



Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11 February 2023

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

Region 11 News

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

Local Activities



Luzerne County Story and Craft Time

Join Hickory Run State Park staff for a short children's story and a craft. The whole family is welcome but the activities are planned for children ages 3-8. Space is limited and registration is required.

Click [here](#) to register!

Creativity at the Courthouse in Wilkes Barre

Come on out and explore the arts!

An Inclusive Art Show at the Luzerne County Courthouse.

March 4th 11:00am - 2:00pm

[Creativity at the Courthouse](#)

Toddler Time in Columbia County

Thursday, February 23, 2023

Come on out to The Bloomsburg Children's Museum for Toddler Time with Ms. Ashley from Rohrbach's Farm! Recommended for Pre-K age children. Each week will consist of exciting new stories and educational crafts to help build fine motor skills, then ends with a 30-minute music & movement session to shake all those sillies out. Included with Museum Admission; adult supervision required.

Register in advance online at <https://bit.ly/bcm-toddertime>

Museums For All

Did you know if you have an EBT card for SNAP benefits, you can take your children to museums for a reduced price or even free? Click the link below to

find a museum in your local area and enjoy!

- [Museums 4 All](#)

National Read Across America Day - March 2, 2023

Celebrate Dr. Suess and the importance of literacy on Thursday, March 2nd! Follow this link to 31 fun activity ideas and choose 1 or 2 to do with your family.

- [31 Ideas for Read Across America](#)
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Parenting Corner

What is Social Emotional Learning?

Social-emotional learning is the process of developing the self-awareness, self-control, and interpersonal skills that are needed for school, work, and life success.



5 Social Emotional Learning Skills

- **Emotional self-awareness** – knowing what one is feeling at any given time and understanding the impact those moods have on others.
- **Self-regulation** – controlling or redirecting one's emotions; anticipating consequences before acting on impulse.
- **Motivation** – using emotional factors to achieve goals, enjoy the learning process and persist in the face of obstacles.
- **Empathy** – sensing the emotions of others.
- **Social skills** – managing relationships, inspiring others and get desired responses from them.

The following link has a wealth of resources and activities to help your child develop their social-emotional skills:

- [Promoting Children's Social and Emotional Well-being](#)
-

Families Needed for the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Advisory Committee

The Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is seeking Pennsylvania families and caregivers of children birth to age five to participate with the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Advisory Committee.

The ECCS team seeks diverse parents and caregivers who have experiences with many aspects of maternal and early childhood services in Pennsylvania. Participants will have opportunities to ensure their family voice is heard, valued and influential in decision making at the state level, as well as share their experiences with using services such as child care, Early Intervention, Home Visiting, local libraries, health care visits, etc. An honorarium and child care reimbursement will be provided.

Applications are being accepted through Feb. 15, 2023. Click [here](#) to apply.

Child Development

Beat that Cabin Fever!

When long Winter days get colder and darker, children tend to spend more time indoors. With limited fresh air and opportunities for vigorous outdoor play, kids may get cooped-up, bored, and restless feeling. We usually call this feeling "cabin fever." Children with cabin fever may start whining or acting out to get attention.

Here are a few ideas to keep families moving in the cold and dark winter months:

- Participating in organized team sports like wrestling, basketball, swimming, football or hockey.
 - When it does snow, sledding, snowman making, snowball fights or ice-skating can be fun for kids (and adults) of all ages.
 - Walks outside, even quick ones, provide fresh air and a change in scenery. If you choose to go out after dark, you can make it fun with flashlights or glow sticks.
 - If you find yourselves stuck inside, challenge the family to move around! Look up family yoga videos on YouTube or turn up the music and have a dance party.
 - When in doubt, channel your inner child and get creative. Build a fort, pretend the floor is hot lava, organize a treasure hunt, or play volleyball with a balloon.
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Resource & Referral

Important Information About SNAP Benefits

SNAP Extra Payments Ending Soon

During the COVID-19 emergency, the federal government allowed states to issue additional SNAP payments that increased the SNAP budget amount to the maximum available for their household size or, since early 2021, a minimum of \$95. The Emergency Allotments (EA) were distributed to SNAP households as an extra payment each month. All SNAP households currently receive at least \$95 in additional SNAP funds each month.

These extra payments will be ending after February and SNAP recipients will only receive one regular SNAP payment starting in March.

If you or someone you know needs help, there are food assistance programs available in your community. Visit the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' [Ending Hunger site](#) or the Pennsylvania [Department of Agriculture](#) for more information on food assistance programs and where to find local resources,

or contact the ELRC for assistance.

If recipients currently have extra funds on their cards, they will still be available. SNAP benefits only expire if cards are not used for nine months.

To ensure you are receiving the maximum SNAP benefit based off your individual circumstances, please click [here](#) to read more.

Childcare Registration Fee

Effective January 2023, the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) is able to further support subsidy eligible families by paying child care providers a fee in lieu of providers charging families a registration fee. The ELRC will pay the registration fee directly to the provider at initial enrollment. In addition, if the provider charges an annual re-registration fee, the ELRC will also cover this expense.

The ELRC will not however, be able to pay other types of fees charged by the provider such as waitlist fees, field trip fees, etc.

Please reach out to your Family Specialist with any questions.

Tax Credits and Assistance

It's Tax Time.

The Earned Income Tax Credit ([EITC](#)) is a benefit for workers with low to moderate income. To qualify, an individual must meet specific requirements and file a tax return. If a family owes taxes, EITC can reduce the amount they owe. In other instances, EITC may provide a tax credit even if a family does not owe taxes. Individuals must file a tax return and claim the tax credit to receive it.

Maximum Qualifying Income by Filing Status and Number of Qualifying Children Claimed (2022 Tax Year)

Filing Status	Qualifying Children Claimed		
	One	Two	Three or more
Single, Head of Household, or Widowed	\$43,492	\$49,399	\$53,057
Married Filing Jointly	\$49,622	\$55,529	\$59,187

The maximum amount of earned income credit an individual can receive for the tax year 2022 is:

- \$6,935 with three or more qualifying children
- \$6,164 with two qualifying children
- \$3,733 with one qualifying child

Child Tax Credit (CTC) and Credit for Other Dependents

The [Child Tax Credit](#) helps families with qualifying children afford the costs of raising children. For tax year 2022, people with children under the age of 17 may be eligible to claim a credit of up to \$2,000 per qualifying dependent, and \$1,500 of that credit may be refundable. You may be able to claim the credit even if you do not normally file a tax return.

Families with dependents who do not qualify for the Child Tax Credit may be able to claim the [Credit for Other Dependents](#). The maximum credit amount is \$500 for each dependent who meets certain conditions.

Child and Dependent Care Credit

The [Child and Dependent Care Credit](#) is intended to offset the cost of childcare. Families may qualify for the credit if they paid expenses for the care of their qualifying child under age 13 to enable them to work or actively look for work.

Free Tax Services

The [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\)](#) program offers free tax help to people who make \$60,000 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. Many VITA sites offer virtual or “drop-off” tax return preparation. To locate an open site near you, use the [VITA Locator Tool](#), [GetYourRefund.org](#), or call (toll-free) 800-906-9887.

The [IRS Free File](#) offers many online resources and tax help. Find tax forms, instructions and publications, online payment options, and more. Individuals can even prepare and file their federal income tax online, for free.

For more information, click on the links above or view this [tip sheet](#).



Pennsylvania Free Rehab Centers

Substance use and abuse can be difficult for anyone to overcome and it can be even harder if you do not know where to turn for help. The stigma that comes with addiction can also keep people from seeking the treatment they may so desperately need.

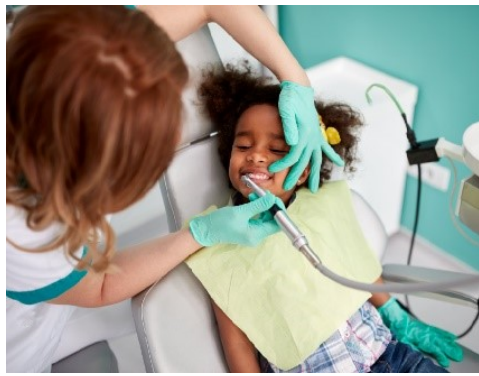
[FreeRehabCenter.org](#) can help you in your search for a free or affordable treatment center. You can also call their helpline at 1-866-972-0589.

Just remember, it is never too late to seek help and no addiction is too severe to overcome. Knowing what resources are out there and contacting a treatment center is the first step in a long journey to lasting sobriety. If you ever need any additional resources, please also reach out to your ELRC.



Oral Health Tip

Before visiting a dentist, complete this form: [Getting to Know Me: Information for Your Child's Dental Office](#). The form gathers information about your child's ability to cooperate during dental visits. It also includes suggestions about approaches that might work best for your child. This information will help the dental office staff understand and meet your child's needs.



Arts & Crafts

Paint Chip Bookmark



Supplies:

- Paint color samples
- Hole punchers - circles or other shapes
- Scissors
- Ribbon

Step 1: Go to the hardware store with your child to pick out paint samples they would like to use. (These samples are free)

Step 2: Carefully use your hole-puncher and punch holes or shapes along the colored sample. Discuss how the shades of the colors are changing as you are punching the holes.

Step 3: Carefully use your hole-puncher and punch a hole in the top of the colored sample.

Step 4: Cut your ribbon into 12-inch (1 foot) pieces. You can use a ruler for this, or use your child's foot as a measuring guide.

Step 5: Pull one end of your ribbon through the top hole and tie it to the sample. (If your ribbon is long enough, have your child lace the ribbon through all the punched holes.)

Step 6: As an option, you can use the shapes that were punched out to glue back onto the bookmark in a different color block, so it stands out.

Step 7: Snuggle up with a good book and enjoy the bookmark.

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

[Visit ELRC Region 11](#)

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Connect with us



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