The 2020 session of the Indiana General Assembly began January 14, 2020 and ended in the early hours of March 11\textsuperscript{th}. In this “short” legislative session, the biennial budget was not addressed; thus, legislators focused primarily on policy, not funding issues.

Thanks to the support of our members, chapters, and donors, we once again had a full-time presence at the statehouse to both champion and monitor legislation that impacts people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

**Direct Support Professionals**

We sought legislation to create a registry for Indiana’s Direct Support Professionals. This piece of legislation gained a lot of interest from legislators, but because the fiscal impact on the state was higher than expected, it was not able to move through the legislative process in a non-budget year.

**Insurance**

*House Enrolled Act 1176* passed through both chambers and was signed into law by Governor Eric Holcomb. Although there was some resistance from insurance providers, we were successful in passing this legislation that allows First Steps therapies to be covered by third party insurance providers if those therapies are listed as covered within a family’s insurance plan. This new law also cleans up some administrative details within the First Steps office and the Interagency Coordinating Council.

We continued to support legislation requiring a license for applied behavior analysts. With healthcare matters taking the majority of the time this legislative session, this bill did not get a hearing and ended up dying.

Since this was the session for healthcare, we supported added transparency to healthcare costs. Multiple pieces of legislation crossed the finish line when it came to transparency, including a major new law requiring a healthcare provider to let the patient know the costs of services and if those services are covered within the patient’s insurance plan. The physician and patient can then make a plan that is best for the patient’s health and wallet.

**Education**

This was an important year for The Arc of Indiana when it came to education, and we saw major success. After many years of battling for proper accommodations on statewide assessments, we finally came out with a piece of legislation which passed unanimously into law. 

*Senate Enrolled Act 346* establishes a taskforce within the State Board of Education to review accommodations currently allowed on the statewide ILEARN assessment and determine what parts of the test need to be changed so that all accommodations within a student’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) can be utilized. A key component that we believe needs to be changed is testing of reading and reading comprehension. Until the test is changed, schools must notify parents that they are allowed to pull their child from taking certain portions of the assessment if their accommodations are not provided. The taskforce has to report back to the General Assembly with the changes needed to make the assessment inclusive for all students. The Arc will be part of the taskforce.

*House Enrolled Act 1341* is a workforce data collection bill, which also passed unanimously into law with the Speaker of the House (who rarely votes on bills) voting in favor. This new law requires the State Advisory Council on the Education of Children with Disabilities (SAC) to develop a plan to provide former students, who left school since the year 2003 with an IEP or a certificate of completion or attendance, with resources on opportunities to get an alternate diploma (which did not exist when they were in school), vocational training or tools to help them skill up and get a better paying job in the Hoosier workforce. The SAC committee will need to provide their plan to the General Assembly by this Fall.

**Looking ahead to 2021**

The 2021 session of the Indiana General Assembly will be a “long” session in which the next biennial budget will be created. As always, the budget session will be important to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, their families, providers, and Direct Support Professionals. If you have not signed up to receive legislative updates and action alerts, you can sign up at [arcind.org/get-involved](http://arcind.org/get-involved).
Reforms passed by Congress in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), require individuals receiving a sub-minimum wage to have the opportunity to prepare for, obtain, maintain, advance in, or regain competitive integrated employment, including supported or customized employment. The reforms also require that individuals be informed of these opportunities.

In response, local vocational rehabilitation services offices, The Arc of Indiana and Self-Advocates of Indiana are working with providers who offer employment at a sub-minimum wage (known as 14(c) entities) to provide Career Counseling & Information and Referral Services (CCIR) sessions for individuals employed at subminimum wage.

The presentation, led by self-advocates, provides information regarding local community organizations and resources that provide employment-related services and supports. At the end of the presentation, attendees receive a certificate of participation that will document the completion of these required activities.

While in person meetings have not been possible due to COVID-19, The Arc and SAI team has successfully transitioned to providing trainings remotely. Individuals who are interested in transitioning to community employment can get assistance through vocational rehabilitation services. VR can provide help with:

- Exploring your employment interests and skills
- Helping you to find your first job
- Providing assistive technology or other services to help you keep your job
- Re-entering employment in the same or different type of employment
- Providing services necessary for career advancement

Learn more about Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services at: in.gov/fssa/ddrs/2636.htm or call The Arc of Indiana at 317-977-2375 or 800-382-9100 and ask to speak with a family advocate.
Executive Director’s Column

What a strange and difficult start to 2020 this has been. It is during these difficult times that I realize how strong The Arc network really is. 2020 started with a legislative session that was successful in several ways, but our focus was on laying the foundation to increase Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages in the 2021 session of the Indiana General Assembly, when legislators will develop the next biennial state budget.

Just after the legislative session ended on March 11, the state of our world began to drastically change following the outbreak of the Coronavirus. Yet, during this difficult time, there continues to be much too that is positive and much to be grateful for.

I am grateful for The Arc of Indiana, The Arc Master Trust, and Erskine Green Training Institute staff who quickly transitioned to working from home while making sure the quality of our services does not change. Please know that our team is here for you!

I cannot give enough praise to the provider network across the state, especially our 21 chapters of The Arc of Indiana who provide direct services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) and members of ICEArc (Indiana Conference of Executives of The Arc).

I also need to say “Thank You” to the leadership team at the Division on Disability and Rehabilitative Services. As the COVID-19 virus started to grow across our state, the leadership team quickly gathered stakeholders to collect information, get questions answered and talk through how services could be delivered with more flexibility and remotely as needed.

When Governor Holcomb made his first announcement about social distancing and the need to reduce the number of people congregating together, providers acted swiftly, realizing that health issues for some with I/DD puts them at greater risk. Our provider chapters and ICEArc members pooled resources to order much needed Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and made sure everyone received at least a portion of what they need. And, they came together to brainstorm how to best communicate with families and clients and how to deliver services in new and unique ways within state and federal guidelines.

At the time I am writing this in early May in Indiana, we are seeing a combined total of 218 positive cases of people with I/DD who are in services and their staff. That is amazing as you look across long term care facilities in our state and certainly in some parts of the country. There have been three deaths, three too many, but it could have been much worse without the quick action of providers and state leaders.

I have looked forward to the daily social media posts from many of our chapters showing people in residential services cooking together, playing games, sewing masks and making signs to show appreciation to their DSPs. I love hearing about the weekly Zoom meetings and dance parties that self-advocates are having in order to stay active and in touch with one another. Social media has also helped families share stories, troubleshoot, stay connected, and get connected to new friends. If you do not follow The Arc of Indiana on Facebook, please join us!

I also send a big “Thank You” to our chapter leaders, members, families and self-advocates who have taken the time, despite work and home pressures, to call and email members of Congress to advocate for the needs of people with I/DD, families and providers. You have made and are making a difference.

This time has been hard. The daily lives of people with I/DD who attend school, go to day programs, work or live in residential programs have changed dramatically. Families balance working from home while taking on home-based schooling, perhaps seeing a reduction in services and working to keep everyone healthy and safe.

As The Arc News in Indiana goes to press, it is unsure how much longer this will continue. But have no doubt, together we are all making it work because it is simply what we can and must do. One day soon we will move forward past these difficult times. In the meantime, please know that The Arc of Indiana is here for you and your family.


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When provider chapters of The Arc learned that COVID-19 was severely impacting people with underlying conditions, and that social distancing was critical, they quickly made the difficult but necessary decision to close their day programs. Just as quickly, they found new and innovative ways to continue to provide services and supports. Chapters providing residential services also needed to quickly innovate to keep clients and staff safe, while also offering new programming to clients who could no longer go to programs outside of their homes. Chapters offering employment services continued to support clients with jobs where they were able to keep working. Employment training, as well as therapies, began to be provided virtually, again, through innovative methods that were quickly developed. Here are just a few of the many positive and uplifting stories of how chapters of The Arc and their staff have risen to the challenge during this difficult time to support people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

When The Arc Southwest Indiana, The Arc in Gibson and Pike Counties, closed their day program, their direct support professionals (DSPs) that usually work in day programming stepped up and without hesitation started working in their residential programs. This same action happened across the state. Executive Director Stan Keepes speaks for so many of The Arc’s chapters in saying, “All of our DSPs have gone above and beyond in supporting and protecting our clients. They have kept the clients active and in daily routines and have even done Zoom meetings so they can see family and friends. DSPs are on the frontlines, supporting the most vulnerable Hoosiers with dignity, care and respect. We could not be prouder to have all these wonderful people working at The Arc Southwest Indiana.”

Many chapters of The Arc, including Stone Belt Arc, The Arc in Monroe County, provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation services. When students could no longer attend school due to COVID-19, Stone Belt Arc’s Pre-ETS staff quickly shifted to supporting students via Facebook, phone calls, and Zoom technology. Students remained engaged through a daily “Zoom Room” with themes such as career counseling, a resume workshop, and workplace readiness training. 2020 graduate Val Schrocks created a beautiful piece of artwork to commemorate her class, and students and staff worked together to celebrate their graduation via Zoom on May 8.

Passages, The Arc in Whitley County, honored their direct support professionals with “We Love Our Everyday Heroes” signs. Like many providers, they found ways to help clients connect with family and friends through Facetime or Zoom calls.

KCARC, The Arc in Knox County, opened their daycare center for children of employees, at no charge; and delivered free meals to staff from their 1972 community center kitchen.

Staff at Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana, The Arc in Allen, Dekalb, Huntington and Steuben Counties, used their sewing center to make hundreds of washable fabric face masks for staff and participants and clients shared their thanks with the Allen County Health Department with a special sign and photo. Like other provider chapters, they helped families stay connected with loved ones in residential programs through video chats.
Making an Impact, from page 4

ADEC, The Arc in Elkhart County, along with many provider chapters, found ways to continue to provide therapies through tele-health visits.

Noble / The Arc of Greater Indianapolis was very successful in transitioning First Steps, early intervention services to tele-health visits.

And, they shared a wonderful story about a young man who works at Lilly Technology Center South in Indianapolis, where he sanitizes common areas to ensure that lab technicians can work safely. He first became connected with Noble working in their sheltered workshop. He moved on to working at businesses through Noble’s Employment and Workforce Services program. He now works at Lilly full-time, with supports from Noble’s Community Employment program.

Kim Dodson, The Arc of Indiana executive director, said, “I could not be prouder of our chapters and their staff. During this extremely difficult time, they have remained committed to providing quality programs and supports to the men, women and children they serve. Each and every day, they continue to make a positive impact in their communities. These stories are just a few of the many positive stories taking place throughout the state. On behalf of The Arc of Indiana, I want our chapters and their hardworking staff to know how very much they are appreciated.”

The Arc of Indiana was established in 1956 by parents of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) who joined together to build a better and more accepting world for their children.

The Arc was built from “the bottom up,” starting with those families who came together and formed our original chapters. Next came the state association, The Arc of Indiana, and next the national organization, The Arc of the United States. Today we are proud to have 43 chapters, including 21 provider chapters that offer a wide array of programs and services, and 22 advocacy chapters that offer supports through information, referral and advocacy.

The combined strength of local Arcs, state Arcs and The Arc of the United States makes The Arc the largest national community-based organization advocating for and serving people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

To find a chapter in your area, visit: arcind.org/about-the-arc/local-chapters

The Arc of Indiana Provider and Advocacy Chapters

The following map identifies the 43 chapters of The Arc of Indiana.

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Report from Erskine Green Training Institute

Andy Kirby, Executive Director, The Arc of Indiana Foundation

During this unique and particularly challenging time, it is my sincere hope that this message finds you and your family safe, healthy and managing through this crisis successfully. To all of our partners, families, students and friends, I want to thank you for your support and let you know that Erskine Green Training Institute remains committed to excellence and is continuing to do what is necessary to ensure that people with disabilities are prepared to enter-and succeed in—the world of community employment.

In late March, we made the difficult decision to complete EGTI Session One as a virtual program and send the class of 15 students home. While it wasn’t how we hoped to finish the final 2½ weeks of the 13-week session, the safety of our students and staff had to come first. The students, their families and the EGTI team are to be commended for quickly adapting and making a challenging situation work. On April 3rd we held our first virtual graduation to recognize and celebrate a fantastic class of motivated and prepared job candidates.

Shortly after graduation we made the even more difficult decision to cancel Session Two. A key to the success of our program is the residential component. We felt that while we could conduct virtual lessons, it is important for each student to experience EGTI fully and we look forward to welcoming this group of students in October.

While the COVID-19 virus is creating a lot of uncertainty, The Arc of Indiana Foundation board of directors and the EGTI team are committed to ensuring that EGTI not only survives this challenging time but comes out stronger when we are finally able to return to normal.

Through EGTI, The Arc of Indiana Foundation has consistently committed to one-of-a-kind programming, creative ways to train people with disabilities and prepare them for community employment. In this time of need we continue with this tradition, and on April 20th we launched a four-week virtual training program to assist students, special education teachers, families and other people with intellectual disabilities around the country. These daily sessions provide training content to help participants maintain or build upon their pre-vocational skills.

We remain committed to excellent programming and will be prepared to come back stronger and better. Please visit EGTI’s website at egti.org and “like” Erskine Green Training Institute on Facebook and Instagram for news and information on EGTI’s programs. We appreciate all of the support we continue to receive from all of our friends throughout the state.

Zachary and Katie trained as Front Desk Agents. Their training included making mock reservations in EGTI’s Indiana Pacers Lab.

Morgan trained in the Front Desk Agent program. She learned how to greet and assist guests checking in and out of the Courtyard by Marriott Muncie.

Leeann trained in the Kitchen Cook program and interned at the IU Health Ball Memorial Hospital kitchen.

Committed to one-of-a-kind programming, creative ways to train people with disabilities and prepare them for community employment.
On March 27, 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES). This was one of a series of bills enacted by Congress to help relieve the financial impact of the coronavirus in the United States.

The CARES Act included providing economic impact (stimulus) payments to individuals and families to help stimulate the economy and provide funds to those struggling to pay their bills.

Single individuals with an adjusted gross income (AGI) less than $75,000 received $1,200. Married couples with an AGI less than $150,000 received $2,400. The payment is gradually reduced for incomes above those levels, tapering off altogether at $99,000 for individuals and $198,000 for couples. In addition, those with dependent children age 16 or younger received a $500 supplemental payment per child. If an adult with a disability is claimed as a dependent on another person’s tax return, they are not eligible for a stimulus check.

It is important to note that the stimulus payments are specifically excluded from counting towards the $2,000 resource limit for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) recipients for 12 months after receipt. As long as the stimulus money is spent within that time period, it will not interfere with benefit eligibility. Also, the payment does not count towards the income limit of the individual in the month it is received.

If individuals would like to save their stimulus money to be used beyond the 12 month period, those funds can be saved in a Trust II account through The Arc Master Trust. If you already have a Trust II account, this money can simply be added to the beneficiary’s account. If you do not have a trust with us, a Trust II account can be set up quickly and easily. Please contact our office at 317-977-2375 and ask to speak with Jill Ginn, assistant director for The Arc Master Trust. You can visit our website at thearctrust.org for information and to find the necessary paperwork to open a Trust II account.

There was a great deal of confusion regarding how SSI recipients would receive their payment. Thanks to the work of The Arc of the United States, other advocacy groups for people with disabilities and calls and emails sent by constituents to their members of Congress, action was taken to provide for the payment to be received in the same way that SSI benefits are received each month: directly to their bank accounts through direct deposit, Direct Express debit card, or by paper check. The payment should be received no later than early May.

*As The Arc News in Indiana goes to press, the IRS required certain Social Security beneficiaries to file taxes or utilize the IRS Non-Filers website by May 5, 2020 in order to claim a stimulus payment for dependent children age 16 or younger. This includes parents with disabilities receiving SSDI, widows and widowers with children with disabilities, and retiree grandparents who are the legal guardian of or who have adopted grandchildren with disabilities. If not filed by the deadline, they will now need to claim the credits when they file their taxes in 2021.

If you have any questions, please call our office at 317-977-2375 and ask to speak with a family advocate. You can find a fact sheet about the stimulus payment on The Arc of Indiana’s COVID-19 information and resources page at: arcind.org/covid-19-information-and-resources.

The Arc Master Trust, a pooled special needs trust, offers families and people of all disabilities an experienced, professional option for special needs trust administration at an affordable price, allowing resources to be saved and easily used for qualified disability and personal expenses.

The trust provides beneficiaries with the extras in life, above and beyond the basic needs that government assistance programs provide.

From special vacations, to a request for beautiful new braids, to art classes and so much more. The Arc Master Trust takes pride in quickly and efficiently responding to our beneficiaries’ requests.

Visit The Arc Master Trust at thearctrust.org or call 317-977-2375 or 800-382-9100.
The Arc of Indiana & Self-Advocates of Indiana
2020 CONFERENCE
Imagine the Possibilities: Shaping Our Future
November 13–14, 2020

The Arc of Indiana and Self-Advocates of Indiana look forward to seeing you at our two-day conference, Imagine the Possibilities: Shaping Our Future, November 13 and 14, at the Horizon Convention Center, Muncie, Indiana.

Join us for one or both days for informative workshop, exciting keynotes, and a celebration of Self-Advocates of Indiana 30th anniversary!

Alonzo Kelly, two time best-selling author and host of a live Internet radio show, will be the keynote speaker at the Impact Awards Luncheon on Friday, November 13. Known as a thought leader, Kelly will inspire and motivate you to live your best life.

Sessions will include:
- Advocating for Yourself / Advocating with Elected Officials
- Emotional Exhaustion & Compassion Fatigue
- Dignity of Risk
- DSP Recruitment & Retention
- Help with SSI
- Waiver Redesign & Charting the LifeCourse
- Supported Decision Making in Services
- Transportation Options
- Special Needs Trusts
- Creative Community Outings
- Entrepreneur Portal – Working & Benefits
- Transition – from school to work / from sheltered work to community employment ... and much more!

Watch for more information and registration opportunities in August.

Register and Vote!

Primary Election

Indiana’s Primary Election has been rescheduled to take place on June 2, 2020. Currently registered voters may choose to cast a ballot by mail by applying for an absentee ballot at IndianaVoters.com. The deadline to return the form is May 21, 2020.

General Election

May 19, 2020 – Voter registration begins

To register you must be 18 years old on the day of the election and you must be a United States citizen. Individuals who have a legal guardian are eligible to vote. You can register at your city clerk’s office, license branch and many other government offices. Indiana residents with a valid Indiana driver’s license or Indiana state-issued identification card can submit a new voter registration application or update an existing voter registration record at IndianaVoters.com.

October 5, 2020 – Voter registration for General Election ends

October 22, 2020 – Deadline to apply to vote absentee. Apply at IndianaVoters.com

November 2, 2020 – Noon deadline to vote absentee

November 3, 2020 – General Election Day – Polls open 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Indiana residents must present a government issued photo ID before casting an in person ballot on Election Day. In most cases, an Indiana driver license, Indiana photo ID card, Military ID or U.S. Passport is sufficient.

Visit IndianaVoters.com to verify your voter registration status, find your polling place and learn who is on your voting ballot. For complete voting information visit: in.gov/sos/elections

The National Bank of Indianapolis’ Annual Golf Tournament For The Arc of Indiana
presented by KCARC
October 9, 2020 | Eagle Creek Golf Club
Hosted by Eddie Gill
For additional details, including sponsorship opportunities and registration information, please visit arcind.org/event/golf or contact Jill Vaught at jvaught@arcind.org

Calling All Artists

The Arc of Indiana and Self-Advocates of Indiana are looking for a logo for our statewide conference. The title of the conference is Imagine the Possibilities: Shaping Our Future. The conference will give people the tools they need to create a better life for themselves or their loved ones.

The contest is open to any person with a disability. The winner will receive a free conference registration and gift card. Please submit your entry by July 1, 2020. Submissions can be emailed to thearc@arcind.org or mailed to: The Arc of Indiana Attn: Jill Vaught 143 W. Market Street, Suite 200 Indianapolis, IN 46204