



The ALL-STAR Newsletter

September 2022

Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities

Issue 37

Jefferson County BDD

250 John Scott Highway
Steubenville, Ohio
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Early Intervention Helps Children Reach Milestones

At first glance, little Eoghan Coakley appears to be a typical child.

His smile could light up the darkest room and his laughter is as sweet as a song. The 15-month-old son of Matt and Holly Coakley of Steubenville, Eoghan (pronounced "Owen") suffered a stroke in utero but has been gaining strength and becoming more actively mobile. He spent the first two weeks following his birth in a neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) and his condition mostly impacted the portion of his brain which controls motor skills. However, doctors do expect his prognosis to improve because of his age and believe he can regain the neural connections he lost.

Eoghan has experienced developmental delays as a result, but his parents are seeing steady advancement through his work with the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities' Early Intervention (EI) program. He has held regular home sessions with Neysa Rogers, developmental specialist and EI supervisor, since he was two months old and his mother said his quality of life has definitely improved.

"He's a little behind on things but he's been making great strides. He's now crawling and we're so excited," Coakley said.

She and Eoghan have worked with Rogers to build his strength and he literally has been taking baby steps toward major milestones and learning to drink from a bottle and cup. Those improvements have meant so much and Coakley said both Rogers and the program have been a huge benefit for her little boy.

"Having her be able to come to the house has been wonderful. She's been so great and encouraging to us and helps with what we need to work on, and we also get to see the little victories he's made," she said. "We've been working on a lot of things and she's always here to have fun and include his siblings so they become part of his growth and development."

Eoghan's four elder siblings, who range in age from two to eight years



Little Eoghan Coakley is taking baby steps toward major milestones after suffering a stroke while still in utero. Now 15 months old, he is steadily learning to crawl, walk and learn to drink on his own through the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities' Early Intervention (EI) program so he can lead a more fulfilling life. He is pictured with EI Supervisor Neysa Rogers, at left, who is helping him walk to his mother, Holly.

old, have taken part in sessions and help their youngest brother incorporate his therapy into games and everyday activities.

"Neysa has brought our family together in a way to rally for Eoghan," Coakley added. "We've become a family team and that's awesome."

Rogers said the Coakleys were a prime example of how EI assists local families and the goal is to provide children ages newborn to three years old with opportunities for brighter tomorrows. The program currently serves 71 children on individual family service plans (IFSP's) in their home or natural learning environment but coordinates services for a total of 98 kids across the county. Rogers said an array of services are offered including special instruction by developmental specialists, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, vision and audiology services and mental health services, but this year all of her 14 part- and full-time staff

members are being trained in many areas through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal funding.

"I wrote an ARPA grant for \$45,000 and we are spending it on new technology for our office staff, a lot of trainings and to start a lending library which includes iPads and compression vests," she said. "One training we are excited about is the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) training, which will help the children of Jefferson County get tested for autism versus having to go to Wheeling, Pittsburgh and Akron."

Rogers said the ADOS training, which has yet to be implemented, would benefit local kids who may otherwise be on a waiting list for up to six months. It marks a first for the JCBDD to have test administrators and that will begin once a doctor approves the testing and observation. She added that ARPA funds are released over a two-year period

(Continued as MILESTONES)



New Staff at Bright Promise

A mix of new and familiar faces have joined The School of Bright Promise with Brenna Johnson, pictured in front, as an intervention specialist. In back are Sara Wright, a board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA); Mandy Thomas, intervention specialist; and Jodie Braswell, occupational therapist.

MILESTONES ***(Continued from Front)***

so all staff members will learn what is known as the SPARK Communication method for children with language delays. This will aid consistency with teaching communication skills, whether the primary provider in the home is a developmental specialist, speech therapist or occupational therapist.

She continued that EI utilizes a coaching model approach as opposed to a therapeutic model so parents may help their child prosper.

"The coaching model is a very different approach than the medical model that most people are accustomed to in the U.S. Coaching requires the parent or caregiver to be the main learner and use everyday childhood experiences during their routines to reinforce and build upon skills so their child makes progress," Rogers noted. "The reason this is different is the child isn't getting

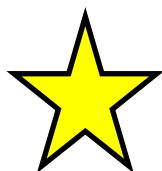
30 or 45 minutes of a therapeutic technique in a facility; they are getting daily opportunities to work on a goal or skill during their regular routine by the coached caregiver."

The caregiver will then check in with EI supports to reflect on what is and isn't working and share ideas on how to further their child's development in areas of concern, such as communication, gross or fine motor skills and sleeping habits.

"The coaching technique allows us to share what the entire team has to offer the family at teaming," Rogers explained. "The entire state follows this coaching model approach and all 88 counties went through an extensive training in 2016 when this approach came about."

For more information about the EI program, contact the JCBDD at (740) 266-3831 or email nrogers@jcbdd.com.

Getting to Know You...



***Kisha
Chester***

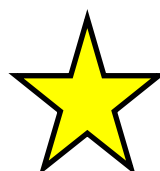


Kisha Chester has returned to her old stomping grounds in Steubenville but is answering a different call as a new staff member at Shaffer Plaza.

Chester recently relocated from Powell, Ohio, where she served in the Westerville City School system for seven years as a high school special education assistant and teacher, and was named a quality intellectual disabilities professional (QIDP) at the apartment complex operated by the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities. She said the move has also shifted her focus from helping kids to assisting adults.

She returned to be closer to family and began her new duties on Aug. 8, which entail being responsible for the service plans of residents as well as meeting staff needs and working with home operators. She said it is different from her days of assisting with individual education plans (IEP's) for students and working with teachers and families, but she still continues virtual tutoring with homebound students in Westerville.

Chester has three children, daughter Zaire Chester and sons David and Devon Calloway. She is a 1994 graduate of Steubenville High School and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in health care administration from Ohio University. She obtained her master's degree in adult education from Ashland University and may pursue her doctorate.



***Jon'tera
Dudley***



Jon'tera Dudley really enjoys her job. "It's awesome," she says. "I like to help."

Dudley, a native of Steubenville who currently resides in Wintersville, has been employed through the Jefferson County Board of Developmental Disabilities as a cafeteria assistant at the School of Bright Promise.

JCBDD has been helping Dudley and other individuals by matching them with jobs through the Community Employment Services (CES). Dudley has been employed for 16 years and presently her tasks include preparing breakfast and lunch and cleaning the kitchen, as well as doing laundry and dishes to sanitization.

Dudley's work gives her a sense of independence by earning a living, but there are some extra perks that come with the job.

"I love the kids and I have made friends," she continued, "and I like my boss, Tisha Polverini."

In her spare time, Dudley said she likes to do art and describes drawing "happy" scenes such as pumpkins and farm life.

She also enjoys watching television, especially sports such as baseball, football and gymnastics, and noted that she definitely loves spending time with her two dogs, Sasha and Zeus.