



Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 13 May 2024

Serving Berks & Schuylkill counties

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Region 13 News

Community Health Needs Assessment



Penn State Health wants to understand and address the health needs of the communities they serve. They are asking for your input so they can develop community programs to help you! The survey will take about 5 minutes to complete and is available in 6 languages through June 30th. Your answers are confidential. Please use this link to access the survey: <https://redcap.link/d4c1qa48>.

If you have specific questions about the survey or if you require a language or disability accommodation to complete this survey, please email CHNA@pennstatehealth.psu.edu.

Local Events



Spring Fiesta 2024 ~ June 8th

You don't want to miss out on this **FREE** family event featuring Berks' Best Tacos with a variety of traditional taco vendors and other delicious food vendors as well. Come out to Jim Dietrich Park on Saturday, **June 8th** between 11AM and 9PM to enjoy amazing food, ice cold drinks, and live music. The evening will end with a Fireworks show. Click [here](#) for more information.

Picnic in the Park ~ June 9th

Come on out to the Frackville Memorial Park for a FREE lunch, ice cream and prizes! Picnic begins at 2:00 pm.

A Night with Reptiles ~ June 18th

Join us for a meet & greet with some slithering guests. Tuesday, June 18th at 5:30 pm at the Pottsville Free Public Library. Email to register at potpublib@pottsvillelibrary.org.

Free Dental Services

Mission of Mercy is offering FREE Dental Services on June 21st & June 22nd. There is no eligibility or income requirements, but services are offered on a first come, first serve basis.

Please see the flyers below for more information.

- [Patient Flyers English 2024](#)
- [Patient Flyers Spanish 2024](#)



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

The Transition from Child Care to Self-Care

Most childcare facilities care for children up to 12 years old, which leaves many to wonder - 'what's next?' As your child approaches that age, it is important to determine if they are ready to stay home alone before and after school or if there is a need to look into other care options until they are ready to handle that responsibility.



Here are a few things to consider:

- Will your child come straight home after school?
- Will your child be lonely or frightened home alone?
- Can your child manage simple jobs, like fixing a snack?

- Is your child prepared to handle an accident or an emergency?
- Is your neighborhood safe?
- Is there someone nearby that can be on call in case of an emergency?
- Does your child follow family rules and directions well?

If you determine that your child is not ready to stay home alone, a few options to consider include looking to neighbors or family members for support, hiring a babysitter, and looking into activities that occur at the school that they can take part in until they can be picked up.

For additional information and resources, visit [Child Care Aware](#) and [Healthy Children](#)

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.

Early Intervention Family Survey
If your family receives Early Intervention services, please take this opportunity to share your input.

The Early Intervention Family Survey is open!
¡Ya está abierta la encuesta de intervención temprana para familias!

Scan to take the survey.
Escanee para realizar la encuesta.



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 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.



Child Development

What is Keystone STARS?

Keystone STARS is Pennsylvania's Quality Rating System for child care providers. It rates programs from STAR 1 to STAR 4 based on quality criteria. Programs must meet state regulations for safety and offer a child-friendly atmosphere with qualified teachers that partner with you to help your child learn. Child care and Head Start programs within Keystone STARS earn their rating based on quality standards that measure:

- staff education
- classroom and learning environment
- communication with families and the community
- strong leadership and management structure

As programs earn more STARS, they are providing higher quality early education for your child.



What can you expect at a Keystone STARS program?

- A comfortable place where your child can explore and learn
- Laughing, reading, and talking between teachers and children which builds language skills

- Teachers who continue to learn new ways to help your child thrive
- A safe, healthy, and exciting place
- Music, art, science, and play activities that increase school preparedness
- Your child feeling good about himself or herself
- Families involved in the program and their child's development
- Teachers that listen to children and parents
- Children having fun together and being respectful of each other

Find a Keystone STARS program!

You can search for local child care providers and see their STAR rating on the COMPASS website. Click [here](#). Click on "Find a Provider" and select filters like your child's age, your location, access to public transportation, and STAR rating.

Remember: the higher the STAR, the higher the quality!

Resource & Referral

Keystone Scholars

All children born to or adopted by PA residents automatically have a Keystone Scholars account in their name with \$100 for postsecondary education expenses. Parents can activate their child's account at www.pa529.com/keystone.



For full information on this program and to claim your child's \$100 deposit, click [here](#).

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/>

Family-Friendly Resources for Early Intervention Services and Supports

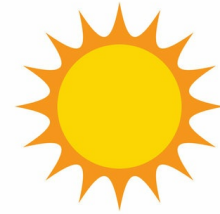
Did you know resources are available for families needing information about Early Intervention Supports and Services? Visit the Family section on the [Early Intervention Technical Assistance website](#) for more information. While there, take a look at the [EITA podcast](#) and the [EITA mobile app](#).



Health & Safety

Sun Safety for All Ages

As we approach the warm summer months, it is important to remember to keep our children's skin safe and protected as they enjoy those sunny days. Sunscreen is one important way to keep your children safe, but there are other ways to limit sun exposure. Any combination of these strategies will help protect your child as they enjoy the sunshine.



- Plan your child's time outdoors to avoid direct sunlight in the middle of the day, between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. The sun is most dangerous to skin during these hours, so plan your outdoor time accordingly. Stay in the shade or go indoors during these hours.
- Keep infants out of direct sunlight at all times, even early and late in the day.
- Dress your child in sun-protective clothing. There are many options out there that are made of light but tightly woven fabrics that block UV rays.
- Provide your child with a hat that has a wide brim to shade the face and neck.
- Sunglasses to protect the eyes make a fun accessory. Let your child choose their own!

Click this [link](#) for more information and resources.

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Oral Health

Getting Fluoride for Your Child

Fluoride is safe. Drinking tap (faucet) water with fluoride, brushing with fluoride toothpaste, and having a health professional apply fluoride varnish to the teeth are important ways to make teeth strong and prevent tooth decay.



Fluoride in Water

- Since most water doesn't have enough natural fluoride to prevent tooth decay, many communities add fluoride to their water supply (tap water) used for drinking and cooking.
- Give your child tap water with fluoride. If you are not sure if your water

- has enough fluoride, ask your child's dental clinic for help in finding out.
- Some bottled waters contain fluoride, and some do not. Check with the bottled water's manufacturer to ask about the fluoride content of a particular brand.
- If your tap water does not have enough fluoride, ask your dental or medical clinic if your child needs fluoride drops or tablets.

Fluoride Toothpaste

- Brush your child's teeth after breakfast and before bed once the first tooth begins to show.
- Use a child-sized toothbrush with soft bristles and fluoride toothpaste.

Fluoride Varnish

- Fluoride varnish is painted on a child's teeth to prevent or reduce cavities.
- It is not permanent but keeps fluoride on the teeth for several hours.
- Fluoride varnish has a pleasant taste and is well tolerated by children.

Family Engagement



Learning Through Everyday Activities, Using Everyday Items!

Infant: Introduce your baby to the outdoors as you welcome a new season. Allow them to touch different items outside and use different words to describe what they see and hear.

Help your baby notice the outside moving objects. Draw their attention to the leaves blowing in the wind, the birds hopping from branch to branch, the children on their bicycles. Give them details for what is being seen. ("Do you see that squirrel? He is hunting for acorns on the ground so he can eat. He is a hungry squirrel!") *Language and Literacy*

Toddler: Play ball with your toddler. Stand across from them and kick the ball, then have them kick it back to you. Next, throw the ball, and then bounce it. What is their favorite way to pass the ball? How far can they pass it? How high can it go? *Health, Wellness and Physical Development*

Preschooler: Assistive technology devices can aide in outdoor experiences. Take pictures of items found outside so, your child can sort and manipulate the pictures on their device. Use your preschooler's interests to get them involved in this experience by comparing the sizes and shapes of the items from nature with favorite toys. Include items from nature in toys for a period to allow them time to explore and investigate its properties. This allows for open-ended learning experiences that build creativity and confidence. *Scientific Thinking*

Kindergarten: Take advantage of the sun by creating shadow monsters! Ask your kindergartner to create different shadow shapes using their body and encourage them to watch what happens to the shadow when they move. How does it change when they hold items in their hand (like a ball) or opens a jacket, or holds your hand? Can the two of you create your own special shadow monster together? Ask them about the shadow monster, such as what sounds the shadow monster makes, and what it might want to eat for breakfast. Encourage them to make smaller shadow monsters by using only their fingers. *Approaches to Learning through Play*

Suggested Books:

- *Inside Outside Upside Down* by Stan Berenstain
- *Outside Over There* by Maurice Sendak
- *Are You Ready to Play Outside?* By Mo Williems
- *Goodnight World Outside* by Frances Gilbert

Resource: *Learning is Everywhere: Activities to do with Young Children.*
www.papromiseforchildren.com

Visit ELRC Region 13

Community Services for Children | elrc13@cscinc.org | www.cscinc.org

Connect with us



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

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