

POE Pulse

This POE newsletter is sent every two months. Please share with your staff. We welcome ideas for topics to be featured in the newsletter. Please contact Donna Montgomery at donna.montgomery@ky.gov with any suggestions. We hope everyone has a safe and happy holiday season with plenty of opportunities for rest and relaxation! You are appreciated!

Introducing the POE Spotlight!

Our first POE Spotlight features the Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KIPDA) Point of Entry. First Steps services in Louisville and surrounding counties are provided through the KIPDA POE. The KIPDA First Steps POE office is managed by Melissa Phillips (formerly Melissa Robinson).

How would you describe your team? *The KIPDA POE team is resilient, motivated, and hard-working. We are fortunate to have a highly experienced and committed team of District Child Evaluation Specialists who have been with the program many years for the most part, lending knowledge and history of the program. KIPDA also has a strong team of Service Coordinator IIs who supervise three teams of Service Coordinators. The supervision team has been instrumental in the progress of our POE over the past several years. They are knowledgeable, have an impeccable work ethic, and provide support to staff, providers, and clients without fail. Our Service Coordinators work through high caseloads and staff turnover to provide access to early intervention services. They have been especially committed to maintaining a high standard of service, learning new policies and procedures, and following all safety protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic. The glue that keeps our POE together is our Administrative Support team who has been flexible, hardworking, and shown up to support everyday even during the pandemic. Of course, we cannot forget the KIPDA providers. We do what we do to ensure children in need have access to the providers of early intervention services, and KIPDA has some amazing providers! This is the KIPDA Point of Entry at a glance!*

What have been your biggest accomplishments? *We have worked diligently to raise federal compliance by changing processes, building morale and a sense of team, and increasing staff retention. We have worked for some time to offer Service Coordinators more flexibility in their schedules. Due to the pandemic we have been able to offer the opportunity to work from home, which has been well received.*

What are your biggest challenges? *The biggest challenges we face from a management perspective are the inefficient hiring process outlined by our governing agency and the inability to monetarily compensate staff based on performance.*

What would you like to tell others about the KIPDA POE that they may not know? *We serve the largest population of First Steps clients in the state of Kentucky, spanning from urban to rural service areas.*

Opportunity for Local First Steps Staff to Attend Virtual Stakeholder Meeting

Please see the flyer attached to this email for information on participating in a virtual stakeholder meeting on November 29 to inform service delivery and childhood outcomes in First Steps. You will have the opportunity to review Kentucky data, discuss the context of the findings, and react to draft policy recommendations for First Steps. This meeting is not mandatory, but anyone who is interested is encouraged to attend. Questions should be directed to Emily Ferrell at emilyferrell@usf.edu.

Upcoming Holiday Closures for State Lead Agency (SLA)

State offices will be closed:

Wednesday, November 25 and Thursday, November 26 (Thanksgiving)

December 23-24 (Christmas)

December 30-31 (New Year)

State offices will reopen on Monday, January 3, 2022.

Keep in mind that SLA staff will not be available to provide assistance on state holidays. Please plan your work and billing accordingly.

December 1 Child Count

Please mark your calendar and be sure to complete all discharge summaries and progress reports by November 30. All IFSPs will be locked on this date. Child count provides a picture of the number of children enrolled in First Steps as of December 1 and is given to the Office of Special Education Programs each year as part of federal reporting. Child count is also tied to KEIS funding.

Policy and Procedure Manual and Billing Manual Recently Updated

The *KEIS Policy and Procedure Manual* and *Doing Business with KEIS* (billing manual) have both been recently updated. The billing manual will be housed on TOTS. The Policy and Procedure Manual is available on TOTS and [here](#) under "Guidance Documents." A huge amount of time and effort went into these updates, and we hope they will be helpful to you.

OT and OTA License Renewal

Most OT and OTA licenses are due for renewal prior to December 31, 2021. Due to possible delays associated with the pandemic, it is highly recommended that providers begin the renewal process early. Contact the Kentucky Department of Professional Licensing to inquire about renewal requirements. Submit a copy of your renewed license as a PDF attachment to Colleen Meszaros at Colleen.Meszaros@ky.gov or Kathy Long at KathyL@ky.gov.

Contract Renewal Coming Soon

The new year will bring a new contract season. Contract renewal for POEs will begin in May 2022. Things to think about collecting for renewal include staff's professional licensure, training record print outs from Adobe, any training certificates for trainings taken outside of Adobe (example: Bayley 4 training), and NPI details page print outs. The SLA plans to use DocuSign in hopes of making renewal a little less stressful!

Mark Your Calendar for Upcoming POE Manager Meetings

November 19 12:30-2:00 ET

February 25 12:30-2:00 ET

Provider Enrollment Reminder

Just a reminder that Lisa Dorman is no longer with First Steps. Lisa is still with CHFS so her email is still working. She is continuing to receive emails about enrollment that she then has to forward to us. Provider enrollment questions should be directed to Savannah Propst at SavannahL.Propst@ky.gov.

Savannah, Kathy Long, and Tammie Isenberg at the SLA deserve a huge shout out for working diligently to ensure that provider enrollment continued to progress smoothly after Lisa's departure. Thank you, ladies!

Nancy Schwartz Retiring (submitted by Barbara Sweeney, NKY POE Manager)

Congratulations to Nancy, who will be retiring at the end of this month. Nancy is a service coordinator at the northern KY POE. She has been with First Steps since 2005 (wow!) During those years, she has empowered families and made deep connections with both coworkers and providers. Nancy's dedication and survival through the metamorphosis of First Steps has been commendable. It has been a delight to get to know her and her leaving will create a gap at northern KY office. We hope she has more time for all the travels she enjoys! Below are comments from coworkers about what Nancy has meant to them:

- Adventurous
- A pleasure to work with
- Kind, gentle, empathetic, and funny
- Thoughtful
- A person who puts families first
- Upbeat
- Positive
- Hardworking
- Treats others with compassion and dignity
- Always puts her all into the job she does
- Attuned to embracing the whole person, whether it be coworkers or families
- Calm and soothing in any situation
- Respectful

Self-Care Corner

Below are a few websites that can help with reducing stress, especially during this particularly busy time of year.

[7 Tips for Lower Holiday Stress](#)

[Why Time Off Is So Good for Your Health](#)

[How to Avoid Burnout During the Upcoming Holiday Season](#)

[How to Practice Self-Care on a Budget](#)

[5 Reasons You Might Like Yourself Better After Living Through the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)

[11 Time Management Tips That Work](#)

First Steps Data

The chart below shows the number of referrals to First Steps as of 11/16/21. Our numbers are continuing to slowly increase as we recover from the pandemic. This data shows an increase of 155 total referrals since the last newsletter. Things are moving in a positive direction!

Also, a referral report from Yahasoft is attached. The referral report shows the number of children referred from each district office in the date range and includes numbers of children referred sorted by referral sources. **Note – we know that some of the colors on the graphs in the referral report are hard to differentiate. It may help to enlarge the graphs when you view.**

PHASE x DISTRICT	BG	BR	BS	BT	CV	FC	GR	GW	KI	KR	LC	LT	NK	PC	PR	Total
1. Pending Consents	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	6
2. Referral	89	67	23	9	25	25	12	11	200	23	24	48	62	22	13	653
3. Evaluation	69	11	4	10	14	9	20	2	52	2	25	14	48	20	8	308
4. Eligibility	45	19	2	5	11	4	16	8	113	11	18	24	29	18	10	333
5. IFSP	630	313	84	39	134	141	168	47	1129	158	127	263	633	197	153	4216
Total:	833	410	113	63	184	179	216	68	1498	195	194	350	772	257	184	5516