



**Service Delivery Area 5  
Regional Advisory Council  
Meeting Summary February 10, 2020**

**1. Call to Order and Meeting Overview**

- a. Chairperson Mary Cundiff called the meeting to order and provided an overview of the agenda items and meeting goals.
- b. Mary introduced the following public comment procedure:
  - i. After each agenda item is present, the Chair will invite the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) members to discuss and ask questions.
  - ii. After the RAC discussion, the Chair will open it up to public comment.

**2. Introductions**

- a. Members introduced themselves by sharing their name, professional role, and stakeholder type (program, community partner, etc.).
- b. Members present in person: Jessica Greulich, Mary Cundiff, Sue Ragains, Ann Feldhaus, Debra Gaetano
- c. Members participating via Zoom: Tara McKay, Jamie Madigan, Terry Green, Jamie Carr

**3. Reviewed Old Business**

- a. At the beginning of each Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meeting, the Council will review action items and recommendations from the previous meeting and discuss progress made. SPARK Leadership will provide updates on actions taken from Council recommendations.
  - i. View past meeting minutes for each Service Delivery Area (SDA) on the SPARK website: <http://indianaspark.com/regional-advisory-councils/>. These minutes include all recommendations and action steps.
- b. Mary summarized the feedback/recommendations made by the Council in November related to outreach and communication strategies and various implementation activities, such as the I-SAT. SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman, provided a high level update on actions taken based on recommendations.

**4. RAC Recommendation Procedure**

- a. SPARK Project Director, Mike Bachman, provided an overview of the RAC recommendation procedure.
- b. Recommendations/agreements made by the Council will be captured within the meeting minutes.
- c. Following each round of quarterly meeting, the RAC Coordinator will compile recommendations from all SDAs into a report to be reviewed by the SPARK Leadership team. The team will then identify appropriate action steps.
- d. Recommendations, action steps, and progress will be reported as Old Business in subsequent RAC meetings.

**5. SPARK Project Highlights**

- a. Each quarter, SPARK Leadership will highlight SPARK features that have been implemented recently or will be launched in the following quarter to gain insight, feedback, concerns, suggestions, and formal recommendations from the public and RAC members.
- b. Spotlight: Call Center/Help Desk Supports
  - i. The SPARK Learning Lab Help Desk, will be available in the Spring of 2020. The exact date is to be determined.



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- ii. At this time, SPARK is planning to have Help Desk representatives available at the following times:
  - 1. Monday-Friday from 6:00 am–7:00 pm Eastern Standard Time (EST)
  - 2. Saturdays 10:00 am–2:00 pm EST
  - 3. The Help Desk will not be open on state holidays
- iii. Trained Help Desk representatives will have general knowledge to answer the questions providers have regarding four main focus areas:
  - 1. SPARK Learning Lab’s trainings and resources
  - 2. Assistance completing the Indiana Self-Assessment Tool and/or determining results
  - 3. Paths to QUALITY™ enrollment, maintenance, advancement, questions, concerns, and rating issues
  - 4. Assistance with understanding and connecting to statewide resources like 211, First Steps, Child Care Search, On My Way Pre-K, and others
- iv. SPARK Learning Lab is also working on transfer agreements with partners so that Help Desk representatives can connect callers to other experts like SPARK Coaches, INAEYC, local CCR&Rs and others.
- v. SPARK is planning to work with Early Learning Indiana to create joint marketing resources that explain the different roles of the SPARK Help Desk and ELI’s Solutions Center and why programs would call each number.
- vi. Questions/suggestions from RAC members and the public:
  - a. Help Desk is a better name than Call Center. Call Center makes people think more of technical and IT support.
  - b. For the Help Desk hours, could SPARK change the weekday hours to 7:00am-8:00pm EST? This would be helpful for programs in Central Time.
  - c. Other focus areas to think about for the Help Desk include assistance with licensing and compliance questions, CCDF vouchers, and the CACFP food program.
  - d. Will SPARK be able to transfer callers to Early Learning Indiana’s Solutions Center and other partners when appropriate?
    - i. Answer from Mike: Yes, we are working to get transfer agreements in place.
- c. Spotlight: Indiana Self-Assessment Tool (I-SAT)
  - i. The Indiana Self-Assessment Tool, or I-SAT, will launch in Spring of 2020. The I-SAT is a program level assessment, not a personal or individual assessment.
  - ii. There are four I-SATs tailored to each program type: Center, Home, Ministry, and School-Based.
  - iii. Prior to the release of the I-SAT, a program assessment training will be available on Indiana Learning Paths and in-person to those interested in completing the I-SAT to orient the program leader to self-assessing their program. This training is a pre-requisite to completing the I-SAT.
  - iv. SPARK Learning Lab will provide local opportunities throughout the Spring to meet SPARK Learning Lab Specialists and Coaches in-person, complete the I-SAT, receive results, learn about SPARK Learning Lab trainings, tools, and resources, and work with a Coach to create a Program Development Plan.
  - v. The I-SAT is not the only way to access SPARK services, but it is the most efficient method. Partners will be able refer programs to SPARK, but the I-SAT will help SPARK identify the goals, resources and supports that will be most relevant to each program.

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- vi. Questions/suggestions from RAC members and the public:
  - a. The prerequisite training is a good idea. It will be helpful to have something to help us understand the evidence and rating continuum.
  - b. Providers may worry that rating themselves too low could lead to negative consequences. The training needs to instill in providers that this assessment is to help with quality and best practices and will not be used in a punitive manner.
  - c. I like that we have the option to complete this in person with access to a coach.
  - d. How quickly will we receive our results after completing the assessment?
    - i. Answer from Mike: We will respond with recommended goals and tailored resources within a week.
  - e. What will programs do if they can't make it to the in-person opportunity to complete the ISAT?
    - i. Answer from Mike: I'd love to hear what the Council might recommend. We think there will come a time when we will need to offer it online, but I don't know if that will happen this Spring.
  - f. Is the I-SAT something you can only do one time, or can you re-assess your program as needed?
    - i. Answer from Mike: Programs can take it however often they want. We understand that things may change and programs may need to rethink their goals and strategies.
  - g. How long will it take to complete the assessment?
    - i. Answer from Mike: The assessment is tailored to what the program wants to look at. You will select the quality indicators you would like to assess. The number you choose will affect how long it takes to complete the assessment.
  - h. Who will take the assessment? The director or teachers?
    - i. Answer from Mike: It is up to each program. We recommend that the pedagogical and/or business leader(s) take the assessment, but it is up to the program.
  - i. Is the rating a gradient system?
    - i. Answer from Mike: Yes, each rating level builds upon the previous level.
  - j. It seems like we are recreating tools when many other similar assessments already exist.
    - i. Response from Mike: We are creating this assessment to focus on quality items specific to Indiana. NAEYC and other standards are embedded, but we also aligned the I-SAT to PTQ. We wanted to create an assessment that was applicable to all accrediting bodies instead of just one. We believe this tool includes or builds off of the best parts of the other existing tools.
  - k. Will you update the I-SAT over time?
    - i. Answer from Mike: Yes, we will revise it as needed.
  - l. What will you do with the data collected through the assessment? Will it be used to get further money for the state?
    - i. Answer from Mike: We are planning to use the data to help create a responsive system that meets your needs. The results will not be used politically to secure more funding.
  - m. Many providers survey staff and parents, but don't know how to effectively use the data they collect. This may be a training opportunity on how to complete assessments and use data.

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- n. Will there be communication/marketing about the I-SAT, or is SPARK relying on the RACs to spread the word?
    - i. Answer from Mike: SPARK will push the I-SAT out with our marketing, but we hope that Council members help us to spread the word further.
  - o. Will the I-SAT be online or on paper?
    - i. Answer from Mike: We plan to have it available in both online and paper formats.
  - d. **Spotlight: Town Square**
    - i. By opening an account with Town Square, Family Child Care programs can open the door to training, resources, and conversation specific to home education and care. Many of these resources have been translated into Spanish.
    - ii. In Town Square, a home program's staff can discover a wealth of resources divided into 5 categories for easy navigation:
      - 1. Activities
      - 2. Home Business
      - 3. Learning
      - 4. Perspectives
      - 5. Wellness
    - iii. Town Square offers the opportunity for those working in the home to watch video tutorials created in the unique circumstances of the home early education and care environment to support the learning of the staff.
    - iv. Town Square's "Discuss" page provides the opportunity for users to post ideas, questions, suggestions, events, etc. for others to respond. It is important to remember that the "Discuss" page is only as active as the members of the community want to make it.
    - v. In one place, anyone that is part of a home program can discover, or rediscover, topics of interest, take part in high-quality, research-based training that is specific to the home early learning and care program, watch video tutorials that demonstrate how others implement these practices in the home environment, then discuss with other home programs their struggles, concerns, and successes.
    - vi. Town Square is available NOW at [www.townsquareIN.org](http://www.townsquareIN.org) (with general and Illinois-specific content). More Indiana-specific content coming to Town Square later this Spring.
    - vii. Town Square IN and Indiana Learning Paths will be linked to assist in the tracking of training hours.
    - viii. Questions/suggestions from RAC members and the public:
      - a. Will there be a similar resource for centers, ministries and school based programs?
        - i. Answer from Mike: The content and discussion boards for those programs will be available through Indiana Learning Paths and the Professional Learning Forums.
      - b. SPARK should consider that some home providers don't have access to the internet and may struggle to connect to this resource.
- 6. PTQ Enrollment Incentives**
- a. About two years ago, the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning (OECOSL) moved to a system through which programs could access kits when they enrolled in PTQ through Kaplan and Lakeshore portals.

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- b. The kits provide a set of materials, along with a User Guide to assist with implementation in the classroom or home setting.
- c. From January-December 2019, 232 total kits were distributed.
- d. The most frequently chosen kit is the Older Toddler Kit, followed closely by the 3-5 Years and Multi-Age Kits.
- e. Now that these kits have been in use for two years, it is time to evaluate the investment and OECOSL would like RAC and public feedback on the usefulness of these kits and if they are the right tools and resources to meet the needs of programs.
- f. Questions/suggestions from RAC members and the public:
  - i. A family engagement kit would be helpful.
  - ii. The User Guide is helpful in providing guidance and direction.
  - iii. Programs should be able to decide what they need instead of selecting a prepackaged kit.
  - iv. More variety in options would also make it a more meaningful incentive for programs.
  - v. It would be helpful to add more of a description for each kit. This description should include a list of the materials and more specific description of what you're getting and the content areas included (social emotional, literacy, etc.).

**7. Public Comment**

- a. It could be helpful to have "sub-regions" within the SDA. SPARK could have "home base" training locations.
- b. What will the process for PTQ look like moving forward?
  - i. Answer from Mike: PTQ is being managed by INAEYC until June 30th. You can reach them at [PTQ@inaeyc.org](mailto:PTQ@inaeyc.org). We are still determining what the process will look like after that date.

**8. Agreements**

- a. Based on what has been presented, RAC discussion, and public comment, the RAC brought forth the following recommendations/agreements for SPARK Learning Lab or partners to consider:
  - i. Help Desk:
    - 1. For the Help Desk hours, could SPARK change the weekday hours to 7:00am-8:00pm EST? This would be helpful for programs in Central Time.
    - 2. Other focus areas to think about for the Help Desk include assistance with licensing and compliance questions, CCDF vouchers, and the CACFP food program.
  - ii. I-SAT:
    - 1. Providers may worry that rating themselves too low on the I-SAT could lead to negative consequences. The training and instructions need to instill in providers that this assessment is to help with quality and best practices and will not be used in a punitive manner.
    - 2. SPARK should offer the in-person opportunities to complete the I-SAT on multiple days and sites throughout the SDA. Consider holding these events at Ivy Tech locations or other partner agencies throughout the region.
    - 3. Many providers survey staff and parents, but don't know how to effectively use the data they collect. This may be a training opportunity on how to complete assessments and use data.
  - iii. Town Square:



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1. SPARK should consider that some home providers don't have access to the internet and may struggle to connect to Town Square.
- iv. PTQ Enrollment Incentives:
  1. A family engagement kit would be helpful.
  2. Programs should be able to decide what they need instead of selecting a prepackaged kit.
  3. It would be helpful to add more of a description for each kit. This description should include a list of the materials and more specific description of what you're getting and the content areas included (social emotional, literacy, etc.).
- v. It could be helpful to have "sub-regions" within the SDA. SPARK could have "home base" training locations.

**9. Upcoming Community Events for SPARK to Attend**

- a. Sue shared information with [RAC@indianaspark.com](mailto:RAC@indianaspark.com) about the Southeast Regional Chapter of INAEYC's Annual Provider Appreciate Dinner. The date is still being confirmed.
- b. Mary shared that the IN Family Child Care Alliance is having a conference on February 29<sup>th</sup>. She will provide more information via email.

**10. Future Meeting Schedule**

- a. Wednesday April 29<sup>th</sup> this meeting was originally scheduled from 2:00-4:00pm EST, but Council members chose to change the time to 6:30-8:30 EST. This meeting will be held in Evansville.
- b. Wednesday September 9<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:30pm ESTT (Location TBD; possibly Ferdinand, Washington, Scottsburg, or Corydon)

**11. Vice Chair Selection**

- a. The previously select chair Erin Cofer has taken a position with SPARK Learning Lab and has thus stepped down from the RAC. Mary Cundiff, the original Vice Chair, has taken her place as Chair. The Council is now looking for a new Vice Chair. Interested members should email [RAC@indianaspark.com](mailto:RAC@indianaspark.com) about their interest.

**12. Adjournment**