



Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11 March 2024

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

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Region 11 News

Main Street Art Festival in Wilkes Barre

Bring your family out to join this multi-day festival beginning Tuesday, April 2nd through Saturday, April 6th. There are different events and activities scheduled each day so check out the flyer below for more information.



- [Main St Art Festival flyer](#)

Block Party on Main Street

The Main Street Art Committee will be sponsoring a Block Party on April 6th from 10:00am-2:00pm. Please come join the fun with live bands and music, food trucks, craft vendors and children's activities!

The Courtyard
116 S. Main St
Wilkes Barre

Click [here](#) for more information.

Mobile WIC Office in Northeast PA

WIC supports healthier pregnancies and births and

improved health and development of children by providing the nutritious foods that support growth during pregnancy, infancy, and early childhood. WIC keeps families connected to essential medical care and social services, and helps parents achieve their goals for the children's health and development.



Maternal and Family Health Services have launched a new mobile WIC center which will bring services to communities across our northern service area. The new mobile unit is staffed with nutritionists and program assistants who are able to provide the full range of WIC services from any location! Visit the website for more information about services in your county.

- [Mobile WIC - MFHS](#)

Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania

Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania (P2P of PA) is an organization that encourages family engagement and supports, funded through Office of Child Development and Early Learning. The P2P organization brings together families who are experiencing similar life journeys and challenges in parenting. P2P also helps to support children and adults with special needs or disabilities to ensure the family is receiving all the benefits and resources available to them.

Register for the Spring 2024 Virtual Parent Café' sessions [here](#). Please visit the P2P website for more details on all that the organization has to offer and additional contact information.

- [Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania](#)

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

Read Across America

March is "Read Across America" month!

There are so many benefits to reading with your child. Not only do you get to share in some quality time together, but it gives you an opportunity to promote the good habit



of reading. Reading with your child to gain knowledge or just for fun, encourages a lifelong love for reading.

Reading has been shown to improve brain activity, reduce stress and aid in sleep readiness. Reading helps build language and thinking skills and builds babies brains even before they can talk. Here are some tips taken from the [Head Start Early Learning website](#).

- Enjoy reading time together: Make funny sounds or sing songs as you read or tell stories. Reading is a great time for back-and-forth interactions with your child. This is how children learn best.
- Read Daily: Pick a regular time to read to your child, like every morning or at bedtime. Routines help children thrive. They may even like to hear the same books over and over again.
- Introduce new words you come across. Choose books in your home language that focus on different topics, like animals, noises, or shapes. This is a great way to expose children to a variety of words. Reading books with new words helps build your child's vocabulary.
- Create a dialogue. Talk to your child about the pictures in the book. "See the duck? The duck is yellow! What else in this picture is yellow?" Storytelling can go beyond the words on the page. This helps children build language and thinking skills.

Check out some more fun facts about "Read across America" at <https://nationaltoday.com/read-across-america-week/> and start creating those healthy habits!

Kindergarten Registration

If you have a child ready to enter Kindergarten in September, now is the time to get him or her registered! Although each school district has their own process for kindergarten registration, most families will need to bring specific documents to register their child. This may include:



- The child's birth certificate
- Proof of residency (like a utility bill or copy of a lease)
- Vaccination records ([the PA Dept. of Health](#) shares which ones your child needs)
- Any forms required by the school district, like an application or emergency contact list.
- There may be other documents needed, so check with your school district.

Some schools set aside specific dates to register for Kindergarten. Others may provide special events, like summer orientation for their incoming students. Click [here](#) to find your school's contact information and specific registration dates.

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 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.



Child Development

Kindergarten Readiness

Kindergarten can be a big transition for your child and a looming decision for parents as to whether their child is ready for the “big” school. Many kindergarten teachers stress that emotional maturity and independence are more important than the pre-academic skills of letters, numbers and shapes. Kindergarten is where most children learn to read and write, therefore it is not expected that they know this before entering school.



Here are some tips to help your child be ready for kindergarten.

- Develop independence at home by practicing putting on jackets, shoes, opening a juice box, cleaning up, using the bathroom, etc. on their own.
- Develop and follow rules and routines and have your child follow simple directions.
- Encourage play with peers focusing on teaching your child how to share, play cooperatively, and problem solve appropriately.
- Help your child talk through problems, recognize big feelings, and ask for help when needed.

For more information on kindergarten readiness, please visit these websites:

- [Kindergarten Readiness Checklist](#)
- [Kindergarten Readiness Video Series](#)
- [Is My Child Ready?](#)

Resource & Referral

Power Kids: Pennsylvania's Electronic Library



Do you know about **Power Kids**, Pennsylvania's electronic library? With Power Kids, you and your child can access things like:

- BookFlix: Watch videos and read books
- CyberSmarts: Learn how to be a safe, responsible and smart citizen with eBooks
- TrueFlix: Learn about people, places, nature, history and science from videos and eBooks
- Chat with a librarian

In addition, many libraries throughout Pennsylvania offers their members access to downloadable or streaming eBooks and audiobooks through Axis 360 and Hoopla. Enjoy new bestsellers and old favorites on your compatible digital device! Check with your local library for additional info.

Health & Safety



It is National Nutrition Month!

This month is a great time to focus on building a foundation for healthy eating for you and your family. Take a moment each day to promote physical activity and integrate healthy food and positive meal experiences that help develop the knowledge and skills necessary to make healthy food choices. A few ways to encourage healthy eating habits include:

- Have regular meals together.
- Serve a variety of healthy foods and snacks.
- Be a role model by eating healthy yourself.
- Involve children in the meal process from setting the table to assisting with meal prep.
- Introduce new fruits and vegetables.

Click [here](#) for a list of 20 other simple tips you can try at home with your family.

For additional resources to help you implement healthy habits, visit the eatright.org website [here](#).

**Information taken from Nemours Kids Health and School of Public Health-Harvard T. H. Chan.*

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 encourage children to drink water click [here.](#)

Family Engagement

Spring is Approaching!

Celebrate spring's arrival by sharing activities with children that are perfect for warm weather fun. Below are some creative ideas for outdoor early learning experiences to kick start Spring:

Enjoy a Spring Stroll. Take your child for a walk around the neighborhood or a nearby park. Ask them to look for signs of spring, such as birds chirping, budding leaves and blooming flowers. Then ask, "What colors do you see?" Provide a clipboard with a pencil attached to a string. Then watch them "document" their discoveries.

On the Hunt for Spring Fun. Drop by your local public library. Help your children find books about insects. Show them how to look up different types of bugs. Next, move the fun outdoors for a bug scavenger hunt. Take pictures and help them create a scrapbook of their discoveries.

Berry Delicious Fun. Take a family trip to a local farm to pick fresh berries. Don't forget to bring a basket! The children can count the number of berries they collect.

Create a Greener Earth. In honor of Earth Day, ask your child to help you sort plastics, papers, and cans. Sorting is an important school readiness skill.

Get Down and Dirty. Children love to play in the dirt and watch things grow. Plant a garden or pot with flowers, tomatoes, or green beans. Learn about nature together as you take care of the plants.

Take a “Rocky” Walk. During your spring stroll, ask the children to collect some rocks. Paint the rocks with spring-themed colors and designs. Give the rocks to friends and neighbors with a friendly spring message.

Suggested Spring Books:

- The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle
- Goodbye Winter, Hello Spring by Kenard Pak
- A Spring Stroll in the City by Cathy Goldberg Fishman
- In Like a Lion, Out Like a Lamb by Marion Dane Bauer



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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