

News & Resources

Sponsor the First Steps Conference

The 2021 First Steps conference is rapidly approaching. We know last year was tough and your focus may not be on early intervention for families of children with disabilities. But early intervention needs you more than ever. Our early intervention providers spent last year learning how to do services with families remotely, through phones and iPads and laptops. They pivoted quickly and learned how to show parents how to help their children using dolls and gestures and verbal prompts. Children with disabilities are often at greater risk of contracting infections, so families have been isolating and depending more than ever on their First Steps providers for much needed support and information.

For these reasons, a 2021 conference is desperately needed; to share best practices in early intervention that have changed and evolved due to COVID. Don't miss out on your chance to sponsor or exhibit at this virtual event. Your sponsorship will provide Indiana's early intervention professionals a chance to learn and network. This year will also offer families of young children with disabilities a chance to join the conference with dedicated sessions that will help them take a more active role in supporting their children and connect with other families.

First Steps serves over 26,000 children each year. We invite you to join us in supporting this important work.

The 2021 First Steps conference team has put together a cutting-edge virtual event. They have chosen the Whova platform to host all of the sessions and provide a virtual exhibit hall where sponsors and exhibitors can engage with participants. The exhibit hall has space for logos, descriptions, videos, brochures, and live chatting. There are also banner ads for sponsors that will play throughout the event.

More information about the benefits of sponsorship can be found on our [conference website](#).

If you have questions, please email Joy Jones, at jsj5@iu.edu. We appreciate your time and partnership and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Embedding Instruction Within Daily Routines, Lessons, & Activities: Part One - Foundations

April's webinar topic in the Early Childhood Center's webinar series "What it Takes to Implement Effective Preschool Inclusion Services" is Embedding Instruction Within Daily Routines, Lessons and Activities. This first in the April series highlights the foundations of why embedding instruction within daily routines, lessons and activities is a critical component of providing quality, effective preschool services that include all children in regular education classrooms. We will explore various aspects of the rationale, the "Why?" and take a look at the role collaborative teaming has on embedding instruction. The April webinars will be presented by Sue Dixon.

Sue Dixon, M.A.

Susan Dixon is a research associate with the Early Childhood Center (ECC) at Indiana University's Indiana Institute on disability and Community. She was in private practice as a speech and language pathologist working in early intervention and early childhood classrooms while working with the Early Childhood Center part time until six years ago when she began working full time at the ECC. During her time as a therapist she provided therapy in family homes and classrooms, giving her a unique insight into April's topic in this series.



Online Directory of Preschool Inclusion Models

Research indicates that placement alone is not sufficient because some children will require specialized instructional supports to increase their outcomes. Districts that achieve the following requirements receive an invitation to be included in the Indiana online directory:

- High preschool LRE (least restrictive environment)
- High child impact as a result of inclusive service delivery
- At or above the cut off percentages for the previous indicators.

Our first step in identifying potential districts is data analysis, including: (1) preschool LRE the December 1 Child Count and (2) Child Exit Assessment Scores (previous year) of children moving onto kindergarten. For child impact we used ISTAR KR in 2017 and 2018 and now use ISPROUT. Cut off percentages for both preschool LRE and Child Impact is based on each data sources' current state mean. For example, we used 2018 preschool LRE with the cut off at 45% and 2017 child impact data cut off at 88% for the 2019 inaugural launch of the online directory and 2019 LRE with the cut off at 50% and 2018 child impact data cut off at 85% for the 2020 directory update. Follow-up interviews and classroom observations (pre-Covid) are conducted to learn how districts achieve their model status. [Indiana Directory PreK Inclusion Models](#)

To learn more contact, Sally Reed Crawford, sreedcra@indiana.edu.

How Diverse is Your Library?

Here are some great books for your early childhood library:

- [*Global Baby Bedtimes*](#) by Maya Ajmera
- [*Little You*](#) by Richard Van Camp
- [*Alma and How She Got Her Name*](#) by Juana Martinez-Neal
- [*What can you do with a Paleta?*](#) By Carmen Tafollo
- [*I Will Dance*](#) by Nancy Bo Flood
- [*Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You*](#) by Sonia Sotomayor

Around the Watercooler at ECC

Sally - So if research tells us that placement alone in a general education environment does not equal high-quality preschool inclusion, what effective practices increase children's' access and participation that promote positive outcomes? It is essential that school districts adopt the [Division of Early Childhood Recommended Practices](#) (DEC RP) to remove barriers to educational and social success and accommodate differences. The DEC RP are a comprehensive collection of the best available empirical evidence that support inclusion. Check out the practices and [DEC RP Practice Improvement Tools](#) to enhance your current inclusion service delivery.

Katie - I was talking to a preschool teacher a few weeks ago about family engagement and she mentioned all the events she has planned. You know, back to school nights, pancake breakfasts, bring-a-grandparent to school days, etc. It made me wonder:

- When was the last time staff sat down to evaluate these events?
- What is the goal of the event?
- How will you know if the event was a success?
- What barriers might exist to keep families from coming?
- How are staff making special efforts to invite/welcome marginalized families?
- How have families helped to plan the event? If the answer is "They haven't", how can staff get families engaged so that the event timing, content and structure works for them?
- What other family engagement strategies are staff using on an on-going basis to supplement the events and build deeper partnerships with families?