



Community Services for Children Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 14 August 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.



Looking for a Career Change?

Do you love children and want to make a difference in the lives of young families? Check out ECE hire for job postings in early childhood education. Click on the logo below to access the latest listings:



Parenting Corner

Parent Project Podcast

Community Services for Children has been hosting the Parent Project Podcast to engage families in areas of common concern for parents. Experts provide perspectives on topics of health & safety, mental health, child transition and other important subjects.

This month, we are joined by Erin Barron, a nurse in emergency pediatrics, who shared information on car seat safety. Click [here](#) to listen.



Getting Ready for Kindergarten

Entering Kindergarten is a very exciting time for children and parents! It can also be a scary time for both you and your child. Children enter Kindergarten with a wide range of skills. Kindergarten teachers are the absolute best at learning the skill level of your child quickly, and will meet them where they are! Don't worry if your child doesn't know all their

letters, or numbers. It's OK! They'll get there! In preparation for this big move, here are some things your family can do before school starts:



- **Make sure the school nurse is aware of any allergies or special needs.** Even if you've already made the school aware through forms you have filled out, send a note directly to the school nurse. You are your child's biggest advocate!
- **Visit the school and meet the teacher.** Kindergarten classes may have a "meet the teacher" night or Kindergarten Camp in late summer that your child can attend. Meeting the teacher, learning classroom routines and expectations, and meeting other children in the class will make those first day jitters a little less. Building that relationship with the teacher is one of the most important things you can do.
- **Start routines early.** Routines give children comfort. Starting those routines early will help them feel more comfortable and ready for that first day. Start early bedtimes and wake ups a few weeks before school starts. Help your child fall asleep with good thoughts by reading books instead of watching TV. Especially avoid news or violent TV shows in the evenings.
- **Label everything!** Label backpacks, lunch boxes, jackets, clothing. Any and all of those items will get misplaced or left somewhere, you can guarantee that!
- **Read books together about starting school.** There are many books about starting school, but here are some suggestions to try:
 - *Miss Bindergarten Gets Ready for Kindergarten*, Joseph Slate (Illustrated by Ashley Wolff)
 - *Seven Little Mice Go to School*, Kazuo Iwamura
 - *Pete the Cat: Rocking in My School Shoes*, Eric Litwin (Illustrated by James Dean)
 - *Mom, It's My First Day of Kindergarten*, Hyewon Yum
 - *Yoko Learns to Read*, Rosemary Wells
- **Most importantly, be positive about the experience.** Your positivity will help your child feel comfortable and trusting in the transition process. Enjoy every moment!

Child Development

Handling Fear in Children

Parents and caregivers are responsible for teaching children when to be fearful and cautious of specific dangers, such as fire, strangers, or crossing the road. For these situations, anxiety can be helpful as it works to protect the child from these dangers. However, children often will become fearful at times or at things that adults do not find threatening. These "fear

sources” will often change as the child grows and matures. It is important to take the feelings of the child seriously, encourage them to talk about their specific fears, and to provide opportunities to confront their fears at a pace that works for them.

Help your children overcome their fears.

- Let your child know that you take their fears seriously. Never tease a child about their fears.
- Provide truthful information about the topics they are afraid of. Let them know you are willing to answer any questions they might have.
- Encourage your child to confront their fear in small increments or steps. For example, if your child is afraid of dogs, start with pictures, then interacting with a small, gentle dog that is tied up so the child can decide how close to get.
- Allow your child some control in handling their fears. For example, if they are afraid of nighttime intruders, you can make shutting and locking their bedroom window part of their nighttime responsibilities.
- Daily routines and rituals give a child a sense of stability and security and may ease general anxiety.

For more information around handling childhood fears, see the link below:
[Anxiety and Fear in Children: Better Health Channel](#)

Resource & Referral

Importance of Healthy Social Connections for Kids

Healthy social connections are important for young children. Connections help us develop a sense of well-being and security knowing we can depend on others.



Learning to develop them begins in early childhood, by following these helpful tips below:

- *Don't force it - Don't force your child to do activities, encourage them to explore new things and find something they like.*
- *Encourage connections beyond online - It is important for children to seek connections outside of the online world.*
- *Recognize social anxiety - If your child experiences social anxiety, it is important to get them help early, so they can build healthy social connections.*
- *Identify common interests - Encourage your child to identify common interests with others. This can be their favorite music, games, books, movies, or sports.*
- *Encourage positive body language - Model positive body language with your children such as smiling, speaking confidently, and making eye contact appropriately.*
- *Be a good listener - Encourage your child to listen to others before they jump in with questions or comments.*

- *Encourage questions - Listening and speaking confidently are important skills, but it is also important to learn to ask good questions to strengthen social connections.*

Health & Safety



August is Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

1. Eat right to protect their sight.

Keep your child's eyes healthy by eating a well-balanced diet. Load up on different types of fruits and veggies, especially leafy

greens like spinach, kale, and collard greens. Fish like salmon, tuna, and halibut have been shown to help developing eyes, too.

2. Speak up if their vision changes.

Does your child complain about blurry vision, squinting, or having trouble seeing things at school? Share your child's experience with their primary doctor to receive a referral to an optometrist.

3. Wear their glasses.

Glasses help children see better, especially when they're clean and free of smudges. Talk to your child about how to clean their glasses and how to store them when they're not wearing them.

4. Keep the germs away.

Always encourage your child to wash their hands before putting them close to their eyes.

5. Gear up.

Playing a sport? Using chemicals during science class? Mowing the lawn? Wear the right protection to keep your eyes safe. Many eye injuries can be prevented with better safety habits, such as using protective eyewear.

6. Wear shades.

The sun's rays can hurt your child's eyes. Choose sunglasses that block 99% or 100% of both UVA and UVB radiation from the sun. And remember, no one should ever look directly at the sun.

7. Give the eyes a break.

Does your child spend a lot of time looking at a computer, phone, or TV screen? Staring at any one thing for too long can tire the eyes. Encourage your child to rest their eyes with the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look about 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

How Sugar Contributes to Tooth Decay

Children who frequently consume foods and drinks containing natural and/or added sugars during the day are more likely to develop tooth decay than those who consume them less often. You may not know that many of the foods and drinks you give your child(ren) contain sugar.

Sugar plays a key role in tooth decay. Many foods, like milk and milk products, fruit, vegetables, grains, and processed and prepared foods, contain sugar. Bacteria that can cause tooth decay, break down foods and drinks that contain sugar to form acid. Each time a person consumes foods or drinks containing sugar, acid is in the mouth for 20 to 40 minutes.

Children who are fed meals and snacks at scheduled times are at lower risk for developing tooth decay than children who are fed often during the day. To prevent tooth decay, it is best to have a schedule for serving meals and snacks to your child(ren) instead of allowing them to graze throughout the day, especially when serving foods or drinks that have natural or added sugar.

Sugar in foods can be listed by many different names. The best place to check for sugar is in the ingredients list on the food label. Look for words like:

- Beet sugar
- Brown sugar
- Cane sugar
- Corn sweeteners
- Corn syrup
- Cane juice
- High fructose corn syrup
- Honey
- Malt syrup
- Maple syrup
- Molasses
- Raw sugar
- White sugar



Family Engagement

Family Nature Walks Tips and Activities

Make a plan everyday to spend some time outside. If your family lives in a city, enjoy a trip to a local public park. If you live in a more rural area,

explore a new nature trail. Here are a few practical tips for taking children on a nature walk.



What to take with you on a nature walk: closed toe shoes, water bottles, insect repellent and sunscreen, healthy snacks and a travel first aid kit. **Tip:** keep a change of clothes and a towel in the car just in case your child decides to play in the mud or water!

Activities: Start a Nature Collection

Bring a bag and encourage your child to start to gather interesting items that have fallen to the ground. Pinecones, leaves, acorns, bark, sticks, small stones and seeds can be saved in a box or basket for nature crafts.

Tip: Provide magnifying glasses, plastic tweezers and kid- friendly field guides so children can examine and identify their treasures.

As young children spend time outdoors, they are better able to develop their awareness of the natural environment and the role they play in taking care of the environment.

Visit ELRC Region 14

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