

A LIFESPAN APPROACH TO DISABILITIES

imagine communities that facilitate and support equitable access to a desirable life for all people



**EARLY
CHILDHOOD**



**SCHOOL
AGE**



**YOUNG
ADULTHOOD**



ADULTHOOD

**Indiana Institute on
Disability and Community**

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

Celebrating 52 years at
Indiana University providing
visionary solutions in
disability and community
through research,
education, and service.



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From Our Director

Friends and Colleagues:

Leadership at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) has never been in short supply. Even during challenging times, faculty and staff have a long history of persevering in the service of advancing our mission, to work with communities to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Despite the ongoing effects of the pandemic, the last fiscal year was no different. As presented in this annual report, IIDC faculty and staff continued to lead the charge and produce new opportunities, including a new interdisciplinary graduate certificate, training and technical assistance programs for disability and education professionals, and new lines of research. These, and many other accomplishments, will continue to push the field forward.

For the Institute to do its work more effectively, we also worked hard to improve the organization from the inside. In the last year, with participation of the entire IIDC, the Institute's Committee on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion led and released the Institute's organizational plan to build a more equity-focused organization. This plan sets out specific internal- and external-focused action to position the IIDC for success in the future. Currently being implemented, this plan is an important step to our ongoing organizational improvement efforts.

Of course, our partners are core to our success. From across the university, state, nation, or globe, we are fortunate to work alongside people with disabilities, family members, and professionals to educate others and change systems for the better. I would like to express my profound gratitude to each of our partners for their commitment and contribution to the work and ideals of the IIDC. We look forward to working with you into the future.



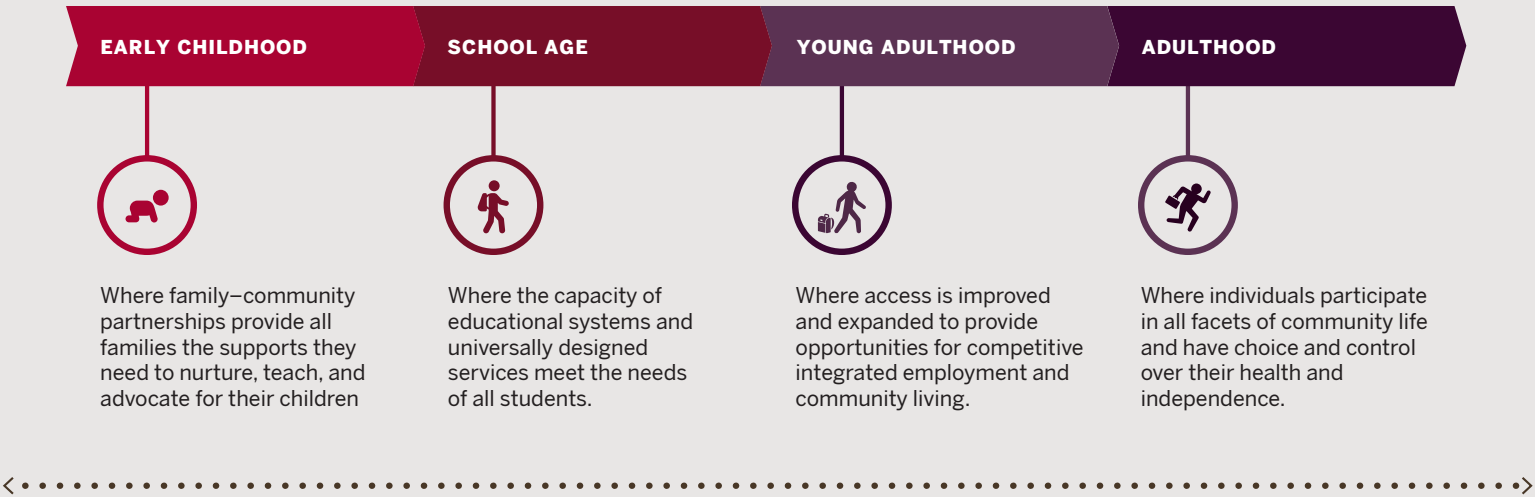
Finally, it is my pleasure to present to you the 2021-2022 Annual Report. I hope you can take some time to review the impressive work occurring at the IIDC and go to our [website](#) to learn about our great work.

Sincerely,

Derek Nord, PhD
Director

A Lifespan Approach to Disabilities

Imagine communities that facilitate and support equitable access to a desirable life for all people



Research Centers at the Indiana Institute

- Center for Collaborative Systems Change
- Center for Health Equity
- Center on Community Living and Careers
- Center on Education and Lifelong Learning
- Early Childhood Center
- Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands
- Indiana Resource Center for Autism

Institute staff **Advance Improvement** in policy and practices in disability through five areas of emphasis...

- Competitive Integrated Employment
- Decisional Supports
- Education Across the Lifespan
- Health, Wellness, and Recreation
- Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services

A Community Where You Belong

Advancing Equity for All Hoosiers

The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) is federally designated as the state’s [University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities](#) (UCEDD). Serving as a bridge between Indiana University, the state, and the nation, IIDC works with individuals, communities, and across a multitude of public systems to ensure people with disabilities are valued and fully included in all aspects of community life. For over half a century, IIDC has brought research, education, and best practices to the broader community with a mission to advance inclusion and rights for people with disabilities and their families.

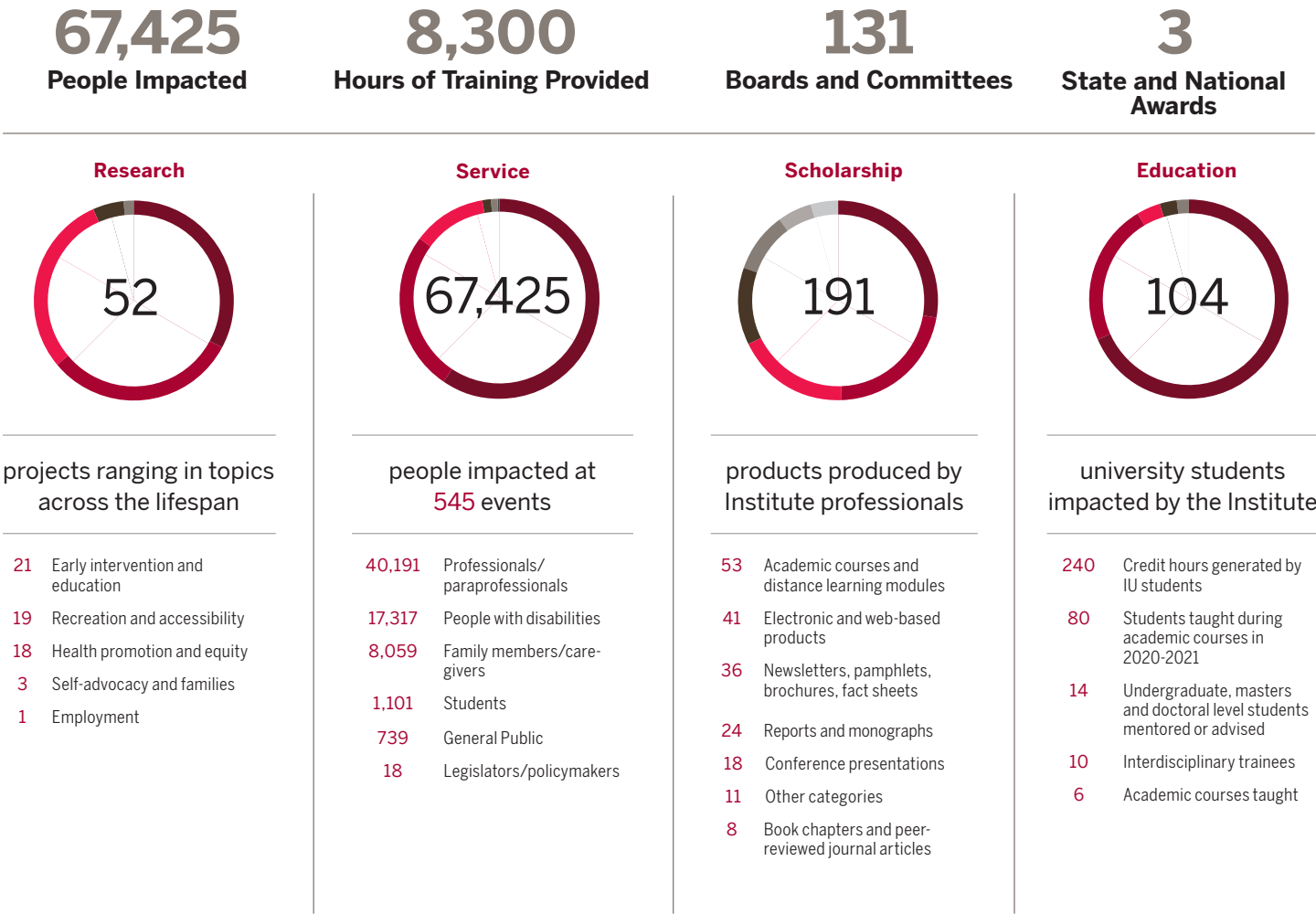
The Indiana Institute’s mission and values are complemented by implementation strategies, which are federally mandated “core functions” for all UCEDDs. These core functions include:

- Interdisciplinary pre-service preparation of students;
- Training and technical assistance through demonstration and model activities to individuals with disabilities and their families, professionals, policymakers, and others;
- Research, evaluation, and public policy analysis; and
- Dissemination of information to multiple audiences.



By the Numbers

The Institute’s research to practice initiatives support the advancement of applied research, evaluation, and public policy; outreach that is community oriented and state-wide; technical assistance activities that are collaborative, systematic, and results driven; and educational preparation that supports the pre-service and in-service training of professionals to become leaders in the field.



A special thank you to the IIDC Advisory Council members. Derek Nord, Chair, Sylvia Brantly, Kate Barrow, David Carter, Frank Epperson, Shawn Fulton, Stacey Heath, Leah Helvering, Sarah Hurwitz, Melissa Keyes, Mary Ann Lapenta, Kate McQueen, Cori Mitchell, Chris Myers, Cynthia Nassim, Amber O’Haver, Chris Stroguiludis, and Karen Vaughn.

Where family-community partnerships provide all families the supports they need to nurture, teach, and advocate for their children.



Early Childhood

Pilot Study Examining Indiana’s Child Find and Early Identification Efforts

In the 2020 state fiscal year, Indiana served 40,000 young children with disabilities through its First Steps (Part C) and school-based early childhood special education programs (Part B). As part of state and federal law, both programs are charged with implementing extensive child find and early identification efforts to assist families and community health, social service, and early care and education programs in locating these services when concerns about their child’s development arise. Each year, over 32,000 children and families in Indiana are referred to these two service programs because of developmental concerns or medical conditions known to impact the child’s development.

In November 2021, the Indiana Institute’s [Early Childhood Center](#) (ECC), [Indiana Resource Center on Autism](#) (IRCA), and Indiana’s LEND program at the Riley Child Development Center, initiated a nationally funded research effort to evaluate Indiana’s early identification efforts. This year-long project builds on the close relationships and data share agreements ECC has with First Steps and the Indiana Department of Education, who generously provided extensive data on all young children, ages birth through 3rd grade, receiving early intervention and public education from 2011-2020.

Through October 2022, this project will analyze this data to answer several questions:

- What do we know about the young children receiving early intervention and special education services in Indiana?
- What do we know about the children and families who are referred to both programs each year over this 10-year period? What do we know about the families and community programs that make these referrals?
- When we look at children receiving special education services starting in kindergarten or grades 1-3, how well did our state’s two early intervention programs find and identify those children early in their lives?
- When we factor in important qualities of children, including their gender, race, family income, and disability, do we find disparities and possible inequities among specific groups of children and families?

A final report will be made available through the Early Childhood website.

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Additional Featured Projects

Family Guided Routines Based Intervention Professional Development Sequence

In partnership with Florida State University and Indiana First Steps, FGRBI or Family Guided Routines Based Intervention training is underway in Indiana. The Early Childhood Center (ECC) is facilitating the professional development sequence presented by FGRBI founder, Dr. Juliann Woods. This new service delivery model for early intervention providers utilizes caregiver coaching to support parent and child interactions. Early intervention providers encourage parent-implemented intervention that is meaningful to each family and embedded within a family’s routines and daily activities. With the continued support of the ECC, Indiana First Steps intends to grow their network of FGRBI trained providers throughout Indiana’s First Steps early intervention system.

ECC Works to Improve Preschool Inclusion

Prioritizing inclusive services based on high standards and current research has long been the vision of the Early Childhood Center (ECC). This year, staff provided intensive technical assistance to promote effective preschool inclusion with three school districts. Working with each district to form a diverse planning team, ECC facilitated meetings to explore their needs and priorities, reflect on data, evaluate readiness to implement identified practices, consider infrastructure improvements, and co-create a plan for how practices will be implemented. Highlights include:

- Full inclusion in one district, majority of preschoolers with IEPs included in another, both resulting in high child outcomes;
- One district established partnership with a community preschool program;
- Established team collaboration time between general and special educators in two districts; and
- Six classroom teams engaged in Practice-based Coaching to enhance inclusive services.

Family Expectations Study

The Early Childhood Center (ECC) completed a research study on family expectations, spring 2022. Previous research on family expectations has shown that when families “dream big” their children tend to achieve more. Most of this research has been done with families of older children. The research study interviewed 44 families of young children (0-6) as well as 27 of their early intervention providers. Families were asked what expectations they have for their children in preschool, kindergarten, and adulthood. Providers were also asked to share their expectations for these children. Families and providers shared how and when conversations about long-term expectations happen in early childhood. This research has implications for professional development for early intervention and preschool staff as we seek ways to promote lifespan thinking and support families to have strong, high expectations for their children.

Early Intervention Racial Equity Study Completed

The Early Childhood Center (ECC), funded by the Indiana University Racial Justice Research Fund, examined Indiana’s early intervention system to determine how the system serves Black and White families. Researchers analyzed data from 43,588 children enrolled between 2016-2019 and conducted interviews with 113 families: 66 White, 45 Black. Professionals have long noted differences in early intervention outcomes for Black and White families (Black children have lower outcomes than White families). However, our findings show that when other factors related to referral (Black families enter later and are less likely to be referred by their pediatricians), service provision (Black families are offered fewer services than White families) and service utilization (Black families are more likely to exit the system while still eligible) are held constant, differences in outcomes between the two groups disappear. These findings have policy implications.

Where the capacity of educational systems
and universally designed services meet the
needs of all students.



School Age

Study Examines the Relationship Between Special Education Placement and High School Outcomes

Indiana high school students with disabilities who spend 80 percent of their educational time in inclusive classrooms did better in reading and math than their peers in less inclusive settings. Students are also more likely to be better prepared for successful post-secondary educational outcome opportunities. The study, conducted by the [Center on Education and Lifelong Learning](#) (CELL), investigated the relationship between inclusion and academic outcomes using statewide student and school demographic and outcome data.

The study focused on a cohort of Indiana students in eighth grade in 2013 through graduation in 2018 and is the second phase of the authors' published study in 2020. The 2020 study looked at the relationship of placement to the academic outcomes for students in Indiana grades 3-8 with primary disabilities including cognitive, learning, emotional, autism spectrum disorder, other health impaired, blind/low vision, and deaf/hard of hearing. In that study, students experiencing more inclusion demonstrated significantly higher achievement on the state assessment than students experiencing less inclusion regardless of the disability category.

The current study assessed whether the same pattern existed for high school students with disabilities. A statewide comparison of student achievement in English/Language Arts with a cohort sample size of 23,796 and math scores with a sample size of 23,940 students in low and high inclusive placements was initiated using ISTP+, the state assessment tool used for all students. Students identified for the state's alternative assessment (approximately 1 percent of students with disabilities) were excluded. Additionally, because diploma type often reflects the curriculum path of high school students, the study investigated relative differences in preparedness for post-secondary transition related to placement. Key findings of this study include:

- Comparisons of 10th grade ISTEP+ scores yield highly significant results favoring placement in the general education classroom for 80% more time in both mathematics and English/Language scores resulting in strong evidence in support of greater inclusion in general education settings.
- Students in high inclusion settings were more likely to graduate with a core 40 by passing the state assessment rather than via waiver and had an average of 22 percentage points higher than that of low inclusion students. They therefore were more prepared for successful post-secondary educational and employment opportunities.

The study, conducted by IU's Center on Education and Lifelong Learning (CELL), investigated the relationship between inclusion and academic outcomes using statewide student and school demographic and outcome data.



Additional Featured Projects

Indiana Center on Teacher Quality

The Indiana Center on Teacher Quality (ICTQ) trained 67 teachers and 32 principals across seven rural Indiana school districts in the 2021-2022 school year. The 67 teachers also participated in four coaching sessions with staff of the Center on Education and Lifelong Learning (CELL) as they began implementing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in their classrooms (grades K-12, all subjects). By fall 2024, they will be ready to scale up UDL throughout their schools, training and coaching their own colleagues. Additionally, ICTQ is advancing each district's work in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with school-specific planning and technical assistance. All superintendents, selected district staff, and principals attended two leadership consortium meetings, deepening their knowledge and application of implementation science. This year's work was impactful; initial findings show high levels of satisfaction with training and coaching, growth in teachers' and principals' sense of efficacy and in each district's capacity to implement change.

Comprehensive School Counseling Initiative

The [Center for Collaborative Systems Change](#) (CCSC) partnered with Crown Point Community Schools and Switzerland County Community School Corporation to provide evaluation and strategic planning for the Comprehensive Counseling Initiative (CCI), a multi-year initiative funded by a Lily Corporation endowment. CCI aims to significantly increase the number of Indiana students who are emotionally healthy, realize academic success, graduate from high school, and obtain valuable postsecondary credentials necessary for meaningful employment. Through comprehensive evaluation and strategic planning efforts each of these school corporations expanded the number of certified counselors, established mental health services for students in need, prepared students for a range of employment opportunities as well as mentoring and internship programs, and provided professional development to teachers, counselors, and administrators to identify and address the social and emotional needs of students.

Social Skills Training

The incidence of autism spectrum disorders has steadily increased through the years. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) now estimates that 1 in 54 are on the autism spectrum. At the same time, the post-school outcomes for this population are poor. One of the barriers to successful employment and life in the community revolves around the lack of social skills. At the start of the pandemic, staff of the Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA) investigated options for supporting families and individuals on the autism spectrum and those with behavior challenges across Indiana. With funding support from the AWS Foundation of Fort Wayne, Indiana, IRCA engaged in virtual social skills training to eight Indiana school districts and one group of adults in Northwest Indiana using UCLA's PEERS model. PEERS is an evidence-based program that involves pre and post testing and focuses on individuals on the autism spectrum, their family members, neurotypical peers, and educators. Building upon this work, IRCA staff are now organizing social skills groups across Indiana and with various populations.

Collaborative Program Review

The Center on Education and Lifelong Learning (CELL) in 2021-2022, provided 60 program evaluations in the areas of curriculum, school structures and cultures, special services, and small learning communities initiatives to school districts in Indiana. This work is designed to move a district forward and improve the educational services provided to all students. A review may also be requested by a special education cooperative to consider the services delivered across the cooperative. Reviews are collaborative because appropriate stakeholders from the school corporation(s) work with the reviewers to design the scope and focus of the program review. Further, stakeholders are involved throughout the process of the review, as the reviewers observe and meet with a representative cross-section of staff members in the corporation(s). The review process leads to a report that is a "picture" of current services and includes recommendations for the future. The design of the review meets the applicable sections of the Joint Committee on Standards for Evaluation, 1994.

Where access is improved and expanded to provide opportunities for competitive integrated employment and community living.



Young Adulthood

Indiana Secondary Transition Resource Center

The [Indiana Secondary Transition Resource Center](#) (INSTRC) creates professional development activities and resources for teachers who support students with disabilities as they transition from high school to their adult lives. A project of the [Center on Community Living and Careers](#) (CCLC), INSTRC is committed to helping these students find inclusion in their communities, careers, and post-secondary education.

To improve student outcomes, a top priority for INSTRC has been to work with the Indiana Institute's Early Childhood Center (ECC) on behalf of preschoolers with disabilities and their families entering public school general education classrooms. Using Implementation Science, ECC provides multi-tiered instruction and coaching to preschool teams, as well as district-wide preschool staff training. The ECC's online presence included a state-wide conference with over 740 attendees registered, recorded trainings done with the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), and a website to help districts grow their inclusive preschool practices using Implementation Science.

While the ECC serves the youngest students, INSTRC focuses on the other end of the public education arc. INSTRC monitors Indiana IEPs annually for quality and regulatory compliance and provides targeted technical assistance, coaching, and professional development to Indiana education agencies.

In 2021-2022, INSTRC was at the forefront of an effort to enhance statewide capacity through seven regional cadres of transition leaders and educators to implement evidence-based practices, resource development, and family involvement strategies. INSTRC was also a key partner in building statewide interagency collaboration on behalf of transition-aged youth in school, the workplace, and the community.

INSTRC provides support in many ways, and in 2021-2022 it witnessed a 14% rise in demand for digital resources such as the Transition Assessment Matrix, sample IEPs, and a broad catalog of recorded training seminars.

INSTRC continues to keep pace with the evolving needs of the project's clientele. From the self-paced Transition Miniseries course (expanded to 13 modules), to the monthly podcast, Transition Talks at High Noon, INSTRC is finding new ways to provide accessible and consumable resources about issues important to the transition education community.

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Additional Featured Projects

Easterseals Crossroads: Pathways to Opportunity

To address the employment support needs of people with disabilities currently unserved, Easterseals Crossroads developed a multi-component employment services program called Pathways to Opportunity. Pathways is an individualized service model to ensure program participants attain and maintain "good" jobs over time. The Center on Community Living and Careers (CCLC) conducts an evaluation of the program and outcomes, looking at aspects such as:

- Completion of work readiness training
- Completion of financial literacy training
- Completion of job-specific training
- Resources and services utilized
- Attainment of employment
- Hourly wage
- Wage growth/household income growth
- Job retention

The Center will submit an annual report compiling both participant outcomes and program evaluation data as well as formative evaluation services throughout the project.

New Certificate in Disability Rights, Policy, and Services (C-DRPS) at Indiana University

A new graduate certificate program, the [Certificate in Disability Rights, Policy, and Services](#) (C-DRPS) has been introduced at Indiana University – Bloomington because of a partnership between the School of Education, School of Social Work, and the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC). The C-DRPS program provides students the opportunity to explore critical concepts impacting the lives of individuals with disabilities across the lifespan. Through active engagement with national and state experts with and without disabilities, students will be provided the opportunity to analyze and critique the systems that provide services and supports to this broad community. The flexible and customizable program will empower students to take coursework that allows them to gain the knowledge and skills most relevant to their practice while expanding their horizons across multiple disciplines.

Capacity Building Institute

Building statewide capacity for educators who help students transition to adulthood is a key mission for the Center on Community Living and Careers (CCLC). Every year, the Center hosts the Capacity Building Institute (CBI) to provide an opportunity for transition leaders and educators from around the state to meet, display their work, and hear state and national presenters discuss key secondary transition topics.

This year, CBI was an all-day virtual meeting, held in April. Paralympian Hope Bevilhymmer lived up to her name, giving hope and vision in her keynote speech as she shared her personal journey from needing specialized schooling in hospital settings to how she became successful in business, athletics, and life.

In addition, state leaders in our field discussed Accessible Transition Assessments, Customized Employment, and Creating Useful Transition Services and Activities.

Everly Learning Support System

[Everly Learning Support System](#)™ is a partnership between the Indiana Institute and the Strategic Indiana Provider Network (SIPN), a group of six non-profit agencies providing services to individuals with disabilities, children, and families in more than 70 counties across Indiana.

The Everly Learning Support System is a three-tiered approach to training direct support professionals. The competency-based training meets all regulatory requirements for organizations. Courses are mapped to Indiana's state standards, policies, and national standards for accreditation (NADSP, CMS, CARF). Content is developed and vetted by individuals working in the field.

The curriculum is responsive to mobile devices and allows organizations to add their own content allowing for developing Learning Paths, selection of lessons or courses tied together for learners to progress through, mastering a particular content.

Where individuals participate in all facets of community life and have choice and control over their health and independence.



Adulthood

Optimal Oral Health for Hoosiers with Disabilities

Oral health is critical to one's overall health and well-being across the lifespan. However, people with disabilities in Indiana encounter great challenges in dental care access and home oral care. Since October 2018, the [Center for Health Equity](#) (CHE) at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC), with support from the Indiana Governor's Council for People with Disabilities, has been working to address significant oral health needs of Hoosiers with disabilities.

In 2021-2022, CHE developed training modules and informational materials and conducted in-person trainings for family and paid caregivers of people with disabilities, as well as the dental workforce in Indiana. The development of the trainings was informed by comprehensive research activities, including literature reviews; interviews with adults with disabilities, caregivers, and dental professionals; and online surveys of family caregivers and practicing dentists in Indiana. Advisory groups, consisting of adults with disabilities, family and paid caregivers, dental professionals, and faculty members from the Indiana University School of Dentistry, also guided the training development. In addition, CHE has collaborated on the development and delivery of the trainings with various stakeholders.

For the caregiver trainings, CHE staff collaborated with the Arc of Indiana, Indiana Family to Family, and a dental hygienist on training modules and the in-person trainings that focused on:

- Oral health needs of Hoosiers with disabilities;
- Navigating oral health and dental care systems; and
- At-home dental care.

For the dental workforce trainings, project staff collaborated with the Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA) at IIDC, a disability sensitivity consultant, and a dental hygienist. The dental workforce trainings consist of the following modules:

- Current landscape of oral health needs of Hoosiers with disabilities;
- Supporting those with challenging behavior in a dental setting;
- Disability awareness and effective communication in a dental setting; and
- Practice preparation for dental care for patients with disabilities.

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Additional Featured Projects

Sexual Health Project

For approximately four years, the Center for Health Equity (CHE) has been collaborating with the Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA) on the development of evidence-based sexual health training for women with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) in Indiana. In 2021, CHE offered two six-week pilot trainings covering sexual health and healthy relationships with a focus on self-advocacy. The trainings were delivered in a pandemic-friendly video-conference format. Feedback about the training included the following: "My client gained such knowledge and self-confidence to advocate for herself." In 2022, the curriculum was refined to provide two in-person pilot trainings in Fort Wayne and Indianapolis. The curricula have been developed in collaboration with women with IDD. Also in 2022, the project offered a webinar to family and professional caregivers of women with IDD, addressing the importance of sexual health education and healthy relationships.

Southeastern Indiana Rural Transportation Initiative

Lack of transportation is a consistent, pervasive barrier to basic life functions such as getting to work, the grocery store, and health services. Transportation barriers are particularly challenging for recovery communities. The Center for Collaborative Systems Change (CCSC) partners with Interact for Health, One Community One Family, recovery coaches, and social service providers to improve transportation access in Southeastern Indiana through community needs assessments, raising awareness of existing public options, and developing flexible funding programs that support individual transportation needs. To ensure that communities make the best use of scarce resources, programs are designed according to the needs identified by communities. People who live and work in the region are surveyed about available transportation methods, needs and barriers, as well as their perspectives on how to improve local transportation options. Flexible funding programs support people in recovery with transportation needs such as car repairs, gas cards, license fees, and transportation vouchers.

Ethnographic Study of Camp Mueller, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, OH

IIDC [Eppley](#) has completed a 20-month [Ethnographic Assessment study](#) relating to Camp Mueller, a historically African American summer camp located at Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio in 2022. The project was impacted significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic delaying and eventually eliminating most in-person interviews and field research. One of only four African American-owned-and-operated residential camps in the US, Camp Mueller was an interracial camp established in 1939 by the Phyllis Wheatley Association. The camp's main purpose was to provide recreational activities for inner-city children in the Cleveland area. Today, the camp is located within Cuyahoga Valley National Park on a private inholding protected by a conservation easement intended to promote, perpetuate, and preserve Camp Mueller's character and to preserve the historic, scenic, natural, and recreational values integral to the Park's mission.

COVID-19 Vaccination Projects

COVID-19 vaccines help prevent COVID-19 infection and related severe consequences such as hospitalization or death. With funds from the Administration for Community Living and Association of University Centers on Disabilities, the Center for Health Equity (CHE) has worked on three COVID-19 projects since April 2021. With these projects, CHE focuses on not only Indiana but also other neighboring states (Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin). These projects aim to increase the vaccination rates of people with disabilities through education about COVID-19 and vaccines. To achieve the aim, CHE has engaged in information dissemination via social media posts and webinars; development and dissemination of various resources such as plain-language fact sheets and infographics in English, Spanish and American Sign Language; and successful vaccination videos. A variety of disability advocates and organizations have guided the Center's COVID-19 vaccination efforts.



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