



Community Services for Children Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11 April 2024

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

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Region 11 News

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Luzerne County Annual Fun Walk and Resource Fair

Bring your family out to enjoy the warmer weather! Autism Awareness NEPA is having their Annual Fun Walk and Resource Fair on Saturday, May 4, 2024 beginning at 9:00am. This event is being held at the Forty Fort Sports Complex located at 1000 Camryn Way, Forty Fort, PA 18704. Enjoy family activities and games, visit local service providers, and get information on local community businesses and organizations in support of individuals with autism.

RESCHEDULED-Block Party on Main Street

The Main Street Art Committee will be sponsoring a Block Part on **Saturday, May 11 from 10:00am-2:00pm**. The event will take place in the Courtyard located at 116 S. Main St. in Wilkes Barre.



Please come visit the Region 11 Early Learning Resource Center's table and join the fun! Enjoy live bands and music, food trucks, craft vendors and children's activities!

Congratulations!

Congratulations to Wyalusing Valley Children's Center on celebrating their 20th anniversary recently! Thank you for everything you do for the children and families of Bradford County.

In addition, an extra special shout out to Ms. Barb Franklin who celebrated 20 years of service as an infant teacher at the center. Thank you for your dedication to the Early Childhood Education field.



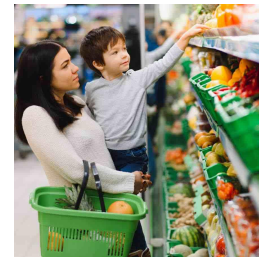
Looking for a Career Change?

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:



Family Budgeting

It's no surprise that prices for just about everything have gone up but there are many ways to save money while still providing your children with a happy and fulfilling childhood. Here are some cost-saving parenting tips:



- **Budgeting:** Create a monthly budget that includes all of your expenses, including those related to your children. This will help you identify areas where you can cut back and save money.
- **Buy Second-hand:** Children outgrow clothes, toys, and gear quickly. Instead of buying everything brand new, consider shopping at thrift stores, consignment shops, or online marketplaces for gently used items at a fraction of the cost.
- **Meal Planning:** Plan your meals for the week ahead of time and stick to a grocery list when shopping to avoid impulse purchases. Cooking at home is generally cheaper and healthier than eating out, and involving your children in meal preparation can be a fun and educational experience.
- **Free Activities:** Take advantage of free or low-cost activities in your community, such as visiting parks, libraries, museums, or attending local events. Many cities offer free family-friendly activities throughout the year.
- **Limit Extracurricular Activities:** While it's important for children to have opportunities for enrichment and socialization, participating in too many extracurricular activities can quickly add up in terms of time and money. Choose activities selectively based on your child's interests and your budget.
- **Healthcare Savings:** Take advantage of preventative healthcare measures such as vaccinations and regular check-ups to avoid costly medical bills later on. Look for low-cost or free healthcare options in your community if you're struggling to afford health insurance.
- **Teach and Model:** Your children can learn a lot about financial literacy by watching the adults in their lives. Teach children the value of a dollar by allowing them the opportunity to pay for things that they desire. Explain your own purchases to your children so they understand the differences between wants and needs.

By implementing these cost-saving strategies, you can provide for your family's needs while still staying within your budget. Remember, it's not about how much money you spend, but rather how wisely you allocate your resources to create a loving and nurturing environment for your family.

For more parenting tips, visit www.parents.com.

Family Scholarships Available to Attend the 2024 National Autism Conference

The Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network is currently offering family scholarships to attend the 2024 National Autism Conference to be held August 5-8, 2024, in Harrisburg, PA. The Autism conference provides



comprehensive, evidence-based information to assist educators and families in developing effective educational programming for all students with autism spectrum disorders.

The Parent/Caregiver Scholarship is available to parent(s) and/or caregiver(s) of a child with an IEP or who receives Early Intervention (EI) services and meets certain qualifications. The registration window is open through May 30, 2024. Scholarships will be granted on a first come first served basis. Eligible recipients are encouraged to apply as early as possible. Notifications will be sent out by June 20, 2024.

Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.

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 Susan Lettera, former Director of Lehigh County Integrated Services. Susan shares her expertise regarding family group decision making. Families know best what their children need and can work with a coordinator to assist in decision making process. Click [here](#) to listen.



Child Development

Childcare Quality: Benefits of Selecting a

Quality Childcare Provider

Children benefit most from high quality early childcare programs. Selecting a quality child care program can impact how well children do in kindergarten, school, and in life. Children who attend a quality early learning program, enter school ready to learn. They are also more likely to graduate high school, attend college, and get good jobs.



High-quality ECE programs go beyond basic health and safety requirements to provide warm, responsive relationships with educators, stimulating and developmentally appropriate lessons, and ongoing training for educators. Developmentally appropriate activities will enhance children's focus, self-regulation, memory and social-emotional development.

The brain develops the most in the first five years of life. Children in high-quality early learning programs are more likely to be exposed to large amount of language through reading, singing, and talking which develop more neuron connections in the area of their brain that handles language and supports their advanced thinking and problem-solving skills.

Resource & Referral

April Family-Friendly Newsletters Now Available

The April releases of family-friendly newsletters for families and providers of children, ages birth to kindergarten are now available. The newsletters feature fun early learning activities that align with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards, resources and information to help families as their child's first and most important teacher.



Take a look and then [subscribe](#) to get the next release directly into your inbox.

- [Learning is Everywhere](#)
- [Kindergarten Here I Come](#)
- [Kindergarten Here I Am](#)

Eat Right When Money is Tight

Are you struggling with your food budget? Are you looking for ideas for healthy, budget friendly meals and snacks for your family?



Take a look at the SNAP-Ed Connection page of resources on the USDA's 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.

Scholarship Opportunity for Students Experiencing Homelessness

SchoolHouse Connection Scholarship Program serves youth experiencing homelessness who have a drive to pursue higher education. They believe that education is key in overcoming homelessness and it is our goal to provide the supportive environment necessary for students to succeed in higher education and the workforce.

The 2024 application is now open through June 1, 2024.

Students are eligible if they:

- Are currently residing in the United States (undocumented applicants are eligible)
- Were born on or after June 1, 2004
- Are starting college (four year, community college, or trade school) for the first time in the 2025-2026 academic year (not including dual-enrollment courses). This applies to high school juniors or high school seniors planning to take a gap year.
- Experienced homelessness in the last six years

For more information, visit SchoolHouse Connection at <https://schoolhouseconnection.org/scholarship/>

Health & Safety

Hydration is Important to Children's Overall Health

Did you know the smallest drop in the water balance in your body could affect physical health, mood, energy and concentration? Just a **1-2% decrease** in body water can impair brain function!



8 Benefits of Hydration for Children's Wellbeing and Brain Function

1. **Mood** - When mildly dehydrated, we are likely to feel less calm, content or happy and may be easily confused, anxious and experience negative emotions.
2. **Energy & tiredness** - Hydration makes your heart's job of pumping blood around the body easier so that oxygen and nutrients can reach your organs and cells. Water increases blood volume, which increases blood pressure, so it is easier for the heart to pump.
3. **Concentration and memory** - Dehydration will affect learning. If dehydration is making you tired, then concentration, memory and even movement become impaired.
4. **Vision** - Hydration helps to keep eyes moist, comfortable and healthy. Mild dehydration often causes gritty, tired feeling eyes and blurry vision.
5. **Brain function** - Water carries oxygen to the brain, which allows it to communicate with the rest of your body. Studies also support a link between access to water and academic performance.
6. **Body temperature regulation** - Sweating cools you down when you are hot. Staying hydrated replaces the water lost through perspiration.
7. **Digestion and nutrient absorption** - Drinking before, during and after eating helps to break down food into vitamins, minerals and nutrients, which you absorb for the body to use. Hydration also helps to prevent constipation.

8. Feeling generally 'well' - Even mild dehydration can cause symptoms from dizziness and headaches to muscle cramps and indigestion. Regularly drinking water throughout the day helps keep you healthy and energized.

For more information on the benefits of water, the amount of water to drink, and how to encourage your child to drink more water visit:

<https://positiveprimarykids.com/drink-more-water/>

Talking to Children about Visiting the Dentist

Children need to visit a dentist or dental clinic to keep their teeth and mouth healthy. If children have regular dental visits, the dentist and dental hygienist can take care of their teeth and find oral health problems early.

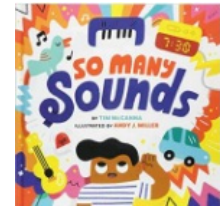


Having regular dental visits also teaches children to value good oral health. Click [here](#) for more information and tips to share with families about preparing their child to visit the dentist.

Family Engagement

In the Neighborhood

Exploring your neighborhood is a wonderful way for your child to learn about the world around them! This also provides opportunities to learn how to interact with others outside of the family.



Your neighborhood is a great way to help your child understand his or her role in a larger community, the diversity of people in the community, and how communities can change over time. It is also a great way to build social and interpersonal skills as you get to know your neighbors!

Help support your child's creative thinking and expression by picturing your neighborhood.

Infant: Take your child for a walk and describe the people, places, and nature you see along the way. Make up stories or songs about what you did when you went by different parts of your neighborhood.

“Hello neighbor, Hello neighbor, it’s nice to see you today.

Hello Neighbor!

Hello Walmart, Hello Walmart, it’s nice to see you today!

Hello Walmart!

And so on.... ”

Toddler: Take or draw pictures of you and your child in different places in the neighborhood. Together make up a song or story about your adventures in the neighborhood. Talk to your child about his/her favorite place in the neighborhood.

Pre-Kindergarten: Take or draw pictures of you and your child in different places in the neighborhood. Make a map of your neighborhood with the pictures and talk about the activities you’ve done there or the people who may work

there. Discuss the difference you see in the neighborhood and if it looks the same or different than in the summer. Draw a picture of their favorite place in the neighborhood and talk about why it is his/her favorite.

Kindergarten: Take or draw pictures of you and your child at different places in the neighborhood. Make a map of the neighborhood. Talk to your child about the different jobs and people who work in your neighborhood. Discuss the difference you see in the neighborhood and if it looks the same or different than in the winter.

Suggested Books:

So Many Sounds by Tim McCanna

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

www.papromiseforchildren.com



Visit ELRC Region 11

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