



Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11 December 2022

Serving Bradford, Sullivan, Wyoming, Luzerne, Columbia & Montour counties

Region 11 News

Si desea ver este boletín en español, haga clic [aquí](#)



The ELRC offices will be closed on 12/26/22 & 1/2/23. We wish you all a safe and healthy holiday season!

Winter Coat Distribution



Just in time for the cold weather, ELRC Region 11 staff, in partnership with the Luzerne and Bradford County Assistance Offices, distributed winter coats for children throughout the region. Over 200 children received new warm coats in these counties.

Get Help with Winter Heating Costs

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is now accepting applications. LIHEAP provides assistance for home heating bills so those Pennsylvanians meeting eligibility and income guidelines can stay warm and safe during the winter months. Assistance is available for renters and homeowners.



The LIHEAP application period for both cash and crisis grants opened on November 1, 2022, and will remain open until April 28, 2023.

Pennsylvanians can apply for LIHEAP and other public assistance programs online at www.compass.state.pa.us or by phone at 1-866-550-4355. On-site **County Assistance Office** (CAO) services are available if clients cannot access online services or need assistance that cannot be accessed through the COMPASS website, the myCOMPASS PA mobile app, or by calling the Customer Service Centers at 1-877-395-8930.

Parenting Corner

Importance of Concrete Supports for Families

Concrete supports are a protective factor that can buffer and support children and families during good times and bad. Concrete supports can provide access to things like:



- Food
- Housing
- Clothing
- Health care
- Legal advice
- Crisis counseling
- Emotional support

If your family is ever in need, it is important to seek help from the community resources available to you. Reach out to the Early Learning Resource Center at (833) 229-6925 and we can confidentially connect you with local service providers.

In addition, the following link provides contact information to many resources available to help meet your family's needs.

[Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)

Child Development

The holidays are here!

This time of year can bring a lot of joy but the added financial strain, busy schedules and changes to routines can add stress to your family. Most children will have a break from school and some parents may take a few days off from work.

Between November and January, these holiday-related changes and situations may increase challenging behavior for some children who struggle to regulate their emotions, communicate and adjust to changes. Below is a link to help identify challenging behaviors your child might exhibit and some strategies you can use to help them cope.

- [Think: Kids : 9 Ways to Improve Challenging Behavior During the Holidays](#)
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Resource & Referral

PPL Assistance Programs

If you're struggling to pay your electric bill, PPL may be able to help. The **OnTrack Payment Plan** makes managing your bill easier with lower fixed monthly payments and debt forgiveness.

Check out PPL's income guidelines at the following link [PPL Electric Utilities](#). If you qualify, click "apply now" and sign in if you are a PPL customer. Your OnTrack credit is determined by your primary heating source and your household income. If your home is heated by electric, the maximum OnTrack credit you'll receive, over 18 months, is \$4,027. If your primary heating source is natural gas or oil, your maximum OnTrack credit will be \$1,310. The credit will be applied monthly to cover the difference between your actual bill and your fixed OnTrack payment.

Operation HELP is a PPL Electric program that provides grants to eligible families struggling with their energy bills. To see if you qualify and to apply for a HELP grant, click on the following link [PPL Electric Utilities](#)

PPL WRAP Program provides income-eligible customers with a no-cost energy

assessment, free energy saving products, and energy tips for long-term savings. To apply for this program, click on the following link [PPL Electric Utilities](#). A specialist will review your application and let you know whether you've been accepted.

Health & Safety

Holiday Safety

This time of year is very festive and busy for many families. Below are a few tips to keep your home and family safe and healthy.

1. **Weather and Travel** - Monitor weather conditions to ensure safety when traveling and dressing your children. Dress them in appropriate outdoor clothing to stay warm and dry. When traveling, buckle up and plan to take extra time if weather conditions are poor. Do not drink and drive or travel with those who are under the influence.
2. **Prevent and treat illness** - There is nothing worse than being sick and missing out on holiday fun. To prepare for the season, ensure your family is properly vaccinated and regularly screened by a doctor. To avoid the spread of germs remember to wash your hands. Whenever possible stay home when you are ill.
3. **Monitor children and new surroundings** - As your family visits different places and as your children get new gifts or toys, keep an eye out for potential dangers. Ask yourself if toys are age appropriate for your child. Do they have small parts that may cause choking hazards for small children? Are there foods, drinks, household items or other objects present that may cause an injury or accident?
4. **Practice fire safety** - Have an emergency plan. Be sure that you monitor food cooking on the stove and items such as candles, fireplaces and space heaters. These and other items such as electrical outlets or extension cords are a frequent cause of fire in the winter months.
5. **Eat healthy, stay active** - Prepare food safely and ensure hands and surfaces are cleaned regularly. Cook and store food at proper temperatures. Eat nutritious food like fruits and vegetables and limit portion sizes. Limit foods or beverages that may be less healthy or high in fat, salt, and sugar. Also, help kids to be active for at least 1 hour a day.
6. **Manage stress** - This time of year is wonderful but it can also be very stressful for many people; including children. If you or your children feel stressed, take a break. Get plenty of rest and seek support if you feel overwhelmed.
7. **Safe toys** - As you plan to purchase toys and gifts for children, click [here](#) to read this article about preventing toy related injuries.

How Smoking Affects Oral Health

Smoking can lead to disease and disability, harming nearly every bodily organ. More than 16 million Americans are living with a disease caused by smoking. Secondhand smoke is also dangerous to both adults and children.

Smoking traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes, and

smokeless tobacco can all cause health problems. Smoking makes it more likely that a person will have tooth decay, gum disease, oral cancer, and poor birth outcomes. It also causes stained teeth, bad breath, and reduced ability to taste and smell.

Not smoking or quitting smoking is important for overall health, including oral health. When a smoker quits, it improves their health and quality of life. It also improves the health and quality of life of those around them, especially young children.

Visit www.smokefree.gov to find out about different ways to quit smoking.

Arts & Crafts

Colorful Lights



Supplies:

- Black marker
- White paper
- Paper plate
- Different colors of finger paint

Step 1: Using your black marker, draw a line with swirls in it.

Step 2: Using your black marker, draw little squares along the line, spacing them out to be the top of the bulb.

Step 3: Place the different colors of paint on the paper plate.

Step 4: Dip your child's finger in the different colored paints

Step 5: Press the child's painted fingers underneath the black squares.

- Ask younger children to count each light as you stamp their fingerprint. Go back and practice identifying colors once dry.
- Older children can try to create patterns of colored lights.

***Always supervise children closely when using tools like scissors or items that could be a choking hazard.**

Connect with us



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