

Community Services for Children

Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11 December 2023

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

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

Region 11 Updates



ELRC Offices Closed

Please note that the ELRC offices will be closed on Monday, December 25th and Monday, January 1st. We wish you all a safe and healthy holiday season!

Keystone STAR Movements

The following programs demonstrated their commitment to quality by moving to

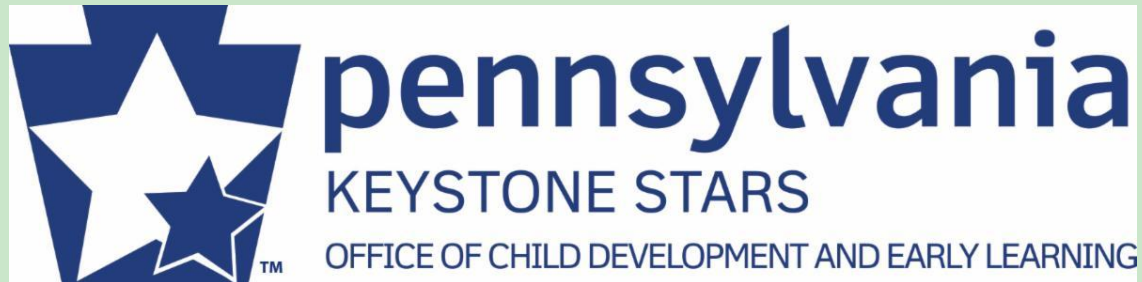
a higher STAR level since July 2023.

Congratulations to the following programs who moved to a STAR 3:

- Scribbles & Giggles Daycare, LLC
- Busy Bee Day Care, LLC

Congratulations to the following programs who moved to a STAR 4:

- Once Upon a Time
- SRU Elementary
- J Andrew Morrow Elementary School



Keystone STAR Updated Standards

During our November Director's Network, we reviewed the new Keystone STARS standards and highlighted the changes. Thank you to all that attended and participated in this discussion. If you were unable to attend this informative meeting, you can click [here](#) to access a copy of our PowerPoint (slides) from the meeting. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your Quality Coach if you have any questions.

Attention Luzerne County Providers!

The Institute for Public Policy & Economic Development is in the process of conducting community-based research surrounding childcare in Northeastern Pennsylvania. Specifically, they are examining equity in access to child care in Luzerne County, particularly as it relates to workers with "nontraditional" or rotating work schedules.



As a part of this research, the Institute is conducting interviews with childcare providers, community organizations, and employer representatives in the 8th Congressional District to understand how the prominence of nontraditional work schedules in industries, such as logistics and healthcare, has affected working families' need for and access to childcare.

The interviews will be conducted at your convenience and can be completed in person, virtually, or by telephone. If your organization is interested in participating, please follow the link below to complete a brief prescreening survey to provide your contact information.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/childcareorganizationprescreen>

Questions can be directed to Dr. Jolene Carey-Pace, Senior Research & Policy Analyst, at carey-pace@institutepa.org

Region 11 Provider Supports



Move Up to STAR 3 or 4 Cohort

Review the designation process with Dana, Quality Coach, and develop a meaningful plan to implement the Keystone STARS Standards. Resources and strategies will be part of each session. Click [here](#) for dates/times and to register.

Coffee Talk

Fawn, Quality Coach, is available the second Thursday of each month to provide any support needed on renewals, designations, evidence uploading, the PD Registry, Career Pathways, Keystone STARS Standards or to answer any other questions you might have. Click [here](#) for times and to join a session.

Director's Network Roundtable

The Region 11 Director's Network Roundtable meets monthly to share ideas and resources and to build partnerships in the child care community. December's meeting will be Thursday, **December 14th at 1:00 pm** via Zoom. **Hope you can join us!** Click [here](#) to register.

Quality Coach Monthly Calendar

Print out a copy of the Region 11 Quality Coach Monthly Calendar for a quick reference to all regional support activities. Remember, **your Quality Coach has office hours** scheduled on the calendar and is available to meet with you and provide any needed supports. Click [here](#) to view this month's calendar.

ELRC Updates

Child Care Works Reminders

Winter Weather Closures

This is the time of year when winter weather can prompt program closures. Providers who use PSS will have until the 5th of the following month to report closures. Providers who do not use PSS must contact their provider specialist within three days of reopening the facility in order to receive a paid closure.



The subsidy program will pay for a maximum of 15 closed days per year from July 1 through June 30th for which the provider also charges private-pay families.

Credential program? Lehigh Carbon Community College has credential coursework beginning in the Spring 2024. 95% of the cost of the coursework can be covered by Rising STAR Tuition Assistance so this is a wonderful opportunity to get started! You do not have to reside in Lehigh or Carbon County to enroll!

Click [here](#) to view the flyer and registration information.

ECE Data Management Software

Are you interested in finding out more information about data management software to help you track attendance, child illnesses, invoicing, communications, staff schedules and more?



ELRC Region 13 will be hosting a virtual Data Management Systems fair on February 21, 2024 from 1:00-3:00 pm. Five vendors will be available to explain their program and answer any questions you may have.

Click on the flyer below for more information. Pre-registration is required for this FREE event.

- [Data Management Systems flyer](#)
-



LIHEAP Assistance Available!

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is now accepting applications. LIHEAP is a federally-funded program administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) that 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, 2023, and will remain open until April 5, 2024.

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. Please share this information with staff and families as needed.

Creative Child Care Solutions

OCDEL has launched a new initiative, Creative Child Care Solutions, to educate businesses how the impact of child care access and high cost of care can negatively affect Pennsylvania's economy and workforce.

Part of this work is to identify businesses that are open to exploring partnerships with local child care providers. Karen Grimm-Thomas will provide supports including gathering and compiling data and talking points to engage with businesses directly.

Please click [here](#) to read more about this program and reach out to Karen at

OCDEL & Start Strong Want to Hear from You!



Join OCDEL Deputy Secretary Shante' Brown and Start Strong PA partners at one of the virtual child care provider listening sessions this fall!

The listening session events are designed to:

- Share the results from the September 2023 child care provider survey (focused on successes and challenges with the Pennsylvania child care system);
- Gather additional feedback on the Pennsylvania child care system from those working in the field;
- Offer opportunities for your questions to be answered by Deputy Secretary Brown; and
- Present current and future opportunities to engage with OCDEL and Start Strong PA.

Northcentral PA
Friday, December 8, 2023
12:00-2:00 pm
Register via [Zoom](#)

Family Child Care (Statewide)
Monday, December 4
5:30-7:30 pm
Register via [Zoom](#)

OCDEL Early Childhood Conference - March 25-26, 2024

Stable and Secure: Supporting Children Through Trauma Sensitive Approaches

Mark your calendars for this voluntary training opportunity, focused on high-quality resources to support the social emotional development of young children, with an emphasis on trauma-informed care. Conference sessions also address self-care.

Audience: Directors and teachers of Pennsylvania licensed child care centers, group child care, family child care homes, and after school care.

Location: Hershey, Pennsylvania. Additional details on registration and logistics will be provided soon.

Financial support for overnight room accommodations will be available for participants. There is no registration fee for this conference. Additional details coming soon!

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.

Please consider sharing these podcasts with the families in your program!

This month, we are joined by Beth Thomlinson, Director of Community Resilience at the United Way of the Lehigh Valley. Beth discusses family resilience and how to bounce back from those tough times that all families experience. Click [here](#) to listen.



Health & Safety

School Age Child Care Mental Health Consultation



The PA Key is now offering SACC Mental Health Consultation appointments. This service utilizes a consultant who problem-solves and collaborates to develop goals for social-emotional concerns, behavioral or developmental concerns, emotional well-being of staff and partners with the family.

For more information regarding the program and scheduling an appointment, please see the flyer below:

- [SACC Mental Health Consultation flyer](#)

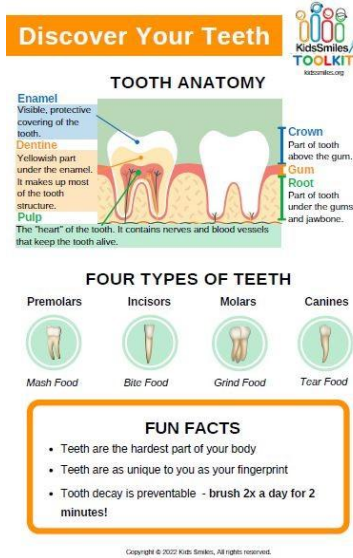
Discover Your Teeth

Here is some information about teeth

for you to share with children and families.

Click [here](#) to view or print a larger copy.

This graphic is compliments of Kids Smiles: www.kidssmiles.org/



Want to add staff or other members of your team to this newsletter? Email estair@cscinc.org and specify which Regional Newsletter you would like. Requests will be added to next month's distribution.

[Visit ELRC Region 11](#)

Community Services for Children | elrc11@cscinc.org | www.cscinc.org

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Community Services for Children | 1520 Hanover Ave, Allentown, PA 18109

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