



NEWS: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Infant and Toddler Connection of the Shenandoah Valley Expands over 400% in Six Years

Winchester, Virginia, May 9, 2016 —Since 2010, the Infant and Toddler Connection of Shenandoah Valley has partnered with Grafton and the City of Winchester to provide early intervention services for local children –from birth to age three with disabilities from six different localities: Frederick County, Clarke County, Warren County, Page County, Shenandoah County and the City of Winchester. In 2010, 129 children were enrolled in the early intervention program and in 2015, over 600 children were referred to the program. Many of the referrals come from local physicians and the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) at the Winchester Medical Center.

Managed by Virginia’s Department of Behavioral Health and Disability Services, early intervention services are mandated through Part C of the Individual Disabilities and Education Act. State and federal funds, along with Medicaid and some private insurance provides the funding for services for children from birth to a child’s third birthday who exhibit one or more of the following:

- 25% or greater delay in cognitive, physical, communication, social, emotional or adaptive development
- Atypical development such as behavioral issues, low muscle tone, high muscle tone, lack of social/play skills to name a few
- A diagnosed physical or mental condition that has a high probability of resulting in a developmental delay

“The infant and toddler period is such a critical time to support a child’s healthy development and set the path for successful school readiness. There is countless research that supports that it is easier and more cost effective to build strong foundations than to remediate developmental delays later on,” said **Sharlene Stowers**, Local System Manager. “Licensed professionals within the early intervention program use a coaching approach with families in natural settings to improve cognitive, physical, communication, social and emotional development.”

In recognition and celebration of Early Intervention month, The Infant and Toddler Connection of Shenandoah Valley-Grafton will offer the following activities:

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- Free developmental screenings for children and grandchildren of Grafton employees.
- Special advertisements highlighting the importance of early intervention services will be posted on Grafton’s website and the company Twitter account.

- A blog highlighting the impact of early intervention services and written by a parent of child who is receiving services will be posted on Grafton's website.
- The early intervention program will host a picnic for families who receive services through the Infant and Toddler Connection of Shenandoah Valley on May 14th.

About Grafton Integrated Health Network

Grafton Integrated Health Network (Grafton) is a private, nonprofit organization that has served children, adolescents and adults with disabilities and significant emotional and/or behavioral challenges for more than 57 years. As an industry leader in behavioral healthcare, we utilize a data-driven, trauma informed treatment model to empower vulnerable and high-risk populations to lead better, more independent lives.

Grafton provides a continuum of services to children, youth and adults including applied behavioral analysis, early intervention, psychiatric residential treatment, a short-term stabilization program, special education programs, community-based group homes and outpatient services.

For more information on Grafton Integrated Health Network's services and expertise, please visit: www.grafton.org.

About Infant and Toddler Connection of Shenandoah Valley

The Infant & Toddler Connection (ITC) of Shenandoah Valley is a joint collaboration with Grafton and the City of Winchester and serves children in six different localities: Frederick County, Clarke County, Warren County, Page County, Shenandoah County and the City of Winchester.

In a joint effort between public and private sectors, Infant & Toddler Connection of Shenandoah Valley utilizes a qualified team of licensed professionals who specialize in cognitive, physical, communicative, social and emotional development. Our licensed professionals offer intervention services in homes and in other traditional environments to help families develop and adopt exercises that can be incorporated into their child's daily routine. Making use of such a large and diverse support group allows us to ensure children receive the most appropriate and least restrictive services. As part of our commitment to offering early intervention to every eligible child in the Shenandoah Valley region, no family will be denied services due to an inability to pay.

For more information, please visit www.itcshenvalley.org.

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