

**First Steps South East
LPCC Quarterly Meeting
Cluster J
May 19, 2023**

- I. Call to Order
Called to order by Tillie Allgood, Chairperson.

- II. Introductions and Inspirational Story
Three inspirational stories were shared:

Kim Fledderman of Developmental Services Inc therapy group shared that she went to a 5k running event of the organization Girls on the Run in Batesville. Some previous First Steps kids were participating alongside typically developing peers.

Inga Moore of Greensburg Community schools shared that she was inspired recently when attending a Unified Track Meet and seeing the success and joy of kids with and without special needs competing as teammates.

Funmi Ige-Wright shared a personal story of inspiration regarding recent accomplishments of her daughter who has Down Syndrome. She passed her highschool Algebra II exam and is on track for graduating with a highschool diploma. Funmi gave testament that when participating in First Steps, the OT therapist Denise Cox encouraged Funmi to work toward high expectations for her daughter. Funmi is so thankful for that support from First Steps as well as the speech, PT, and DT services.

- III. Consent Agenda Items
Consent agenda items reviewed. Ella Boyd motioned to accept the consent agenda including the minutes. Funmi Ige-Wright moved to second. Approved by consensus.

- IV. Financial Report
SPOE Financial report handout reviewed by Becky Haymond. The budget year is July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023. The figures presented on the report do include an allocation increase from the state which started Jan 1, 2023. As stated at the last LPCC meeting, the additional dollars have been used by our SPOE to provide cost of living increases for staff wages and the addition of Service Coordinator positions to address high caseload sizes. With the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, the SPOE will be monitoring final expenditures and is planning on spending any remaining funds on materials that would be beneficial in the future.

- V. Other Business
 - Cluster Oversight and System Updates
 - Provider Networks-
 - Missy Myers, Collaborating for Kids, shared that the team in Bloomington has expanded due to absorbing therapists who used to work for Select Rehab. Select Rehab recently aquired Bedford Outpatient Therapy Services (BOTS) and decided to discontinue involvement with the First Steps program, so many of those First Steps therapists found a new home with Collaborating for Kids.
 - Kim Fledderman, Developmental Services (DSI), shared that DSI has a handful of new therapists. The new therapists prefer less than full-time hours serving First Steps children and will each serve 2-5 kids per week. Amy Torres, FSSA, noted that the average hours worked by First Steps therapists across the state is 35 hours (equaling approximately 35 kids per week). Kim Fledderman clarified that therapists who work full-time in her region serve about 18-20 kids per week, and perhaps this is lower than

the state average due to the time spent by therapists to travel distances across rural counties. Sara Cummins asked Kim why the new therapists only wanted to see a few kids per week, do they have other jobs? Kim said yes, the therapists have other jobs. Kim recognizes that contract work as offered to the therapists through First Steps cannot provide things like benefits or a reliable number of hours, but Kim is hopeful that maybe the new therapists will move to offer more hours to serve First Steps kids in the future. Missy Myers, Collaborating for Kids, states that in all three of the Clusters (regions) of the state that her agency serves, it is common that new providers start with just a few kids.

- Overall Therapy Workforce Discussion - Becky Haymond, SPOE Director, shared that the state is hoping that the provider rate increase has resulted in some seasoned therapists who left First Steps coming back. Missy Myers states that in all three of the Clusters (regions) of the state that her agency serves, some providers have come back but even those start with just a few kids. There is a hope that the state will monitor not only total number of providers, but also the total capacity of hours available for therapy as that might be a better way to understand workforce availability trends. Becky also introduced Family First who is a therapy agency that will be a new addition to the agencies serving Hancock and Shelby counties. Funmi Ige-Wright inquired about opportunities to broaden the workforce beyond the status quo to include more male therapists and Gen Z. Beth Ann Thompson, Kids Only, states her sense that working with young children seems to be more attractive to women. Funmi wants to be sure that recruitment methods target younger men to the same degree as women. Becky commented that it could be useful to get and track data about the demographics of therapists. Amy Torres, FSSA, is aware that the field of education is seeing that females make up large portion of the student body. Barb Sanders, FSSA, added that the same is true for PT, OT, and ST. Becky states that clinics and hospitals have higher wages and sign-on bonuses for therapists which can make it hard for First Steps to complete. First Steps is hoping that therapists fall in love with the work. Barb Sanders wondered if student loan forgiveness options are attractive and utilized in recruitment and retention. Becky replied that does work for Service Coordinators. Missy said her agency has looked into it, but therapy agencies who are not a not-for-profit cannot qualify their staff for the loan forgiveness program. Missy added that while there are some male therapists who work in her agency, families sometimes will ask to change from a male therapist to a female therapist likely due to the dynamic that the family caregiver working with the child is most often female and the family caregiver is most comfortable working with another female.
- Training Opportunities –
 - Becky Haymond shared that the registration for the upcoming in-person Indiana’s Early Intervention Conference scheduled for June 8-9, 2023 in Bloomington is full. The conference does still have registration open for those who would like to attend virtually. See meeting handout.
- Statistics – Referrals, Evaluation, and IFSPs counts totals were shared showing Cluster totals by month for several years and 2023 year to date. The available referral numbers go as far back as pre-pandemic for comparison purposes. The IFSP counts are for Initial (new) IFSPs only. A new report is provided which shows the county level breakdown of referrals by month for 2022.
- Staffing Update – There are 4 people employed by the SPOE office (including Service Coordinators) who are currently on maternity leave. There also two open Service Coordinator positions: 1 in Madison County, and 1 growth position. A new Service Coordinator will be starting on the 22nd, and some Service Coordinator caseload sizes are 80-85 kids. Another position came open with a Service Coordinator departing in Lawrence and Monroe counties, but that one has been filled by a new Service Coordinator starting at the end of June after she gets married. The new Service Coordinator in Lawrence and Monroe counties has done an internship

with First Steps in another Cluster. In summary, the SPOE will be navigating a tricky summer in covering duties for staff on leave and hiring and training new staff.

- EI Hub –Becky reported that the SPOE has been told by the state to anticipate a new version release for EI Hub around the end of May or early June. Marie Smith , FSSA, has been working closely with the vendor PCG toward resolution and improvements for some EI Hub functionality after visiting with the SPOE in late winter and early spring when Marie was hired by the state. Debbie McKenney and Christal Precht from our local SPOE staff have been helping Marie do testing of the upcoming release. Barb Sanders, FSSA, added that the timing of the EI Hub release is more likely to be in early June than in late May. Missy Myers, Collaborating for Kids, is hoping for the release to include an update to the reports, since sending reports to families isn't working properly. Missy has been working with PCG regarding the issue. Becky is pleased that monthly Zoom call meetings between PCG and the SPOE directors across the state have resumed.
- Old Business
 - LPCC Officer Elections: Nominating Committee – Anne Dolan, Cluster LPCC Coordinator for the SPOE, provided a verbal summary of the nominating committee's efforts. On behalf of the nominating committee, a slate of officers is being proposed at today's meeting. The slate of nominees presented today have agreed to be nominated. The proposed officers are Kim Fledderman for Chairperson, Lorien Konietzka for Vice-Chairperson, and Ella Boyd for Secretary. LPCC members at today's meeting can discuss the proposal and suggest changes. Missy Myers moved to accept the proposed slate of officers. Sara Cummins seconds. Motion passed via voting. New officers will begin serving at the next LPCC meeting in August.
 - State Budget Bill – Becky gave an update that the State Budget that has passed the Indiana legislature includes a 7.3 million dollar increase for First Steps statewide. This budget should allow First Steps to sustain the increases in provider rates and SPOE allocations for staffing that were established in January 2023.
 - Request for Proposals for First Steps System Point of Entry (SPOE) via Event ID #10000073695 – Becky reported that Thrive Alliance (current SPOE contract holder for Cluster J) has received notification that the proposal to continue delivering SPOE services starting July 1, 2023 has been accepted. Thrive Alliance will continue as the SPOE grantee. Becky thanked the LPCC members who served as references as part of the proposal. The SPOE is waiting on the contract to be exercised, but is anticipating completion of the contract by June 25th.
 - Student Identification Number (SIN) with Department of Education (DOE) – Funmi Ige-Wright asked if there was any update regarding the effort to assign and use SIN in the First Steps program. Funmi is hopeful using the SIN which would carry over into school services might help First Steps with data about the impact of the First Steps program. Becky offered a reply that, per Becky's perception, the effort is not off the table, however, the logistics of how to do it have not been worked out. Becky can send a request to the state for an update on behalf of the council.
- New Business
 - LifeCourse Training Cohort –Becky shared that a few First Steps staff from several Clusters around the state are participating in a training for Charting the LifeCourse. Charting the LifeCourse is a set of tools developed by the University of Missouri that are intended to help individuals plan for the future. The Indiana Bureau of Developmental Disabilities (BDDS) has adopted the LifeCourse approach to help adult individuals and families with older children to identify personalized life goals and identify supports. Once the training of First Steps staff is completed, the state will be seeking feedback from the training cohort about how to incorporate LifeCourse tools into First Steps. Sara Cummins of FUSE reports that she has had LifeCourse training in the past and loves it. As a parent, she uses the tools in Case Conferences for her child's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) with the school. Barbara Sanders, FSSA, recognizes that First Steps is already working toward implementing Family-Guided Routines-Based Intervention (FGRBI) and has a Family Assessment Tool. Sara feels that LifeCourse offers a valuable way to identify goals and organize services for living your best life. Ella Boyd, Arc of

Indiana, states that the Arc uses it for staff development and organizational development. Ella states that using the LifeCourse tools is really eye opening and leads to great conversations. Sara is aware that self-advocates are also using LifeCourse. Becky feels the LifeCourse tool would help families to answer the family strengths question on the First Steps IFSP (Individualized Family Service Plan).

VI. Announcements and Updates

- Medically Complex Warrior Publication – Anne Dolan called attention to a handout distributed along with the meeting materials that presents the ways that the Aged and Disabled Waiver services can be helpful to families with young children, particularly to pay the family for the extra caregiving they do for their child.
- Early Years Initiative Grants – Anne described the link to the Early Years Initiative Grants: <https://earlylearningin.org/early-years-initiative>. Not only are sizeable grant awards being offered to enhance any not-for-profit delivering services to the age 0-3 population related to family and child development, but there is a data dashboard on the site that may also be of interest to LPCC members.

VII. Adjournment

Sara Cummins motioned to adjourn today’s meeting. Kim Fledderman seconded. Meeting adjourned at 10:35am.

Attendees:

Amanda Hardin-Morton	Major Hospital
Amy Torres	First Steps Training Manager, FSSA
Anne Dolan	First Steps South East, LPCC Coordinator
Barbara Sanders	First Steps Family Engagement Manager, FSSA
Becky Haymond	First Steps South East, Program Director
Beth Anne Thompson	Kids Only, Inc.
Cheryl Short	First Steps South East, Service Coordinator
Deb Miller	Accord
Elaine Studdard	Pediplay
Ella Boyd	Arc of Indiana
Funmi Ige-Wright	
Inga Moore	Greensburg Community School Corporation
Kim Amberger-Fledderman	Developmental Services, Inc.
Maggie Matthews	First Steps South East, Service Coordinator
Marissa Horvath	KORT Kids
Michelle Ditts	Family First
Missy Myers	Collaborating For Kids
Sara Cummins	FUSE, Inc.
Tillie Allgood	South Central Community Action Program (SCCAP) Head Start