

Community Services for Children Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 14 December 2023

Serving Lehigh & Northampton counties

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Region 14 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.

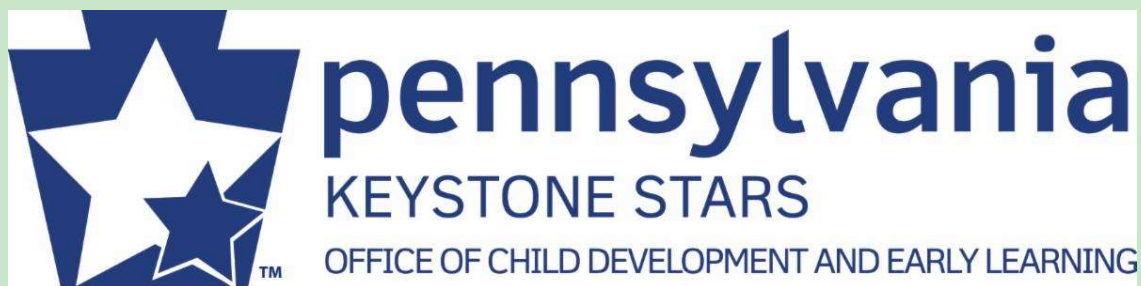
Congratulations to providers who moved to a STAR 2:

- Nasya Family Daycare
- ABC Children's Day Care Center
- Jenmy Tavares Daycare
- Kidtopia Learning Center
- Greenway Early Learning Center
- Active Learning Center - Trexelertown
- Mendez Mercedes Family Child Care

Congratulations to Middletown ALC LLC who moved to a STAR 3!

Finally, congratulations to the following providers who moved to a STAR 4:

- Mercedes Childcare Corp
- Yicet Family Childcare
- Rivera Diaz Family Daycare
- Above & Beyond Care Learning Center
- The Lehigh School Academy of Early Education
- Liriano Childcare Corporation



ELRC Region 14 Invoicing Update

Starting November 2023, providers submitting invoices after the 5th of the month will not receive payment until the end of the month following service. As stated in Appendix A, Section D of your Provider Agreement, "The invoice is due to the ELRC by the fifth calendar day of the month following the month child care is provided." Due to the large volume of invoices and the limited time the ELRC has to process these invoices, the ELRC 14 staff can no longer guarantee payment by the 15th of the month for any invoices received after the 5th of each month. Thank you for your understanding.



ELRC Region 14 Provider Specialist Update

Starting immediately Providers should start directing all inquiries regarding copay delinquencies, enrollment questions, schedule questions, etc. to your Provider Specialist. The Provider Specialists will work with the Family Specialist for the client to get your questions answered. You can contact your Provider Specialist at:

Abigail Araujo - aaaraujo@cscinc.org or at 484-898-8113
(Relative Providers)

Damaris Nieves - dnieves@cscinc.org or at 484-602-4285
(Family and Group Providers)

Region 14 Provider Supports



Directors Network

After a few months off due to our Kick-off Meetings, our Director's Networks are back! Our next meeting will be December 12th at 1:00 pm. Don't miss this meeting, this month we will be discussing the 2023 Keystone STARS Performance Standards. Learn about the key changes in the updated standards that took effect October 1, 2023, for all Keystone STARS programs. Come with any questions you might have around the new standards. Click [here](#) to register.

Quality Coach Office Days

Are you thinking about moving up in STARS and need some extra assistance? Do you need assistance with your Keystone STARS Renewal or Designation?

Your Quality Coach is here to help! Quality Coaches are available to answer questions throughout the week and are in the office weekly to meet one on one to support you through your STARS journey. Click [here](#) for dates of when your Quality Coach will be in the office. Please don't hesitate to email, call or schedule a time to meet.

Get to Know Keystone STARS!

Are you a STAR 1 Program? If so, please join the ELRC 14 for an informational webinar to learn about the basics of Keystone STARS. Keystone STARS is not the same as it was when it first started. It has evolved over the years. Come and learn what Keystone STARS is today. We will share information on the STARS structure, benefits and incentives, STARS Performance Standards, the designation process, and how your Quality Coach can help you.

If you missed the first two sessions don't worry there are still several dates and times available, click [here](#) to find out more information and to register.

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.

Directors Credential - Enrolling Now!

Have you considered enrolling in a Directors 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 kargri@pakeys.org with any questions or potential business contact.

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.

Northeast PA
Monday, December 4, 2023
11:00 am -1:00 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 Pennsylvanian 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



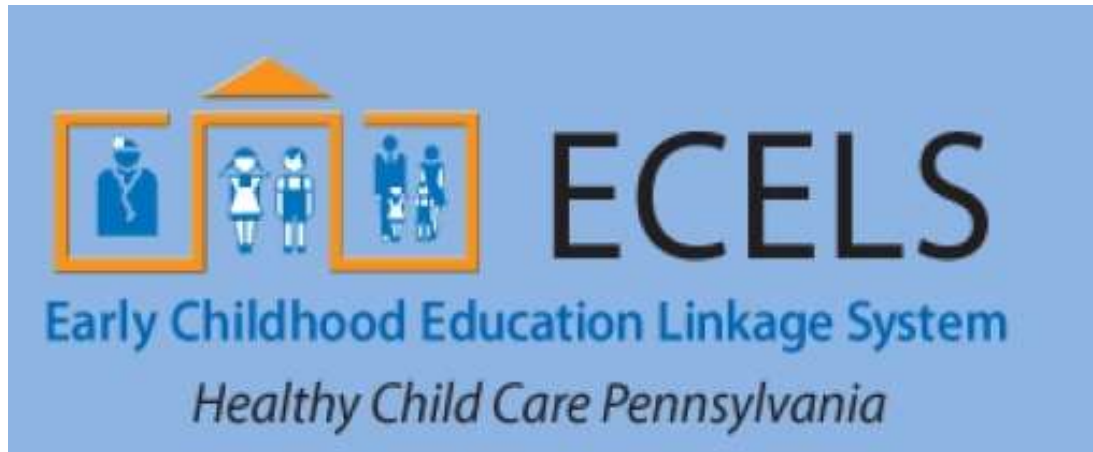
The PA Key is now offering SACC Mental Health Consultation appointments. This service utilizes a consultant who problem-solves and collaborates to develop goals for social-emotional concerns, behavioral or developmental concerns, emotional well-being of staff and partners with the family.

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

- [SACC Mental Health Consultation flyer](#)

Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS) Office Hours

The American Academy of Pediatrics ECELS Program is now offering Virtual Office Hours! These office hours will be used for addressing health and safety questions and concerns in your program. Please click [here](#) to view the flyer for more information regarding the Office Hours, including appointment bookings. Please reach out to ecels@paaap.org or cmanfre@paaap.org if you have any questions!



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 14

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

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