

10:00 am Session 1A

Speaker Name **Rosemary Gunst**

Session Title ***Early Language Development, Delay and Intervention***

Parents and caregivers will be given information about typical development of receptive and expressive language skills, as well as information regarding language delay. Specific types of delays and intervention will be discussed and strategies will be given to encourage growth in these areas.

Speaker Bio

Rosemary Gunst received her Master's Degree in Speech Pathology sixteen years ago and has worked for over ten years with First Steps. She also has experience in the clinic, hospital and school settings. Currently she is a member of the Hancock County Evaluation Determination Team and treats children in Marion County. She is also a mother of a ten year old son and eleven year old daughter.

10:00 am Session 1B

Speaker Name **Craig Andler**

Session Title ***Mental Health Issues: Recognizing the Signs of Mental Health Challenges in Children and Accessing Resources to Support the Family***

This session will provide information on early signs of mental health challenges. Families will learn about resources and supports that may be available. At the end of this presentation, families will:

- Recognize potential signs of mental health challenges and types of diagnoses.
- Build skills in accessing resources and supports that will help with accurate diagnosis and care.
- Feel greater confidence in identification of symptoms, getting help and comforting our kids!

Speaker Bio Craig Andler, LSW – President and Executive Director, Families Reaching for Rainbows, Inc. As the Director of Rainbows since February 2007, Craig brings 29 years of person centered services to children, youth and adults with mental illness, addictions, and multiple challenges. This includes seven years as Program Manager for the ACES Project, an award winning Choices program for homeless persons with co-occurring disorders. Throughout his career, Craig has provided leadership, training, consultation and advocacy across the continuum of professional disciplines. As a trainer, educator and consultant, Craig has presented and published, at the international, national, regional and state levels. He is the 2005 recipient of the Heroes in the Fight Award presented by Eli Lilly and Mental Health America Indiana and the 2006 Parent of the Year Award presented at the Nur Allah

Islamic Center's 14th Annual Parent Appreciation Banquet. For over five years Craig has facilitated the St. Luke's United Methodist Church's Family Support Group for families with loved ones who have substance issues and mental health challenges.

10:00 am Session 1C

Speaker Name **Jennifer Akers**

Session Title ***Understanding Medicaid Waivers***

Home and Community-Based Services, also known as Medicaid waivers, provide supports to families to care for a loved one at home, and supports to adults to live in their own home or small residential program. Learn who is eligible, what the waiver program can provide, and how to apply.

Speaker Bio

Jennifer Akers is a family advocate for The Arc of Indiana and has a child who receives supports from the Developmental Disability waiver.

11:30 am Session 2A

Speaker **Janine Shapiro**

Session Title ***Social Skills and their Impact on Behavior***

Social skill deficits and behavioral issues are common concerns of parents of children with special needs. In this talk, the following will be discussed:

1. The definition of social skills.
2. The importance of viewing social skills as behavior
3. The role of language ability in social skill development and behavior management
4. How to use behavioral principles to decrease problem behaviors and increase social skills.

Speaker Bio

Janine Shapiro, M.S., CCC-SLP, BCBA is a speech-language pathologist and behavior analyst with eight years experience working with children with autism. She received her B.S. in communication sciences

and disorders from The University of Texas at Austin and her M.S. in speech-language pathology from The University of Arizona. For over two years, Janine worked at a pediatric outpatient medical rehabilitation center in San Antonio, Texas where she obtained extensive experience implementing ABA, specifically verbal behavior principles. She is also the only dually certified SLP and BCBA in Indiana. Janine has co-authored research concerning the efficacy of social therapy for children with high-functioning autism and Asperger Syndrome published in the Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders.

11:30 am Session 2B

Speaker: **Melanie K. Stone, Ph.D.**

Session Title: *Kids with Special Needs: The Effects on Marriage, Siblings, and the Family as a Whole*

This session will examine the psychological impact on the family who is raising a child with special needs. Dr. Stone will discuss the differences between fathers and mothers and how they cope with their child's needs, and the stress that may be placed on their marriage. Dr. Stone will also talk about how siblings may be affected, and how to help these children adjust, cope and accept the variety of situations that may come as a result of living with a sibling with special needs.

Speaker Bio: Melanie K. Stone, Ph.D. is an Indianapolis - based psychologist who has been helping couples with marital and parenting concerns for almost 20 years. For the past seven years she has served on the Board of Directors for ProKids, Inc., overseeing the organization's use of grant monies for the First Steps program for children with special needs in Indiana. Dr. Stone has been a speaker for various organizations, including national and international conferences for families with children with special needs. She and her husband are raising four children, including a fourteen-year-old daughter with special needs.

11:30 am Session 2C

Speaker Name **Kristy G. Cook, M.Ed.**

Session Title ***Vocational Rehabilitation Services 101***

This session is an introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation Services. It will provide a basic understanding of the agency's mission, purpose, and process of case management.

Speaker Bio

Kristy G. Cook, M.Ed. is the Central Indiana Region Manager for Vocational Rehabilitation Services. She graduated from Eastern Kentucky University with a Bachelors of Science degree in Psychology in 2003 and from the University of Cincinnati with a Masters of Education degree in School Counseling in 2005. Kristy has been with the State of Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services since 2006. She has counseling experience with children and youth, mental illness, substance abuse and addictions, and adults with physical and mental disabilities.

1:00 pm Session 3A

Speaker **John Rafferty, Horizon Planning Group, Inc.**
Melissa Justice, ARC of Indiana

Session Title ***What Keeps You Up at Night – Financial Planning for the Special Need***

We will investigate questions and concerns, like: How can you provide for your child after you die? How will this impact your retirement? What government programs are available to help us, such as social security and Medicaid? How can we supplement the government programs without impacting benefits? What is a special needs trust and how to use them?

Speaker Bio

John has been a financial advisor for 14 years. He focuses on families with special needs. John's passion comes from personal experience. He has two children with special needs. Melissa Justice is the Trust Director for Arc of Indiana.

1:00 pm Session 3B

Speaker **Panel Presentation**

Session Title ***Transition from First Steps: What's Next?***

This panel of staff from First Steps, public school special education and Head Start will help parents understand how community partners work together to help each child and family experience a smooth transition from First Steps services to preschool services in the school and community. Topics to be

discussed include the transition meeting, preschool intake processes, evaluations and the school case conference.

Panelist Bios

Beth Barnes, MAE, is the Special Needs Coordinator for ICAP Head Start for Hancock, Henry, and Rush Counties.

Terri Branson is the Preschool Coordinator for Hancock-South Madison Joint Services. Terri worked in developmental preschool from 1996 to 2007 and has also been a resource teacher. She has a Masters Degree in special education preschool through grade 8, with additional endorsements in Mild, Moderate and Severe Disabilities, and Emotional Disabilities.

Becky Haymond is currently the Service Coordinator Supervisor for First Steps South East - Custer J. She has worked in the field of early intervention and disabilities for over 28 years. She is also a field trainer for UTS responsible for core training of both direct service providers and service coordinators. She also offers technical assistance throughout the state around service coordination issues. Becky currently sits on the state ICC.

Erin Owens works at Achieva Resources and is the First Steps Local Planning and Coordinating Council Coordinator in Fayette, Hancock, Henry, Rush, Shelby, Union, Wayne counties.

1:00 pm Session 3C

Speaker Name **Dinah Oldham**

Session Title ***Social Security and Supplemental Security Income
Benefits for Children and Young Adults with Disabilities***

This session will cover who can get benefits, how to apply, and the Social Security Administration's definition of disability for children and adults.

Speaker Bio

Dinah Oldham is a SSA claims representative at the Anderson, IN Social Security office. She has helped individuals and families apply for disability benefits for 37 years. Dinah specializes in SSI disability benefits for children and young adults.