

# Real Lives, Real Impact: Stories from the WVU Center for Excellence in Disabilities (CED)

## Tiffany Wilson, foster parent and care coordinator

My Name is Tiffany Wilson, and I am a foster parent who recently accepted a care coordinator position with the Early Diversion Program at Westbrook Health Services.

I have several years' experience working with children and adults with various barriers. I became a certified foster parent in June 2022, knowing I would face great challenges finding the appropriate services for the children in my care. In May of 2023, I was placed with a child who suffered years of loss, abuse, and neglect. When her world came crashing down, I was screaming for help. I spent a year contacting multiple places trying to find family therapy and someone to help me best support her. We were referred to other programs that were not helpful at all. My child viewed her sessions as negative, and we were given false hope. In January of 2025, a former coworker suggested I look into the **WVU CED**.

After filling out the referral, I received a quick response and things started rolling. **Alyssa Flowers with the Family to Family/Paths for Parents programs** was my first point of contact, and she has been amazing! Whether it was a phone call or text, she was quick to check in and follow up. Next, we were in contact with **mental health specialist Eric Murphy**, who is fulfilling the request of family therapy, and **Theresa Bhaile with the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program**.

My child did not like the idea of meeting new people, let alone sharing her story, her fears, and all the other hard things she struggles with yet again. She was able to quickly build a rapport with Eric and look forward to her appointments. She has been able to open up and talk about the hard things without even realizing sometimes. She has bragged about the professional relationship she has with Eric Murphy and encourages peers to reach out for help as well. Eric has been amazing with assisting me through the challenges of parenting a child with significant trauma.

I was overjoyed when I found out Theresa Bhaile was able to meet with us in the home. Her first appointment in our home was very pleasant and she gave me hope we could work together to get through our family struggles. Being a foster parent, it often becomes overwhelming keeping up with all the appointments, so having Theresa come into our home was greatly appreciated. Since our first appointment, she has helped us learn tools to support our family goals. We are currently meeting with Theresa via ZOOM, due to a travel freeze. We have made this work, but it's not the same as in person. Our schedules do not allow us to travel to Morgantown. Theresa has utilized the mail and continues to go above and beyond supplying us with the tools to reach our goals.



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Since making the referral for my oldest child, I was placed with a four-year-old who has Deletion of the 16th Chromosome, along with abuse and neglect. She came to me only able to feed from a bottle. Theresa quickly recommended we put in a referral to the **CED's Feeding and Swallowing Clinic**. On June 12, 2025, I had the pleasure of meeting **Cassaundra Miller and Amy Burt**. My foster child unfortunately was having a rough time when we arrived. Cassaundra and Amy worked immediately to help calm her. There were no words, just a team working quickly *together* to help my child de-escalate. I was so blessed by their presence in that moment and could not have been in a better place. The visit didn't seem long at all, and I learned so much in a short period of time. I was familiar with the adaptive utensils but had never seen them used. It was truly an “ah-ha!” moment for me. Within a week, my little one was eating foods I was struggling to get her to even taste, let alone place in her mouth and swallow!

Last week I was informed I would receive my first referral in my new position. When a co-worker verbalized some information regarding the youth, I quickly thought about how the CED would be a great resource for them. I'm eager to submit the referral once I officially start with the youth and her family. I have shared the CED's information repeatedly. I have not had one bad thing to say at all.

THANK YOU to all the staff at the CED. I know I only named a few and there are so many others that have answered phone calls, scheduled appointments, or were a part of the initial meetings, who have had a part in helping my family personally, and other individuals who I have referred to or will refer to in the future. Thank you for being kind, patient, and so knowledgeable. Thank you for restoring my faith in services for children in our state!

– Tiffany Wilson, foster parent, Westbrook Health Services