



Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 13

October 2023

Serving Berks & Schuylkill counties

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To distribute this newsletter to others, copy and share this link:

Region 13 News

Children's Coat Giveaway

Both of our offices will have coats to distribute to any family in need. Stop by or call 484-651-8000.



Available Now - Pottsville Office, 2335 West End Avenue

Coming Soon - Reading Office, 1138 Rockland Street

Community Events

Reading Aviation Festival & Job Fair

Saturday, October 21st

Reading Regional Airport Terminal Building

Free & Open to the Public

Aircraft Show - Seminars - Food - Music

Click [here](#) for more details

Health & Wellness Fair

Learn more about your health and get guidance to access local resources at Rep. Johanny Cepeda-Freytiz's Health & Wellness Fair. COVID boosters and flu shots will be available.

Sunday, October 29th

11:00 am - 3:00 pm

Fall Job Fair

CareerLink Berks County invites you to their Fall Job Fair. The event is to be held on Monday, October 30th at the Abraham Lincoln at 100 North 5th Street in Reading. See this [flyer](#) for details. You can also visit their website: <https://www.careerlinkberks.com/>

Christmas Assistance Applications

The Salvation Army (301 S. 5th Street, Reading) is beginning to accept applications for their Christmas Assistance program. See the photos below for more detail:



 **2023 Christmas Assistance
Application Dates**

		DOORS OPEN	DOORS CLOSE
Thursday	October 5 th	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Friday	October 6 th	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Saturday	October 7 th	9:00 am	11:00 am
Tuesday	October 10 th	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Wednesday	October 11 th	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Thursday	October 12 th	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Friday	October 13 th	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Monday	October 16 th	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Tuesday	October 17 th	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Thursday	October 19 th	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Monday	October 23 rd	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Wednesday	October 25 th	10:00 am	3:00 pm
Thursday	October 26 th	10:00 am	5:00 pm
Saturday	October 28 th	9:00 am	11:00 am

The Salvation Army
301 S. 5th Street
Reading, PA 19602

Required Documentation:

- Photo Identification
- Social Security Card for all household members
- Proof of ALL household income for the past 30 days
- Birth Certificates for children 12 years and younger
- One utility bill (current Met-Ed, UGI, telephone, cable) or Lease Agreement/Rent Receipt to verify the address.

***Applications cannot be taken without ALL
information listed above***





Acceptable Forms of Documentation:

- Official Identification with Photo:
 - Driver's license
 - State ID Card
 - Employer photo ID card
 - School ID card
 - Passport/VISA
- Social Security Numbers
 - Social Security Card
 - Printout from Social Security with number listed.
 - Most recent (2022) Tax return listing household member and social security number
- Birth Certificate:
 - Department of Public Welfare statement listing child and date of birth
 - Shot records with child's name and date of birth.
 - Medical card with child's name and date of birth
 - Custody papers listing the child's name and date of birth.
 - School records with child's name and date of birth
- Proof of income:
 - Department of Public Welfare statement listing all income
 - Pay stubs (from last 30 days)
 - 2022 Tax Return
 - Social Security Benefit Letter (most recent)
 - Bank statement showing direct deposit of income.
 - Child Support award letter
 - Unemployment letter
 - Letter from employer indicating the amount paid weekly or monthly (must be on company letterhead)
- Proof of Address:
 - Lease Agreement/Rent Receipt listing the address.
 - Mortgage Statement listing address.
 - Current household or utility bill
 - Department of Public Welfare Statement (within last 45 days)
 - Social Security Statement (within last 45 days)
 - School Form mailed to home (within last 45 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

National Parenting Week October 16-20, 2023

National Parenting Week, which takes place in mid-October, highlights the importance of strong parenting skills and gives appreciation to parents. This year, it takes place from October 16th through the 20th.



The way a child is raised has a deep impact on his or her personality, the way they view life, and how their personalities develop into adulthood. Developing parenting skills requires confidence, love, emotional connection, and trust.

This year's Parenting Week theme is "The Positivity of Parenting". The theme acknowledges that while parenting can be challenging, it is also full of joy and fun experiences. Those in parenting roles are encouraged to share snapshots of their day and celebrate successes via social media. Others can honor and acknowledge those in parenting roles by giving them a shout out as well. By celebrating the positive impact parents have on their children's lives, it encourages parents and communities to recognize the strengths, resilience and dedication of parents.

To learn more about Parenting Week and to get more information, visit www.parenting.org

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 Denise Continenza, Food, Families & Health Educator at Penn State Cooperative Extension, as she shares about youth mental health. Click [here](#) to listen.



Child Development

Young Children and Technology

The use of technology can have positive and negative effects on a child's development. Interactions with technology can support the development of fine motor skills. Children are pressing buttons, dragging, swiping items, and moving items around. The right games and activities can also support learning skills such as letter, number, and shape recognition, reading, writing, planning, and problem solving.



However, for young children, excessive screen time can interfere with the development of language, social, and motor skills. This can lead to aggressive behaviors, physical inactivity, and sleep problems. Children need face-to-face interactions to learn how to communicate, regulate emotions, problem solve real situations, and explore their world. The key is to maintain a balance.

- Set limits on device usage.
- Encourage children to engage in a variety of activities both online/offline and indoors/outdoors.
- Talk with your children and encourage them to communicate with you.
- Encourage play and friendships with others.
- Be a role model and be present with your children.

For more information on the positive and negative effects of technology, please visit these websites:

<https://www.wfla.com/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/guidance/resources/kids/resources/>

<https://online.maryville.edu/blog/children-and-technology/>

Resource & Referral

Car Seat Safety

Having a car seat that is correctly installed is key to ensuring your child remains safe in case of an accident. It is always important to follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing a car seat and never use a car seat that is past its expiration date.

If you are unsure how to install a car seat, or if you want to check to make sure it is installed correctly, the state of Pennsylvania offers a website where you can find the closest [car seat check location](#) to you. Additionally, if you need a car seat, the state also has a website for their [car seat loan program](#). The car seat loan program can help families find a car seat when they otherwise may not be able to afford one.

Just remember that when traveling, your child should always be appropriately secured in a car seat that is not only installed correctly, but also fits their height and weight. The state of Pennsylvania also has resources that parents can use to make sure they have the [correct car seat for their child](#).

Check out these additional car seat resources:

- Car seat loan programs- <https://pakidstravelsafe.org/resources/car-seat-loan-programs/>

- Car seat check/fitting locations-
<https://pakidstravelsafe.org/resources/car-seat-check-fitting-station-locations/>

Is Your Child in the Right Car Seat?

How to know for sure:

 <p>REAR-FACING CAR SEAT</p>	 <p>FORWARD-FACING CAR SEAT</p>	 <p>BOOSTER SEAT</p>	 <p>SEAT BELT</p>
<p>Babies and toddlers need to ride rear-facing as long as possible.</p> <p>Keep children rear-facing until they are at least two years old, or until they reach their car seat's height or weight limits. Convertible and 3-in-1 car seats usually have higher height and weight limits for rear-facing (compared to infant-only seats) so you can keep your child rear-facing longer.</p>	<p>Use a forward-facing seat with a harness when your child outgrows the rear-facing seat.</p> <p>When your child outgrows the rear-facing seat, he/she should ride in a forward-facing seat with a harness up to the highest weight or height allowed in the car seat instructions. Use the top tether strap based on your car seat and vehicle manufacturer's instructions. The tether (and harness) limit your child's movement in a crash.</p>	<p>Children are ready for a booster when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They reach the limits for the forward-facing car seat with a harness, or • Their shoulders grow above the car seat top harness slot, or • Their ears are at the top of their car seat. <p>Boosters help keep the seat belts in the safest position. The lap belt stays low, touching the tops of the legs. The shoulder belt is centered on the shoulder and chest, so children don't put it behind their backs or under their arms.</p>	<p>Is your child ready to ride on the seat?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can your child sit with his hips against the back of the seat? • Do her knees bend comfortably at the edge of the seat? • Does the belt cross the center of your child's shoulder and is the lap belt low, touching the tops of your child's legs? • Can your child sit like this the entire trip? <p>If you answered "no" to any of these questions, your child needs to keep using a booster.</p>

● The back seat is the safest place. Children should ride in the back seat until they are 13 years old.

● Attend a car seat checkup to be sure your child is in the right seat and the seat is installed correctly.

● Always check your vehicle and car seat manufacturers' instructions to be sure your child's car seat is installed and used correctly.

● Seat belts do not usually fit until children are 4'9" tall and between 8-12 years old.

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Health & Safety

10 Steps to Help Prevent SIDS

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the sudden and unexplained death of a baby younger than 1 year old. Most SIDS deaths are associated with sleep, which is why it's sometimes still called "crib death." While researchers are still trying to determine the causes, follow these 10 steps to help prevent SIDS.

1. **Put a Sleeping Baby on Their Back.** Your baby's risk of SIDS is much higher any time they sleep on their side or stomach. Once your baby can roll over both ways, which usually happens around 6 months, they may not stay on their back. That's OK. It's fine to let them choose their own sleep position once they know how to roll over.
2. **Firm Bed, No Soft Toys or Bedding.** To prevent smothering or suffocation,

always lay your baby down to sleep on either a firm mattress or surface in a crib or bassinet.

3. **Don't Smoke Around Your Baby.** If you smoke, here's a huge reason to stop before you get pregnant: Babies born to women who smoked during pregnancy die from SIDS three times more often than babies born to nonsmokers.
4. **Keep Your Sleeping Baby Close, but Not in Your Bed.** When a baby sleeps in the same room as mom, studies show it lowers the risk of SIDS. But it's dangerous for a baby to sleep with another child or an adult in the same bed, in an armchair, and on a couch.
5. **Breastfeed as Long as You Can.** Breastfeeding your baby can lower the risk of SIDS by as much as 50%, though experts aren't sure why.
6. **Immunize Your Baby.** Evidence shows babies who've been immunized in accordance with recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics and the CDC have a 50% reduced risk of SIDS compared with babies who aren't fully immunized.
7. **Consider Using a Pacifier to Put Baby to Sleep.** Putting your baby to sleep with a pacifier may also help prevent SIDS.
8. **Keep Your Baby from Overheating.** Because overheating may raise a baby's risk of SIDS, dress your infant in light, comfortable clothes for sleeping, and keep the room temperature at a level that's comfortable for an adult.
9. **Steer Clear of Products That Claim to Reduce the Risk of SIDS.** It's best to avoid any product that says it can lower your baby's risk of SIDS, because they haven't been proven safe or effective. Cardiac monitors and electronic respirators also haven't been proven to reduce SIDS risk, so avoid these, too.
10. **Don't Give Honey to an Infant Under 1 Year Old.** Honey can lead to botulism in very young children, never give honey to a child under 1 year old. Botulism and the bacteria that cause it may be linked to SIDS.

Remember, your baby's health care provider is always available to answer any questions you have about SIDS, SIDS prevention, and keeping your baby warm, happy, and safe.

Information gathered from "Grow by WebMD"



The Impact of Stress on Oral Health

Stress is a reaction to a physical, psychological, or emotional demand. Everyone has felt stress at one time or another. Some stress is good because it pushes us to do things that are challenging and meet the demands of daily life. However, too much stress is not good and can have negative short and long-term effects on our health, including our oral health.

Long-term stress can cause problems with your mouth, teeth, and gums. These problems can include:

- Sores in or around the mouth.
- Teeth clenching and grinding.
- Tooth decay and gum disease.

Here are some tips to help you manage stress:

- Eat healthy foods.
- Take care of your mouth.
- Seek treatment for unhealthy habits.
- Practice relaxation techniques.
- Talk to someone.

This [Brush Up on Oral Health tip sheet](#) describes how stress affects oral health and offers more detailed tips to help you manage stress.

Family Engagement

Learning in the Kitchen

The kitchen provides opportunities to introduce and work with your child on a variety of different skills. Children can learn and practice math skills such as counting, measuring and patterning. Having a conversation about the foods your child likes and dislikes and what they are exploring helps develop their language skills. Recipe cards help strengthen their ability to follow directions. Try some of these activities in the kitchen:



- **Infant:** Provide plastic bowls, pots, pans, wooden/plastic spoons for your child to explore while you are cooking. Describe to them the sizes and number of items.
- **Toddler:** Give your child plastic measure cups and spoons and have he or she put them in size order. Talk to your child about which is the biggest and smallest and how many.
- **Pre-Kindergarten:** Have him or her put measuring cups or spoons in size order. Discuss which comes first, second, third, etc. Give him/her an empty container and water. Allow him/her the opportunity to fill the empty container with the measuring cups/spoons. Discuss with them how many of each cup it takes to fill the container.
- **Kindergarten:** Use grapes or cheese to fill a cup. How many does it take to fill the cup? What if a smaller cup is used-does filling the cup require more or less? What if a larger cup is used? Talk with him or her about their predictions about the number of items it will take to fill each size cup.

Suggested Books:
The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
Stone Soup by Marcia Brown

Resource: Learning is Everywhere: Activities to do with young children.
www.papromiseforchildren.com

Visit ELRC Region 13

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