

Community Services for Children

Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 12

March 2024

Serving Susquehanna, Wayne, Lackawanna, Pike, Monroe & Carbon counties

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

Region 12 Updates

ELRC Family Connection Newsletter

Thank you for sharing the ELRC Family Connection newsletter each month with all of the enrolled families in your program! This newsletter provides parents and caregivers with valuable parenting information, local resources, health & safety news and family engagement activities. The newsletter is emailed to you the 15th of the month and is available in both English and Spanish.

Thank You!

Please consider:

- Printing a copy and hanging outside classrooms each month or
- Printing copies and distributing in children's cubbies/backpacks or
- Forwarding the newsletter each month via the link that appears in the section above.

Celebrating Provider Successes!

Has your program celebrated a milestone such as an educational achievement, program anniversary, new accreditation or retirement? Please reach out to your Quality Coach and let them know! We would love to celebrate with you and feature your exciting milestone in our newsletter! This month we would like to celebrate the recent achievements of Green Trees Early Learning Center, Inc. and Inch by Inch Childcare, LLC.

HARKIN ON WELLNESS SYMPOSIUM 2024

Green Trees Early Learning Center, Inc. has been selected to receive the 2024 Harkin on Wellness Award! Green Trees was selected as one out of 10 programs nationwide to receive this prestigious award from retired Senator Tom Harkins. Center Director, Mary Rebe and Program Director, Cera Alber, will represent the school in April at the 2024 Harkin on Wellness Symposium to receive the award and to provide a presentation on the important work that Green Trees is doing with the school and local community. Congratulations!



Senator Rosemary Brown recently stopped by Inch by Inch Childcare, LLC to celebrate their recent STAR 3 movement! Senator Brown toured the facility, read to children, and took some time to discuss the importance of quality early childhood education. Senator Brown also presented the facility with a certificate of recognition on behalf of the state senate. Congratulations to the staff and leadership at Inch by Inch, and thank you for your commitment to continuous quality improvement!

Community Resource - Free Tax Preparation Services



The United Way of Lackawanna and Wayne Counties is once again offering the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program to prepare local, state and federal income tax returns for FREE! To qualify for this service, households must have had an income under \$60,000 in 2023. Appointments can be made online by visiting www.uwlc.net or by calling 2-1-1. Click [here](#) to see upcoming dates and locations.

Region 12 Provider Supports

ELRC 12 Director's Network

Our next Director's Network will be March 11 at 1:00 PM. This month we will be exploring the intent behind Keystone STARS requirements, and the importance of communicating this to staff and families. Please join us for an engaging afternoon of tackling the "why". Registration for this event is now open; we hope to see you there!

- [Directors Network - March 2024](#)



PD Opportunity

Quality Coach Deb Galloway will be presenting *Y'All Means All: Changing the culture of gender specific language and gaining an understanding of the LGBTQ+ community to ensure a more inclusive workplace*. This engaging

training will explore diversity, inclusion, and belonging as it relates to the LGBTQ+ population in the workplace. Please be on the lookout for registration information coming soon! Questions? Please contact Deb Galloway at dgalloway@cscinc.org.

- [Y'All Means All PD](#)

ELRC Updates



Continuous Quality Improvement Grant

Eligible STAR 2, 3 and 4 providers who applied for the Continuous Quality Improvement Grant, will be receiving their payment by March 15th. Programs will receive their award in the same manner in which you receive your CCW payments (direct deposit or paper check).

Once you receive your payment, it is required that you account for the spending of these award dollars. Keep all receipts for eligible expenses, including payroll records to verify staff bonuses have been paid through payroll and taxes deducted appropriately. All expenses must have occurred from July 1, 2023 - May 8, 2024

Please read through the [ELRC Policy Communication](#) and [FAQ document](#) for full grant details and schedule a meeting with your Quality Coach to complete your Final Expense Report. Final Expense Reports are due to the ELRC no later than May 15, 2024.

Register Now!

Directors Network - Finding and Retaining Staff for Child Care Providers



ELRC Region 16 is inviting you to attend their monthly Directors Network "Finding and Retaining Staff for Child Care Providers." This group will meet over Zoom on April 17th from 1:00-3:00 pm.

Multiple breakout rooms will be offered to address the following topics:

1. Finding the Right Fit: Learn effective strategies and tools to identify and attract the right staff.
2. Onboarding New Hires: Get a plan for the first 90 days to ensure a successful transition.
3. Staff Retention Tactics: Explore innovative approaches to foster a positive workplace.
4. Representatives from Southeast Professional Development Organization (higher education enrollment and tuition assistance)
5. Representatives from Northeast Professional Development Organization (higher education enrollment and tuition assistance)

Please join us for an engaging session filled with expert advice, real-world examples, and collaborative discussions.

Click [here](#) to register

LCCC CDA Apprenticeship Program

Lehigh Carbon Community College (LCCC) is offering a fully funded Child Development Associate (CDA) Apprenticeship Program with courses starting in March 2024. Click [here](#) to learn more about this program!



Eligibility criteria for this opportunity:

- Employed by a DHS licensed center for at least 3 months and work a minimum of 25 hours per week
- Hold a high school diploma or equivalent
- Are a PA resident
- Are able to complete coursework and apply learning to your classroom

Click [here](#) for more information.



Shared Source PA: Thousands of Resources in One Place

Shared Source PA offers a wide variety of materials to help you successfully operate your early childhood care and education business. This resource provides guides, handouts, policy templates, links to important resources to guide your policies and procedures, tips and tools for parents and caregivers as well as much more. New resources are added all the time, including many in Spanish.

Not a SharedSourcePA user? Visit www.sharedsourcepa.org and select REGISTER in the upper right corner. Typically, within 48 hours you will receive an acceptance email with instructions to log in and start using the available resources. Log in today and check it out! If you have problems logging in, please contact Rose Synder at rsnyder@pennaeyc.org.

Tax Form 1099

If you have received grant funding or Child Care Works payments from Community Services for Children in 2023, you should have received your 1099. Please reach out to your Provider Specialist with any questions. Please note that this 1099 will include any grant funds that were received in 2023.

Strengthening Business Practices

Family and Center-based programs are eligible for this FREE Business Practice professional development series. PQAS hours are available. Click on the flyer below to register. Spaces are filling quickly!

- [Strengthening Business Practices](#)

PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



The PA Farm to School Institute

Interested in elevating your current farm to school activities? Consider applying for the PA Farm to School Institute! The PA Farm to School Institute is a unique year-long learning opportunity for selected early care and education program teams from Pennsylvania. During this year-long institute, teams will participate in a two-day summer retreat, work with an experienced farm to school coach and receive a \$7,000 stipend to support their farm to school activities.



Learn more about the institute [here](#) and register for the [team applicant info session](#) on Wednesday, March 6th, 2-3 pm. The deadline for [team applications](#) is midnight on Thursday, March 28th, for more information. Review the [FAQ page](#) for full details about the program. If you're interested in learning more about the PA Farm to School Network, join the upcoming [virtual open house on March 21st](#).

Wages and Benefits Comparability Survey

Philadelphia Health Management Corporation is completing a Wages & Benefits Comparability Survey on behalf of the Pennsylvania Head Start Association. This survey compares the wages and benefits of childcare providers to Head Start grantees.

Your organization may be a good source of comparable information. PHMC will be launching the survey in early March! Organizations that complete the survey will receive a gift card. If you would like more information or have any questions about the survey, please email phsawage@phmc.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.

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

This month, we are joined by Nyanda Finley de Santos, Director of Family and Community Engagement at Community Services for Children. Nyanda discusses Parent Advocacy and the importance of parent's becoming engaged in their child's education. Click [here](#) to listen.

PARENT PROJECT PODCAST



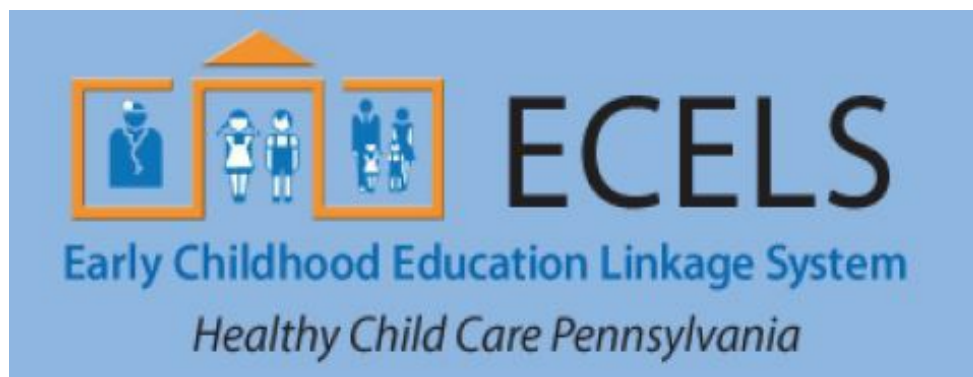
Health & Safety

ECELS Office Hours

ECELS (Early Childhood Education Linkage System) is able to provide support with health and safety concerns in your program. You can make a FREE appointment with a specialist who can help you:

- Resolve health & safety questions
- Provide information and resources to aid in decision making
- Strengthen health and safety policies
- Promote safe & healthy environments for children to learn and thrive
- Improve staff/caregiver health & safety skills

Click [here](#) to request an appointment. You can email the ECELS program at ecels@paaap.org with any questions.



Oral Health - Encourage Children to Drink Water

Water is important for good oral health and overall health and well-being. Drinking water every day helps move nutrients throughout the body, gets rid of waste, gives skin a healthy glow, keeps muscles moving, and promotes a healthy weight.



Here are some reasons why drinking water helps keep teeth healthy:

- **It strengthens teeth.** Drinking water with fluoride is one of the easiest and best ways to help prevent tooth decay. Water with fluoride makes it hard for the bacteria that cause tooth decay to create acid. Fluoride also strengthens the outer layers of the teeth, making them more resistant to acid attacks. If the local, county, or state health department says not to drink water from the tap, make sure the new water source contains fluoride.
- **It keeps the mouth clean.** Drinking water washes away the bacteria that cause tooth decay and also washes away food left in the mouth after eating. Water also dilutes acids made by the bacteria that cause tooth decay. Even though drinking water helps keep the mouth clean, it is still important to brush the teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day.
- **It fights dry mouth.** Water helps create saliva, which is the mouth's first defense against tooth decay. Saliva contains calcium and other minerals that work into the outer layers of the teeth to keep them strong. It also keeps food moist so it can be swallowed easily and clears away food left in the mouth after eating.
- **It does not contain sugar.** Water is sugar-free, so drinking it doesn't allow the bacteria that cause tooth decay to make acid. Drinking water instead of beverages that have natural or added sugar lowers the risk for developing tooth decay.

For tips to share with families to encourage children to drink water click [here](#). For a toolkit that explains why you should serve water to the children under your care, click [here](#).

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 12](#)

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