



Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 14 April 2022

Serving Northampton & Lehigh Valley counties

Region 14 News

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BRIGADIER GENERAL ANNA MAE HAYS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

New Food Bank in Allentown

A new food bank opened the beginning of March at the Brigadier General Anna Mae Hays Elementary School in Allentown. This new food bank allows families to order ahead so they can get what they need, while also fitting into busy schedules.

The food bank is a partnership between the Allentown Area School District and the Second Harvest Food Bank of the Lehigh Valley. The food bank will be open each week on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 4pm-7pm, and on the first and third Sundays of every month from 9am to noon.

If you need any additional information about food banks in the area please do not hesitate to contact your ELRC for resources!

ParentPowered

ParentPowered is a FREE service for parents with children ages 0 - 10. Each week, **ParentPowered** offers easy, relatable, and fun facts and tips delivered via text messages to help kids thrive in school and life. Messages also offer ideas and support for parents and caregivers aimed at reducing family stress and strengthening connections with kids.



Parenting Corner



Celebrating Young Children

Quality child care offers children supportive, nurturing relationships with trusted teachers, and positive, diverse learning experiences. For children ages birth to 5 years, quality child care settings can make sure your child is ready for school. The experiences children have during this

time will influence how they learn and develop in years to come. These opportunities will also encourage the skills and attitudes children need to succeed in school and throughout life.

Research has proven that about 90 percent of the brain is developed by age 5. That means that all activities young children engage in, from daily routines like combing their hair, to exciting adventures like going on a scavenger hunt, can have a lasting impact on their growth and development.

Each year in April, providers across the country celebrate the Week of the Young Child. This year the week was celebrated from April 4 - April 8 but you can do these [fun activities](#) with your child all month long.

Quality Child Care

Touring a Child Care Program

When selecting a child care provider, schedule a time to take a tour. The ELRC recommends that you visit several programs to see what is the right fit for your family.

When on a tour, look for the following things:

- Does the program feel welcoming and nurturing? Teachers should be talking with the children in positive ways and you will hear happy, laughing voices.
- Children will be playing in the classroom and seem comfortable with the

teachers. If a child is upset, does the teacher try to comfort them?

- Are the classrooms and other public spaces clean and safe? Check that the outlets are covered, toys and equipment are in good shape and you should see children washing their hands.
- Look for a wide variety of toys and learning materials, such as books, puzzles, blocks and climbing equipment. Children need to have lots of opportunities to explore learning materials that will contribute to their growth and development.
- Ask to see the outdoor space. Children should have options outdoors to practice their gross motor skills like running, jumping and climbing.

Ask about the program's Keystone STAR rating. All providers are rated from a STAR 1 to a STAR 4. The higher the STAR level, the more confident you should feel about the program's quality. To learn more about selecting a child care provider, you can watch this short [video](#) created by CSC.

Resource & Referral



Water Assistance

Your local County Assistance Office has numerous programs to help out families in need. One of the newer programs through the state is the [Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program \(LIHWAP\)](#),

which is a program that helps families pay their water bills.

To qualify for this benefit, you must:

- have a past due amount on your water bill
- have had your service terminated or are in danger of having your water shut off.

You can apply for this benefit through the state's [COMPASS website](#) or at your local County Assistance Office.

The ELRC is also available to connect families with other area resources. Please reach out to your family specialist with any needs you may be experiencing

Connect with Tech

Do you struggle with accessing quality health care and believe that having technology available to you would help? You may be eligible to receive a free tablet and tech support to assist you with your search for health services.



Click on this [link](#) to view the flyer for eligibility guidelines or visit the [Tech Owl website](#).

Health & Safety

Appropriate Use of Screen Time for Children

Screen time is defined as any time when children are looking at devices such as cell phones, tablets, TV or computers. Young children enjoy watching videos and playing video games but time looking at screens should be limited and monitored closely.

Your child's brain is developing rapidly and watching a screen too much has been linked to negative impacts on sleep, weight, social/emotional development and brain development. It is recommended that children under 2 do not watch screens at all, while children 2-5 years, watch only one hour a day. Click [here](#) to learn more about screen time recommendations.

Oral Health - Keep Your Child's Mouth Healthy

Healthy mouths are important, especially for babies and young children.

- Poor oral health can cause your child to have problems eating, speaking, and learning.
- Baby teeth are important because they hold space for adult teeth.

A healthy mouth is important for overall health.

- Cavities can be painful and lead to infections and other health problems.
- You can prevent cavities by taking care of your child's mouth every day.

How to care for your child's mouth:

- Clean your newborn baby's gums before teeth come in.
- Once teeth come in, brush with fluoride toothpaste twice a day, every day, especially before bedtime.

Click below to learn more.

[Understanding why baby teeth are important](#)
[Brushing teeth](#)



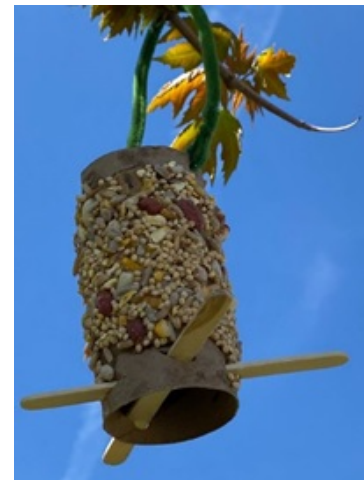
Arts & Crafts

Toilet Paper Bird Feeder project

Make this bird feeder with your child using items you may already have on hand.

You will need:

- Toilet paper or paper towel roll
- Hole-puncher
- Peanut butter
- Popsicle sticks
- Bird seed
- Yarn, string, or pipe cleaner
- Scissors



***Always supervise children closely when engaging in activities that may include sharp items like scissors or items that may be a choking hazard.**

1. Punch 2 holes on the top of the roll. (This is where you will need to secure the yarn or string so that the feeder can hang.)
2. Cut 4 slits and slide 2 Popsicle sticks in, crisscrossing each other. (Make sure they fit and slide them back out.) This is where the bird can perch to enjoy the birdseed.
3. Pour birdseed onto a plate and spread peanut butter over the entire cardboard roll.
4. Roll the cardboard roll back and forth until it is covered with the birdseed.
5. Slide the Popsicle sticks back in.
6. Add yarn/string to the top by pulling it through the holes.
7. Have your child hang the birdfeeder outside and watch out for birds who come to enjoy the snack. Talk with your child about the color, size and other features of the different birds that come to visit.

Visit [ELRC Region 14](#)

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