Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11 September 2024

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

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Region 11 News

School Year Schedule Changes - Child Care Works:

If your child's childcare arrangements have changed for the new school year (new provider, change in hours, no longer needing care) please remember to notify the ELRC of these changes. You can reach out to your ELRC Family Specialist with any updates or questions.

The ELRC will also need to be notified if your child(ren) will not need care due to a vacation that will last 5 or more consecutive days or if you are deciding to suspend care for the school year.

Wilkes Barre Area Wolfpack Community Outreach Event

The Wolfpack Welcome Day is being held on Friday, September 20 th from 4:00pm-6:30pm. The event will provide information on many free resources and programs available to families in the area. There will be a cook out, music, games and prizes! At 7:00pm, head on over to the new stadium for an exciting night out with your family and watch the first home football game against West Scranton.

- Wolfpack Event flyer

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:

ECEhire.com
a PHMC program

Parenting Corner

Choosing Quality Childcare: Understanding the Keystone STARS Program

Why It Matters?
Choosing childcare with a higher STAR rating brings numerous benefits for children:

1. Enhanced Learning Opportunities: Higher STAR ratings often indicate a curriculum that promotes cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.
2. Trained Staff: Facilities with higher STAR ratings invest in ongoing professional development for their staff, ensuring they're equipped with the latest knowledge and best practices.
3. Safe and Nurturing Environment: From health and safety protocols to positive interactions between caregivers and children, higher STAR ratings signify a commitment to providing a secure and supportive atmosphere.
4. Parental Peace of Mind: Knowing that your child is in a high-quality childcare setting can alleviate parental stress and foster confidence in your child's development.

Choosing Quality Childcare
When selecting childcare for your family, consider the following steps:

1. Research: Look for childcare centers participating in the Keystone STARS program and inquire about their STAR rating.
2. Visit: Schedule visits to potential childcare facilities to observe the environment, interact with staff, and ask questions about their programs and practices.
3. Ask for References: Reach out to other parents whose children attend the facility to gather firsthand insights into their experiences.
4. Trust Your Instincts: Ultimately, trust your instincts as a parent. Choose a childcare provider that aligns with your values, feels welcoming, and prioritizes your child's well-being and development.

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 Denise Continenza. She is food, families and health educator at Penn State Extension and she shares information on this Podcast about youth mental health. Click **here** to listen.

Child Development

9 Minutes a Day

There are 9 minutes during the day that have the greatest impact on a child:

- The first 3 minutes right after they wake up
- The 3 minutes after they come home from school
- The last 3 minutes of the day before they go to bed.

Make those minutes special and help children feel special, loved, and accepted.

- Each day children need meaningful eye-to-eye conversations with a parent. It is especially important to slow down and look them in the eye. Listen and respond with love.

- Hug your children, straighten her hair, pat him on the back and tell them how proud you are of him every day. A simple touch makes them feel connected to a parent in ways that words never will. Remember, actions speak louder than words!

Tips for a Smooth Child Care Drop Off

A smooth childcare drop-off can set a positive tone for the rest of the day for both you and your child. Here are some tips to make the process easier:

1. Establish a Routine: Consistency helps children feel secure. Try to follow a similar routine each day so your child knows what to expect.
2. Prepare the Night Before: Lay out clothes, pack lunches, and organize any necessary items the night before to reduce morning stress.
3. Keep Goodbyes Short and Sweet: Prolonged goodbyes can increase anxiety. Offer a brief, reassuring farewell and then leave promptly.
4. Provide Comfort Items: If allowed, let your child bring a favorite toy or comfort item to help ease their transition.
5. Stay Calm and Positive: Your attitude influences how your child feels. Stay calm and upbeat to help your child feel more secure.
6. Communicate with the Caregiver: Share any relevant information about your child's needs or feelings. This helps caregivers provide the best support.
7. Be Consistent: Try to drop off and pick up at the same time each day. Consistency helps children feel more secure.
8. Prepare Your Child: Talk about the day's activities and reassure them about the fun and learning they'll experience.
9. Practice Drop-Offs: If your child is particularly anxious, consider doing short, practice drop-offs to help them get used to the routine.
10. Follow Up: After drop-off, check in with the caregiver if you have concerns or questions about how your child is adjusting.
11. Be Patient: Adjustments can take time. If your child is having a tough time, be patient and supportive as they adapt.

Every child is different, so it might take some time to figure out what works best for your family.

Resource & Referral

Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania

Parent to Parent of Pennsylvania strives to empower and support parents throughout the state by connecting families of children & adults with special needs or disabilities to other families who've had similar journeys.
Is your family struggling with a diagnosis, even a rare condition? Do you or someone you know have life experience navigating a diagnosis within your own family and want to help others? If so, reach out to the Parent to Parent organization. Parent to Parent of PA has over 1,400 volunteer Peer Supporters who can support for 830 conditions.

Parents and Family members of children and adults with disabilities or special needs may be matched for the following conditions or concerns: (please note: list is not limited to...)

- Physical disabilities
- Developmental disabilities
- Special health care needs
- Behavioral/mental health concerns
- Foster care or adoption
- Educational issues

http://www.parenttoparent.org/
Call today for more information: 1-888-727-2706
General Inquiries: p2pinfo@parenttoparent.org

Health & Safety

ECELS Health & Safety Newsletter

Early Childhood Education Linkage System

(ECELS) publishes a monthly newsletter full of valuable health & safety tips and resources for children and families.

Click here to download the most recent newsletter.

School Bus Safety

It's back to school time which means we are seeing more buses. Here are a few tips to stay safe for kids and parents.

Remind your child about safe practices at the bus stop and on the bus:

- Make sure drivers can see the kids at your bus stop.
- Stand at least three giant steps back from the curb as the bus approaches and board the bus one at a time.
- Wait for the school bus to come to a complete stop before getting off.
- Stay away from the bus wheels at all times – the driver cannot see you.
- Wait until the bus has come to a complete stop and watch for the driver to signal that it's safe to board.
- Listen to the bus driver and sit still to avoid distracting the driver.
- When exiting the bus, cross only in front of the bus, never behind it.
- Make sure the bus stop has proper lighting.
- The bus stop should be cleared of snow and ice during the winter.

To learn more: https://www.safekids.org/safetytips/field_risks/school-bus-safety

While driving, remember the laws regarding stopped buses:

- When you meet or overtake a stopped school bus with red signal lights flashing and stop arm activated, you MUST STOP.
- When approaching a school bus with flashing amber lights, SLOW DOWN and be PREPARED TO STOP.
- When you approach an intersection where a school bus is stopped with red signal lights flashing and stop arm activated, you MUST STOP.
- You MUST STOP at least ten (10) feet away from the school bus.
- You MUST WAIT until the red lights have stopped flashing and the stop arm has been withdrawn before moving.
- DO NOT MOVE until all the children have reached a place of safety

To learn more:
https://www.dot.state.pa.us/Public/DVSPubsForms/BDL/BDL%20Publications/Pub%2097.pdf

**Information from PA Department of Transportation and Safe Kids Worldwide*

How Smoking Affects Oral Health

Smoking can lead to disease and disability, harming nearly every bodily organ. More than 16 million Americans are living with a disease caused by smoking.

Secondhand smoke is also dangerous to both adults and children.

Smoking traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes, and smokeless tobacco can all cause health problems. Smoking makes it more likely that a person will have tooth decay, gum disease, oral cancer, and poor birth outcomes. It also causes stained teeth, bad breath, and reduced ability to taste and smell.

Not smoking or quitting smoking is important for overall health, including oral health. When a smoker quits, it improves their health and quality of life. It also improves the health and quality of life of those around them, especially young children.
Smokefree.gov

Explore this website to find out about different ways to quit smoking.

Apple Juice Recall

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) website indicates that more than 9,500 cases of Great Value apple juice sold at Walmart stores across 25 states has been recalled by Walmart's juice supplier. Reportedly the juice contains 13.2 parts per billion (ppb) inorganic arsenic, which exceeds the FDA set limit of 10 ppb.

Sold as 8-ounce bottles as part of a 6-pack, the exact UPC code can be obtained on the FDA enforcement report. Click here for more information.

Family Engagement

Using Play to Build the Brain

Did you know that more than any other activity, play promotes the **healthy development** of your child!

The most important thing to remember about play is that it should be fun! Learning through play can use the mind, body or even props. It engages the imagination and exercises the muscles, and it also allows our children to practice new skills. Play that allows for exploration provides a sense of discovery and learning.

How to fuel brain development using play.
Therefore, what we can do is use play to assist in the development of each stage of the brain. Here are some ideas that you can try with your kids to help them learn through play:
Brainstem development (from birth to 9 months) some great activities are:

- Peek-a-boo
- Taste play (for example, yoghurt finger painting)
- Tactile Play (for example, sensory toys)
- Massage

Midbrain development (from 6 months to 2 years)

- Gross motor play (for example, crawling through a tunnel)
- Fine motor play (for example, shape sorting)
- Music play

Limbic development (From 1 year to 4 years)

- Team play
- Win/lose play
- Turns play
- Sharing play

Cortical development (From 3 years to 6 years)

- Humor play (jokes, skits)
- Language play (books, word games)
- Arts (craft, painting)
- Games (board games)

Reference: ***Gooey Brains***

Visit ELRC Region 11

Community Services for Children |elrc11@cscinc.org| www.cscinc.org

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