

Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT)
 Quarterly Meeting
 April 21, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Member Name	Member Seat	Present (In Person)	Present (Via Phone)	Absent
Matt Bracket	Member from the agency responsible for the State Medicaid and CHIP program		X	
Kim Carr	Public/private provider of early intervention services		X	
James Dunn	Member from the agency responsible for the State regulation of private health insurance		X	
Senator Anitere Flores	Member from the State Legislature			X
Erin Hough	Member from the state child welfare agency responsible for foster care			X
Renee Jenkins	Member from the state agency involved in the provision of, or payment for, early intervention services to infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families		X	
Dr. Judith Levin	Member from personnel preparation program		X	
Rob Porcaro	Public/private provider of early intervention services		X	
Misty Porter	Parent of child with disability age 12 or younger		X	
Lourdes Quintana	Public/private provider of early intervention services		X	
Kathleen Vergara	Public/private provider of early intervention services			X
Dr. Ilene Wilkens	Public/private provider of early intervention services		X	
Member Name	Member Seat	Present (In Person)	Present (Via Phone)	Absent
Vacant	Parent of child with disability age 12 or younger	--	--	--
Vacant	Parent of child with disability age 6 or younger	--	--	--

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Vacant	Parent of child with disability age 12 or younger	--	--	--
Vacant	Public/private provider of early intervention services	--	--	--
Vacant	Member from the agency responsible for children's mental health	--	--	--
Vacant	Member of the state education agency responsible for preschool services to children with disabilities	--	--	--
Vacant	Member from a Head Start Program	--	--	--
Vacant	Member from the state agency responsible for childcare	--	--	--
Vacant	Office of Coordination of Education of Homeless Children & Youth	--	--	--
Guests	Affiliation	Present (In Person)	Present (Via Phone)	
Sharika Farlin	Early Steps State Office		X	
Alicia Blue	Early Steps State Office		X	
Dusty Edwards	Early Steps State Office		X	
Robert French	Early Steps State Office		X	
Allison Rudd	Early Steps State Office		X	
Lily Wells	Early Steps State Office		X	
Risa Davis	Early Steps State Office		X	
Azizi Coleman	Early Steps State Office		X	
Marcy Hajdukiewicz	Early Steps State Office		X	
Dr. Robert Karch	Early Steps State Office		X	
Liz Gonzalez	Early Steps State Office		X	
Robin Masterson	Early Steps State Office		X	

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Kimberly Tendrich	Early Steps State Office		X
Jessica Meyer	Early Steps State Office		X
Natasha Ruiz-villar	Early Steps State Office		X
Theresa Schlossman	Early Steps State Office		X
Luc Toussaint	Early Steps State Office		X
John Lee	Northeastern Early Steps		X
April Leopold	Northeastern Early Steps		X
Laurie Colon	Central Florida Early Steps		X
Jana Khoury	Southernmost Coast Early Steps		X
Olabisi Baruwa-Castro	Southernmost Coast Early Steps		X
Annalise Campisi	Bay Area Early Steps		X
Mary K Carroll	Gold Coast Early Steps		X
Kim Werner	Gold Coast Early Steps		X
Althea Puzio	Space Coast Early Steps		X
Nicki Phillips-Wright	Space Coast Early Steps		X
Shelli Buckley	Space Coast Early Steps		X
Kim Barger	Gulf Central Early Steps		X
Juliana Melara	Big Bend Early Steps		X
Dina Snider	Big Bend Early Steps		X
Arleen Chilton	Big Bend Early Steps		X
Susan Loftis	Big Bend Early Steps		X
Trina Puddefoot	Southwest & Gulf Central Early Steps		X
Tina Cordell	Southwest Early Steps		X
Brenna Giblock	North Beaches Early Steps		X
Stephanie Ellis	North Beaches Early Steps		X
Emily Shaffer	Bay Area Early Steps		X

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Justine Hicks	Department of Children and Families		X
Cristina Navarrete	North Dade Early Steps		X
Tamelia Malcolm	North Central Early Steps		X
Kamona Dansey			X
Brooke Delmotte			X

Call to Order – *Dr. Ilene Wilkins, Chair*

Allison Rudd called the meeting to order and completed Council member roll call. The presence of a quorum was established with all of the members in attendance in person or via phone. The Council voted unanimously to approve the January 20, 2021, Meeting Minutes with no abstentions, or negative votes.

Motion: Approval of the January 20, 2021, Meeting Minutes
Motion Made By: Rob Porcaro
Seconded Motion: Judith Levin
Discussion:

Lourdes Quintana made an announcement that she will not be acting as the director for Central Florida Early Steps any longer.

State Office Update – *Dusty Edwards, Bureau Chief of Early Steps and Newborn Screening, Florida Department of Health*

Dusty Edwards gave an update on the legislative session. The legislature is nearing the sixty-day end. The Senate and House included recurring general revenue for the Early Steps Medicaid Match. The money will no longer go to the Department of Health first but go straight to Medicaid. The non-recurring grants like the trust fund for the administrative system were included as well as funding to expand State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) sites. There are other funds within Children’s Medical Services (CMS) being watched as well. Dr. Ilene Wilkins asked how the change in Medicaid match will affect providers. Dusty Edwards responded that it should not affect the providers at all. Dr. Wilkins also asked how the stimulus money would affect Early Steps. Dusty Edwards stated, the Department is still researching how the funding can be spent. Dusty Edwards provided an update on the Early Steps Administrative System (ESAS). The system is not ready for a go live date, but the Early Steps state staff has been testing the functionality of the system and are working with the vendor to determine a new go live date. Dusty Edwards provided the council with an update on the Southernmost Coast contract and that Easter Seales will take over the contract and continue to provide services in the Miami Dade area. Dr. Wilkins asked why Benchmark chose not to renew their contract. Dusty Edwards explained that it was due to federal regulations regarding spending.



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Sunshine Law Presentation – *Kimberly Tendrich, Senior Attorney, Florida Department of Health*

Kimberly Tendrich provided a detailed presentation on the Sunshine Law and public records. The presentation addressed communication requirements pertaining to boards and commissions within state agencies or elected officials.

Insurance Denial Follow-up Strategy – *Council Discussion*

Allison Rudd stated, the Early Steps State Office (ESSO) requested insurance denial examples from the Local Early Steps (LES) but only received a handful back. Rob Porcaro stated, the council has been attempting to address the insurance denial issue since 2019 and that asking LES's to pull denial examples is not the best approach. The process is cumbersome and could be why ESSO didn't receive many examples. Rob Porcaro stated, in the contracts LES's are responsible for maintaining a relationship with commercial and private insurance companies but after sending out letters each year asking to be a part of their panel either a rejection letter is received or no response at all. Rob Porcaro suggested that insurance companies need to be educated on what Early Steps is and what services are provided. Lourdes Quintana seconded Rob Porcaro's statement regarding insurance denials.

SSIP Report – *Lily Wells, Government Operations Consultant III, Florida Department of Health*

Lily Wells provided the council with an update on the SSIP Report. The report has been submitted and is under review. The report will be posted on the webpage in the coming weeks. Florida's state identified measurable result remains indicator 3A-1 which is an increase in the percentage of infants and toddlers who are exiting early intervention programs with an increased rate of growth in positive social and emotional skills. Florida did not achieve the FY19 target of 32% but instead saw slippage from the previous year and reported 26%. FY19 saw significant effects from COVID-19 on data quality. Children entering the program after December 1, 2020 will exit with the Child Outcomes System (COS). The SSIP sites continue to pilot the COS process and provide training to providers.

OSEP Monitoring Corrective Action Plan – *Jessica O. Meyer, MSW, Early Steps Program, Florida Department of Health*

Jessica Meyer provided the council with an update on the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Monitoring Corrective Action Plan. In late January of this year OSEP issued a monitoring report from the on-site visit in 2019. OSEP found three areas of noncompliance that require corrective action. The first finding was monitoring of individuation and timeliness of service and receipt for services on the IFSP. The second finding was related to the monitoring process for system of payment and payer of last resort. The third finding was related to tracking and reporting of maintenance of effort. ESSO created a corrective action plan addressing compliance for each of the areas and submitted the plan. Dr. Judith Levin asked, in reviewing the corrective actions highlighted has ESSO reached out to other states to see what they are doing. Jessica responded, ESSO is hopeful that these are old problems that have since been fixed due to the time frame of OSEP'S visit.

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Public Comment –

Kim Warner with Gold Coast Early Steps supported Rob Porcaro earlier statement regarding the insurance denial issue; and stated the problem is not getting a response from the insurance companies or receiving rejection letters. Kim Warner suggested an insurance mandate is needed in the State of Florida.

Motion: Adjourn the meeting.

Motion Made By: Misty Porter

Seconded Motion: Lourdes Quintana

Discussion: None

Motion Passed

Meeting Adjourned – *Rob Porcaro*