



Community Services for Children Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 14 June 2023

Serving Lehigh & Northampton counties

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Region 14 News

Summer Schedule Changes - Child Care Works

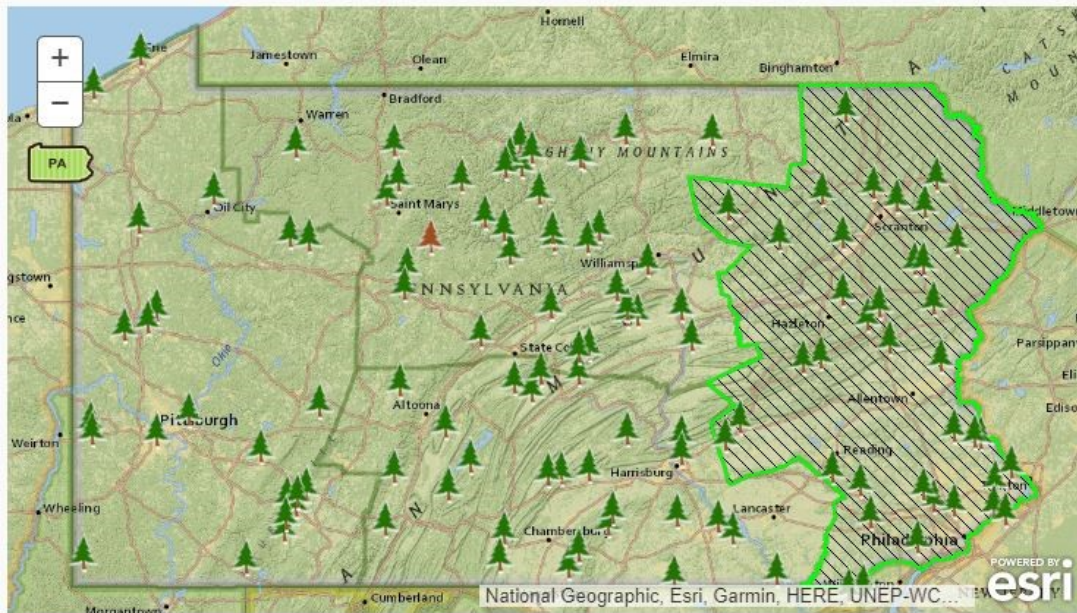
If your child's child care arrangements have changed for the summer (new provider, change in hours, no longer needing care) please remember to notify the ELRC of these changes. You can reach out to your ELRC Family Specialist with any updates or questions.

The ELRC will also need to be notified if your child(ren) will not be in care due to a vacation for 5 or more consecutive days.



Pennsylvania State Parks

Are you looking to get out into the great outdoors this summer? Pennsylvania has over 100 state parks covering more than 300,000 acres. There are many activities to choose from, including having a picnic, hiking, and camping. Pennsylvania state parks do not charge an entrance fee. You can even sign up to receive an emailed newsletter to learn about news and events happening in your area. Click [here](#) to learn more!



Parents Plus - Accelerate Your Child's Language Skills

Lehigh University is beginning a free program called Parent Plus. This online program is for parents of preschool age children (ages 3-5) who have limited language skills. Staff will work with your child to assess their needs and work with you to access resources.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Participate in Professional Photo Session - Stipend Provided!

Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) invites pregnant and parenting families of children birth to age six to participate in a free professional photo session! The photos will be used in future local, state, and national education and outreach efforts.

Each participating family will receive a stipend of \$150 and associated travel/mileage reimbursement for completing the approximately 1-hour photoshoot. Families will also receive copies of their photos.

Four sessions will be held at various locations throughout the state in late June and July. There is no cost to participate in the photo session. Space is limited, and registration is required by the June 15 deadline. Click [here](#) to get more information and to register.

Parenting Corner

Family Road Trip

As more families are traveling by car this summer, road trips are trending to be the vacation of choice. A long-distance road trip can

be a great way to travel together as a family .

Movies and electronic games can keep children of all ages entertained for long periods of time. However, parents who wish to limit the amount of screen time for their children, can use these ideas to incorporate other types of activities into your trip:



- Purchase magnetic road trip puzzles and magnet games with game pieces that stay in place.
- Alphabet Game - Each player takes a turn, in order of the alphabet, to find something that begins with their letter.
- Bring a sketchbook and pencil where children can draw things they see and experience on the trip.
- Sticker books...or any type of book!
- Surprise Bags—Bags with activities or a small toy that you bring out each time you hit a certain mileage point or a new state. Having little surprise bags is a fun way to keep kids entertained and happy.
- Snacks—yes, snacks can count as a road trip activity!

Kindergarten Here I Am!

Do you have a child getting ready to start Kindergarten this fall? Sign up for the *Kindergarten Here I Am* newsletter!

Each month, the *Kindergarten, Here I Am* newsletter will provide information to help your kindergartner have a successful school year.

- **Activities:** Each activity is linked to the PA Early Learning Standards for Kindergarten. These standards are being used in kindergarten classrooms across Pennsylvania. When you and your kindergartner do activities together, you build their knowledge and experience.
- **Books:** The books each month will help support the activities and may help your kindergartner better understand a particular concept. Print the list of books, then visit your local library to find the books mentioned each month, or ask your librarian to help you find a similar book.
- **Tips and Resources:** Each month you can find tips and resources to help your kindergartner build the skills they need for Kindergarten. You can share your favorites with your friends and family.

Click [here](#) to subscribe!

Child Development

Strategies for a Successful Summer Break

Summer is here, it is a time for fun and relaxation. It is also a time when children get



bored, lose key learning skills, and develop unhealthy habits. Here are a few strategies to keep the summer fun, healthy and safe.

Set a schedule/routine. The more you keep children's day the same, the more comfortable they will be in knowing what is going to happen next. Having structure helps children be more productive, engage in activities, limit learning

loss and be healthy. Keep wake up times, bedtimes, and mealtimes the same. This allows children's bodies to stay in the same rhythm, which helps stabilize their mood.

Get outdoors. Physical activity is good for the mind, body, and spirit. Children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Choose activities you can do with your child outdoors such as taking a nature walk, going to the pool, heading to a playground, or playing games outside. This will keep your child active, build gross motor skills, and burn off some of that energy.

Be flexible. Having a planned day is great, but sometimes too much planning can take away from the fun and make the day boring. Keep an open mind throughout the day and take your lead from the children's interests. If they are not having fun, change it up. Remember that it is OK if things do not go exactly as planned. Being flexible teaches children to adapt to situations and problem solve.

For more tips on summer activities, visit these websites.

- [Encourage Summer Learning](#)
- [Boost Your Child's Development](#)
- [Summer Activities at Home](#)

Resource & Referral

Renewing Medicaid and CHIP Coverage

Pennsylvanians throughout the state may get information in the mail about renewing their Medicaid or CHIP coverage. If they and/or their children get health coverage through the state, they must complete a renewal every year. If this renewal is not completed, they and/or their children could lose Medicaid or CHIP coverage.

When this packet arrives, families must complete and return it by the date printed on the packet. Send it in by mail or deliver it in-person at any local [County Assistance Office](#). Families can also complete the renewal by phone at 1-866-550-4355 or online at dhs.pa.gov/COMPASS.

Summer Food Service Program

Throughout Pennsylvania, children and families continue to struggle with food insecurity during the summer months. These months can be



especially hard for some families since schools provide a regular source of healthy meals to children during the school year.

There are options for families who still need help during the summer months, as numerous community organizations across the state and country step up to fill this need.

The link below will take you to a website that can help in finding summer meals in your area. Just click on the link, and then click on the map in the middle of the page to be taken to the search feature.

If you do not have access to a computer or the internet, you can also call 1-866-348-6479, or text “Summer Meals” to 914-342-7744, to find locations near you.

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sfsp/household>

Health & Safety

Beat the Heat

As we welcome summer, temperatures are heating up and we are spending more time outside. Heat related injuries and illness can happen to anyone but are easy to prevent.

Here are some warning signs to watch for:

- skin that is pale, ashen, or moist
- muscle cramps
- fatigue, weakness, or exhaustion
- rapid heart rate
- nausea or vomiting

Tips for preventing heat-related illness:

- Wear light colored, lightweight, loose-fitting clothing
- On extremely hot days, schedule outdoor activities for the morning or evening hours
- Wear sunscreen; sunburn affects your body’s ability to cool down
- Stay hydrated
- NEVER leave children in cars without supervision



For more information on this topic visit

https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/extremeheat/heat_guide.html

Setting Oral Health Goals

Why is setting goals important? Goal setting can help you create new behaviors. It can also allow you to measure your progress and it can give you the motivation to maintain healthy oral health habits for you and your family.

Healthy oral health habits include:

- Regular dental visits and treatment
- Healthy snacks
- Brush with fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day
- No sugary beverages
- No bottle for bed
- Water or milk only in sippy cups
- Drink tap water

- Avoid or limit junk food and candy
- Limit sugar and consider sugar substitutes
- Last thing to touch teeth before bed is toothbrush with fluorinated toothpaste

Click [here](#) for an infographic that you can use to help you set and meet healthy oral health goals.

Family Engagement

Family Gardening

If you are starting work on a garden, this is a perfect opportunity to teach math and science concepts while your children get some much-needed fresh air. Have your child measure water into a watering can, counts seeds, or sort plants. Introduce science skills by writing or drawing pictures of the plants growing at different stages.

If you do not have a backyard, you can start a windowsill garden. They can measure soil into small pots, count and plant seeds, predict which seeds will sprout first and record observations. Pick up a few of these gardening books at the library:

1. A Family Guide to Terrariums for Kids
2. Beehive
3. Dana Digs In
4. Farmer Bear's Garden
5. Harlem Grown
6. In the Garden
7. Let's Get Gardening
8. Nature Play Workshop for Families
9. The Little Gardener
10. The Unplugged Family Activity Book

<https://gardenerspath.com/gear/gardening-books/best-children/>



Visit ELRC Region 14

Community Services for Children | elrc14@cscinc.org | www.cscinc.org

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