



A LETTER TO OUR FAMILIES



A Step Ahead welcomes Lindsey Hartman as Interim Executive Director

A note on behalf of the A Step Ahead Board of Directors:

Lindsey Hartman, MA, SPED was appointed as Interim Executive Director in January 2024. Lindsey has been with A Step Ahead for 5 years and last served as the agency's Evaluation Coordinator on the Leadership Team. She is a special education teacher with previous experiences as a birth to three developmental specialist, a school district itinerant teacher, and a master's level adjunct professor. Her robust knowledge of Part C will be an asset to the staff as well as the families they serve. Lindsey looks forward to bringing a fresh perspective on service provision and clear direction for the agency as the organization transitions into the opportunities ahead.

A letter from Lindsey Hartman, Interim Executive Director

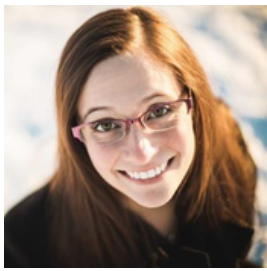
I am honored to support and represent A Step Ahead families, staff, and supporters. Interim Executive Director is a large undertaking as A Step Ahead pioneers a path forward through this transition both programmatically and fiscally. There is so much potential for the agency as I work alongside the A Step Ahead team to bring the agency through its next period of growth and continued improvement.

Professionally, I attained my Master's degree from University of Northern Colorado Greeley for Special Education: Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and I acquired my Bachelor's degree from University of Minnesota Duluth in Unified Early Childhood Studies (Early Childhood Education/Special Education). My teaching experiences have focused on children in the early childhood years or primary grades with certification through Grade 12. I have worked and studied in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Alaska, Colorado, and Washington. My experience from across multiple states, settings, and ages allows me to approach challenges creatively and robustly.

On a more personal note, I am a proud mom of two children who both have graduated from A Step Ahead services. I am also fortunate to be supported by my loving partner and our extended families who have made this journey possible. My perspective as both a provider and family within the A Step Ahead organization gives me a unique insight when guiding the agency.

I am very passionate about supporting families as well as advocating for best practice through awareness and education. I enjoy working with children with a variety of abilities and their families. My colleagues would attest to my commitment to compliance under the Part C Law, with ESIT Guidance, and our Pierce County Contract, as well as affirm my love for this field of work and inclusivity for all children.

I look forward to the innovative and collaborative work ahead with the A Step Ahead community.



Sincerely,

Lindsey N. Hartman, MA



FAMILY COST PARTICIPATION UPDATE

Dear ASAPC Families,

A Step Ahead is sending this letter to inform families of some recent changes to our billing practices and policies. Since 2020, due to the Covid Pandemic, ASAPC had paused the billing of families for copays and deductibles. ASAPC will now resume billing families for copay, co-insurance and deductible portions of your insurance billing as applicable.

From the System of Payments and Fees Policy (SOPAF) shared with you by your FRC at IFSP:

Funding for Part C was designed to utilize Federal, State and Local fund sources including public and private insurance. Because there is not enough public funding to cover all early support service costs, not all early support services can be provided at public expense. Families are expected to contribute financially to their child's program. This expectation can be met by giving access to private health care/insurance and Apple Health for Kids/Medicaid for those services that are subject to ESIT's Family Cost Participation requirements.

It is the expectation that unless inability to pay has been determined, all families who receive services that are subject to Family Cost Participation will contribute financially to their child's services by using their public insurance benefits, private insurance benefits, or by paying a fee.

If you receive the following services: speech therapy, physical therapy and/or occupational therapy services, you have already signed the Prior Written Notice, Consent to Access Public and/or Private Insurance, and Income and Expense Verification form at the time of the IFSP.

If you currently receive services from a special instruction teacher, you would only be presented with this form when therapy services are included on the IFSP, which allows for medical billing.

Prior to billing public or private insurance, families will be provided with the ESIT System of Payment and Fees Policy. Families will be asked to complete, as appropriate, the Prior Written Notice, Consent to Access public and/or Private Insurance, and Income and expense Verification form. The family's Family Resource Coordinator (FRC) will assist families in reviewing and completing the Prior Written Notice, Consent to Access Public and/or Private Insurance, and Income and Expense Verification form, as appropriate.

Here are things to keep in mind regarding Public and/or Private Insurance Billing and Family Cost Participation (FCP):

1. Support. A Step Ahead is ready to assist families as we return to insurance billing. We are here to help during this transition including connecting you with your insurance customer support or reviewing benefits and patient responsibilities as needed.
2. Insurance. We participate in most insurance plans. However, unless you carry secondary insurance there will likely be a deductible, and the reimbursement by your insurance carrier may not equal the amount billed for services rendered, in which case the patient's parent/guardian may be responsible for any balance due.
3. Copays, Co-insurance, and Deductibles. All copays, co-insurance and deductibles are to be paid to A Step Ahead in Pierce County. This arrangement is part of your contract with your insurance company and ESIT's Family Cost Participation. Please help us in upholding these agreements by paying your fees in a timely fashion.
4. Proof of Insurance/Coverage Changes. All families must provide insurance information before seeing their assigned therapist. If your insurance changes, please notify us before your next visit so we can make the appropriate changes to help you receive your maximum benefits. If your insurance company does not pay your claim due to unreported changes, you may be held responsible for the unpaid balance.
5. Claims Submission. We will submit claims and assist you in any way we reasonably can to help get your claim paid. Your insurance company may need you to supply certain information directly. It is your responsibility to comply with their request. Please be aware that the balance of your claim is your responsibility whether your insurance company pays your claim. Your insurance benefit is a contract between you and your insurance company; we are not party to that contract.

If you feel you will need some type of financial assistance (i.e. payment plans, inability to pay, family cost participation monthly fees, etc.), please contact our billing department at 253-319-8289 ext.138.

What to expect: Families can expect to get a monthly invoice electronically via email as well as paper copy via USPS mail. The invoice will include instructions on how to make a payment online. Various payment types will be accepted including all major debit or credit card carriers. If you have any questions about making payment, please contact our billing department.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office.

Thank you,

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