



Early ACCESS  
Wednesday Wonders  
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Welcome to the Early ACCESS (EA) Wednesday Wonders! The purpose of this newsletter is to have a consistent, predictable way for EA stakeholders to stay current on happenings as well as share information with other stakeholders such as practical advice, training announcements, video clips, and/or success stories. It is a newsletter for stakeholders, by stakeholders. Please let me know if you have something you would like to contribute or have suggestions or comments at: [melissa.schnurr@iowa.gov](mailto:melissa.schnurr@iowa.gov)

To view archived Wednesday Wonders, visit the Iowa Family Support Network [website](#).

*If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.* – Mother Teresa

## Service Coordinator Shout-Out (Spotlight on Service Coordinators in Iowa)

### Shout-Out to Grant Wood AEA Service Coordinator – Jamie Forster:

Jamie Forster is an all-around excellent service coordinator. Jamie is passionate about her work and detail oriented. She is organized, flexible, and committed to serving all families on her case load. Jamie is a leader and a team player. I have learned more about myself, my perspective on parenting, and mental health concerns in the 3 years she has been my service coordinator than I have in the 10 years before meeting her. Jamie has made me a better provider and parent to my son.

Jamie has an uncanny knack at reading people and understanding what challenges or road blocks they may be facing in helping their child be successful. We have a number of families on our caseload faced with mental health concerns. Jamie is supportive of them but also holds them accountable for their thoughts and actions. It isn't one specific family she has made an impact with, it is several. One mom struggled when she interacted with community providers, her son's teachers and in most interactions with new individuals in her life. Together, Jamie and I made certain she participated with us in the RESPECT training. This parent is now able to assert herself in a manner that is positive and straightforward without getting angry or shutting down.



Jamie frequently checks in on our families she knows are struggling. If she hasn't heard from a parent recently, she will continue to reach out to them until they have responded. She is always a safe place for our families to land when they feel there is no one else to talk to. Jamie has sat with more than one parent for over an hour while they shared their current fears and/or challenges to being the best possible parent for their child. Jamie is committed to all our families and I am proud to get to work with her.

Jamie engages with an immense diversity of families. She is instrumental in providing them with the tools to achieve their own success for their child and family. Commitment, leadership and flexibility are second nature to her. She has initiated productive, weekly large /small group meetings that have continued throughout the 12-month calendar. Jamie is able to relate and connect to each family in a way that best serves them. This includes seeking mental health assistance for families in need, which have become a success story with employment/independence and successfully aiding their child during and beyond Early ACCESS services. Her behind the scenes paperwork is stellar which has aided our team as a whole. I commend Jamie for her performance as a professional, co-worker, family supporter and friend.

If you work with an outstanding Service Coordinator, submit their information [here](#) to be included in a future Shout-Out.

*Early ACCESS Vision: Every infant and toddler with or likely to have a developmental delay and their families will be supported and included in their communities so they will be healthy and successful.*

## In case you were wondering....

### **The Power of Learning Through Imitation:**

This [20-minute online module](#) from the [Institute for Learning & Brain Sciences](#) (I-LABS) shares why imitation is so important for early learning. Each module delivers content through narrated PowerPoint slides with embedded videos. A discussion guide and handout are also available for this module.

### **Children Learn by Imitating You:**

Watch. Enjoy. Learn. From this [1-minute video](#).

### **Ideas for Teaching Children about Handling Disappointment/Different Emotions:**

Young children are experiencing often disrupted care situations as schools close, open, and close again for mitigation of COVID-19 spread. The [Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#) developed this [list](#) of daily, weekly, and home ideas for supporting children experiencing feelings of disappointment. Learn about labeling, engaging in role play, and calming activities.

## Something wonderful is happening....

### **Mindfulness and Compassion Program:**

The [Odessa Brown Children's Clinic of Seattle Children's Hospital](#) has a [suite of resources](#) for supporting the mental health of families of children with disabilities or special health care needs. The program also offers free online classes run by parents for parents. They are committed to culturally responsive resources to build resilience and collective capacity for social justice and healing. Meditations, courses, and other resources are provided regularly in Spanish, Somali, and English.

### **FREE Training on Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation:**

The Polk County Children's Behavioral Health Collaborative is hosting a FREE training on [Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation](#)! Stephanie McFarland is going to be presenting this workshop on December 3, 2020 from noon to 4PM. She will be discussing foundational skills, knowledge, abilities, and types of services for Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation! You can sign up [here](#).

For more information about Early Childhood Iowa, visit: <https://earlychildhood.iowa.gov>

For more information about Early ACCESS, visit: [www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org](http://www.iafamilysupportnetwork.org) or contact:

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