



Community Services for Children

Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 16

September 2024

Serving Bucks county

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Region 16 Updates

The ELRC offices will be closed on Monday, October 14th for Columbus Day. We will reopen on Tuesday, October 15th.



Rapid Response Team

Thank you to everyone who attended our Rapid Response Team Kick Off Meetings in September. Attendees were able to learn how the Rapid Response Team is designed to support the child care provider who is struggling with the challenging behaviors of a child who is at immediate risk of suspension or expulsion. This team will also provide supports and referrals to the family and child.



If you were unable to attend a Kick Off Meeting, please reach out to your Quality Coach to schedule a meeting to review the program.

If a child enrolled in your program could benefit from the Rapid Response Team supports, you can begin the referral process here: [RRT Referral](#) (This program does require parental consent)

We would also like to thank Children's Village and Kol Emet Preschool for hosting these events.



Virtual Parent Information Session

The Bucks County Local Interagency Counsel, announces a Virtual Parent Information Session to be held on Tuesday October 29, 2024. Join the Local ICC to connect with others, learn about resources for families, and opportunities to be involved in early intervention.

Please review the flyer below for details on how to register for this event.

- [Virtual Parent Information Session](#)

Region 16 Provider Supports

Director's Network

Each month the Quality Coaches host the Bucks County Directors' Network meeting. These sessions are an excellent opportunity to network, learn, and engage with representatives from a wide variety of service agencies in the county. On a regular basis, providers can hear updates from early intervention staff, advocates, the Professional Development Organization, certification and more.



Please join us this month on Wednesday, October 16th 1:00-3:00, for an *in-person* gathering at Bucks County Community College/Bristol Campus, 1304 Veterans Hwy. Bristol. Attendance is strongly recommended. Hear updates from a variety of early childhood partners who can help support your children, families, and program goals. This meeting will be our first Community of Practice for Leadership. Our topic will be Leadership Investment. Registration is required for this meeting. Please review the Quality Coach Calendar to sign up.

Please review the attached In-Person Director's Network Schedule. You may register on [this flyer](#) for future meetings.

Community of Practice

The ELRC will offer meetings for Leadership and Teachers to participate in virtually during evening and daytime hours.

Please review the Virtual Early Educators Connections Flyer and follow the link to register for the day and time you would like to attend.

- [Early Educators Connections Flyer](#)

Coaches Calendar

Take a look at the Region 16 Coaches Calendar full of program support opportunities. Reach out to your Quality Coach with any questions!

- [Region 16 Coaches Calendar](#)

ELRC Updates

CCW Reminders

- Check your invoices each month for accuracy. Let your Provider Specialist know if you have any questions.
- Please mark on your invoice the last day of care when a child stops attending. Make sure to watch children who frequently deviate from their assigned schedule.
- When a child has been absent more than 5 consecutive days, the enrollment will be suspended until the child returns.

STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Awards!

Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Award acceptance letters were sent to eligible STAR 2, 3 & 4 providers in mid-September. The intent of the Awards is to improve, support, and recognize the quality of Pennsylvania's early learning and school-age programs that are invested in the Keystone STARS Program.



Providers in ELRC Regions 11,12, 13, 14 & 16 were emailed their acceptance letter. If you were expecting a letter but did not receive it, please reach out to your Quality Coach.

Providers should complete their acceptance letter and email back to elrc-kgrants@cscinc.org. All acceptance letters must be received by December 13, 2024.

For full details, please see the [Announcement ELRC 24 #02, 2024-25 Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Awards](#). This Announcement contains important information regarding general provider eligibility requirements, a policy eligibility exception for STAR 1 programs, special consideration for STAR 2 and 3 programs, award amounts, allowable expenses, ineligible expenses, processes and a timeline.



The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance is offering a new curriculum series, ***Strengthening Business Practices for Child Care Programs***. The training content and activities are designed to strengthen child care providers' foundational knowledge of sound fiscal management and business operations.

The series contains four modules of business practices content:

- Budgets, Projections, and Planning
- Financial Reports and Internal Controls
- Marketing for Child Care Programs
- Staff Recruitment and Retention for Center-based Child Care Programs

For an overview of sessions offered, click on this flyer:

- [Business Practices for Child Care Programs](#)

For dates and registration information, click on this flyer:

- [Fall-Winter 2024 Registration](#)

Free School Age Lesson Plans

Best Day Ever! is back for Fall! Join us for another round of FREE after-school and school holiday lesson plans designed to make program planning a breeze. Designed by teachers for teachers, these easy-to-use, standards-aligned plans offer a turnkey solution for school-age programs during after school hours or on days when kids are off from school.



The program includes ten after school plans, each presented in a weekly format with five days of activities, plus ten full-day Kids' Day Out plans for school holidays or unexpected snow days! All are centered around high-interest themes and come with daily schedules and plenty of hands-on activities using materials you likely already have on hand.

These lesson plans, written and tested by The Learning Lamp, a leading out-of-school-time education provider in Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains region, are available for **FREE through February 28, 2025**.

Sample lessons include:

- Money Masterminds
- Colorful Creations
- Night Sky Navigators

Click [here](#) to sign up today to get access to these easy-to-use plans for your program!

Professional Development - School Age Staff

School age staff and administrators can take part in Professional Development opportunities through the Collaborative for Advancing Health Equity in Out-of-School Time. All trainings are virtual. See the flyers below:



- [Out-of-School Time Training](#)
- [Uncovering Health Vulnerability](#)

Rapid Response Team - Tip of the Month Family Handbooks



The purpose of a family handbook is to share the policies and procedures of your program with the families that you serve. It's also an opportunity to share your program's strengths and to provide clear expectations so that families can determine if your program will be a good fit for their child.

Family handbooks should be reviewed at least annually and be revised whenever necessary. Requesting input from staff can also be helpful when updating your handbook. They may be aware of trends or concerns that could be addressed with updated policies. If your handbook has been created electronically it can easily be updated and sent out to your families.

Your family handbook is a reflection of your business, your educational philosophy and your daily policies and procedures. It provides clear communication between families, staff and the director and should be updated as needed. If you are looking for a sample handbook or want to know what policies should be included in your handbook, contact your Quality Coach who will provide a variety of samples and resources.

Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program

PennAEYC has created a new resource for early care and education providers and the families you serve about the Infant and Toddler Early Intervention program, which provides services to children who have or are at risk of developmental delays.

This one-page handout includes valuable information on:

- Eligibility criteria and the enrollment process
- Available services and how they can support child development
- Contact information for referrals and questions

[PennAEYC Infant Toddler Early Intervention Handout](#)

Health & Safety

Fire Prevention

October is Fire Prevention Month! The National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) has an abundance of resources available on their website, including lesson plans and classroom activity ideas.

Fire Safety may also be an interesting parent workshop idea (STARS indicator FC3.4.6). Invite a local fire house to visit the center one evening to show the trucks to the children and ask a firefighter to discuss home fire safety with families. You can provide the following resources and handouts to families to supplement the workshop.

- [Fire Escape](#)
- [Escape Planning Tips](#)
- [Smoke Alarms at Home](#)
- [Safety Action Plan](#)

ECELS Health & Safety Newsletter

Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS) publishes a monthly newsletter full of valuable health & safety tips and resources for staff, children and families.



Click [here](#) to download the most recent newsletter.



Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)

As we move into the winter season, we know that paying for home heating bills can be difficult for families. That's where the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) can help income eligible families pay their heating bills. This vital resource is designed to help families ease the financial burden of winter heating costs.

Please share this LIHEAP brochure with the families in your program.

- [Low Income Home Energy Assistance](#)

Oral Health for Children with Disabilities

A disability can affect a child's activities and ability to learn. Some children with disabilities need extra health services and support services. Children with disabilities are at higher risk for tooth decay and other oral health problems than children without disabilities.



Oral Health Challenges for Children with Disabilities

- Children with physical disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, may not have the motor skills they need to use a toothbrush safely or to sit still in a dental chair during dental visits.

- Children with communication disorders, such as delayed speech and language development, may not be able to tell their parents that they have a toothache.
- Children who get frequent medical care, such as having many medical visits or hospital stays, may be afraid of the dental office and may not cooperate during visits.
- Children who take medicines with added sugars or that cause dry mouth are at high risk for tooth decay.
- Children on special diets may be at high risk for tooth decay. Foods that are soft or high in starch (e.g., potatoes, corn) stick to children's teeth and give bacteria in the mouth more time to cause tooth decay.

Strategies to Help Improve the Oral Health of Children with Disabilities

- Click [here](#) to learn more about taking care of teeth, selecting the right toothbrush, adapting toothbrushes, addressing challenges, providing good nutrition, encouraging safety, and going to the dentist.
- Give children with disabilities extra support. Make sure children eat food and drink beverages low in sugar and that children's teeth are brushed with fluoridated toothpaste after meals. Children with intellectual disabilities may need extra time for brushing.
- Please share this information 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 16

Community Services for Children | elrc16@cscinc.org | www.cscinc.org

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