North East & North Central

Indiana First Steps

Oversight Council Meeting

Meeting Minutes

February 9th, 2021

9:30am – 10:21am

Participants: Abby Rager, Abigail West, Aimee Dodd (ASL Interpreter), Alee Mannakee, Alysia Marshall, Amy Ellis, Andrea Polman, Angela Moddy (ASL Interpreter), Brigette Fairchild-Leazenby, Brooklyn Dugdale, Charity Smith, Clare Mann, Connie Young, Deb Tipton, Donna Driscoll, Elizabeth Waletzko, Emily Rupchock, Grant Brizke, Jaimie Burks, Jessica Blea, Jodi Curtis, Jon Ekhoff, Julie Petrowsky, Laura Fulton, Leah Kurz, Lily Osborn, Lydia Otiato, Meg Warnock, Mary Ellen Schreck, Megan Drzewiecki, Meghan Murphy, Nancy Moore, Noel Weibel, Paula Fox, Rhian Fertil, Robyn Duffy, Sara Lane, Shari Upchurch, Stephanie Ihnen, Stephanie Furnas, Tammy Pifer, and Tanika Phinisee.

1. Call to Order
   1. Meeting via zoom so all attendees and their names are visible.
2. November 2020 Meeting Minutes\*
   1. Amy Ellis motioned to approve the November 2020 Meeting Minutes and Brooklyn Dugdale seconded. No corrections.
3. SPOE Report
   1. SPOE Report\*
      1. For Cluster C Clare reported the age of referral is 16 months. We are really watching the number of referrals. While we would like to see continued growth with referrals, we are happy that we are coming back from this past year and referrals are steady. DCS referrals continue to increase and our partnership with their caseworkers continues to grow.
      2. For Custer B Clare reported the average age of referral is 17 months. Again, our continued work with DCS has influenced an increase of DCS referrals. We are continuing to work to increase referrals.
   2. Referrals during COVID\*
      1. This report shows “by week, by cluster” referrals. We have been tracking this since the start of COVID. We can see when families are feeling more confident and referrals pick up and when something hits the news or there is an increase in restrictions/lock down a corresponding dip in referrals.
   3. EI Hub
      1. The state is in the process of rolling out the new EI hub. We are planning for the coordinators transition and aware of the billing needs and doing our best to make sure authorizations are entered. There are going to be bumps, just like any transition, but we always get through it and are trying our best to be as proactive as possible to be prepared. EI Hub rolls out on 3/8/21 and will hopefully be fully functioning by June 2021. Trainings for the new EI Hub start next week. We will continue with Teamwork for consistency for the foreseeable future. We are really looking forward to the reporting capabilities of the new system!
      2. At this time nothing will be changing for our LEA’s. They will continue to receive information through teamwork.
      3. The Teamwork portal will not be opening to Head Start at this time in order to make sure consents current. SC’s will continue to email Early Head Start and Head Start the needed documentation.
      4. Connie also reported she is very excited for the LMS training system as it communicates with the credentialing system!
   4. Benchmark is no longer a First Steps provider.
4. Coordinator Report
   1. Child Find Activities: LPCC Coordinator reported she has continued with social media outreach, contacting families after discharge from the NICU, and following up with numerous DCS Caseworkers. LPCC Coordinator has check in with several doctors’ offices and sent additional brochures. LPCC Coordinator has talked with several programs such as Triple P, Purdue Extensions for Nutrition, and WIC. LPCC Coordinator has contacted the family birth planners at several hospitals and the First Steps brochure will now be included in the New Parent Welcome packet that gets sent home with families. The participating birth centers so far include Adams Memorial Hospital, Goshen Hospital, Dupont Hospital, Kosciusko Community Hospital, and Parkview Noble, Whitley, DeKalb, Huntington, and LaGrange Hospital. LPCC Coordinator has a couple meetings scheduled with doctors this next quarter, plans to continue to reach out to birthing centers, and will be faxing out a new First Steps letter with bullet point benefits of the program.
   2. Pat on the Back Award Winners; Bethany Davidson at PNE, Bethany Fenker at HIH, Kathleen Steel at 1st Kids. All awards were for going above and beyond to support families.
5. 1st Kids Agency Update
   1. Fiscal Report\*
      1. There are no unusual expenses. There is a reduction in mileage, however if coordinators need to complete meetings they are able to. The additional line item is the PPP loan and that was resolved in December and will continue to show up. We expect to end the year within our budget.
   2. HR Report\*
      1. In Cluster B there was a resignation for another job and in Cluster C there was a resignation for another job. Both were bilingual coordinators with offers for higher paying opportunities. Otherwise, employment has been steady.
6. Assessment Team
   1. Virtual Assessments have continued. Cluster B and C have continued to have a high rate of cancelation and they have lot of openings. At this time, we are not sure when assessments may transition back into the home. Some clusters are having some evaluators going back into the home. However, we are cautious about this because if they were exposed or to become sick and would have to be taken out of the field, we do not have a backup for them. This would affect our ability to evaluate and establish eligibility in a timely manner. Currently, we are not seeing families decline because of zoom assessments. We will get back to in person evaluations, however we will gradually move back to this in the future.
7. New Business
   1. Welcome to Leah Kurz at Healthy Families in St. Joseph County. She reported Healthy Families is still all virtual. They do monthly doorstep drops to families with necessities such as diapers otherwise things are virtual.
   2. Paula Fox at Turnstone reported Turnstone has opened a third classroom! They were closed from March until June in 2020 and have since been open. They have had to close a room or had a few people out here and there but are continuing with services. They are looking to hire two PT’s. Therapies are going well.
   3. Alysia Marshall at Early Head Start Huntington reported they opened four new classrooms and are serving many families. They updated their therapy room so First Steps providers have more space for social distancing and things are going well.
   4. PNE reported most providers are back in home and they have had a couple cases where a provider had COVID and offered virtual sessions, but families declined until they could be in person. HomeFront reported a lot of their providers are also back in homes with a few strictly virtual.
   5. Connie Young, State Outreach Manager, shared that if new people are coming into First Steps they should contact Sandra for enrollment with CSC and EI Hub. Initial training will have a black out period until 3/31/21. Adobe Flash player will no longer be available (that was the UTS training platform). They are working on the LMS training platform for Initial credentialing. The First Steps conference will be this virtual and we are encouraging families to attend this year. Early enrollment fee is $15 and that deadline is approaching. Flyers will be sent out after the LPCC meeting for providers and families. Connie also shared there is an IU OT student in their office and has set up family forums for her project. She will then set up a training for First Steps providers. This flyer will also be sent out after the meeting. Connie also reminded everyone there is a State First Steps SMS message that goes out monthly and anyone can sign up to receive it.
8. Old Business
   1. No old business.
9. Announcements
   1. No new announcements.
10. Adjournment

Coming up next:

LPCC & Child Find Meeting: Tuesday May 11th, 2021 at 9:30 am EST via Zoom

Cluster C Transition Committee Meeting: Tuesday March 16th, 2021 at 10:00 am EST via Zoom

Custer B Transition Committee Meeting: Tuesday March 23rd, 2021 at 10:00 am EST via Zoom