



Community Services for Children Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 14 April 2024

Serving Lehigh & Northampton counties

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Region 14 News

DaVinci Science Center - Grand Opening of New Location!

May 22, 2024
815 W. Hamilton Street
Allentown PA 18101

Dinos Alive: Immersive Experience May 22 - September 8, 2024
Travel back in time millions of years during Dinos Alive featuring over 30 animated dinosaurs, a virtual reality experience, and 360° projections guaranteed to amaze the whole family.

Come face-to-face with the fearsome and spectacular dinosaurs that dominated the animal world for 140 million years. From the turkey-sized Velociraptors to the mighty T-rex, interact with life-sized, moving animatronics, and see these magnificent creatures in their natural prehistoric habitat. Set out on a discovery of the largest land animals to ever set foot on our planet - the dinosaurs.

- Ticket price: \$10 per person, not included with general admission.
- Member ticket price: \$7 per person
- All non-members must purchase a general admission ticket in addition to a Dinos Alive ticket.

Family Block Party

Pinebrook Family Answers' is hosting a family block party to raise awareness of the need for more foster homes. This years' block party is scheduled for Saturday, May 18, 2024 from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m at 402 North Fulton Street, Allentown, 18102.



Lehigh Valley WIC Office

The Early Learning Resource Center is excited to announce staff will be on location at the Lehigh Valley WIC office at 1837 Linden Street, Allentown on the 2nd Wednesday of each month. ELRC staff will be available to assist WIC recipients apply for Child Care Works funding, offer referrals for high quality child care or connect to other resources.

WIC provides a safe, nurturing environment for new parents and families with young children to learn about the benefits of nutrient rich foods that support proper growth and development. They also have resources on breastfeeding, connections to health care and social services, and eWIC benefits to purchase nutritious foods. To learn more, reach out to the ELRC or the WIC office.

Looking for a Career Change?

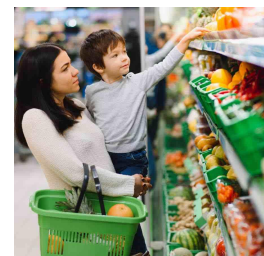
Do you love children and want to make a difference in the lives of young families? Check out ECE hire for job postings in early childhood education. Click on the logo below to access the latest listings:



Parenting Corner

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

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

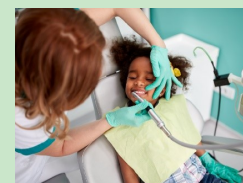
1. Mood - When mildly dehydrated, we are likely to feel less calm, content or happy and may be easily confused, anxious and experience negative emotions.
2. Energy & tiredness - Hydration makes your heart's job of pumping blood around the body easier so that oxygen and nutrients can reach your organs 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

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 14

Community Services for Children | elrc14@cscinc.org | www.cscinc.org

Connect with us



Community Services for Children | 1520 Hanover Ave, Allentown, PA 18109

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