

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

- I. Call to Order

Called to order by Tillie Allgood, Chairperson. Tillie is attending virtually from Washington, D.C. where she is attending a conference.
- II. Introductions and Inspirational Story

Anne Dolan shared an inspirational story that a child care center contacted the SPOE office with a desire to help child in her care who was demonstrating significant social development issues negatively affecting the whole classroom. This was heartwarming to Anne because there have been many calls to the SPOE in the past from desperate parents attending other child care centers who have been told that their child is no longer welcome to attend child care due to similar issues. Hearing from a child care center director reaching out to First Steps to help find strategies to address the child's developmental issues for the benefit of the child, the family, and classroom teachers demonstrated a lot of awareness and caring by the child care center director.
- III. Consent Agenda Items

Consent agenda items reviewed. Kim Fledderman motioned to accept the consent agenda including the minutes. Ella Boyd moved to second. Approved by consensus.
- IV. Financial Report

SPOE Financial report handout reviewed by Becky Haymond. The report shows the SPOE expenses for the first quarter (July-Sept) of the current grant year starting July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. The majority of SPOE expenses are personnel. The SPOE will continue to monitor expenses in all areas through June 2023. Expenses have increased for a variety of things such as health insurance, utility costs, etc.
- V. Other Business
 - Cluster Oversight and System Updates
 - Provider Networks-
 - Becky Haymond, SPOE Director, shared that the SPOE had been contacted by two individuals who expressed interest in becoming providers – a DT in Jennings County, and an OT in Dearborn County. Becky provided the individuals with contacts to the network agencies serving those counties.
 - Kim Fledderman, Developmental Services (DSI), shared that some potential new DT hires are doing some shadowing. Still needing ST providers. Has been doing some provider sharing with KOI network. DSI has more providers with a current frequency of 2 times a month on service plans. DSI is having continued success doing some service plans with a DT going into the home and having a virtual co-treat with other disciplines. The virtual co-treat needs a bit more training so that the virtual provider has success with coaching while the in-home DT can do demonstration.

Becky added discussion sharing that the First Steps system is not immune to workforce shortages. The approach that Kim described of reducing frequencies when appropriate and utilizing virtual therapy as appropriate helps to spread out the existing provider capacity and free up travel time in order to serve more kids. There is also consideration given for families who want to prioritize outcomes and do not have interest in working on all outcomes equally on their plan. The workforce shortage challenge calls for creative thinking to find solutions. The SPOE office recently gave a training to local Service Coordinators with national videos demonstrating virtual therapy so that Service Coordinators have better knowledge to explain all models of therapy options including virtual. Those present at the

meeting today asked if the training videos are available to families, and is it available for childcare providers. Becky said that the information can be shared. Mandy Hardin asked that the virtual training information be shared with the group. Becky also mentioned that Connie Young with the State First Steps office continues to visit colleges to encourage students to explore a career as an Early Intervention provider and suggests students can reach out to job shadow as part of their career exploration.

- Training Opportunities –
 - Becky Haymond highlighted that Indiana’s Early Intervention Conference is scheduled for June 8-9, 2023 in Bloomington.
 - Ella Boyd, Arc of Indiana, shared that the Arc has a virtual conference coming up on Nov 30th from 10:30-3:15 that is free for many. Conference website for information is: www.arcind.org/event/conference-2022/
- Statistics – Referrals, Evaluation, and IFSPs counts were shared in the chart format developed by the SPOE office. Referrals appear to have rebounded fully year over year after a dip during COVID. Evaluations are being done mostly virtually. Virtual evaluations have a side benefit of building comfort with families in virtual service delivery which may lead to better understanding of how a virtual therapy option could work. The SPOE office provides loaner equipment if lack of equipment is a barrier to a virtual evaluation.

Funmi Ige-Wright expressed concern that the evaluations are mostly done virtually. Funmi would like to know comparison measures of the effectiveness of a virtual evaluation compared to an in person evaluation. Funmi is concerned that virtual evaluations are being done out of convenience with little concrete data relating to effectiveness in establishing eligibility. Anne Dolan from the SPOE office noted that the rate of children found eligible is not noticeably higher or lower since changing for virtual evaluations a few years ago during the pandemic. A more or less unchanged rate suggests that the virtual evaluations are delivering about the same results as when evaluations were in person. Becky added that while the convenience of virtual evaluation is nice, the travel time saved maximizes the capacity of the eligibility team to see more families as needed and to get cancellation spots re-filled quickly from any county. With this capacity, children in Cluster J are able to get timely evaluations within a timeframe for establishing eligibility and service plans within the 45 day requirement. Funmi wants to be sure that virtual evaluations are accurately capturing the potential needs of the children, as parents don’t always know what their child needs before the evaluation. Sara Cummins added thoughts that once eligible, the providers assigned on the service plan do deliver services in person, so perhaps the question can be posed to providers about the accuracy of the evaluations. Kim Fledderman shared her impression that since the AEPS evaluation tool relies on parent report, the eligibility process through the evaluation tool is not likely to be affected by completion virtually, and may result in more children qualifying if anything. Funmi suggested that a way to find trends could be to see review what needs and services are assigned on plans. Maggie Matthews, service coordinator, added that the needs and services are not defined by the evaluation results exclusively since the families define the goals of plans and play a part in choosing the therapies.

- Staffing Update – Two new Service Coordinators for Hancock County have begun training. Michelle Massey was introduced. She is enjoying meeting families. Mikayla Cougill was introduced. Mikayla is also enjoying training and meeting families.
- EI Hub –

Becky gave report that all Service Coordinators in Cluster J are doing intake activities in the EI Hub. The biggest development with EI Hub this month is that the SPOE has been asked to complete a data clean-up project for all of the EI Hub records in the Cluster J area. Cleaned-up data will help make good reports when reports are available. Most Service Coordinators have embraced EI Hub. The SPOE still continues to provide extra training to Service Coordinators and availability for answering questions. There is still some slowness of the system experienced which has been reported to PCG.

- Old Business
 - State Quality Review of Records – Becky shared that the state did complete a quality review of SPOE records. The SPOE is waiting on determination and findings. There is no report yet.
 - Legislative Update – Becky shared that the next Indiana Legislative session starts soon and it will include state budget planning. The Arc and INARF are both advocacy organizations which have prioritized funding support for First Steps in their legislative advocacy efforts. The ICC group for Indiana First Steps has an advocacy committee and the ICC group recently published its First Steps Report for the Governor. The Governor’s report presents a compelling case for increasing funding to the First Steps program. The report will be provided to the local LPCC distribution list. Kim Fledderman shared that INARF is planning to set-up a Votor’s Voice link tool that can assist families or other individuals interested in contacting legislators to send a pre-typed message with the option to add more to the message. Katie is the person at INARF who is working on using the tool which should be ready in December and can be forwarded to families. Representative Clere serves on the ICC group and leads the advocacy committee. He is a great advocate and has advised the ICC to do what they can to encourage families to reach out to their legislative representatives as soon as possible. Rep. Clere feels that families sharing their personal success stories is the most powerful. Kim also reports that Katie has explained that a legislator might think that getting an e-mail from 5 people means a lot of people care about the topic. Kim explained that a funding analysis from 2018 estimated that the First Steps program for Indiana needs 44 million dollars total in order to be fully funded, and the current budget is 18 million per year. Sara Cummins chimed in that she is ready to put the call out to families to be a force since seeing is believing.
- New Business
 - LPCC Officer Elections: Nominating Committee – Anne Dolan shared that to fulfill our LPCC duties, a nominating committee needs to meet to discuss nominations for the three Council leadership positions: Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. The nominating committee will consist of current officers and anyone who would like to volunteer. Anyone wishing to volunteer for the committee can speak up now or contact Anne Dolan with interest. Also, anyone interested in being considered for an officer is encouraged to express their interest. Lastly, if you are contacted by the nominating committee to see if you would accept a nomination, please say yes. Those who have served in the past say it is not very hard.
 - 2023 LPCC Meeting Dates and Times – Anne Dolan suggested it was time to discuss and decide on the 2023 LPCC meeting schedule. The meetings for the past several years have been held virtually on the third Friday of February, May, August, and November from 9:30-11:00. There is a requirement to meet at least quarterly. Those present expressed that the existing schedule seems to work fine and propose to continue the same way for 2023. Approved by consensus.

VI. Announcements and Updates

- Request for Proposals for First Steps System Point of Entry (SPOE) via Event ID #10000073695 – Becky shared that the SPOE office contract proposal for Cluster J starting July 1, 2023 is due to the state First Steps office on December 15, 2023. The existing SPOE contract is held by Thrive Alliance, and current Thrive Alliance team plans to complete and submit a proposal to continue serving Cluster J. Thrive Alliance attended a meeting with the state last Monday to learn requirements and Becky may be reaching out to selected LPCC members for letters of support. Kim Fledderman asked if the contract amount offered will include any more funding than the current level. Becky replied that the contract amount is offering \$100,000 more to account for an increase in the scope of work. Becky feels the increase limits competitive salaries. Other community agencies can offer more and the SPOE loses staff. At this point, all of the staff positions are filled, however, in Cluster J Dearborn County service numbers have grown significantly and another Service Coordinator is needed there. Across Clusters H & J, several Service Coordinators are carrying caseloads of 100-120 kids. To help out, Whitney, Janell, and Becky are each carrying small caseloads themselves along with completing other duties. The SPOE cannot put people on a waiting list.

- Moriah and Amber introduced themselves as the current contact people for Bedford Outpatient Therapy Services (BOTS)
- Sarah Cummins shared that the Inspiring Abilities Expo is coming up on March 4th in Greenfield. Also coming up is the Male caregiver support group which includes pizza, coffee, and gaming.
- Kristin Waters introduced herself from the Bartholomew County Early Learning Coalition with Ivy Tech Columbus. Her position involves working with early learning providers and with Ivy Tech with students exploring early learning professions.
- Kari Sheward with Tangram shared she plans to send out information about Tangram's services to the LPCC group.
- Becky Haymond shared that there is an Indiana Broadband Initiative aiming to identify coverage gaps and speed deficits in order to obtain funding to improve broadband across Indiana especially in rural areas. The Broadband Initiative would like everyone to test their broadband speed. Becky can have Anne Dolan send out the information to the LPCC group. Molly Cleek from Kids Only Inc asked if completing this test was something providers could do to help. Becky said absolutely!

VII. Adjournment

Sara Cummins motioned to adjourn today's meeting. Funmi and Molly seconded. Meeting adjourned. Next meeting February 17, 2022 at 9:30 as scheduled. Becky thanked everyone for attending to help First Steps serve families and kids.

Attendees:

Amanda Hardin-Morton	Major Hospital
Amber & Mariah	Bedford Outpatient Therapy Specialists
Anne Dolan	First Steps South East
Becky Haymond	First Steps South East
Cheryl (subbing for Missy Myers)	Collaborating for Kids
Christine Waters	Bartholomew County Early Learning Coalition/ Ivy Tech
Elaine Studdard	Pediplay
Ella Boyd	Arc of Indiana
Funmi Ige-Wright	Parent
Janell Foley	First Steps South East
Kari Sheward	Tangram
Kim Amberger-Fledderman	Developmental Services, Inc.
Maggie Matthews	First Steps South East
Michelle Massey	First Steps South East
Mikayla Cougill	First Steps South East
Molly Cleek	Kids Only
Sara Cummins	FUSE, Inc.
Sarah Bishop	First Steps South East
Tillie Allgood	South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP) Head Start