. The cost of the conference is reasonable. The conference is virtual. Family scholarships to cover the registration cost are available. Over 500 people are currently registered to attend.
  - FUSE completed their Expo event recently. Sessions recorded live at the Expo are currently available on the FUSE website and the FUSE YouTube channel. Information is available on all types of Waivers.
- Statistics – The meeting handouts of the Cluster and State profile statistics as well as the 2020 ref, assessment, and IFSP counts were reviewed. Becky shared that referrals have been picking up, though not quite at pre-COVID levels. Assessments are still mostly virtual. Initial IFSP numbers have started growing. Sara Cummins asked Becky if there seems to be a trend now that kids are coming into First Steps at an older age, perhaps having deferred pursuit of identification services during the past year of COVID. Becky stated that the EI Hub statistical reporting system is not developed enough yet to be able to pull out data such as age at referral. Tillie Allgood, Early Head Start, stated she is aware that some families were waiting to pursue First Steps over the past year. Sara wonders if there will be a flood of referrals coming soon as a result.

Anne Dolan, local SPOE support, shared a follow-up to the question from the Cluster J LPCC group last quarter regarding participation in First Steps via race to understand any disparities. Anne stated she found it difficult to find useful statistics. Becky shared that she is aware that the state has a goal to improve reporting on race statistics in First Steps with features of the EI Hub. Funmi Ige-Wright, parent and community representative, suggested that action should be considered at the local SPOE to gather related information when possible, in particular, by adding race to local referral forms as an optional data point in addition to efforts to try improvements at the state level. Funmi recognizes many systems are working on shifting to better monitor disparities which can be hard to measure. Steps need to be taken now to measure for there is a risk of underserving populations that would benefit. Funmi is willing to brainstorm with Anne and Becky on what type of measuring and monitoring would be useful and possible.

- Staffing Update – The Cluster J has a Service Coordinator, Keri Johnson, leaving to become a full-time mom. Margaret Matthews has been hired in Hancock County to replace Keri. The SPOE is still looking for a Bi-lingual Service Coordinator to serve Delaware and surrounding counties in Cluster H.
- COVID Procedures – The local SPOE has made the decision to have the assessment teams and service coordinators return to in person visits on July 6<sup>th</sup>. If a family is uncomfortable with in person visits, accommodations will be made. The SPOE has a safety protocol including masks, social distancing, sanitizing, and advance family health screening questions. Last summer the SPOE attempted to have in person assessments, but it lasted only for two weeks due to families having difficulties responding to the health screening questions. Because service coordinators

have been holding virtual family meetings for the past year, the mileage costs to the SPOE was extremely low compared to other years. With return to in person visits, mileage costs are anticipated to be much higher in the coming year. To try to save on mileage, three service coordinators have switched around service areas so that the families they serve will be a shorter drive. The SPOE office building managers (United Way) have safety protocols including keeping visitors to a minimum, masks in common areas, and temperature checks. The SPOE office still has a laptop loaner program for families which has been used a couple of times if families if lack of technology has been a barrier to First Steps services.

- Old Business
  - LPCC Officer Elections: Nominating Committee –The nominating committee met and identified a slate of officers. Committee members reached out to identified prospective nominees to see if they would be comfortable with being nominated. Today, the committee would like to nominate for Council Chairperson: Tillie Allsgood, SCCAP Head Start, for Council Vice-Chairperson: Teri Williams, Peditplay, for Secretary: Lorien Konetzka, Unlocking the Spectrum. Ella Boyd motioned to vote to accept the nominations from the committee, Funmi Ige-Wright seconded the motion. Voting on nominations completed. Thank you given to outgoing council officers and to the willingness of new officers to serve. Missy Myers, outgoing Council Vice-Chair, was thankful for the support given to her which made being an officer “a piece of cake”.
  - ASQ Online – Anne Dolan revisited the fact that the ASQ online subscription is coming up for renewal in August, but there hasn’t been the expected increase in usage or return rate. Anne would like opinion from the LPCC Council on whether or not to renew subscription. Council suggested for Anne to prepare tabulations on use for the Council to review in August.
- New Business
  - EI Hub with PCG – Earlier in today’s meeting, the agencies shared some information regarding their experiences with the March 8 deployment of the EI Hub. Becky Haymond SPOE shared that the SPOE office also had significant difficulties using the EI Hub at first. There has been regular ongoing communication with the state and PCG about EI Hub issues. Starting around April 1<sup>st</sup>, there was a big increase in dependability of the EI Hub system. Agencies and providers are getting paid. Service Coordinators have not yet been brought into using EI Hub since the data is not fully accessible to Service Coordinators. Service Coordinators have had system demonstrations. The SPOE office is reminded that in using EI Hub, April was better than March, and May was better than April, so there is reason to believe things will continue to improve when using EI Hub.
  - First Steps Conference – Covered earlier in meeting.

## VI. Announcements and Updates

- Steve Viehweg: CDC Learn the Signs Act Early Campaign – Steve provided a presentation today to the Council about the Campaign and resource materials as part of his role as an Indiana ambassador for the campaign. Learn the Signs, Act Early (LTSAE) works to inform parents and caregivers about expected child development milestones, how to encourage this development, and what to do if development is delayed. The Indiana LTSAE effort can be found on Facebook and also has a website [actearlyindiana.org](http://actearlyindiana.org). With COVID stimulus dollars, Head Start programs around the state will have support to incorporate LTSAE education as part of the family engagement and child wellness components of their program. Steve demonstrated videos and handouts from the national website designed for parents. Free materials are available for organizations to order. There is also a free app for parents and professionals. The SPOE stated that the Milestone app flyers and booklets are regularly shared by First Steps at outreach events. Sara Cummings suggested that LTSAE might consider providing the information to Women’s Hospitals to pass along to expectant mothers.
- FSSA Waiver Case Management Changes – Ella Boyd shared that families across Indiana who receive FSSA waiver services will be getting a letter that case management will be moving from providers to vendors.

- Down Syndrome Awareness License Plate – Funmi Ige-Wright shared that the Down Syndrome Awareness License Plate is now available.
- Legislation – Legislation is approved for some provider licensure rules to allow telehealth services beyond the COVID public health emergency. Telehealth works for some families. Also applying to First Steps services, there is legislation being developed about a state cross-border provider licensure, possibly allowing a provider’s license to be recognized across state borders.

VII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned. Next meeting August 20, 2021.