

**First Steps South East**  
**LPCC Quarterly Meeting – Cluster H**  
**Wednesday, August 7, 2024**

**Call to Order**

Meeting called to order at 9:03 by Sarah Haisley.

**Introductions and Inspirational Story**

Introductions made by everyone present.

There were no inspirational stories shared at today's meeting.

**Consent Agenda**

Minutes and Consent Agenda were approved by consensus.

**Financial Report**

Becky Haymond reviewed the distributed SPOE budget report. The SPOE annual budget year ended June 30, 2024, however, the claims and payments for services prior to July 1 are not yet fully finished. The budget year included a change in IT vendors and some new servers and equipment. It is anticipated that all funds will be spent. The budget reflects Cluster H and Cluster J combined.

**Other Business**

- **Cluster Oversight and System Updates**

- **Provider Networks Update –**

- Julianne Jarrell of Hopewell Center reported that Hopewell has a new OT and an increase in slots available to children for ST.
    - Patty Kovacs of NCA Therapy reported that NCA has hired seven new therapists in the last six weeks mostly PT and PTA. Most areas are now covered.
    - Becky Haymond from the SPOE and Robyn Duffey from Carey Services Head Start are both serving on the state's First Steps ICC Workforce Development Subcommittee. The most recent meeting was last Monday. The focus of the Subcommittee is provider recruitment and retention with recommendations for anything not already being done. There is a lot being done as well as brainstorming.
    - Becky received an e-mail recently from the Workforce Development office inquiring about position openings for therapists. Becky forwarded the e-mail to Connie Young, First Steps State Outreach Manager, in hopes that a state level partnership could be explored for training and recruitment.
    - Discussion from group at today's meeting: Providers who leave cite cancellations and inconsistencies from families. If we can help families, we can help providers. Patty shared that NCA looks closely at the eval from the ED team and what is the family's primary concern. Families often can't meet 2-3 appointments per week. Families will keep two appointments and the 3<sup>rd</sup> gets cancelled. Robyn mentioned that the consultation model can be useful on a case by case basis, such as DT providing therapy with occasional consultation from PT. Becky shared that co-treats are sometimes arranged once per month. It was talked about that having a therapist assigned for twice per month opens the therapist up to serve more kids, but serving more kids also means twice as many progress reports so providers are sometimes resistive to that frequency.

- **Training Opportunities** – Training opportunities shared by the group:
  - Lindsay Devers spoke about the upcoming Heart to Heart Conference organized by Indiana Family to Family coming up on September 26<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.inf2f.org/heart-to-heart-conference.html> Attendance is virtual/on-line. No cost. Even if you are unable to attend that day, if you register you will have access to the sessions for one month following the conference.
  - Firefly is hosting a Provider Fair (social services providers) for the Department of Child Services Region 7 on September 6<sup>th</sup> in Hartford City. Several First Steps Service Coordinators will be attending to learn more about resources for families in the area and will also share First Steps information. If anyone in the LPCC group would like to learn more, Tashia Weaver with Firefly can provide more information.
- **Statistical Reports** –
  - Statistical report handouts were reviewed which include Referrals, Evaluations, and Initial IFSPs for Cluster H.
    - Referrals – There is an average of 212 referrals coming in per month. The counties with the highest numbers are Madison and Delaware. Patty noted that referrals from Jay County seems to have tanked recently.
    - Evaluations – There is an average of 125 evaluations completed each month which includes some annual evaluations. More are scheduled, but families sometimes cancel. The scheduling team tries to get those rescheduled.
    - Initial IFSPs (Individualized Family Service Plans)– There are an average of 80 new service plans being developed each month in Cluster H. The statistics now show them by county.
    - Overall note about all statistics – All data is hand-counted. EI Hub is unable to do data reporting for us.
- **Staffing Update** –
  - A Service Coordinator is dealing with a personal family emergency. Once the Madison County area has more fully trained Service Coordinators, that will allow the SPOE to redistribute SC caseloads which will provide relief to some Service Coordinators who are handling many kids in the meantime. The SPOE is not immune to staffing challenges.
- **EI Hub** –
  - EI Hub Software Version Releases - Work continues with vendor PCG to improve functionality of EI Hub. There have been several release versions since the last LPCC meeting in May. With the new versions, some things are fixed, but the fixes cause something else to stop working. It is a continual work in progress.
  - Therapy Session Reports issues – Some therapists use paper in rural areas to record session reports due to internet connectivity. Also, families don't have access to the digital reports logged into the system. Patty states that a work around is for families to take a picture of the session notes from the therapist's device. Families can also get info from the therapy office if needed.
- **Old Business**
  - **Indiana's Early Intervention Conference June 13-14, 2024** – The in-person attendance was sold out, and there were also large numbers of attendees registering for and attending via the virtual option. Cluster H Service Coordinators Amy Kupferer and Rose Larcom served on the conference planning committee. Service Coordinator Ali Rogers provided a poster presentation about Lead Exposure. Amy Kupferer gave a break-out session presentation about the Family Perspectives in First Steps. Becky Haymond gave a break-out session presentation about Knowledge and Skills for Service Coordinators based on materials from the Division of Early Childhood Conference she attended in 2023. This reminded Becky to share that four staff members will be attending the Division of Early Childhood Conference in September of

2024. Having SPOE leadership attend a national conference is now a requirement of the state SPOE grant. In addition to Becky and Whitney attending, Amy Kupferer and Janell Foley will attend the upcoming conference related to their roles as Service Coordinator Training Coordinators responsible for onboarding and mentorship of service coordinators. The DEC conference has a significant number of presentations focused on Service Coordination.

- **Transition MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) Process 2024** – The SPOE connected with all LEA and Head Start partners to complete the renewal of the Memorandums of Understanding. Nine in-person meetings were held with entities needing clarification of the transition agreement responsibilities. Several Special Education Co-ops have broken up, leaving local schools now doing the transition which is a new process for them. The contact list of all the transition partners has been updated a lot recently. Many LEA and Head Start organizations did not feel the need to meet in-person since they reported the existing partnership was working fine.
- **Federal Monitoring of State First Steps Program, OSEP Site Visit scheduled for Aug 19-21** - The state-level First Steps staff have been working hard preparing for the upcoming visit from the federal Office of Special Education Programs.

- **New Business**

No new business items.

## Announcements and Updates

- **Hanger Clinic** – Hanger Clinic gave an overview of current pediatric Orthodic and Prosthetic services. Hanger Clinic has many locations across Indiana. It has absorbed many older Orthodic and Prosthetic companies including those staff. First Steps providers in our area may be familiar with what was once Midwest Orthodics, but is now part of Hanger Clinic. Hanger Clinic is a provider of braces, helmets, AFOs, and SMOs. The family calls Hanger Clinic and schedules and appointment, and Hanger helps the family through the rest of the process to get what they need for their child. If the family has a hardship, Hanger can actually arrange to come to the family home. Others present at the meeting today state that families have raved about the service they received. It is nice that families don't have to travel to Indianapolis.
- **Carey Services** – Robyn Duffy from Carey Services shared that 49% of kids receiving Head Start services have disabilities. In years past, the percentages were 20-25%. In Blackford County, 7 of the 16 children in the Head Start program have IFSPs. Patty from NCA added that the number of kids being served in Blackford County is now 33 and in years past was 8-10. Not only are there more kids, the needs of the kids are more complex. Yes, there is a significant rise in autism, but also medical complexity. Becky theorized that maybe having the Autism Early Detection Hub in Madison has made autism diagnosis more accessible for families with less travel and less wait. Debbie Laughman with TRC Head Start in Muncie has also been seeing an increase in the kids having special needs in the Muncie Head Start – more than ever before.
- **Conduct Curb** – Erin Russell with Conduct Curb gave an overview of Conduct Curb services which includes clinic diagnostic and therapy services in Madison and Henry Counties. There a lots of referrals coming in for Autism or ADHD with families wanting a diagnosis before starting school. More awareness of these conditions equals more desire for evaluations even just to rule the diagnosis out. Debbie has concerns that there are still families never seeing a specialist who would benefit from doing so. Becky asked Erin what the timelines are for a diagnostic appoint, i.e. how long does it take to get an appointment. Erin said that the time waiting for an appointment varies by location, but it's generally between 2 and 6 weeks right now.
- **Ivy Tech Early Childhood** – Sarah Haisley with Ivy Tech shared that the Early Childhood program at Ivy Tech will be delivering some programs as part of the Early Years Initiative. The program, called Skills for New Parents, will be offered to parents expecting or with newborn arrivals of their first child. The

program offers 8 weekly group sessions which include dinner and giveaways including books, car seats, and home safety items. The 2<sup>nd</sup> co-hort of the program will be happening in Anderson, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> co-hort will be happening in Muncie. The flyers will be coming out soon.

## Adjournment

Next meeting Wednesday, Nov 6th. Meeting adjourned 10:00am.

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## Attendance:

Austin	Whitney	First Steps South East, SPOE Supervisor
Cougill	Mikayla	First Steps South East, Office Manager
Devers	Lindsey	Indiana Family to Family
Dolan	Anne	First Steps South East, LPCC Coordinator
Duffy	Robyn	Carey Services Head Start
Ferguson	Ginger	First Steps South East, Service Coordinator
Foley	Janell	First Steps South East, SC Training Coordinator
Fox	Stacy	First Steps South East, Service Coordinator
Grisenbach	Kayla	Conduct Curb
Haisley	Sarah	Ivy Tech Early Childhood
Haymond	Becky	First Steps South East, Program Director
Henson	Carrie	First Steps South East, Service Coordinator
Kovacs	Patty	NCA Therapy
Kupferer	Amy	First Steps South East, SC Training Coordinator
Loughman	Debbie	TRC Head Start
Russell	Erin	Conduct Curb
Schwering	Sharon	First Steps South East, Service Coordinator
Stephens	Misty	First Steps South East, Service Coordinator