



Community Services for Children Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 13 January 2024

Serving Berks & Schuylkill counties

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Region 13 News



The Early Learning Resource Center would like to welcome the following new child care providers to our region.

- **Growing Better Child Care LLC**
- **Tiny Thinkers Academy**

ELRC staff are here to connect families to resources in your community, including a high quality child care provider that meets the needs of your family. Please reach out to your family specialist if you would like a list of child care referrals.

Housing Experience Survey

The Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) wants to hear from you about housing success stories, needs, and challenges across Pennsylvania. Your input will help the housing team develop a well thought out plan to meet the housing needs in PA. Please consider taking this survey to share your housing experiences and thoughts. The survey takes approximately 10 minutes to complete.



- [PA DHS Housing Strategy Feedback Survey](#)
-

Kindergarten Registration

Many school districts will begin Kindergarten registration in January. While most children begin Kindergarten at five years old, each school district sets their own cut-off dates based on the child's birthday. Click [here](#) for a complete listing of cut-off dates by school district across the state.

Consider signing up for the following newsletter to help your child prepare for this transition time. Take a look and then [subscribe](#) to get the next release directly into your inbox.

- [Kindergarten Here I Come](#)
 - [Kindergarten Here I Am](#)
-

Eat Right When Money is Tight

Are you struggling with having enough money to buy food? Are you looking for ideas for healthy, cheap meals and snacks for your family?

Take a look at this webpage, [Eat Right When Money's Tight](#). It has meal planning and budgeting tips as well as links for food assistance resources in your area. You can also find helpful information on the [Stay Safe and Healthy at Home](#) page.

National Alliance on Mental Illness NAMI Family-to-Family



NAMI Family-to-Family is a free, 8-session education program for family, friends and significant others of adults with mental health conditions. NAMI Family-to-Family provides information about anxiety, depressive disorders, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and other mental health conditions. Other topics covered include communication, problem solving, treatment and recovery. The first session is Tuesday, February 27, 2024. See this [flyer](#) for more details.



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 Creativity Month

Did you know that January is National Creativity Month? Getting creative as a family can be a great way to unwind and can serve as a fun way to reconnect with your child. Art activities are always a great way to get creative, but creativity can occur in many ways. Here are some ideas for your next family fun day:

- Cooking together can be a terrific way to get creative. Even better when you invent your own recipes!
- Conduct a science experiment. Check out this site for simple science activities to do with your child. Click [here](#) for ideas!
- Playing games together. Sometimes the best games are the ones that you make up on your own!
- Photography—take pictures of items inside or outside the house. Try using different filters to change how the photo looks.
- Write a story together. Decide upon characters and setting and then put your thoughts to words. Later, you can illustrate your story.
- Singing and dancing to your favorite music. Try coming up with your own “choreographed” moves.

For lots more ideas, visit <https://artfulparent.com/creative-activities-for-kids/>



Kindergarten News

Is your child in kindergarten now? If so, [sign up for the FREE monthly Kindergarten, Here I Am eNews!](#) Each month get activities, tips and resources you can use to help your kindergartner have a great school year.

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 Dr. Brown from the Children's Clinic at LVHN. Dr. Brown discusses promoting healthy brain development in young children and the importance of social connection. Click [here](#) to listen.

PARENT PROJECT PODCAST



Child Development

Kids and Kindness

Have you ever been amazed by the kindness of a child? We have all heard stories of children who saw a need in their community and then selflessly found a way to address the issue. They gathered toys for children in a hospital or provided food for the homeless. How did they learn to be kind to other people and not expect anything in return? They learned by seeing adults and other children showing compassion to one another and not expecting anything in return. They learned that random acts of kindness made their community a better place to live. They learned that empathy and sympathy towards others helps them to form genuine friendships.



Kindness is more than sharing your toys, it is being sympathetic and understanding of how other people feel and how your behavior affects them. It's being tolerant, compassionate and understanding to family and friends and it's a skill that will enrich every child's life. We can encourage kindness in children by modeling kind behaviors and challenging children to find ways to build random acts of kindness into their daily life. We can inspire children to make the world around them just a little bit better each day.

Resource & Referral

Prepare for Emergencies with Ready Wrigley

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has created a resource called Ready Wrigley to provide families and young children with tips, activities, and a story to help the whole family prepare for emergencies. Join Wrigley as she helps her family prepare for emergencies by staying informed, packing emergency kits, and making a family communication plan. Wrigley explores topics like sun safety, winter weather, and staying healthy during cold and flu season.

The activity book is designed to provide an interactive tool to further your child's education and promote disaster preparedness and safe clean-up in your community. Check out these engaging stories to help your children learn the importance of being prepared. It is available in English and Spanish.

- [Ready Wrigley English & Spanish](#)

Health & Safety

Playing Outside in Winter: Tips to Keep Kids Warm & Safe

Heading outside for some wintertime fun like sledding, throwing snowballs or ice skating can be a sure-fire cure for cabin fever. It is also a great way for kids to get the 60 minutes of daily exercise they need. Just be sure your child is dressed right and know when it is time to come in and warm up. Children exposed to extreme cold for too long and without warm, dry, breathable clothing can get frostbite or even life-threatening hypothermia.

Frostbite happens when the skin, and sometimes the tissue below it, freezes. Fingers, toes, ears, and noses are most likely to get frostbite. Frostbitten skin may start to hurt or feel like it is burning, then quickly go numb. It may turn white or pale gray and form blisters.

What to do:

- If you suspect frostbite, bring your child indoors to gently warm up. Do not rub the affected area, and do not pop any blisters.
- Avoid placing anything hot directly on the skin. Soak frostbitten areas of the body in warm (not hot) water for 20 to 30 minutes. Warm washcloths can be applied to frostbitten noses, ears and lips.
- After a few minutes, dry and cover your child with blankets. Give them something warm to drink.
- If the pain or numbness continues for more than a few minutes, call your pediatrician.

When the body's temperature drops below normal from the cold, dangerous hypothermia begins to set in. A child may start shivering; a sign the body is trying to warm itself up, but then become sluggish, clumsy, or slur his words.

What to do:

- Hypothermia is a medical emergency, so call 911 right away.
- Until help arrives, bring your child indoors. Remove any wet clothing, which draws heat away from the body.
- Wrap your child in blankets or warm clothes and give her something warm to drink. Be sure to cover core body areas like the chest and abdomen.
- If your child stops breathing or loses a pulse, give mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or CPR.

Frostbite and hypothermia are different conditions, but some wintertime planning and safety steps can help protect your child from both:

- Check the wind chill.
- In general, playing outside in temperatures or wind chills below -15° Fahrenheit should be avoided. At these temperatures, exposed skin begins to freeze within minutes.

What to wear

- Several thin layers will help keep kids warm and dry. Insulated boots, mittens or gloves, and a hat are essential. Make sure children change out of any wet clothes right away.
- Take breaks
- Set reasonable limits on the amount of time spent playing outside to prevent hypothermia and frostbite. Make sure kids have a place to go for regular indoor breaks to warm up.

For more information on this topic please visit:

[Playing Outside in Winter: Tips to Keep Kids Warm & Safe - HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org/healthy-living/seasonal-tips/Pages/Playing-Outside-in-Winter-Tips-to-Keep-Kids-Warm-Safe.aspx)

Oral Health - The Importance of Caring for Baby Teeth

Healthy mouths are important, especially for babies and young children.

- Poor oral health can cause children to have problems eating, speaking, and learning.
- Baby teeth are important because they hold space for adult teeth.

A healthy mouth is important for overall health.

- Cavities can be painful and lead to infections and other health problems.
- Cavities can be prevented with proper oral care.

View this [flyer](#) for more information about the importance of caring for baby teeth.

STAYING HEALTHY DURING THE WINTER SEASON

for Families



Prevent the flu and other illnesses at home by washing hands, staying home when sick, and covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing. ([CDC](#))



Learn about RSV and how to prevent it ([HealthyChildren.org](#))



Stay active during the colder months with indoor and outdoor activities. ([American Heart Association](#))



Take steps to maintain your mental health, like getting outside and exercising, keeping up healthy eating and sleep habits, having a support system and staying connected, and practicing mindfulness and meditating. ([Lifespan](#))



Help children grow strong with good nutrition. ([CDC](#))



Check the expiration date and batteries of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in the home. Replace as necessary. ([National Fire Protection Association](#)) If you don't have at least one fire extinguisher in your home, consider adding one!

What to do when your child is sick.

- Know the signs and symptoms of fever. ([HealthyChildren.org](#))
- Contact your child's health care provider with concerns about your child's illness.
- Keep your child home from school, child care, and playdates when they have symptoms that could be contagious.



Family Engagement

A Trip to the Grocery Store

A trip to the grocery store at any age can serve as an opportunity for your child to gain real and valuable knowledge about math and nutrition. You can guide your child in the discovery of basic Mathematics and Social Studies concepts as you help him or her process information about the world outside family and home.



Help support your child's mathematics thinking and expression with colorful choices.

Infant: Babies will enjoy seeing the bright colors of fruits and vegetables at the grocery store. Show your baby objects as you put them in your cart. “Here’s a nice red apple!” or “See the green pepper?”

Toddler: A trip to the store can provide an opportunity to explore objects not found in the home. You can also involve your toddler in decision making. Offer your toddler choices, “Should we get the red apple or yellow pear?”

Pre-Kindergarten: The grocery store is filled with things to count! Let your child help you count out the number of potatoes you will need to buy for dinner, or the cans of soup that go in your cart.

Kindergarten: If you clip coupons, you may have several bright pictures of the products you will be searching for at the store. Your Kindergartener can be your helper at the grocery store by matching the pictures and words on the coupons to the objects on the shelves.

Suggested Books:

What’s in Grandma’s Grocery Bag? By Hui-Mei Pan

Our Corner Grocery Store by Joanne Schwartz & Laura Beingessner

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

www.papromiseforchildren.com

Visit ELRC Region 13

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