

## Community Services for Children Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 14 March 2022

Serving Lehigh & Northampton counties

*Community Services for Children offices are open to the public. We have put preventative measures in place to keep both our staff and visitors safe. Please wear a mask regardless of vaccination status and stay home if you are feeling unwell. We look forward to seeing you soon!*

### Region 14 Updates

#### Please Welcome

We are pleased to announce two new Quality Coaches to the ELRC 14 team, Mitchell Hughes and Erica Cisneros.



Mitchell comes to us with years of experience in the Early Childhood field in both the classroom and in administration. He provided support and supervision to over thirty directors of early learning and school age programs and assisted them in meeting their Keystone STARS goals. He has extensive experience with school age programs and looks forward to offering professional development opportunities on school age programming in the near future. We hope you will join us in giving Mitchell a warm welcome!



Erica has been working in the early childhood field for the past fifteen years as a teacher and as a Special Instructor, providing services to children and families who qualify for Early Intervention services. She also collaborated with agencies, including Head Start/Early Head Start and behavioral services to support children on a case by case basis. We welcome Erica and her expertise in early childhood to our Quality Coach team!

## American Rescue Plan Act

The Early Learning Resource Center has been able to award over \$39.3 million in ARPA funding to eligible providers. Payments will continue until all programs have received their six-monthly installments. ARPA payments are taxable income so we recommend programs work with their tax advisor for any questions.

In addition, all providers should have received their IRS form 1099 from Community Services for Children. Amounts WILL include ARPA payments received in 2021 so your amounts will look higher than typical. If you have not received your 1099, please reach out to your Provider Specialist.

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## Region 14 Provider Supports

### Quality Coach Office Days

Do you need assistance with your Keystone STARS Renewal or Designation? Are you thinking about moving up in STARS and need some extra assistance? Well, the Quality Coaches are here to help! Quality Coaches are in the office weekly and are available to meet. See the attached flyer for dates of when your Quality Coach will be in the office.



- [Quality Coach Office Days-March 2022](#)

### Director's Network

The United Way and Lehigh Carbon Community College joined our meeting to discuss a Day of Hiring for the early learning community on March 29, 30 and 31, 2022. This is a statewide initiative to raise awareness for the staffing shortage in early childhood. Career Link, local workforce boards, WFMZ and other location radio stations, local newspapers, and digital ad campaigns will promote the event. Look for more information to come soon!

The group will meet in March to discuss resources and approaches to reducing screen time at home. See the attached flyer for the link to register for our March 8<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- [Director's Network](#)

### PQA - Let's Talk Quality Monthly webinar series

- [March topic: Art](#)

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## ELRC Updates

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### Is Your Email Address Up to Date in PSS?

OCDEL uses email to communicate with child care locations about important announcements including additional grant and award opportunities in the coming months. Providers should visit PSS and confirm that their contact information is up to date as soon as possible.

## Log into Provider Self Service

- Click on Location Profile.
  - Review all location information including the email address.
  - Contact the help desk with any issues at 877-491-3818 and select option #2 twice.
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## CCW Reminders

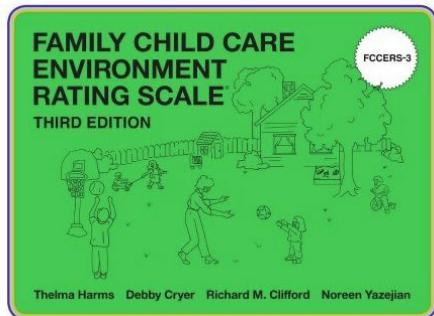
Correctly completing your attendance is essential to receiving an accurate Child Care Works payment.

- Paper Attendance - Mark “CA” for COVID Absence for each child out for COVID related absence
- Online Attendance - Mark the child absent for every scheduled day that they do not attend. Click on the blue hyperlink to access the comment box. Place a comment for the COVID absences

(ex: COVID absence: 2/11-2/15)

Examples of COVID Absences:

- Child must quarantine
- Child or family member is positive for COVID
- Facility needs to close due to positive cases
- Child or family member is waiting for COVID test results



## Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale PD

The FCCERS tool assists family providers in assessing program quality. This tool can be used to meet the STARS quality indicator EC2.1. Two live sessions will be offered by the assessor team for \$7 a session and the FCCERS tool is included in the cost of registration.

- Foundations of FCCERS - 3/23 @ 6:00 pm - This session will give you an overview of the scale and will help you to learn how to use the 7 point scoring system.

Event ID: 335260

- FCCERS-R - 4/20 @ 6:00 pm - This session goes into detail about specific items and indicators in the FCCERS-R.

Event ID: 335264

Family Child Care providers should reach out to their Quality Coach for support in registering for these events.

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## Certification News

[Announcement C-22-02](#) includes information related to pre-service training for all child care staff. In summary of this announcement:

- All child care staff must complete 12 hours of annual training

**As of 4/29/22:**

- All staff must complete the required CCDBG health and safety training which is found on the Better Kid Care website, before caring for children unsupervised. Click [here](#) to access this page
- Shaken Baby Syndrome, Abusive Head Trauma and Child Maltreatment is also a required training. This training IS embedded as part of the CCDBG training listed above.
  - If you took this training after 9/2016, you are in compliance
  - If you had taken CCDBG prior to 9/2016, it is recommended that you take the updated 10-hour module
- Certification requires all staff to take 12 hours of ongoing professional development. Health & Safety topics should be prioritized but other topics may be included in those 12 hours.

## **Updated Policies**

Child care providers must have a policy and procedure to help staff identify shaken baby syndrome, abusive head trauma and child maltreatment. The policy must include, but is not limited to:

- Recognition of potential signs and symptoms of shaken baby syndrome and abusive head trauma
- Strategies for coping with a crying, fussing, or distraught child
- Address the prevention and identification of child maltreatment

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## **Week of the Young Child**

The Week of the Young Child is a fun-filled week celebrating early learning, young children, their teachers, families and communities. This year's WOYC is April 2-8.



NAEYC has developed resources and ideas so your program can celebrate and raise awareness on the needs of young children and their families. Visit [NAEYC](#) for daily activity idea.

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## **Keystone STARS Updates**

Providers with STAR expirations through September 30, 2022 may accept the one-year extension offered by OCDEL. Providers are using this time to work with their Quality Coach to prepare for an evidence review next year and many are working on moving to the next STAR level!

Quality Coaches provide supports including individual meetings, Movement Co-horts, Learning Communities, Director Networks and other assistance to walk you through every step of the designation process. Check out all the Regional Groups above and join in!

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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

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### Face Coverings in Child Care

As of 12/10/21, masks were no longer required to be worn by children or staff in a child care setting. However, CDC continues to recommend masking as a critical public health tool for preventing the spread of COVID-19.

- Masks are effective at reducing transmission of the Coronavirus when worn consistently and correctly.
- Choose a well-fitting and comfortable mask that your child can wear properly. A poorly fitting or uncomfortable mask might be worn incorrectly or removed often, and that would reduce its intended benefits.
- Choose a size that fits over the child's nose and under the chin but does not impair vision.
- Clear masks or cloth masks with a clear plastic panel are an alternative type of mask that may be helpful when interacting with certain groups of people.

Visit [\*\*PA Key\*\*](#) for up-to-date guidance.

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### Reporting COVID cases

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) has provided two options for Department of Human Services (DHS) certified child care facilities to report positive COVID-19 cases, either by email or phone. This resource has updated counties and provides an [outline of the process](#) that should be followed when reporting cases to DOH. Click [here](#) for more information.



### PQAS First Aid Instructors

Instructors delivering First Aid/CPR modules must be PQAS approved and use an OCDEL approved Pediatric curriculum. The approved curriculum list can be found on the [PA Key website](#).

Any questions regarding PQAS status of trainers can be directed to Amanda Janeshefski [amajan@pakeys.org](mailto:amajan@pakeys.org).

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Want to add staff or other members of your team to this newsletter? Email [estair@cscinc.org](mailto:estair@cscinc.org) and specify which Regional Newsletter you would like and requests will be added to next month's distribution.

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