

Community Services for Children Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 14 May 2024

Serving Lehigh & Northampton counties

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Region 14 Updates

2024 Equity in Early Childhood Education Champion Award Recipients

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is honored to recognize the work of the early childhood education programs and professionals with the 2024 Equity in Early Childhood Education Champion Award.

The Pennsylvania Equity in Early Childhood Education Champion Award highlights the vital impact around equity for staff, children and families within early childhood education settings.

[Learn more about this award and about ECE equity in Pennsylvania .](#)



The 2024 Awardee from Region 14

Gold Level

KR Early Learning Center, Allentown

Bronze Level

Keystone STAR Movements

RAISE YOUR STAR

The following programs have demonstrated their commitment to quality by moving to a higher STAR level from January through March 2024

Congratulations to the provider who has moved to STAR 2:

- Alicea Aponte Family Day Care

Congratulations to the provider who has moved to STAR 3:

- Lehigh Valley Childrens Centers/Muhlenberg School

Congratulations to the providers who have moved to STAR 4 :

- Lehigh Valley Childrens Centers at Palmer Elementary
- Bright Futures Child Care Center, LLC
- Active Learning Centers, LLC Trexlertown
- Middletown ALC, LLC
- Creative Kids Learning Academy, LLC

Reporting New Enrollments and Accurately Completing Attendance Invoicing

Please remember when accepting new children who have Child Care Works funding, if you have not already received a call from the ELRC or an enrollment summary authorizing care, please have the parents contact their ELRC Family Specialist regarding the new enrollment. The ELRC Family Specialist will then contact you to verify the enrollment and send out the enrollment summary documenting their authorized schedule and family copay. You should not accept any new enrollments until you hear from the ELRC and are sure they have CCW funding. Once you have heard from the ELRC and the child has started care, if the child does not appear on your attendance invoice for the month you must add the child to your invoice and document their start date, days they attended and absences for the month. If the child is not added to the invoice the ELRC may not be able to go back more than 30 days from the date we are notified of the enrollment to pay for services which will result in the parent having to pay privately from the time of enrollment until the ELRC payment begins.

It is very important that you review your attendance invoice each month to ensure all children are listed and that you mark the attendance invoice correctly documenting all absences or terminations of enrollment. As stated in Appendix A of the Provider Agreement, “The ELRC may audit providers who utilize the No Change code on a regular basis when completing Attendance Invoices. Non-compliance with accurate completion of Attendance Invoices may lead to termination of the Agreement and referral to the OSIG for fraud investigation.”

Region 14 Provider Supports

Director Network

Join us on May 14th at 1:00 pm for our next Director's Network Meeting. This month we will have Natasha Kershner from Northampton Community College join us to discuss their Apprentice Program. We will also have a time for open discussion to talk about any questions or topics you would like to discuss. Click [here](#) to register.



Quality Coach Office Days

Are you thinking about moving up in STARS and need some extra assistance? Do you need assistance with your Keystone STARS Renewal or Designation? Your Quality Coach is here to help! Quality Coaches are available to answer questions throughout the week and are in the office weekly to meet one on one to support you through your STARS journey. Click [here](#) for dates of when your Quality Coach will be in the office. Please don't hesitate to email, call or schedule a time to meet.

ELRC Updates

Teacher Appreciation Week May 6-10



Continuous Quality Improvement Grant

Eligible STAR 2, 3 and 4 providers who applied for the Continuous Quality Improvement Grant, received their payment in March.

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**. Any unspent funds must be returned by **May 31, 2024**.

CCW Reminders

- Watch for the enrollment summaries with any copay changes for families effective 5/6/24.
- Watch for the school-age summer enrollment request to come to your email the first week of May.
- Reminder to reach out to the ELRC before enrolling children with CCW funding to confirm all information.

Reporting Inability to Meet Child Care Needs



Please remember, you must notify your Provider Specialist if you are unable to provide care, for any reason, for a child(ren) enrolled through CCW. If you are unable to meet a child(ren)'s authorized enrollment schedule due to staffing, behavior issues or any other reason, you must report it immediately to your Provider Specialist so, the child(ren) do not accrue absences and you are paid correctly. If you find it necessary to close your facility due to staffing or other emergency, you must report this immediately or within three days of reopening. If eligible, you may be able to request a paid closure(s). Your Provider Specialist is available to answer your questions.

Provider Closed Days

Providers received a request on April 18th to submit the Appendix B, Closed Days, for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The subsidy program will pay up to 15 closed days per year from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, if the provider also charges private-pay clients for the closed days listed.

Please click [here](#) to read the full instructions.

Providers who are not using PSS must click [here](#) and complete the attached Provider Agreement Appendix B and return to their provider specialist no later than **May 13, 2024**.

To view a video with instructions for completing this form, check out Community Services for Children YouTube page: [Appendix B-Provider Closed Days](#).

Finding & Retaining Staff Meeting - Recording Available!

ELRC Region 16 held a "Finding & Retaining Staff" support meeting on April 17th. Sessions included:

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 & Northeast Professional Development Organization (higher education enrollment and tuition assistance)

If you were unable to attend this meeting, it has been recorded. You can click [here](#) to view the recording and reach out to your Quality Coach with any questions.

Free Summer Lesson Plans!

Nearly 600 child care providers downloaded 5,202 free lesson plans last summer, saving already short-staffed teachers hundreds of hours in lesson planning and ensuring high-quality learning for 39,971 children statewide. Child care and youth-serving organizations can access **Best Day Ever!** at no cost again this summer with 11 weeks of all-new lesson plans for preschool and school-aged children.



The Learning Lamp developed Best Day Ever! to reduce the burden of staffing shortages and rising costs for child care programs. Lessons are easy to access, use readily available, affordable materials, and come aligned with PA Academic and Early Learning standards. The plans are offered in week-long themed units: 11 preschool and 11 school-age lesson plans are available now to summer programs in Pennsylvania at no cost. The lessons were written and tested by The Learning Lamp's own teachers. A leading provider of out-of-school time learning in south-central Pennsylvania, The Learning Lamp will share all Best Day Ever! units for FREE through August 2024

For more information about The Learning Lamp and its Best Day Ever! 2024 Free Summer Trial, call Kerri at 814-262-0732 ext. 245.

FREE Mandated Reporter Training

PA Family Support Alliance is providing free virtual Mandated Reporter training in May. This is a three-hour, live training approved by DHS and meets all requirements for training on recognizing and reporting child abuse. Click on each link to preregister.



Note: Each person must log in through a separate device using the unique access link emailed after registration to receive credit. Shared email addresses may not be used in the same session.

Click [here](#) to view dates and register.

PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

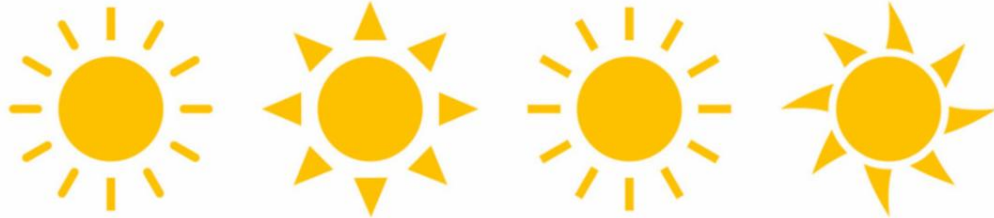


Free On Demand Courses from Better Kid Care

Ready to rejuvenate your teaching toolkit? Better Kid Care is offering TWO amazing courses free of charge in honor of Month of the Young Child and Professionals Appreciation Week.

- ["Fostering Community Through Restorative Practices"](#)
- ["Nature Sketching Builds Strong Observation Skills"](#)

Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to sharpen your observation skills and learn about foundational restorative practice strategies. Earn a certificate of completion at no charge if you finish each course by May 31, 2024.



It's Time to Revisit Your Supervision Policy for Summer!

Summer will be here before we know it and you are probably busy working on your summer programming schedule. You may be hiring additional staff, planning field trips or tweaking your playground schedule. The most important aspect of your summer planning is to ensure that all of your staff understand and implement your supervision policy. As per Certification's regulation, **"Each staff person shall be assigned the responsibility of specific children. The staff person shall know the names and whereabouts of a child in his/her assigned group. Children on the facility premises or facility excursions shall be supervised by a staff person at all times."**

As part of your summer planning, revisit your supervision policy with all of your staff. As you observe each classroom, ensure that your staff are counting children before and after using the playground, taking walks or going on field trips. Ensure every staff knows which children they are responsible for and that they know the children's names. In addition, ensure that all staff are in ratio with their age group.

Summer programming is challenging and requires daily adjustments to cover staff's vacations, increased enrollments and special events or excursions. If you are hiring new staff or floaters for summer, ensure they know which children they are responsible for and that they know each child's name, especially if they are covering multiple classrooms or age groups throughout the day.

It is up to you to ensure your staff understands and implements your supervision policy. Provide your staff with attendance charts, clipboards or software tool they need to track the children they are responsible for each day. Create a safe and healthy summer program by planning and working together to keep all children safe!

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 Krystal Perez from the Allentown School District. She is the assistant director of health services and she shares information on childhood obesity. Click [here](#) to listen.



Health & Safety



Oral Health - The Importance of Fluoride

There are several important ways to make teeth strong and prevent tooth decay. These include drinking tap (faucet) water with fluoride, brushing with fluoride toothpaste, and having a professional apply fluoride varnish. Fluoride is safe. It is found in nature in plants, soil, and water.

See this [Cavity Fighter flyer](#) and [Getting Fluoride flyer](#) for more information, and please post this information and/or share with families.

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 14

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

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