



## Community Services for Children

### Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11 February 2024

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

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## Region 11 News

### Black History Month Event

It's February, which means it's Black History Month. The non-profit organization, Gather Community Space, in Wilkes Barre is hosting "African-American Read-In." The National Council of Teachers of English encourages communities to read together and celebrate the work of African-American writers at events just like this. Please click [here](#) to see the flyer for more information on this February 16<sup>th</sup> event.

### S.A.F.E.

Supporting Area Families Everyday (SAFE) is a non-profit organization with locations in Wysox and New Milford. SAFE provides parenting classes on many childhood related topics for families in Bradford County and the surrounding areas. At SAFE, they focus on supporting families through child custody issues, providing a secure place for supervised child visitations and custody exchanges. For more information visit <https://safebradco.com> or send an e-mail to [safebradco@gmail.com](mailto:safebradco@gmail.com).



### ELRC Region 11 Supports Two Local Non-profits

For the Winter season, the staff at the ELRC decided to do something special for

the local community. Together, we made monetary donations to support two local nonprofits: Sleep in Heavenly Peace [PA-Luzerne Co - Sleep in Heavenly Peace \(shpbeds.org\)](https://shpbeds.org) and Parenting Autism United [About – Parenting Autism United](#).

A heartfelt thanks to Denise Ogurkis, the President of Sleep in Heavenly Peace Luzerne County, for visiting our office and sharing more about her incredibly important work that involves building and delivering twin beds to any Luzerne County child in need.

Another special thank you goes to Michelle Gunshannon, ELRC Region 11 Quality Coach, who is deeply connected to Parenting Autism United. She accepted the donation on their behalf and shared more about the organization and their incredibly valuable service to the community.

Check out the links above for more information and how you can become involved with these organizations.



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## Bradford County Event Focusing on Fraud Prevention

In an effort to raise public awareness about money scams, PA State Representative, Tina Pickett is joining with the PA Department of Banking and Securities to host an upcoming event in two different Bradford County locations on Friday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>. These FREE events will feature “Fraud Bingo,” a fun and interactive presentation that teaches people how to protect themselves from money scams and other schemes. To register for one of these events, please see the flyer below for more information.

- [Fraud Prevention](#)

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## 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

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## We're Stuck Inside Because of the Weather... Now What?



This time of year can feel never-ending when the cold and gloomy weather makes it difficult to get outside. Keeping children actively engaged helps prevent them from going stir-crazy or becoming bored. Here's a few ideas to help them (and you!) make it through the cold months while having fun together!

- Build a fort with blankets and sheets
- Play Hide and Seek
- Have a tower building championship and you don't have to stick with blocks! What other objects can you find to stack tall?
- Try a new recipe
- Have a dance party
- Create an indoor obstacle course
- Make slime! Click [here](#) for a recipe
- Create a scavenger hunt
- Build a sensory bin for your toddler. What is a sensory bin? Click [here](#) for ideas.
- Get some fresh air! It doesn't have to be for long. Get bundled up and spend a few minutes outdoors, jumping in the puddles or building a snow man!

For additional ideas, visit <https://busytoddler.com/easy-activities-for-kids-stuck-at-home/>.

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## PA Maternal & Child Health Services Block Grant

Parents and caregivers are invited to participate in meetings to provide feedback regarding priorities for Title V programs. The Bureau of Family Health is hosting meetings across the state and want to hear from you!

### Southeast PA

3/7/24

Community Center at Willow Grove GIANT

### Northeast PA

3/14/24

The Woodlands Inn

Click here for the [flyer](#) and registration details.

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## 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 sleep habits in young children. Click [here](#) to listen.



## Child Development

### Considerations for Finding Quality Childcare

As parents and guardians, we want to give our children every opportunity for a happy and healthy childhood. A foundation for future success can be attributed to selecting a quality childcare provider.

Whether you are a new family looking to establish care for the first time or a family that is looking to switch facilities, it is important to take some time to research the potential childcare program. A majority of that research can happen by scheduling a tour and coming prepared with questions or a checklist. ChildCare Aware of America has a checklist along with additional information to help families choose quality childcare. You can get a copy of the checklist by going to [Childcareaware.com](https://www.childcareaware.com). Some of the questions to ask when touring a program:



#### Infant Specific:

- How do staff track infant feedings?
- How is formula/breast milk stored in the classroom?
- How are babies put down to nap? (All infants should be placed on their back to sleep and have their own assigned crib)

#### Generalized for all ages:

- What qualifications/trainings do your teaching staff have?
- What items do I need to bring? (extra clothing, nap items, diapers, wipes,

- etc.)
- What is your illness policy? When can they return after illness?

Additionally, here are some items that you want to look for when touring a facility:

- Are there positive teacher-child interactions and respectful language?
- What is the overall condition of the facility and classroom materials?
- What is the building security/access like?

For more information on touring a facility, watch this quick video:

[Choosing Quality Childcare](#)

## Resource & Referral



The Affordable Connectivity Program is a federal program designed to help families who may be struggling to afford internet service. Having a reliable internet service is extremely important in today's interconnected world. The Coronavirus Pandemic has also shown us how important internet access can be to both school children and working adults.

In general, a household is eligible if the household income is at or below 200% Federal Poverty Income Guidelines, or if a member of the household is enrolled in an assistance program. Click [here](#) to for eligibility specifics and additional information on the program.

### Two Steps to Enroll

1. Go to [AffordableConnectivity.gov](https://affordableconnectivity.gov) to submit an application or print out a mail-in application.
2. Contact your preferred participating provider to select a plan and have the discount applied to your bill. (Some providers may have an alternative application that they will ask you to complete.)

Eligible households must both apply for the program and contact a participating provider to select a service plan.

## Health & Safety

### American Heart Month

February is a busy month for kids. Valentine's Day and Dental Health month are recognized in February, but it is also American Heart Month. This is a great opportunity to talk about keeping our hearts healthy!



Encourage children at home to be physically active. You can set up a quick and easy obstacle course in the living room or at the local playground, run relay races, take a bike ride, or learn how to do jumping jacks.

You can also introduce the importance of sleep and quiet time for a healthy heart, including yoga for kids. Another fun family activity is to create and cook heart-healthy recipes together. Talk about foods that keep your heart strong and healthy. You might also want to pick up some books from your local library about heart health and spend some quality time together reading a new book.

There are many more ideas included in the links below.

- [Action for Healthy Kids](#)
- [Kids Yoga](#)
- [Heart Healthy Book Titles](#)

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## February is National Children's Dental Health Month

### Choosing Healthy Drinks for Your Young Child

Choose drinks that will help keep your child healthy. Many drinks have natural or added sugar. Children who are often given sugary drinks are more likely to have tooth decay (cavities). You might not even know you are giving your child drinks with sugar! Water or milk are the best drinks for your child.



Tips for Choosing Healthy Drinks:

- Breast milk is best. Breastfeed your child for 6 months or longer.
- Give your child plain water with fluoride. Water from the tap (faucet) is safe and inexpensive.
- Give your child milk at scheduled meal and snack times.
- It is best not to put your child to bed with a bottle or sippy cup. If you do, the bottle or sippy cup should contain only water, nothing else.
- Give your child cut-up or whole fruit instead of fruit juice.
- If you give your child juice, wait until he is 6 months old. Offer your child no more than 4 to 6 ounces of 100-percent fruit juice each day. Serve juice in a cup.
- If your child drinks from a sippy cup, it should contain only water or milk, nothing else. By age 12 to 14 months, most children can drink from a cup.

For more information click [here](#).

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## Family Engagement

### We are Learning in the Bedroom!

Learning happens everywhere, including when children are getting up in the morning and when they are going to bed at night. Here are some activities to help support your children's learning.

**Activities for Infants:** As you dress your baby, tell him what you are doing as you are doing it. Tell him, "The shirt goes over the head and one arm in and the other arm in the other sleeve, then cover your belly". (Social and Emotional

Development)

**Activities for Toddlers:** Let your toddler pick out his clothes or at least one item. Ask him to identify where different items of clothing belong on his body. Do not forget things like mittens, hats and shoes. (Social and Emotional Development)

**Activities for Preschoolers:** Using index cards, as you move through your child's room, have them name items and help them write the name of the items on the cards. Place the cards next to the items. (Language and Literacy Development, Writing and Reading)

**Activities for Kindergarteners:** Before bedtime, ask your kindergartner to draw a picture of what they think they will dream about. Take the picture and post it in the room so they can see it and ask them to tell you a bedtime story about their picture. (Language and Literacy)

**Suggested Books:**

- In My Bedroom by Carol Thompson
- The Berenstain Bears and the Messy Room by Stan and Jan Berensta
- Good Night, Gorilla by Petty Rathmann

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

[www.papromiseforchildren.com](http://www.papromiseforchildren.com)

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Visit ELRC Region 11

Community Services for Children | [elrc11@cscinc.org](mailto:elrc11@cscinc.org) | [www.cscinc.org](http://www.cscinc.org)

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