North East & North Central

Indiana First Steps

Oversight Council Meeting Minutes

May 10th, 2022

9:30am – 10:15am EST

Participants: Abby Rager, Amy Ellis, Amy Ferguson, Amy Hill, Brigette Fairchild-Leazenby, Brooke Ebel, Carenna Rae, Charity Smith, Chelsea Beard, Clare Mann, Connie Young, Donna Driscoll, Elizabeth Waletzko, Erika Pearson, Gwyndyn Seabolt, Janet Ballard, Janet Mota, Jennifer Martinez, Jessica Blea, Jodi Curtis, Laura Osborn, Lori Hundt, Mary Ellen Schreck, Megan Drzewiecki, Meghan Murphy, Nancy Moore, Noel Weibel, Pam Dove, Renee Springer, Robyn Duffy, Shari Upchurch, Stephanie Furnas, Theresa Eldridge

Chair: Amy Ellis

Vice Chair: Donna Driscoll

1. Call to Order & Introductions
   1. Everyone introduced themselves and their role.
2. February 2022 Meeting Minutes
   1. The February 2022 meeting minutes were reviewed, and Donna Driscoll motioned to approve the meeting minutes and Brooklyn Dugdale seconded the motion.
3. SPOE Report
   1. We do not yet have access to reports through EI hub. A report with referral numbers for Cluster A, B, C, and D was provided and referrals are up and staying up.
4. Coordinator Report
   1. Abby Rager, LPCC, reported that in addition to keeping up on social media updates, communication with the NICUs and DCS that this past quarter has been very busy with the focus having been on DCS and WIC. LPCC reported that she mailed a First Steps poster, tear away note sheets and information for each of the 17 DCS offices in Cluster’s B & C and reached out to each DCS office director offering information and a presentation. LPCC had six DCS presentations and recognized may names and provided information to newer employees. The relationship between First Steps and DCS is going very well. LPCC mailed brochures to all the WIC offices in Clusters B & C in preparation for their appointments going back to in person. SC thought about focusing on daycare outreach next quarter, however Nancy Moore reported she recently had a conversation with Angie Harmon who manages Parkviews Outpatient Therapy Clinic in Noble County regarding First Steps for those under 3 and a resource for their waitlist and this could be an opportunity for outreach. They have a long waitlist as do many outpatient clinics and, on that waitlist, there are children under three who could also go through First Steps. Nancy Moore is waiting to set up a meeting with Angie Harmon and other managers and has invited the LPCC to be a part of that meeting to discuss how we can work together to serve children. Clare Mann suggested instead of focusing on daycares, shifting to focus on outpatient therapy clinics. LPCC will focus on building relationships and working with Outpatient Therapy Clinics this next quarter.
5. 1st Kids Agency Update
   1. Clare Mann reviewed the fiscal reports for Clusters B & C. Around 98% of the budget goes to salaries. Travel is going up a little more with more meetings in the community. There were no unusual expenditures, and we are expected to end the fiscal year on target.
   2. Clare Mann reported 1st Kids continues to have turn over. While there hasn’t tremendous in B and C, we have shifted several people around to other clusters. We have one position in B and one in C as our Burmese Speaking Coordinator’s last day was Friday.
6. Assessment Team
   1. Brigette Fairchild-Leazenby reported that for Cluster B there have been a number of cancelations and families have preferred to keep their originally scheduled time verses moving the evaluation up to fill a cancellation.
   2. Lily Osborn reported for Cluster C the schedule is pretty full and outlying counties may have one or two days a month for evaluations right now.
   3. Nancy Moore shared a few providers have shared that a couple families express concerns that their assessment was scheduled for in person and then switched to zoom the day before. Bridgette Fairchild-Leazenby explained that families are given the option of in person or virtual and if they do not want virtual, we schedule for in person. Nancy will let us know the names of the families so we can follow up.
7. New Business
   1. Robyn Duffy reported that Grant County Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) are suffering with teacher shortages. They have two classrooms that are sitting empty because they don’t have teachers. They continue to search for teachers to fill those positions. Nationwide there is a shortage of teachers for EHS and HS. Nancy reported this is the case with ABA centers as well. Robyn reported they had amazing staff retention throughout COVID. She also said First Steps providers and assessment team members are coming in and that is going very well. They are getting some college interns and Amy suggested reaching out to Renee Boyer at IWU for additional intern opportunities.
   2. Donna Driscoll said she would like to step down as the co-chair. Clare Mann said we could look at the bylaws to see about the timing of Donna stepping down.
   3. Erika Pearson reported CDHHE has referred 32 kiddos to Cluster B and C and remind everyone they are here to provide services and supports throughout the state of Indiana.
   4. Pam Dove reported that their numbers at NISEC have increased, which has caused some challenges for summer birthdays. Pam asked for any feedback on how other districts handle summer birthdays. Theresa Eldridge at Elkhart County Special Education Cooperative reported they struggled with paraprofessionals and school phycologists, which influenced their decision to enroll some kiddos into the school system with an IEP based on their IFSP. All Speech only kiddos have a speech evaluation by an SLP, however other kiddos with higher needs may have partial evaluations or enroll under Developmental Delay (DD) eligibility. She would caution others with this approach because they have seen that after three weeks of kiddos in the program some kiddos would have an explosion of skills. When they started this Theresa reported she relied a lot on SC’s to help with guidance and their school team would still review the First Steps file. They may bring the kiddo in for PT/OT or for pieces of the assessment. They treat First steps kiddos as a “move in” kiddo, like First Steps is its own school and they re-evaluate regularly based on what they are seeing, which could include additional testing if concerns for Autism or OHI are seen, otherwise they come in under Developmental Delay criteria. For DD a school psych doesn’t have to be involved. Theresa also reported they put together a summer team for summer evaluations.
   5. Connie Young reminded everyone of the Early Childhood Conference on June 9th and 10th.
   6. Robyn Duffy reported that Grant County Early Childhood Coalition is hosting their Annual Fall Conference Saturday September 17th at Ivy Tech. It will be around $25 and includes breakfast and lunch and she will get more information to Abby Rager for her to send out closer to that time.
8. Old Business - none
9. Adjournment
   1. Theresa Eldridge motioned to adjourn, and Nancy Moore seconded the motion.

Coming up next:

LPCC Oversight & Child Find Meetings: Tuesday August 9th, 2022 at 9:30 am EST

Cluster C Transition Committee Meetings: Tuesday September 20th, 2022 at 10:00 am EST

Cluster B Transition Committee Meetings: Tuesday September 27th, 2022 at 10:00 am EST