



## Community Services for Children

# Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 13 March 2022

Serving Berks & Schuylkill counties

## Region 13 News

### Need Help with Heating Costs?

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps eligible families pay their heating bills. LIHEAP is a grant that **does not need to be repaid**.

- You do not need to be on public assistance
- You do not need to already have an unpaid heating bill
- This program is for those whom rent or own their home

To receive help, apply before May 6, 2022. Apply online [here](#).

[LIHEAP 2022](#)

## Parenting Corner

### Kindergarten Here I Come!

Spring has almost sprung which means it is the time of the year for Kindergarten registration. March is the month most School Districts begin the Kindergarten registration process.

Going to Kindergarten is a big event for every child and family. You and your child may feel excited and proud about this next big step. You may also be feeling a bit uneasy and anxious. This [article](#) by NAEYC provides helpful tips for preparing you and your child for this exciting life experience.

Each school district has different days and times that registration occurs. Please use the [link](#) to find out the specifics for the County/School District you live in



and what you will need to successfully register your child on time.

## Quality Child Care



### Selecting Quality Child Care

Selecting a childcare provider can be an overwhelming experience. The quality of your child's experience in an early childhood program has a direct impact on your child's ability to learn, to build healthy relationships, and be prepared for the elementary school classroom.

You have many options when making these choices. Your child can be supervised in a state licensed child care program, group provider or family child care home.

The differences in these providers can be significant.

- Family childcare is held in the caregiver's home and limits the total number of children in care to six. Usually there is only one caregiver but they should have a back-up person in the event of an emergency. Family providers will often provide flexible options such as overnight or weekend care.
- Group providers are limited to 12 children but are required to have more than one staff member to maintain their ratio.
- Child care centers can range from small programs of less than ten children to very large programs of over 200. Centers will usually group children by age in classrooms with teachers and caregivers assigned to a group. Centers can be found in commercial space, churches, hospitals, school district buildings or other privately owned facilities.

Check out this newsletter next month when we will discuss what to look for when touring a program!

## Resource & Referral

### Resource & Referral with the ELRC

While many people know the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) as a place to apply for subsidized child care for working families, many do not know that it also serves as a one stop shop for all resources in their community.



The resources and referrals the ELRC can provide, go way beyond just help in finding quality child care. Our family specialists are extremely knowledgeable about the resources in the community they serve, and can point families in the right direction no matter what services they need.

ELRC and its staff can assist in:

- finding resources for behavioral support for child(ren)
- mental health therapy
- drug and alcohol counseling
- housing resources
- food banks and many other areas of assistance

One need the ELRC has seen is families seeking information on housing and homelessness services. The local county assistance office has numerous programs to help struggling families with housing needs.

One program that the CAO has to offer is the Emergency Rental Assistance Program, or ERAP. This program helps people pay back rent and utilities and was designed to help those dealing with the lasting economic impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic. Apply via the [Compass website](#), or by going to the [ERAP website](#) for information to apply in-person.

Contact the ELRC office for assistance.

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## Tax Assistance

The **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)** program offers free tax help to people who make \$57,000 or less, persons with disabilities, and limited English-speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their tax returns. Families can usually find VITA sites in community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations. To locate an open site near you, use the [VITA Locator Tool](#) or call (toll-free) 888-227-7669.



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## Health & Safety

### Powdered Infant Formula Warning

Please be advised that the FDA is currently investigating powdered infant products produced at Abbott Nutrition's facility in Sturgis, Michigan. **Four infants have been hospitalized and one infant has died as a result of their illnesses**, believed to be tied to the bacterium *Cronobacter sakazakii* and the strain *Salmonella Newport*. Read more [here](#).



The code on the bottom of the package can also be entered [here](#) to determine whether the produce is affected.

The FDA recommends that consumers avoid Similac, Alimentum and EleCare formulas if they contain the following criteria:

- The first two digits of the code are 22 through 37
- The code on the container includes K8, SH or Z2
- The expiration date is 4-1-2022 (APR 2022) or later

An article has been posted on this topic on HealthyChildren.org - [What should I](#)

## Healthy Eating Tips

Good eating habits begin early in your child's life. As early as infancy, you can help your child grow lifelong healthy eating habits. You are your child's best role model so while you help him or her to eat healthy, try to do the same too! The [Very Well Family website](#), suggests 10 fun, healthy snacks for children to make themselves.



In addition, this [fact sheet](#) provides easy tips to help your child learn healthy eating behaviors.

## Arts & Crafts

### Rainbow St. Patrick Day Game

Looking for some fun indoor activities to do with your family?

Try creating the **Rainbow St. Patrick's Day Game** all you need is 6 simple supplies:

- Construction Paper
- Glue Stick
- Scissors
- Markers
- Plastic Coin



**Rainbow St. Patrick's Day Game**

powered by  
**CIY**

Irish you good luck! Follow the rainbow to this DIY St. Patrick's Day game for kids & toss a coin to try your luck.

Follow the Steps:

1. Cut a piece of red paper into 4 equal pieces
2. Add a line of glue at the edge of the paper
3. Roll paper to create tube shape
4. Repeat for a total of 16 red, 13 orange, 10 yellow, 7 green, 4 blue, and 1 purple tube.
5. Arrange tubes into a rainbow shape
6. Assign and write point values to each colored tube using your marker
7. Wrap a large piece of ribbon around the rainbow to keep the tubes from shifting
8. Stand a few feet away and flip a plastic coin toward the rainbow. If the coin lands in a tube, tally the points you've won.

Remember to never leave your child unattended with items that could present a choking hazard or other safety concern.

For more fun activities, go to [www.crayola.com/crafts/](http://www.crayola.com/crafts/)

Connect with us



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