

INvision

Indiana Division of Disability &
Rehabilitative Services Newsletter

A message from the DDRS director

Let's challenge the stigma



Within the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services, our vision is, "All people have the right to live, love, work, learn, play, participate and pursue their dreams in their community." From birth, we provide services and support to empower individuals with disabilities to define and pursue their vision of a good life. As for all individuals, employment is and should be a significant part of that vision. As May is Mental Health Awareness Month, we are focusing on how our mental health, which includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being, affects how we think, feel and act.

Each year one in four people in the United States is affected by mental illness. That is equivalent to over 50 million Americans. Over 1 in 10 youth in the U.S. are experiencing depression that is severely impairing their ability to function at school or work, at home, with family or in their social life and we know that individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities are at high risk of co-occurring mental health conditions, including major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder, psychotic disorders, anxiety disorders, impulse control disorders and others.

In other words, people living with mental illness are a diverse group with a wide range of talents. Individuals with mental health conditions can and do, work in all segments of our economy. However, they often have problems in finding and keeping jobs. But even though it is common, mental illness still carries a stigma and those living with it often face discrimination.

Work can be an important part of recovery. Work can provide a structure, a sense of purpose, income and benefits. Despite this, people with mental illness are often unemployed or underemployed. Almost 80 percent of the 7 million individuals in the public mental health system are unemployed, though studies show that at least 60 percent of them want to work.

During this month of awareness, let's challenge the stigma.

Kelly Mitchell

JUNE 2023
ISSUE 3, VOLUME 6

STORIES IN THIS NEWSLETTER

- **Bureau bits:** Updates from your First Steps, Bureau of Developmental Disabilities and Vocational Rehabilitation teams.
- **Making the LifeCourse work for you:** Health is ingrained into other areas of our lives, but we often overlook our mental health. It is important to look after your mental health just as you do your physical health.
- **News you can use:** 988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number—it will offer a direct connection to crisis support.
- **Featured story:** Meet Zach. It took a lot for Zach to step outside his comfort zone and try living on his own. Read his story.
- **Events you don't want to miss:** The quarterly Building Bridges events create direct avenues for individuals and families to share their feedback.

First Steps

Oftentimes, when we focus on mental health, the populations that we focus on most tend to be adolescents and adults. Rarely do we consider that infants and young children have mental health needs as well. Interestingly, many mental health concerns that emerge in adolescence and in adulthood have roots that extend to challenges occurring in infancy and early childhood.

According to the Mayo Clinic Online, “infant mental health refers to the well-being of infants and children up to age 3 and it includes a child’s emotional and social growth and development (Stygar & Zadroga, 2021). Caregivers (parents, grandparents, foster parents, etc.) undoubtedly experience normal challenges in the raising of their child(ren). Sometimes, caregivers can experience anxiety and frustration themselves if a challenge persists or remains unchanged. By seeking out support with an expert in infant and early childhood development, a caregiver can receive developmentally appropriate strategies to help reduce the stress for everyone involved while supporting the development of the child.

Core features of an infant’s successful social emotional growth include:

- ▶ Understanding one’s own emotional states
- ▶ Reading and understanding emotional states in others
- ▶ Managing strong emotions and expressing these in a constructive manner

- ▶ Regulating one’s own behavior
- ▶ Developing empathy for others
- ▶ Establishing and maintaining relationships (Stygar & Zadroga, 2021)

A child’s behavior will often show these core features as the child continues to develop. For example, babies often mimic the reaction of their caregiver. When you smile, the baby smiles. Sometimes, when an infant or young child is overstimulated. When one child cries, it may cause another child to cry. A child may even give a caregiver a hug or tell them, “It will be okay,” if they sense that a caregiver is sad or upset.

An infant’s future ability to pay attention, learn in school and in life situations, make friends and manage unpleasant emotions, such as anger or anxiety all depend on early social emotional development. When infants and young children struggle to develop these essential abilities, mental illness can follow.

If you have concerns about your young child’s social emotional development, please do not hesitate to reach out to [First Steps](#). We employ developmental therapists that focus on play skills, social emotional development and parent education as well as social workers and psychologists to help you meet your child’s developmental needs.

Additional resources you may find helpful

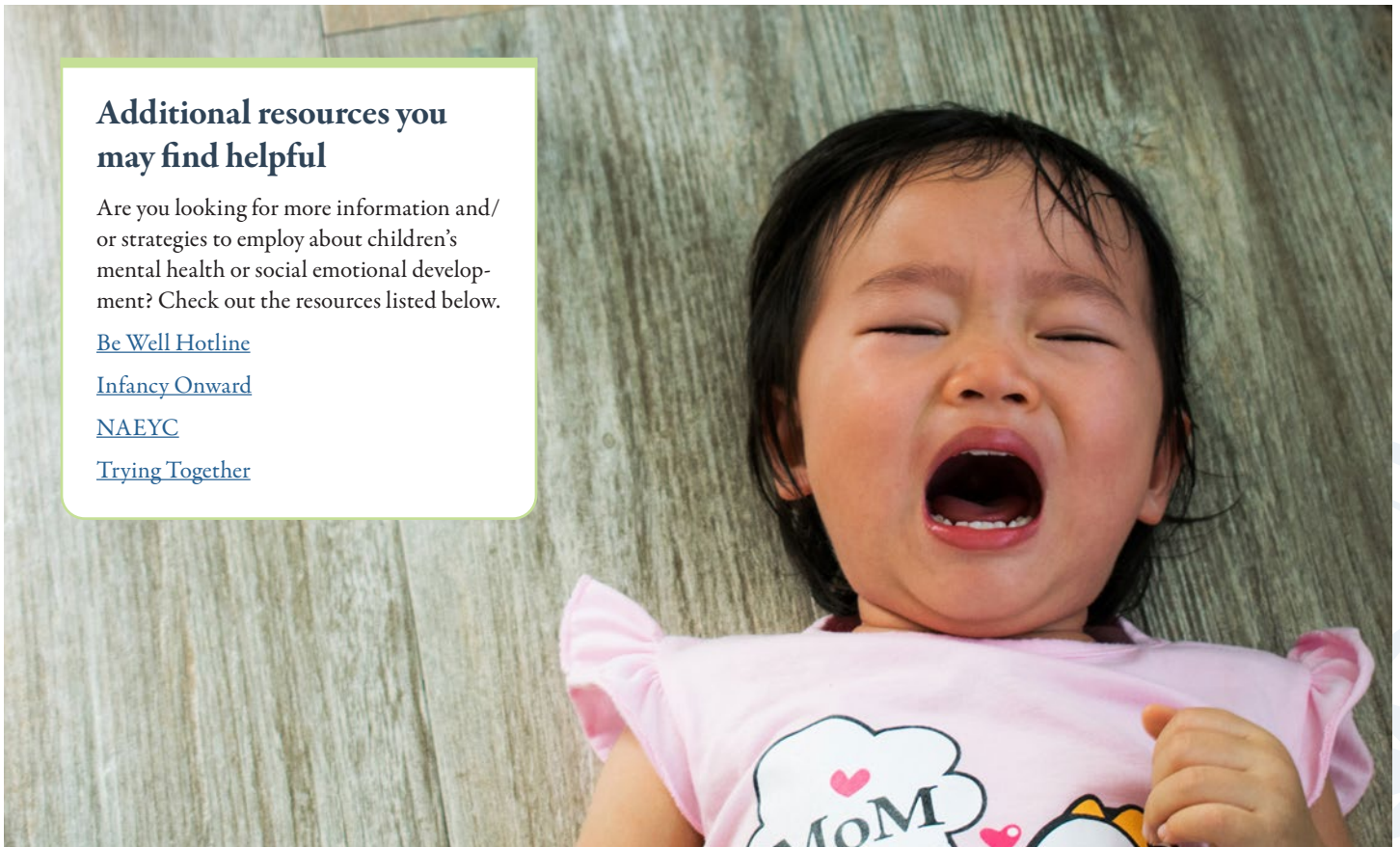
Are you looking for more information and/or strategies to employ about children’s mental health or social emotional development? Check out the resources listed below.

[Be Well Hotline](#)

[Infancy Onward](#)

[NAEYC](#)

[Trying Together](#)



Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services

The Bureau of Disabilities Services offers services and supports to eligible individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Indiana. BDS recognizes that people are more than just their qualifying diagnosis and works to ensure that our staff, case managers and service providers have the tools and resources they need to connect people to individualized supports.

This is true for the growing need for mental health supports for Individuals who are dually diagnosed with a mental health diagnosis alongside an intellectual or developmental disability. Over the last year, BDS has provided a variety of trainings to case managers and service providers with topics such as quality behavior supports and supporting individuals with dual diagnosis. All of the BDS trainings are available on [our website](#) or you can view them on [our YouTube page](#).

BDS regularly collaborates with the [Division of Mental Health and Addiction](#) and [community mental health centers](#) to bring the appropriate supports to individuals. The DMHA provides supports to Hoosiers living with a mental health diagnosis or substance abuse disorders. This can include services such as Medicaid Rehabilitation Option services, Adult 1915(i) programs, Recovery Works and State Psychiatric Hospitals.

Additional resources you may find helpful

If you or a loved one is feeling overwhelmed or anxious and would like to explore additional supports, here are some links that can be explored to help you or your loved one obtain some additional information:

[Children's Mental Health Initiative](#)

[Indiana 211](#)

[Finder Indiana Disability Resource Center](#)

[Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities National Training Center](#)

[Adult Mental Health Habilitation and Behavioral and Primary Healthcare Coordination](#)

Vocational Rehabilitation

What is your high school student's plan for the summer? Since the school year will soon be coming to a close, now is a great time to start thinking about getting them involved in Pre-ETS so they can make the most of their time off this summer.

What is Pre-ETS? The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and requires Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to set aside federal funds for their statewide provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services to "students with disabilities who are eligible for potentially eligible for VR services." This provides an opportunity to ensure students with disabilities have access to meaningful career planning in order to help with the transition from high school to employment or postsecondary training. A student with a disability is an individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary or other recognized education program who:

- ▶ Is between the ages of 14 and 22 years old; and
- ▶ Is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IEP, 504 Plan); or
- ▶ Is a student with a disability for purposes of Section 504

Pre-ETS services are provided by both VR counselors and contracted vendors, are available throughout the state, are voluntary and are provided at no cost to the participant. Pre-ETS activities include:

- ▶ Job exploration counseling
- ▶ Work-based learning experiences
- ▶ Counseling on postsecondary opportunities
- ▶ Workplace readiness training
- ▶ Instruction in self-advocacy

Why is summertime such a great time to take advantage of the Pre-ETS program? Some Pre-ETS contractors offer summer camps, where students meet regularly and are offered opportunities to tour, observe and conduct informational interviews at different facilities, as well as provide opportunities for job shadowing and work experience. Students are also able to participate in fun group activities and outings. Summer time is also a great time to take advantage of other Pre-ETS services, such as volunteering to add experience to their resume, touring area colleges or participating in paid and unpaid internships.

There are several different ways to get your student started in Pre-ETS. Talk to their school and ask to have them referred. If their school isn't currently receiving services, you can contact the [Pre-ETS provider in your area](#) directly or you can contact your [local VR office](#). Help your student make the most of their summer!



Making the LifeCourse work for you

“Health Team” and “Today’s Health Care Visit” papers

As you review the different life domains associated with the LifeCourse Framework, you will likely spend a lot of time reviewing what you want in the [healthy living section](#). Your health is so ingrained into other areas of your life, but we often overlook our mental health. It is important that you look after your mental health just as you do your physical health. Mental health is often more difficult to talk about than physical health and sometimes we need a little support to do so.



Luckily, many of the same LifeCourse tools can be used for mental health as well as physical health planning. Today, let’s spend a little time looking over the “Health Team Document” and “Today’s Health Care Visit” papers that can be found online in the Healthy Living life domain section.

Just as you map and plan for other areas of life, you should be working through how to best support mental health. The health team document is one page and goes through listing out your personal support team, formal support team (such as residential providers) and information regarding health care reps and guardians. Having this information handy when you attend a doctor’s appointment will help you ensure you have the team present that is best suited to assist, when needed, in answering questions and helping to make decisions.

The second half of this document is a section that helps you breakdown different areas of support that may be needed when attending appointments, communicating your wants and needs as well as following through with your treatment plan. You can use this to work through any support you may need and who you would like to provide this support. You can take this to your appointments to show your care providers how they can best communicate your health plan with you.

The health care visit document is also only one page. The top section you complete prior to the appointment and will help you explain why you are visiting the doctor that day. There is a section on this form for the questions you want to ask and the answers to those questions. Often, a lot of information is presented to us during appointments and it’s easy to get confused or overwhelmed. Being prepared is helpful in these situations. How many times have you left the doctor and couldn’t remember what you were told? The bottom section of this health care visit form is for you to list your take-away information to help you remember medication and treatment information after your appointment is over.

Mental health is important at every life stage as it affects how we handle stress, relate to others and make other healthy choices. The tools listed above are just a snippet of how LifeCourse can help support you and your mental health. If these tools don’t reflect the support you need, please browse other LifeCourse tools until you find something that works for you. Your mental health matters, so please reach out to your team and let them know what support you want.



Daily Life and Employment: What a person does as part of everyday life – school, employment, volunteering, communication, routines and life skills.



Community Living: Where and how someone lives—housing and living options, community access, transportation, home adaptation and modification.



Safety and Security: Staying safe and secure—finances, emergencies, well-being, decision making supports, legal rights and issues.



Healthy Living: Managing and accessing health care and staying well—medical, mental health, behavior, developmental, wellness and nutrition.

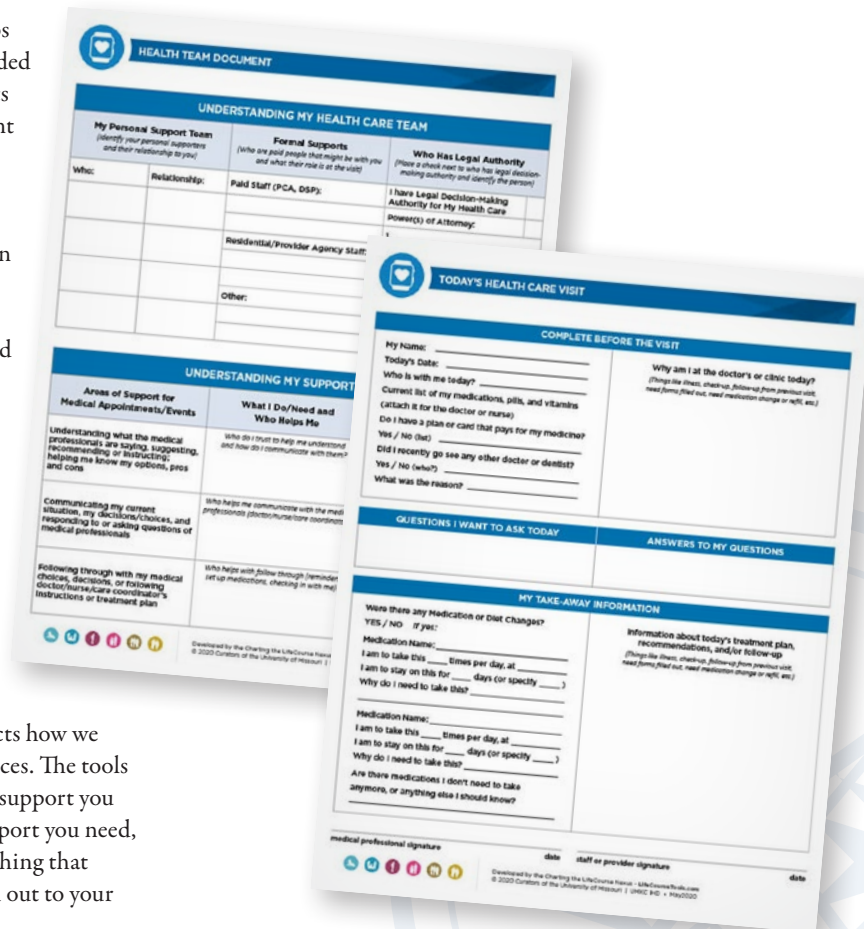


Social and Spirituality: Building friendships and relationships, leisure activities, personal networks and faith community.



Advocacy and Engagement: Building valued roles, making choices, setting goals, assuming responsibility and driving how one’s own life is lived.

For more information on the LifeCourse framework and principles, [visit: www.lifecoursetools.com](http://www.lifecoursetools.com).



988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number

It's a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support

What is 988 Indiana?

988 is more than just an easy-to-remember number—it offers a direct connection to compassionate, accessible care and support for anyone experiencing mental health-related distress—whether that is thoughts of suicide, mental health or substance use crisis or any other kind of emotional distress. People can also dial 988 if they are worried about a loved one who may need crisis support.

Vision and mission statements

Vision: Providing quick, competent and nation-leading crisis response services for every Indiana resident.

Mission: Creating a sustainable infrastructure that will fully coordinate crisis care for mental health, substance use and suicidal crises.

988 Indiana six- to nine-year plan

Indiana is using the arrival of 988 to invest in a broader crisis response system to help all Hoosiers. This will ultimately include more than just someone to contact at a 988 center, but also someone to respond and a safe place for help, if needed.

The work to develop this complete system is well underway and will [continue over the next six to nine years](#). Pilot projects are being funded right now, and we are evaluating the best way to establish these services through providers throughout the state.

What it will mean, throughout the coming years, is:

- ▶ A simple, short number for anyone experiencing any kind of emotional distress.
- ▶ The establishment of mobile crisis teams who are trained and skilled in responding to anyone experiencing mental health-related distress. Mobile crisis teams are comprised of peers and behavioral health professionals skilled in providing specialized crisis care to people on site in their community.
- ▶ A greater ability to refer Hoosiers in crisis to a network of local crisis specialists who are familiar with the community and better equipped to provide culturally competent support and referrals to local resources and other lifesaving follow-up care.

988: More than a number

988 is more than just a number. It's a chance to transform crisis care.

- ▶ Someone to contact
- ▶ Someone to respond
- ▶ A safe place for help

If you or someone you know needs support now, call 988. If you have questions about 988 Indiana, email IN988Questions@fssa.IN.gov.



Build Learn Grow Program Impact Report

The [April 2023 "Build Learn Grow Program Impact Report"](#) highlights agency-wide outcomes to demonstrate how FSSA is leveraging federal relief funding. FSSA is committed to sharing with stakeholders how these investments are improving the health and well-being of Hoosiers in three key areas: Services in the home or community, early childhood programs and mental health services.



100% A&D waiver providers certified or conditionally certified with the HCBS Settings Rule by the March 17, 2023 deadline³



7% Increase in number of Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services (BDDS) Providers from 507 in 2021 to **544** in 2022



1,260 Caregivers of older adults received **42,600+** hours of Counseling, Training, Respite, & Case Management services in 2022



2M Home-delivered & congregate meals provided in 2022 to **20,000+** individuals



104 New BDDS provider applications approved in 2022, which represents a **96%** increase since 2021



63 New computers sent to Adult Protective Service (APS) units to support operations and telehealth capacity

FEATURED STORY

Meet Zach

Encouraging everyone to set their goals and go after them

Tell us a little about yourself.

My name is Zach Arland. I am 29 years old and live in my own apartment in Muncie. I graduated from Erskine Green Training Institute in 2016 and I've worked in Muncie at the Courtyard at Horizon Convention Center for the past five years. When I'm not working I enjoy playing power soccer, going to the movies, attending live theater and spending time with my family. I am a big fan of Purdue football and basketball and Colts football. I'm also a huge Batman fan.

What is your vision for your good life? This can include things that are happening now as well things you want in the future.

My good life includes having a successful career, having a good group of friends and strong family support. I want to be able to travel and experience new places and things. I may want to get married someday.

As a person with co-occurring conditions, what has been the greatest challenge(s) to live your best life?

I have cerebral palsy and use a power wheelchair for mobility. I also have Bipolar II, which has caused me challenges since I was a young teenager. One of my challenges is staying self-motivated when I'm going through difficult times in life. When I'm depressed, it can sometimes be hard for me to reach out to people for support when I need it. It is easy to isolate myself because I do not drive, so sometimes my only contact with people outside of work is my daily staff support.

While getting medical treatment is usually easy from an accessible standpoint, it is sometimes harder to find accessible mental health treatment. I have mostly used private mental health providers, so we always have to ask in advance if their offices are wheelchair accessible. For a while, we were using one close to our home, but we had to take our own ramp to access the office.

One time when I needed to access inpatient behavioral health services, the facilities I usually used were full. The facility where I ended up did not want to keep me because of

my physical disability. It's like they assumed I was helpless, so they felt ill equipped to provide care. Being made to feel unwanted did not help my mental status at that point. In reality, my mental health needs far outweighed my physical needs while I was there. They were forced to keep me due to bed shortages in the city, but the experience was not good. When I left, I still needed tons of support to manage my mental health for a while.



How have you overcome those challenges?

I have to explore all the options available in my community to find good providers in places that are accessible. I do that with the help of my mom, who is a huge advocate for me. I also rely on my behavior management provider, who is a great help and my nurse case manager with my HHA services. I know I can reach out to any of them anytime I need support. They are very proactive in helping me adjust my services or staff as needed.

Is there a specific success you would like to share?

My training at EGTI and my job at the hotel have been a life-changing experience. Before attending EGTI, I never really thought I would be able to live on my own and be as independent as I am. EGTI helped me recognize my abilities right from the first week.

My employer is extremely supportive any time I have had challenges in my life. When I needed inpatient treatment, they have always made me feel like I was safe to take the time off I needed and my job would be waiting for me when I got back. They never made me feel bad about needing some schedule accommodations for treatment and they always check up on to see how I'm doing. They encourage me to use mistakes as a learning experience and never beat myself up, which I can struggle with at times. I could not ask for a better place to work.

What advice would you give to someone who has a co-occurring conditioning and is trying to navigate all the different service systems to meet their needs?

Definitely take the time to explore all the different options in the community. Don't be afraid to speak up to the people on your support team, including your case manager, providers and family. Try to set high goals for yourself, even though life can be really challenging sometimes. Also find someone who can help you navigate all the different systems that you need to achieve your goals. My mom helps me a lot with the paperwork and understanding the rules and regulations for things like my BDS services, Social Security, Section 8 and others. She helps me by coaching me on what to ask when I reach out to these offices on my own and she does the paperwork, since that's a task that is difficult for me to do.

It took a lot for me to step outside my comfort zone to try living on my own. If I had not done that, my life would look very different today. I like the life I have made for myself, so I encourage everyone to set their goals and go after them. You will get a lot more satisfaction out of life if you have goals to achieve.



Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services

Indiana Family and Social Services Administration
Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
402 W. Washington St., W453/MS 26
Indianapolis, IN 46204

You can sign up to receive this newsletter by [clicking here](#).

For updated meeting information, as well as agendas and past meeting minutes, visit [the DDRS Commissions & Councils page](#).

The Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services is a program of the Indiana Family & Social Services Administration. If you have questions about DDRS programs and services, [visit us online](#).

Did you know that families can sign up to receive text messages and email updates from First Steps? Families will learn more about policy issues, how to become an effective advocate, how to be involved in your local planning and coordinating council, how to connect to events and groups, how to tell your family story and more. Go to [this site to sign up!](#)

EVENTS YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

Following are the current commission, council and public meetings that you may be interested in learning more about and/or attending in the future. To find the most current information, including next meeting dates and locations, [please click here](#).



Building Bridges

These meetings are an opportunity for families and self-advocates to meet and speak with the Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services state staff. These sessions are an important part of the Bureau's efforts to create direct avenues for individuals and families to share their feedback. These meetings are solely for families and individuals with disabilities to provide a forum for constructive and valuable conversations on successes or concerns, as well as suggestions or input regarding BDDS programs and services. For more information on upcoming meetings, please visit the [DDRS Announcements web page](#).

INSILC public meeting

The Indiana Statewide Independent Living Council provides oversight of the Indiana State Plan for Independent Living and assists the Centers for Independent Living with the plan's implementation and coordination of services. For more information, visit [the Statewide Independent Living Council webpage](#).

DDRS Advisory Council

The DDRS Advisory Council was established to assist the Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services in ensuring that individuals with disabilities are as independent and self-sufficient as possible. The council meets at least six times a year and the meetings are open to the public. For more information, visit the [DDRS Commissions & Councils webpage](#).

ICC meetings

The Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities is the state's federally mandated early intervention council. The council is charged with advising and assisting DDRS in its responsibility to develop an early intervention system of the highest quality, balancing family-centered services with fiscal responsibility. The council is comprised of parents, state agency groups, early intervention service providers, legislators and others. The meetings are open to the public.

Members of the public are encouraged to attend. A link will be made public prior to each meeting. Should a member of the public need access to the meeting link, special accommodations or interpretative services, please contact Janet Ballard at Jaeball@indiana.edu at least two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting. The 2023 meeting dates are as follows:

July 12, 2023, 10 a.m. ET

Sept. 13, 2023, 10 a.m. ET

Nov. 8, 2023, 10 a.m. ET

Commission on Rehabilitation Services

The Commission on Rehabilitation Services works with the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services' Vocational Rehabilitation Services on matters such as the effectiveness and customer satisfaction with the services provided to individuals participating in the VR program. The commission is also involved in matters affecting VR policies and procedures, goals and priorities, and the state plan. For more information, please visit the [DDRS Commissions & Councils webpage](#). Check the [2023 Indiana Commission on Rehabilitation Services meeting schedule](#) to find the upcoming meetings.