



**Welcome to the Individual and Family Support Program's
March 2025 Coordinated Regional Council Meeting!**

Navigating Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Care for Children and Youth with DD in Virginia



Featuring a presentation from Stacia Stribling, Ph.D. and
Kelly Henderson, Ph.D. of Formed Families Forward

If you need closed captioning, please check the chat box for the link!





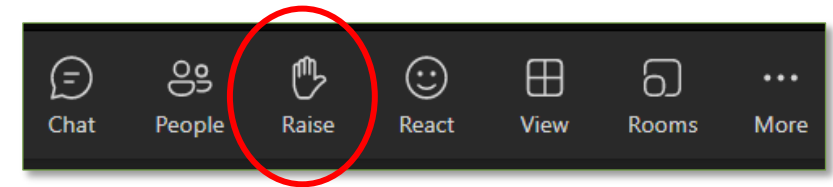
- **Welcome & Ground Rules**
- **What is the IFSP?**
- **Navigating Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Care for Children & Youth with DD in Virginia** – Stacia Stribling, Ph.D. Deputy Director and Kelly Henderson, Ph.D., Executive Director, Formed Families Forward
- **Panel** – Linda Lundin-Seidel, LaSherron Diaz, Nikki Plaster, and Jacquetta Cole
- **Q&A**
- **Council Business and Adjourn**

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** If you need technical support, email IFSPCommunity@dbhds.virginia.gov! **



- **Tonight's main session is being recorded and will be posted to YouTube.**
- **Please be respectful of our presenter, panelists, and other attendees.**
- **Please place your questions in the chat!**
 - The chat is not private.
 - Please identify your region when you are asking your question.
 - If you cannot use the chat box, use the "Raise Hand" feature at the top of your Teams panel.
 - If you have a question that is not related to this topic, you can email IFSPSupport@dbhds.virginia.gov.
- **This meeting is hosted by the IFSP's Regional Councils.**
- **Remember that tonight's meeting is public, so please refrain from sharing personal information.**

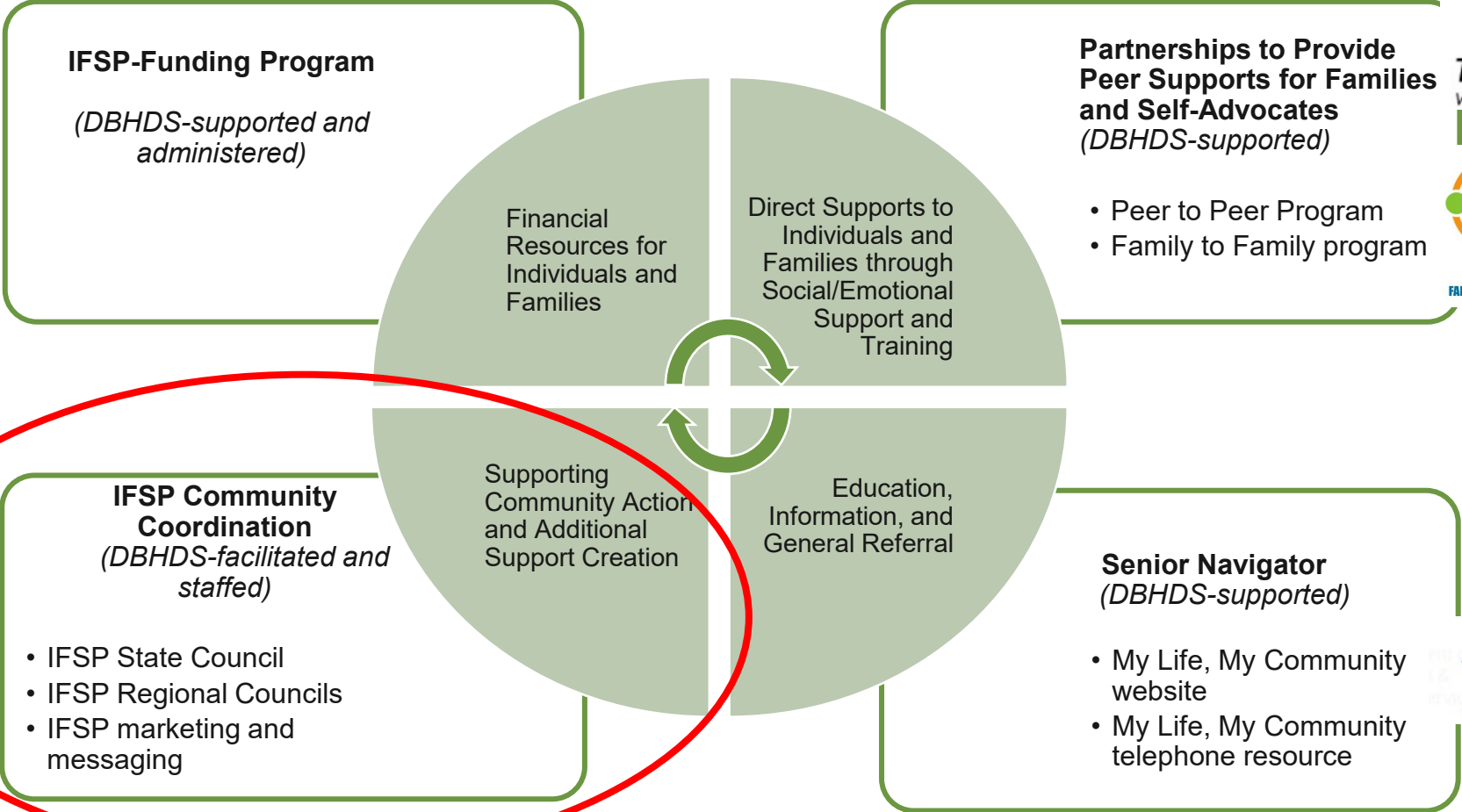
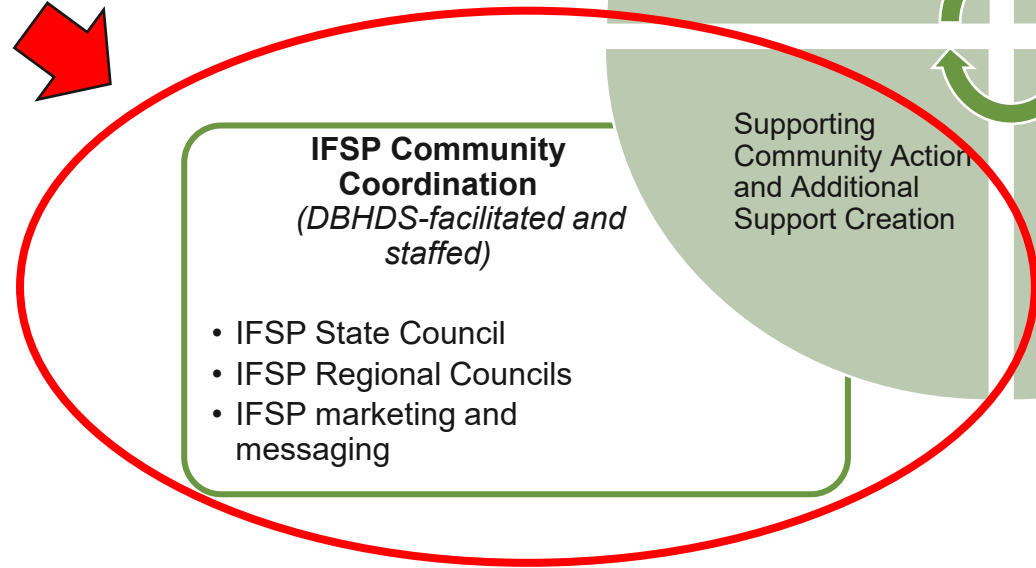


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You are here!



Tonight's presenter: **Stacia Stribling, Ph.D.**

Stacia began her career as an elementary school teacher in Fauquier County, VA. After 8 years in the public school system, she left to pursue a doctorate in early childhood education and literacy. As a teacher educator, she taught graduate courses to pre-service and in-service teachers. She has extensive experience in qualitative research focused on issues of equity and social justice in education, presenting her research at national and international conferences and publishing numerous journal articles and book chapters.

In 2013, Stacia and her husband grew their family through foster/adoption. She is now the Deputy Director of Formed Families Forward and is a strong advocate for foster, adoptive, and kinship families. She provides training sessions for caregivers, service providers, organizations, local classroom teachers and administrators on various topics including trauma, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and parenting/teaching through a brain-based lens.



Tonight's presenter: **Kelly Henderson, Ph.D.**

Kelly is a former public school teacher of students with emotional and behavioral disorders. She has worked in national and federal special education policy and research settings.

Kelly's family is formed in part through foster care and adoption. Her young adult sons have a range of learning, behavioral health, and cognitive disabilities. Kelly's work at the family-led nonprofit organization Formed Families Forward includes training, consultations and other supports of adoptive, foster and kinship families and agency personnel. Kelly has also served as part-time instructional faculty at GMU for nearly 20 years, training graduate students and special education teachers.





Linda Lundin-Seidel

Regional Council
Western (Region 1)



LaSherron Diaz

State Council
Southwestern (Region 3)



Nikki Plaster

Regional Council
Southwestern (Region 3)



Jacquetta Cole

**Case Manager and Parent
Aide**
Alliance Human Services

Meet our moderator: **Lisa Richard**

Lisa Richard is the Southwest Regional Network Coordinator and the Rural Outreach Specialist at the Center for Family Involvement at Virginia Commonwealth University. She supports caregivers and families living with disability across the lifespan in southwest and rural Virginia.

She is the parent to seven children, including two adult children with intellectual disabilities and has lived experience navigating complex disability systems throughout Virginia. Lisa adopted a child with an intellectual disability and now shares her practical knowledge to empower caregivers of individuals with disabilities in kinship, adoptive, and foster care families.



Meet our panelist: **Linda Lundin-Seidel**

Linda obtained her bachelor's and master's degrees from Georgian Court University, then attended George Mason University's Master's Degree Program for Educational Leadership. Her educational journey began in the Garden State, where she happily taught students for five years in Lacey Township, New Jersey. In 1988, Linda and her husband relocated to Virginia following her husband's career change. Linda has been actively involved in the field of education for 39 years, not including the three years she spent as a substitute teacher and volunteer at her eldest child's school while being a stay-at-home mom. Her teaching experience encompasses both elementary and secondary levels, where she has served as a classroom teacher and a collaborative teacher, holding endorsements in both special and general education.

Throughout Linda's career, she has embraced various roles, including Special Education Administrator and VDOE T/TAC Program Specialist at Virginia Commonwealth University. Furthermore, she has served as an adjunct instructor for George Mason University's graduate program, as well as an IEP Specialist/Supervisor and Educational Diagnostician. Currently, she works as one of the Coordinators of Special Education for Louisa County Public Schools, where her responsibilities include overseeing eligibility, IEP, and MDR meetings, as well as facilitating transition planning and assistive technology training. Her local involvement extends to being a member of the Family Assessment Planning Team (FAPT). In 2025, she joined the Western Regional Council for the Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP).



Meet our panelist: **LaSherron Diaz**

LaSherron Diaz is a passionate advocate for the special needs community and those who need a voice. The native North Carolinian moved to Virginia in 2022. She serves as a community mental health support professional, substance abuse educator, and a supermom of five girls and one boy.

In 2024, she became a State Council member of the Individual and Family Support Program (IFSP). She also serves as a Community Connector for The Arc of Southside. As a graduate of American Public University, she earned an Associate of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies. LaSherron also serves on the Member Services Committee with DMAS (Virginia Department of Medical Assistance Services). She enjoys reading, writing, playing with her “fur babies,” Jeriko and Leonardo Di Caprio. LaSherron also hosts a Podcast (ONAW), where she advocates and provides her voice on various topics.



Meet our panelist: **Nikki Plaster**

Working in the behavioral health field since 2007, Nikki had navigated the system as a board-certified Behavior Analyst and knew how to support families in ensuring they knew available resources. Then a call came in 2022, and two little girls entered her life as foster placements. This created a whole new spin on the system that left Nikki now to navigate as a parent/guardian.



Meet our panelist: **Jacquetta Cole**

Jacquetta Cole has over 20 years of experience in the human services field that spans from Maryland to Virginia. She has worked with children in different arenas, including group homes, intensive in-home services, wraparound services, and even Child Protective Services. Currently, she serves as a case manager for a private treatment foster care agency in Virginia, for children with various backgrounds and behaviors.





1. **Is there any data on children in foster care that have Individualized Family Service Plans through Early Intervention?**

- **Kelly:** These are not data required for local agencies nationally or in Virginia to report. It is likely that if an infant or toddler in foster care is receiving early intervention services and has an IFSP, the public DSS agency would be named on that Individualized Family Service Plan. So potentially those data are available, perhaps through a case review.

We sometimes hear about a misconception that the local DSS worker should act as the educational decision maker when a child is in a foster placement. In both Parts B and C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), there is a very clear definition of “parent”. In almost all cases where a child is placed with a foster family, a foster parent should be part of the IEP team or IFSP team. If a birth parent is involved and rights of the birth parent have not been terminated, that birth parent usually has primary educational decision-making rights. If that birth parent is not available to participate and act as “parent”, then the foster parent typically has those rights. More about the interpretation of “parent” for early intervention/Individualized Family Service Plans, can be found starting on page 11 of Chapter 3 of the Practice Manual for the Infant and Toddler Connection of Virginia, at <https://itcva.online/wp-content/uploads/Resources/PM/PM-03-Referral.pdf>.

2. **What is the working relationship like with Virginia’s Indian tribes around Indian child welfare and foster care in Virginia?**

- **Stacia:** Typically, other states with larger populations and organized tribes and spaces do a better job with that. Virginia is behind in that aspect.





3. **What other statistics are available regarding the 20% of children in care who are removed for child behavior problems? (Examples of statistics: ages, what are the behaviors?, etc.)**
- **Kelly:** Children who are coded with reason for removal tend to be older and tend to be in situations where the family of origin may already be seeking support, including relief of custody. We're hearing more from partners and families that relief of custody petitions are more frequent in Southwest Virginia than in other regions. It may be more common in areas where services for intense behavioral challenges and substance use disorder are harder to come by. One hypothesis for that 20% is that the birth families who are seeking relief or custody feel that they are not able to get the level of support that children would need after trying lots of things and reaching out to many agencies and supports. That is what we are hearing in terms of trends. Someone mentioned truancy in the chat, and we are hoping to learn more about how frequently children and youth and their families are being put in front of a judge for truancy and how those judges are treating those cases.





4. Is power of attorney (POA) or guardianship necessary for grandparents to care for a child?

- **Kelly:** Depending on the circumstance, power of attorney is not always necessary. For example, when it comes to enrollment in school, power of attorney is not necessary in some school divisions. School divisions have some leeway in terms of what they would accept as an indication of a parent giving temporary custody or designating an acting caregiver. Many school divisions request an affidavit, a notarized statement that's not power of attorney, but can give a grandparent or other kin caregivers permission to be the educational decision maker and to be the registrant of this child in school. We have a checklist that talks about this issue: https://formedfamiliesforward.org/family_resource/checklist-for-kinship-caregivers-working-with-the-schools. There is a checklist also for schools and other resources at the Virginia Family Special Education Connection: <https://vafamilysped.org/Resource/JWHaEa5BS777JFDM1VmPxQ/Resource-checklist-for-kinship-caregivers--checklist-for-schools-working-with-kinship-caregivers>

There are a variety of ways to get at that and it's not consistent, but in short, power of attorney is not always necessary for situations like enrollment.





Before we wrap up ...

Don't forget to let us know what you think!

- Please scan the QR code to fill out the Satisfaction Survey!
- You can also click the link that is being shared in the chat.

THANK YOU!





- The recording and PowerPoint slides will be shared on the My Life, My Community website and on the IFSPCommunity Facebook page:
 - <https://mylifemycommunityvirginia.org>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/IFSPCommunity>
- Save the date!
 - **The next IFSP State Council meeting:** Friday, April 25th
 - **Our next IFSP Coordinated Regional Council meeting:** Thursday, May 22nd about transition
- To receive the latest updates from the IFSP, please make sure you are subscribed to our email list at <http://tiny.cc/ifsp-email>





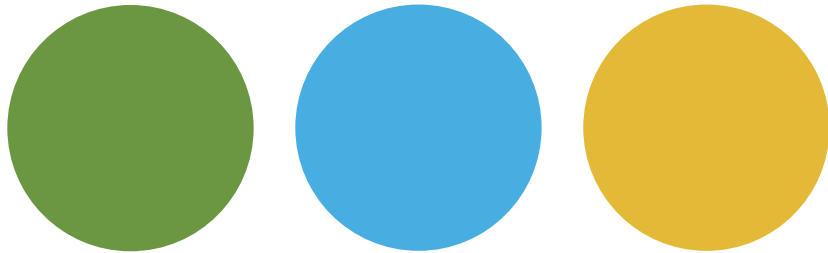
To our IFSP Council cohost:

LaSherron Diaz

To our IFSP Southwestern
Regional Council

To our Hamilton Relay captioner:

Kimberly Shea



To our main session presenters,
panelists, and moderator:

Stacia Stribling, Ph.D.
Kelly Henderson, Ph.D.

Linda Lundin-Seidel
LaSherron Diaz
Nikki Plaster
Jacquetta Cole

Lisa Richard



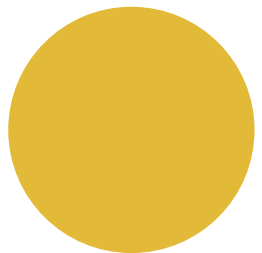
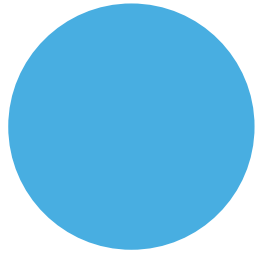
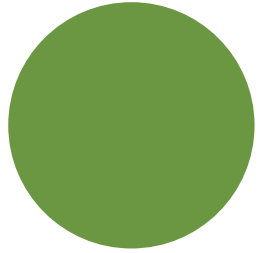


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Thank you!

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