



Mike Braun, Governor  
State of Indiana

## *Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services*

### *First Steps*

402 W. WASHINGTON STREET, P.O. BOX 7083  
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46207-7083

#### **First Steps Interagency Coordinating Council Meeting Agenda**

May 7, 2025

10 a.m. - 11 a.m. EDT (abbreviated meeting)

#### **Attending ICC Members:**

Cory Best (ICC Chair), Deanna Woodruff (ICC Vice Chair), Jason Berty, Laura Burklew, Mariann Frigo, Alexandra Hall, Charlie Jones-Gibson, Kristi Linson, Jennifer Owens, Erica Deathe, Jessica Minor, Courtney Penn, Alyssa Christy, Robyn Duffy, Adam Alson, David Reed, Tanya Merritt-Mulamba, Stacy Holmes-Williams, Representative Edward Clere

#### **Attending First Steps State Staff:**

David Brandon-Friedman, Danielle Ruffino, Marie Theresa Smith, Connie Young, Katie Moore, Amy Torres

#### **Welcome and Introductions**

Cory Best, ICC Chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. All ICC members were asked to briefly introduce themselves, both in person and virtually.

Mandy McGarrell shared her family story and how First Steps has positively impacted her son, Tucker.

#### **Approval of January 2025 Minutes**

A request was made to amend the January meeting minutes to indicate that the Indiana Early Intervention conference will be held in June 2025, not 2024.

Cory Best asked for a motion to approve the January meeting minutes as amended. Mariann Frigo made a motion to accept the meeting minutes as written. Charlie Jones Gibson seconded the motion, and a vote was taken, with all members approving the motion. The motion passed.

#### **First Steps Update**

David Brandon-Friedman and Danielle Ruffino provided an update on the First Steps program, including data on the number of children receiving services, key program metrics, and a year-to-date summary. During the third quarter of 2025, a total of 8,976 new referrals were received for First Steps services.

In addition, updates were shared regarding the Early Intervention (EI) Hub, as well as other program developments. These included staffing changes and upcoming Requests for Proposals (RFPs) related to Caregiver Coaching, Professional Development Systems, and Data Systems.



Connie Young shared that the Indiana Early Intervention Conference will be held on June 12-13, 2025. The in-person conference is now sold out, however, the virtual conference More information can be found here: <https://earlyintervention.iu.edu/registration/index.html>

### **2025 Legislative Session Update**

Representative Clere provided the following legislative updates to the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC):

- a. Funding for the First Steps program will remain unchanged in the current budget session.
- b. Most other state programs experienced reductions of 5% or more.
- c. This presents a valuable opportunity for the ICC to continue its advocacy efforts on behalf of First Steps families. Members are encouraged to engage with local legislators and to invite them to visit program sites and interact directly with families and children receiving First Steps services.
- d. A 5% budget reduction was applied to the Medicaid Waiver program. While the Medicaid program remains intact and fully funded, there continues to be a waiting list for most Medicaid waivers.

### **Sub-Committees Updates**

- a. Workforce Development
  - i. Legislative updates related to workforce development are currently pending.
- b. Technology
  - i. Technology initiatives were paused in January following the state's announcement of the Early Intervention (EI) Hub.
- c. Other State Systems
  - i. The team convened in April to provide feedback to Indiana University (IU) and to discuss shared program initiatives.

The ICC continues to reassess the structure and function of its sub-committees. This will be a topic of discussion during today's Strategy Session.

### **2025 Strategy Session**

All ICC members were requested to stay for our Annual ICC Strategy Session from 11:30 a.m.-2:30 a.m. following the abbreviated ICC meeting.

### **2025 ICC Meetings**

August 20, 2025 (10 a.m. - 1 p.m. EDT): Virtual and In-Person

November 5, 2025 (10 a.m. - 1 p.m. EDT): Virtual and In-Person

All 2025 meetings will be held at Easterseals Crossroads, 5th Floor. There will also be a Zoom link provided for virtual participation.

### **Public Comment**

Cory Best opened the floor for council members. No comments were made. He then opened the floor for public comment and no one from the public had comments.

### **Adjournment**

Cory Best requested a motion to adjourn the meeting. A motion was made to adjourn and seconded. The motion passed, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:00am.

**Next Meeting**

August 20, 2025

10 a.m. - 1 p.m. EDT

Location: Easterseals Crossroads 4740 Kingsway Drive Indianapolis, IN 46205 Conf. Room 5<sup>th</sup> Floor

Minutes were respectfully submitted by Megan Hershey, Transform Consulting Group