Celebrating 50 years of visionary solutions in disability and community through research, education, and service
From Our Director

Friends and Colleagues:

As we close out the fiscal year, our nation is reeling. The coronavirus has sickened millions of Americans, many of whom have died. Our daily lives have been tossed in disarray as our families, workplaces, schools, and communities take measures to ensure health and safety, while limiting community spread of the virus. During this same time, Black and Brown people across the country continue to face racist acts of suppression, violence and murder, resulting in national and international protests.

In these challenging times the Institute has responded. We know that the coronavirus has disproportionate effects on people with disabilities. This is why, within days of the coronavirus gaining its global pandemic title, the Institute faculty and staff entirely revamped internal and external operations to ensure we could meet our mission and obligations – even from a distance and at home. This nimbleness and fortitude exemplify the passion and dedication of the Institute faculty and staff.

We also know that Black and Brown people with disabilities continue to face extreme marginalization and our work is critical in addressing this problem. This is why the Institute has worked internally and through our funded projects to increase our capacity to more effectively address issues of systemic racism experienced by Black and Brown communities. As we continue to engage with systems of early education, K-12 education, health and human services, and beyond, the Institute remains committed to addressing inequality and supporting our partners in implementing equitable practices.

As the Institute begins its 50th year of research, education, and service, our work remains at the forefront. It is also expanding. As announced in a February press release (https://go.iu.edu/2RF5), beginning on July 1 the Institute will make the Eppley Institute for Public Parks and Lands its seventh research center. With a portfolio of work that aims to improve access to recreational resources, this move expands the Institute’s footprint into a critical area. I’d like to welcome the Eppley team to the Institute.

Now, I invite you to learn more about our work and achievements in this 2020 Annual Report and our newly redesigned website (iidc.indiana.edu).

Sincerely,

Derek Nord, Ph.D.
Director
Visionary Solutions in Disability

Construction began on the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community, then known as the Developmental Training Center (DTC), in December of 1967. Funding for construction was authorized through a Public Service grant approved by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Completed in 1970, at a time when institutionalization and sheltered workshops were the norm for those with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the purpose of the DTC was to “educate children with disabilities for life in a community.”

This was the vision of Dr. Delton C. Beir, then director of the Psychological Clinic and Graduate Training Program in Clinical Psychology at Indiana University and “father” of the design of the DTC as a residence center. Thus began, what is now a 50-year journey, of VISIONARY and practical solutions in disability through research, education, and service in Indiana. The Indiana Institute works to put good ideas into everyday practice in schools and community settings to improve choices and quality of life for people with disabilities and their families.

A Foundation of Excellence

The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC), Indiana’s University Center for Excellence in Disabilities, has fostered a foundation of excellence for community investment in developmental disabilities since 1970. Our mission is to work with communities to welcome, value, and support the meaningful participation of people of all ages and abilities through research, education, and service.

Our work crosses the lifespan and is conducted across six centers and an Indiana University disability-focused library accessible to all state residents.

Advancing Improvement in Policy and Practices in Disability

The Indiana Institute is a bridge that connects the university to the broader community through the sharing of ideas and innovations to improve communities and lives. The Institute’s work achieves this through:

• Advocacy – Advancing effective policy and best practices by informing and educating decision makers.
• Coalition Development – Developing collaborative solutions by connecting and convening diverse community stakeholders.
• Family Engagement – Supporting families through partnerships among educators and human service providers to strengthen learning, independence, and community connections.
• Information Dissemination – Communicating and sharing information and research findings with broad constituencies over various mediums.
• Pre-Service Education and Preparation – Supporting the training of professionals to become leaders and prepare future practitioners to implement best practices in the field.
• Research, Evaluation, and Policy Analysis – Conducting disciplined inquiry to test and improve policies, programs, and practices.
• Training and Technical Assistance – Building capacity to support community members and professionals in applying specific skills and best practices.

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.

54,975
PEOPLE IMPACTED

9,727
HOURS OF TRAINING PROVIDED

161
BOARDS & COMMITTEES

4
NATIONAL AWARDS

RESEARCH

54,975
people impacted at
506 events

SERVICE

48
projects ranging in topics
across the lifespan

SCHOLARSHIP

143
products produced by
Institute professionals

EDUCATION

179

Thanks to our IIDC Advisory Council members: Dawn Adams, Sylvia Brantley, David Carter, Amanda Circle, Christine Dahlberg, Frank Epperson, Shawn Fulton, Sharon Hassis, Stacey Hay, Sarah Hensel, Leah Helvering, Melissa Keysy, MaryAnn Lapenta, Kate McQueen, Cori Mitchell, Chris Myers, Cynthia Nassim, Derek Nors, Amber O'Harrow, Chris Stengel, and Karen Vaughn.
Early Childhood

Bridging Research to Practice

The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community’s Early Childhood Center (ECC) partners with community programs to bring research to practice through high-quality professional development and technical assistance. Such partnerships involve generating collaborative plans to achieve goals by using evidence-based practices, making data-informed decisions, and addressing challenges. Examples of such partnerships, and the evidence-based practices they focused on, include Center work with the South-Central Community Action Program (SCAAP) regarding the Pyramid Model practices to address challenging behavior and work with the Community Foundations in Wabash and Monroe counties in Indiana to develop Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) practices to increase high-quality adult-child interactions.

These partnerships began by coordinating meetings with organization administrators to identify priorities and jointly design technical assistance to be delivered by ECC staff. All three projects included preliminary orientation training on either Pyramid Model or CLASS practices to build awareness and familiarize practitioners with the TA process. Because high-quality professional development requires more than just a single training to impact practices, follow-up coaching elements were also included. Data-informed decisions were critical to high-assessments collected during the orientation trainings and formal pre-observations using the identified tool’s assessment instruments. Programs also incorporated post-observations into their plans as a way to measure impact.

SCAAP and the Monroe County Community Foundation both elected to include the evidence-based practices and technical assistance. Such partnerships involve generating collaborative plans to achieve goals by using evidence-based practices, making data-informed decisions, and addressing challenges. Examples of such partnerships, and the evidence-based practices they focused on, include Center work with the South-Central Community Action Program (SCAAP) regarding the Pyramid Model practices to address challenging behavior and work with the Community Foundations in Wabash and Monroe counties in Indiana to develop Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) practices to increase high-quality adult-child interactions.

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Additional Highlighted Projects

Evidence-Based Home-Visiting Model

Indiana’s Part C early intervention program, First Steps, has adopted an evidence-based home-visiting model. First Steps recognized that adopting an evidence-based model with fidelity will increase the consistency of family-centered practices and improve child and family outcomes. To begin this multi-year effort, First Steps sought guidance from the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC). The ICC worked with the Early Childhood Center (ECC) to identify three models using an implementation science evaluation rubric. A literature review was conducted, interviews with the model’s authors took place, and early intervention directors in other states who had implemented the model were sought for input. After careful consideration, the ICC adopted the Juliann Woods’ Family Guided Routines Based Intervention (FGRBI) model. ECC staff is currently collaborating with the First Steps state team and Dr. Woods to design a plan for introducing and implementing the model over the next several years.

IDOE Preschool Roadshow

The Early Childhood Center (ECC) participated in the first Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) Preschool Roadshow traveling to four regions of the state. Staffers traveled 923 miles to four locations reaching 130 early childhood professionals. This collaborative effort brought together six colleagues from the ECC to showcase information and leadership to regional members of the Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education (ICASE). The IDOE specialists addressed topics that included data dashboards and accurate coding of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Additionally, the exemplary inclusion work of Indiana districts was highlighted focusing on the Indiana Directory of Preschool Models and the Division of Early Childhood Recommended Practices website of resources to improve inclusive practices that increase child outcomes.

Indianapolis Preschool Inclusion Study

Currently, Indiana provides less than one in three preschool children with disabilities which is below the national average of 30%. The Indiana Department of Education Special Education Office asked the Early Childhood Center (ECC) to conduct an inclusion study to gather and analyze data to better understand preschool inclusion in Indiana. What corporations are doing and why. Staff analyzed preschool placement and impact data to determine models providing inclusion. A survey was developed and interview format embedded into evidence-based practices to collect data from over 60 administrators and practitioners about service models, classroom practices, and challenges they faced in implementing preschool inclusion. Samples of reported evidence-based practices included special education services delivered within classroom routines and unique practices that were reported by practitioners. Reported challenges included funding and locating qualified special education practitioners.

Preschool Development Grant

The state of Indiana Office of Early Childhood and Out of School Learning (OECSL) received a large federal Preschool Development Grant (PDG) intended to strengthen Indiana’s early childhood and education system. The Early Childhood Center (ECC) and the Center on Collaborative Curricula (C3C) worked with the OECSL to develop the performance evaluation framework and process included in the original PDG grant application. Staff from the two Institute centers and PDG stakeholders worked together to ensure that the evaluation plan is responsive to and aligned with Indiana’s vision. Currently, eight of the 12 PDG projects are developing important models or practices that focus on improving access to or quality of early childhood education, such as the ()

The Community Program of Preschool and Parent Education (PREPARE) was established in the early 1970s. PREPARE provided an early intervention model program for infants and toddlers as part of the Handicapped Children’s Early Education Program (HCEEP). The Community Program of Preschool and Parent Education (PREPARE) was established in the early 1970s. PREPARE provided an early intervention model program for infants and toddlers as part of the Handicapped Children’s Early Education Program (HCEEP).
Indicator 14: What’s Next?

Last year, nearly 1,700 students with disabilities who had Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs) left Indiana high schools to begin the next phase of their lives. That next phase can include job training, postsecondary education, employment, and community life and participation. But a year after they’ve left school, what specifically are these young adults doing and how successful was their transition in preparing them for adulthood?

Those are the questions IIDC’s Center on Community Living and Careers (CCLC) is seeking to answer as it takes on the task of data collection to fulfill the federal Indicator 14 requirement. Indicator 14 is one of a series of regulations mandated by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Special Education Programs. It requires states to collect information about students one year after they’ve left school. The data is used to determine whether a state’s transition programming is meeting what the Indiana Department of Education would like to see.

The challenge to obtaining this useful data is that students and their families don’t always remain in contact with their high schools. Email addresses change, students move, last names may change. In the past, that’s meant that the percentage of students responding to the Indicator 14 surveys has been much lower than what the Indiana Department of Education would like to see.

To improve on those numbers this year CCLC created a new outreach campaign called “What’s Next?” Through campaign, the center is asking students and their families to stay in touch by subscribing to a listserv, and repository of resources. Supported through IRCA via ongoing meetings, the strong in Indiana with autism leaders identified in almost every school district in Indiana. To date, there are over 200 autism leaders that are supported through IRA via ongoing meetings, listservs, and repository of resources.

A primary focus of the Developmental Training Center in the 1970s was to address the need for assessment and the case management of children with developmental disabilities.

School-Age

In the 2018, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) implemented a Results Driven Accountability and Differentiated Support (RDA) system that included three elements: Compliance, Results, and Data Timeliness. The Indiana Disproportionality Resource Center (IDRC) at the Center on Education and Lifelong Learning (CELL), provides technical assistance to IDOE in defining and identifying disproportionality in special education. IDRC tracks indicators 4A, 4B, 9, and 30, which focus on discipline and identification and placement of special education students. IDRC shares findings with school corporations in an effort to address disproportionality and inequity and implement new policies and practices to create long-term change. Additionally, IDRC makes tools, resources, and technical assistance available to LEAs as they address sources of inequity. These resources address specific issues related to cultural context, policy, and practice change, and offer practical, evidence-based solutions that LEAs can implement for long-term change.

Autism Team Training

With the increasing prevalence of autism spectrum disorders in Indiana, the Indiana Resource Center for Autism (IRCA) has been building local district capacity to implement proactive and positive programming that is evidence-based for students across the autism spectrum. Since 1995, 484 school district teams attended IRCA-led training sessions focusing on supporting initiatives that support initiatives around PBIS, RTI, and MTSS (multi-tiered system of support). District commitment to effectively educate students on the autism spectrum remains strong in Indiana with autism leaders identified in almost every school district in Indiana. To date, there are over 200 autism leaders that are supported through IRCA via ongoing meetings, listservs, and repository of resources.

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Facilitating Prison Literacy

In a project supported by the New Frontiers of Creativity and Scholarship Fellowship at Indiana University, the Center on Education and Lifelong Learning (CCLC) began a new initiative called Writing Out Resilience, a hybrid creative writing project and qualitative research study on the topic of trauma-informed care. This project was born out of a prison literacy program for all learners of all ages in Indiana titled the Power of a Sentence. Writing Out Resilience participants read and discuss poetry written by survivors of abuse that explore difficult themes including addiction, domestic violence, household dysfunction, and mental health. The curriculum is embedded with Educational Neuroscience activities and serves to help writers living with trauma learn how to write about their experiences in healthy ways. Participants in the class are invited to respond to readings by creating their own poems about critical topics, which will be compiled into an archive to help the greater public understand the relationship between trauma and the criminal justice system.

Building Communities of Recovery

Motivating resources to increase the prevalence and quality of long-term recovery support from substance and addiction is the focus of a funded project at the Center for Criminal Systems Change (CCSC), Partnering with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, One Community One Family, and Voice, the Center works with Dearborn County in Indiana to support the development, enhancement, and delivery of recovery support services (RSS). Specifically supports via certified peer recovery support specialists. The project advances the promotion of, and education about, addiction science and recovery governed by people in recovery. The CCSC research team will conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the project including the collection and reporting of all required performance measures.

Benefits Information Network

Funded by Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation and administered by the Center on Community Living and Careers, the Benefits Information Network (BIN) supports Hoosiers with disabilities by providing an informed, efficient network of benefits information counselors throughout Indiana. These certified BIN liaisons advise individuals and families on how current policy and earnings can impact Social Security, SNAP/TANF, and Medicaid or other state benefits. BIN liaisons receive extensive training in Social Security’s work incentive programs, which help workers maintain or extend their benefits while earning more and saving more of their paychecks. The BIN training curriculum includes validation of basic knowledge standards; provides updates focused on federal and state work incentives, and delivers ongoing training and technical assistance to 149 BIN liaisons, who work with consumers, service providers and organizations around the state.

Vocational Rehabilitation Leadership Academy

The Center on Community Living and Careers (CCLC), in partnership with Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation, has developed 38 online, professional development training courses for Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) personnel. The Vocational Rehabilitation Leadership Academy (VRLA) consists of a series of modules or trainings (units) in specific area of study. These include on-orientation, core, and specialty courses that align with Indiana rules, procedures, federal legislation and state rules, and evidence-based practices. CCLC ensures that all trainings and courses online are interactive and accessible to all participants. Course evaluations, embedded learner feedback, and pre/post test results are components of all courses. Between July 1, 2019, and June 28, 2020, CCLC completed 242 courses for a total of 449 VRLA enrollments, and VR staff have completed 242 courses thus far.
In 1987, the DTC refocused to reflect changes at the national level regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities. As a result, the DTC, no longer a residential facility, changed its name to the Institute for the Study of Developmental Disabilities (ISDD). In 1999, the ISDD was renamed the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC).

Aging

IIDC’s Interdisciplinary Education and Training Program

Having a firm grasp of evidence-based practices in disability services, supports, and policy are critical for future leaders. The Indiana Institute on Disability and Community’s (IIDC) Interdisciplinary Education Training Program (IETP) is a leadership development program for students working at the IIDC. The IETP trainee experience includes engagement in research, field-based training, technical assistance, and curriculum and materials development in community settings.

Former interdisciplinary trainee Mackenzie Jones, now a health education specialist for the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services, Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Bureau, recounts her experiences as part of the IETP program. Jones was a graduate student pursuing her Masters of Public Health degree in 2018-2019. "With so many opportunities throughout IIDC, I was also able to complete my capstone for my Master’s program," said Jones. "However, it was the focus on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) that was especially helpful for me in my current position in Montana. Before working at IIDC, my research focused on communication disorders, specifically, the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing (D/HH) communities, but IIDC helped me expand my knowledge of people with IDD."

"I did much research on supported decision-making, guardianship, and self-determination of people with IDD. I also had the pleasure of working with, and learning from, my friends/colleague, Adria Nasim, who identifies as having Autism and a processing disorder. As a result, I gained great respect for the IDD community and the need to elevate their voices. This has been extremely valuable in Montana too. In fact, I hosted six listening sessions with people with IDD and their parents. A video that taught the audience about how to take care of diabetes. Without my experience at IIDC, I would not have felt as confident or comfortable in this role. I will always be grateful for the time I spent at Institute for the Study of Developmental Disabilities (ISDD). In 1999, the ISDD was renamed the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC)."

Living Well Initiative

In a collaborative between the Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (IDDRS) and the Center for Collaborative Systems Change (CCSC), Living Well is an initiative that engages and empowers self-advocates, families, and other key stakeholders to build capacity around community supports. Living Well aims to enhance current systems for monitoring the safety, health, and well-being of those with intellectual and developmental disabilities to promote general independence, community integration, and access to quality at Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). Project deliverables include toolkits for providers, individuals, and their families to improve monitoring of safety, health, and well-being, reduce risk factors for abuse, neglect, and exploitation, and identify and implement an innovative approach to build the capacity of community supports for people with IDD.

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Jail Chemical Addiction Program

For several decades, drug use has shaped the criminal justice system, and drug offenders often move through the system in a prescribed pattern: arrest, prosecution, conviction, incarceration, and release. The Dearborn County Court Services in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, aims to improve community safety by reducing repetitive criminal behavior and encouraging rehabilitation through evidence-based practices. With funding through Indiana’s Office of Criminal Justice Planning, the Center for Collaborative Systems Change (CCSC) is the evaluator of Dearborn’s Jail Chemical Addictions Program. The program also includes two problem solving courts focused on breaking the cycle of criminality and reducing access to alcohol and drug abuse. In exchange for successful completion of one or more of these programs, the courts may dismiss participants’ original criminal charge or reduce it. Participants appropriate, returning individuals to productive functioning in their family, workplace, and community.

Sexual Health Literacy and Advocacy Skills Project

Lack of formal sexual health education can make individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) vulnerable. This can lead to unsafe sexual practices, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and sexual abuse and exploitation. This is a serious problem for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) vulnerable. This can lead to unsafe sexual practices, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), and sexual abuse and exploitation. This is a serious problem for people with IDD in general, but it can be more pronounced for individuals with IDD. The Center for Health Equity’s (CHE) Sexual Health and Literacy Skills Project aims to improve health and well-being of women with IDD in Indiana by enhancing their sexual health literacy and advocacy skills through evidence-based sexual health education. Project objectives include identifying the current landscape of sexual health for adult women through literature reviews, key informant interviews, and focus groups; and development of pilot sexual health and education curriculum for the target audience. Project outcomes will lay the foundation for future efforts in Indiana regarding sexual health literacy and advocacy skills for women with IDD to improve their sexual health.

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