

North East & North Central  
Indiana First Steps  
Oversight Council Meeting Minutes  
November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020  
9:30 am – 10:38 am via Zoom



Chair: Nancy Moore

Vice Chair: Donna Driscoll

Participants: Abby Rager, Abigail West, Amy Ferguson, Amy Ellis, Andrea Polman, Brigette Fairchild-Leazenby, Cathy German, Charity Smith, Clare Mann, Cindy Lawrence, Connie Young, Diane Jones, Donna Driscoll, Laura Fulton, Grant Britzke, Laura Leffler (ASL Interpreter), Diane Jones (ASL Interpreter), Jaime Burks, Jennifer Shank, Jessica Blea, Jodi Curtis, Jon, Julie Petrowsky, KyLynne Greer, Laura Leffler, Laura Cooper, Lily Osborn, Lydia Otiato, Madelyn Warnock, Mary Ellen Schreck, Megan Drzewiecki, Melissa, M. Murphy, Nancy Moore, Noel Weibel, Paula Fox, Robyn Duffy, Sarah, Stephanie Furnas, Tammy MMullen, and Lydia Bradford Otiato.

1. Call to Order & Introductions

- a. Nancy called the meeting to order and everyone is able to see all in attendance.

2. August Meeting Minutes\*

- a. August Meeting Minutes were reviewed and approved.

3. SPOE Report

a. SPOE Report\*

- i. Clare reported that we have seen a trend with referrals since COVID started. When COVID started referrals dropped, then picked up, and are dropping again.
- ii. Clare explained and review the SPOE reports. For Cluster B the average age of referral is 16months. The one-day child count still shows an upward trend. Clare is going to recheck 2020.
- iii. For Cluster C the average age is also 16months. The one-day child count still shows an upward trend. The agencies are still very interested in the number of children who come into First Steps how many of those kiddos go to IFSP. When the new system takes effect, we will be able to see that. The agency is also wondered if doing virtual meetings has impacted the number of referrals going to IFSP's. Clare reported the information we have right now is

antidotal, but that if a family needs an in person appointment, we are accommodating and working with those families.

#### 4. Coordinator Report

- LPCC Coordinator reported on Child Find Activities for this past quarter. LPCC has continued with social media outreach on Facebook and in other Facebook groups. LPCC has continued reaching out to families with kiddos discharged from the NICU as well as following up with DCS caseworkers. LPCC sent new faxes to doctors in Cluster C on 08/31/20 and in Cluster B on 10/21/20. LPCC has presented to several doctor's office early in the quarter. LPCC has now presented DCS caseworkers in 10 of the 17 counties Cluster B and C serve. LPCC has also presented to the Bowen Center in both Adams and Wells County. LPCC worked to reach out to several MOPS groups, however they were postponing gatherings due to COVID-19. LPCC will work to research to see what/if any MOPS groups have gone virtual or are still opening to create a new outreach list. LPCC has worked with Babe of Wabash to become a coupon vendor when their store opens and has re-established contact with Babe of Whitley to build back a strong partnership. More details will be provided to agencies and providers in the coming weeks on how we hope this will not only increase referrals, but also family attendance and participation.
- Nancy brought up that many children who receive a diagnosis of ASD are coming to clinics without having been advised or gone to First Steps. LPCC will work on creating a document or a couple pages that can be shared to highlight the benefits of First Steps focusing on the benefits of Service Coordination and the Transition piece.
- No Pat on the Back-Award Winners this quarter.

#### 5. 1<sup>st</sup> Kids Agency Update

- a. Fiscal Report – There has been a change of not spending so much on mileage. Coordinators are still working from home and that has been going well. There are no unusual expenses. We still have the building and continue to pay rent.
- b. HR Report – In Cluster B there is one new employee. Employment numbers remain steady.

#### 6. Assessment Team

- a. Virtual Assessments continue, however there are many more cancelations than ever before. Nancy reported providers have also seen cancelations because families are not wanting and are resistant to virtual therapy. It has been very challenging. Stephanie reported that they made it through the first round of COVID with minimal loss of providers, but she is concerned about the future as during the winter we typically see a drop in referrals and now to add COVID to that she is unsure of how that will impact providers. Stephanie reported that the providers who have had the best success are the providers who have done a hybrid of services.

- b. The agencies would appreciate it if SPOE's could have conversations with families about a hybrid approach to therapy. The coordinator's conversations with families have not changed much since the beginning of COVID and stressing the need for flexibility, but if the agencies could agree on some tips that we could put on a tip sheet for parents for Coordinators to review with families that this may be helpful for that initial discussion. We discussed that some providers have been modeling a virtual session during one of their first meetings to that they are prepared for when sessions do need to be virtual.

7. New Business

- a. Cindy Lawrence, CDHHE, reported on new legislation that was passed last year. The IDEAL act was passed that requires annual language assessments for any child that is deaf or hard of hearing. There is a letting in the last First Steps newsletter that can provide additional information. CDHHE is providing services statewide and almost all providers are providing services virtually. Anyone with questions is welcome to reach out to Cindy.

8. Old Business - none

9. Announcements - none

10. Meeting Adjourned