



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY FIRST IN STATE FOR EARLY INTERVENTION

Uniontown, PA – Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration (BHA) is celebrating more than just the holidays – thanks to their outstanding achievement in Early Intervention Services.

Early Intervention consists of services and supports designed to help families with children who have developmental delays or disabilities. The program focuses on physical, cognitive, communication, social, emotional and adaptive development.

Fayette County BHA was recently ranked first in Pennsylvania in fiscal year 2022-23 for these services, administered by their Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) Birth-Three Program.

BHA Administrator Dave Rider said dozens of enrolled families completed surveys designed to help determine areas in which the program is successful or needs improvement. Survey results are reported to the federal Office of Special Education Programs and used for determination and verification processes for local programs.

“We are extremely proud of our local Fayette County Early Intervention Birth-Three Program, as they achieved the highest overall score across Pennsylvania,” Rider said. “Our office isn’t competing with other counties or their providers; we’re simply trying to give our families an always-improving experience, and these results show that families are pleased with our efforts.”

BHA Supports Coordination Organization/Early Intervention Director Kerry Smith said the program has been proven to “positively impact” children’s development and “can reduce the need for services later in life.”

“Through early intervention, families are able to gain skills which enable them to meet their child’s needs with guidance from trained staff, who can make positive impacts in several domains,” Smith said. “The results of the OCDEL survey demonstrate the satisfaction of families whose young children receive services. Early intervention staff dedicate extensive effort to identify the needs of families and children served.”

Fayette County’s OCDEL Birth-Three Program received 461 referrals during the 2022-23 eligibility period. The Early Intervention Program is available to all eligible children at no cost to the family. Services are voluntary, and families can opt out at any time.

Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration is located at 215 Jacob Murphy Lane in Uniontown. For referrals, call BHA at 724-430-1370 or the CONNECT Helpline at 1-800-692-7288. Referrals can also be made online by visiting www.education.pa.gov and searching "Early Intervention".

"We understand that when families are faced with questions about how to support their very young children, anxiety may surface. Part of what we deliver is comforting family members' hearts, and the families have said that our team is doing a pretty good job," Rider said. "I'm so proud of our office and our EI team. They are making a difference in Fayette County, and I'm thrilled that they have been recognized as leaders in the state."

To learn more about Fayette County Behavioral Health Administration, visit www.fcbha.org.

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