

Director of Early Brain Development named

FEATURED

Clint Wolf
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Austin

BELOIT — Jessica Austin has been hired in the new position of director of Early Brain Development in Rock County, and she will help in an effort to make sure area children have the learning skills necessary at an early age.

Tara Tinder, Executive Director of the Stateline Community Foundation, and Dr. Bill Flanagan, Chair of the Foundation's Literacy for Life Initiative, announced the hiring of Austin this week. This new position at the Foundation was made possible by a generous donation from Quint and Rishy Studer whose passion for early childhood brain development can be summarized by their motto: Build a Brain, Build a Life, Build a Community.

Austin graduated from University of Wisconsin – Whitewater with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education and special education. She also earned an associate's degree from Blackhawk Technical College in early childhood education. She has extensive experience working in the field of early childhood education, including owning and operating her own childcare center.

"We are thrilled to hire someone with such passion and commitment to our goal that every child born in Rock County will be ready to learn when they reach kindergarten," Tinder said in a news release.

Flanagan said Austin will be working to develop and grow the Stateline Community Foundation's Literacy for Life Initiative in all of Rock County. She will be developing critically important relationships with each of the health systems where babies are born, school districts, non-profits, city governments, organizations and businesses who recognize how critically important early childhood brain development is for ensuring children are ready to learn when they reach kindergarten.

The first three years of a baby's life is when 80 to 85% of the brain is developed. When children are ready to learn by kindergarten their chances for success in terms of their education, career and quality of life improves dramatically according to early childhood education researchers.

To ensure that the family of a newborn has the support and information on how to develop their newborn's brain, families will be enrolled in a program called The Basics developed by Dr. Ronald Ferguson at Harvard University. Prior to leaving the hospital, mothers will view a video about the importance of building their baby's brain and receive a brain-bag with a toy and materials that support brain development. Families will be enrolled in The Basics program where they will

receive texts twice a week for the baby's first three years designed to explain where the baby is developmentally. In addition, suggestions for activities such as singing, playing, reading and managing stress that promote brain development will be provided.

Austin will assume her new role on March 6 and can be reached at her office at the Stateline Community Foundation, 690 3rd St. Suite 110, Beloit.



\$500,000 gift to support Rock County child development

Quint and Rishy Studer have given a \$500,000 gift to help promote childhood brain development in Rock County.

Beloit Sky Carp Owner Quint Studer presented with Bridge to the Future Award.

Clint Wolf

https://www.beloitdailynews.com/news/local-news/director-of-early-brain-development-named/article_0d8dfe8e-b7b8-11ed-ac2d-ab4d3bf8b0fa.html?utm_campaign=blox&utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&fbclid=IwAR0-5oAoiwCNVaAo6JhuadgcmE8P9r8_6G7CD61a9sTFMVsqWmAdGCvATQ