Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11 December 2024

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

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Region 11 News

Please note that the ELRC offices will be closed on Wednesday, December 25th and Wednesday, January 1st. We wish you all a safe and healthy holiday season!

Winter Coat Distribution

Just in time for the cold weather, ELRC Region 11 staff, in partnership with the Department of Human Services, distributed winter coats for children in the region. Over two hundred children received new warm winter coats in Luzerne and Wyoming Counties.

Child Care Works Notification

The Pennsylvania Subsidized Child Care Eligibility regulations provide information to families regarding their responsibilities to pay the

copayment for subsidized child care. Failure to pay co-payment is identified as an Intentional Program Violation and may result in loss of subsidy benefits.

Please see the following notification to fully understand your co-pay responsibilities. Reach out to your family specialist with any questions.

- Intentional Program Violation - English
- Intentional Program Violation - Spanish

Baby, It's Cold Outside!

Winter is quickly approaching and the temperatures are dropping. While the cold weather may mean more time spent indoors, it does not mean children have to stop exploring and learning. Try these educational websites for young children to keep your children engaged and discovering during the cold winter months.

- Sesame Street: https://www.sesamestreet.org/
- Nick Jr.: https://www.nickjr.com/
- FunBrain PK & K Playground: https://www.funbrain.com/pre-k-and-k-playground
- PBS Kids: https://pbskids.org/
- Disney Jr.: https://disneynow.com/all-games

Discounted of Free Medical and Dental Care

Rural Health Corporation has nine medical centers, throughout Luzerne, Wyoming and Sullivan counties, including three co-located dental centers, and a homeless clinic. Rural Health Corporation clinical staff provide comprehensive primary and preventive medical and dental health care and 24-hour emergency services.

Rural Health Corporation of Northeastern PA
Quality Healthcare Since 1971

For more information and locations call 570-825-8741 or 1-833-283-5887 or click here.

As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Rural Health Corporation offers discounted or free services on a discounted sliding fee schedule based on the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) guidelines.

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

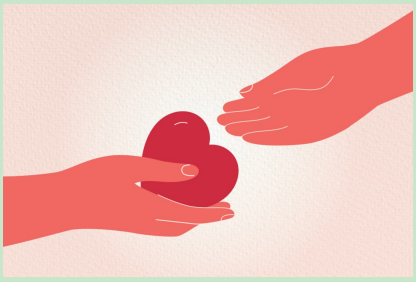
Rapid Response Team

Rapid Response Team is a short-term intervention designed to support children who may be experiencing challenging behaviors in the early learning setting. This team observes the child at the child care facility and will offer strategies to the teacher and parent. If appropriate, referrals to community resources and services are shared with the family and provider as well.

RAPID
RESPONSE TEAM

If you have concerns that your child may be suspended or expelled from child care and could benefit from the Rapid Response Team supports, you can begin the referral process here: ***RRT Referral***
(This program does require parental and provider consent)

Teaching and Modeling Compassion

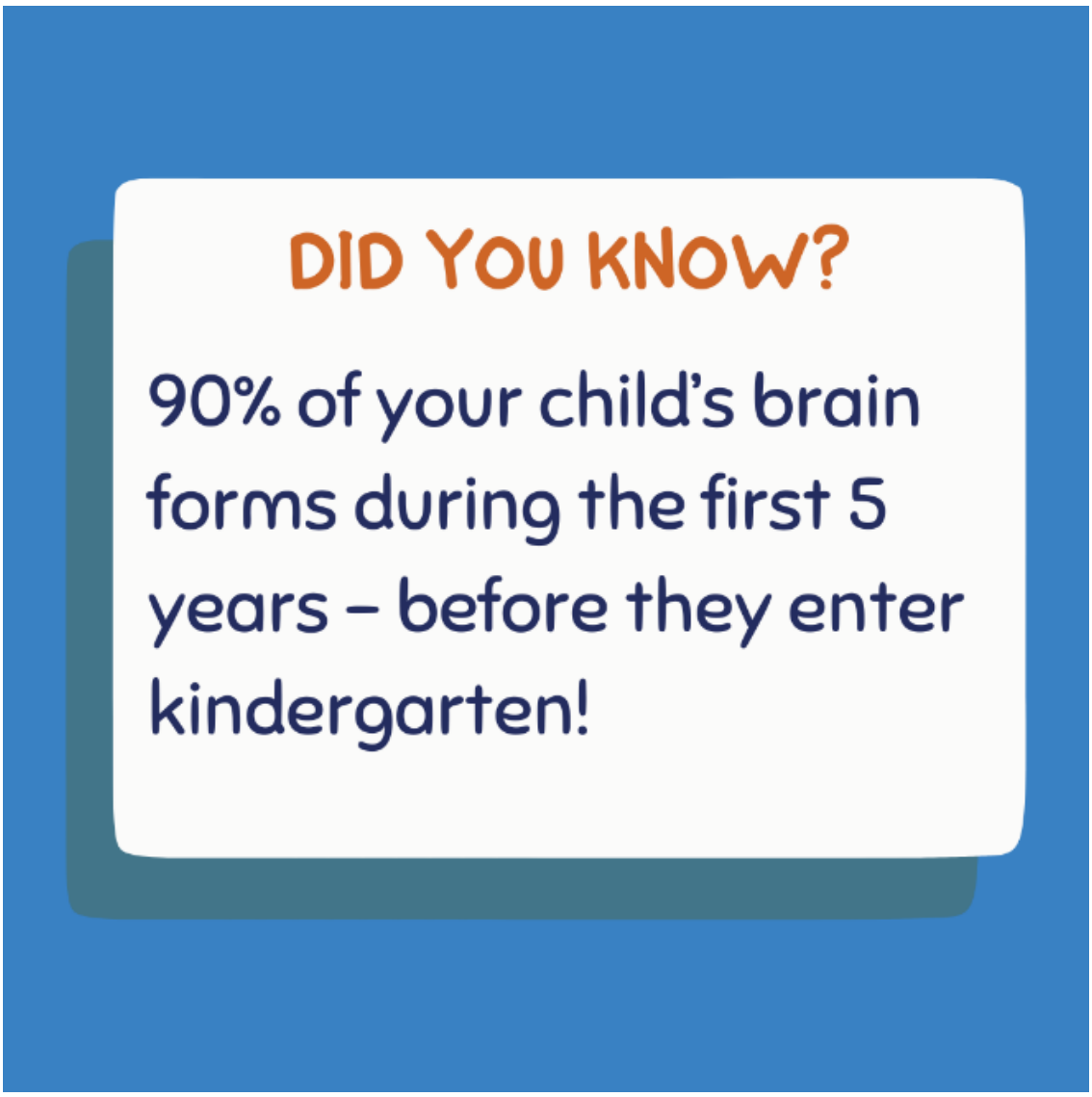


Teaching young children about generosity and compassion can be a rewarding experience! Here are some effective tips:

1. Lead by Example: Demonstrate charitable behavior in your own life. Involve children in acts of kindness, such as donating clothes or helping a neighbor.
2. Storytelling: Share stories and books that highlight themes of generosity and kindness. Discuss the characters' actions and the impact they have on others.
3. Involve Them in Choices: Let children help choose a charity or cause they care about. This can make them feel more connected and invested.
4. Set Up a Giving Jar: Encourage them to save a portion of their allowance or gifts for charity. Once the jar is full, take a trip to donate it together.
5. Volunteer Together: Find age-appropriate volunteer opportunities, such as helping at a local shelter or participating in community clean-up days.
6. Discuss Empathy: Talk about feelings and how helping others can make a difference. Encourage them to think about how they would feel in someone else's shoes.
7. Celebrate Giving: Recognize and praise their charitable efforts, no matter how small. Celebrate their contributions to reinforce the behavior.
8. Make It Fun: Organize charity events, like bake sales or toy drives, where they can engage in giving while having fun with friends.
9. Teach About Needs: Explain why some people might need help, using

simple language. Tailor discussions to their understanding and experiences.
10. Create a Kindness Calendar: Plan daily or weekly acts of kindness, encouraging children to think of new ways to help others regularly.

By incorporating these tips, you can help instill a sense of compassion and a desire to give in young children!



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 Dr. Brown from the Children's Clinic at Lehigh Valley Health Network. She shares information about promoting healthy sleep habits for children. Click here to listen.

Child Development

Exercise in the Winter is Fun!

The colder it gets outside, the more we tend to stay indoors, but research shows that when children play outdoors it promotes learning, curiosity and it builds strong muscles. It improves their mood and behavior as well! Children need at least sixty minutes of vigorous exercise daily, even in the winter. So, look for opportunities to get your child outdoors and moving!

If children are dressed appropriately and the temperature is not below freezing, it is safe for children to play outside but they need to dress in layers and wear a hat, scarf, mittens, and boots as needed. Have them practice putting on their boots and mittens by themselves to build their independence.

Once your child is dressed appropriately, go outdoors together. Visit their favorite playground, play soccer in the snow or give them a child sized snow shovel to clear your sidewalk. Sledding and building snowmen is fun too! Children learn best when they can engage their whole bodies in an activity and wintertime provides unique opportunities to enjoy nature, build lifelong memories and promote healthy physical development.

Resource & Referral

Mental Health Care for Children

Sesame Workshop provides so many resources for parents and families! Click **here** to view resources to support your child's mental and emotional development.

If you have concerns about your child's mental health, reach out to your pediatrician, your child's teacher, or the ELRC for support. Click here for a support guide.

Health Insurance Coverage

Make sure you're covered! Pennie's Open Enrollment Period for the 2025 coverage year is open now until Jan. 15, 2025.

During this period, individuals and families can enroll in health insurance plans, make changes to their existing coverage, or renew their current plans. It is a critical time for PA residents to ensure they have the necessary health coverage for the upcoming year.

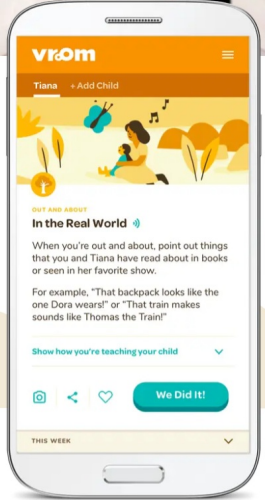
Enrolling is easy, visit **pennie.com** to learn more!

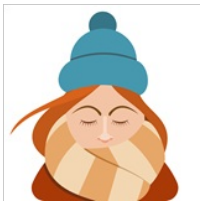
Boost brain building with Vroom

Vroom is a free tool for families and caregivers that puts free, science-based tips right at their fingertips. Learn how to download the app and share brain-building tips from

Vroom to help young brains grow strong.

Click here to watch the video.





Energy Assistance

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is now accepting applications. LIHEAP is a federally funded program administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) that provides assistance for home heating bills so those Pennsylvanians meeting eligibility and income guidelines can stay warm and safe during the winter months. Assistance is available for renters and homeowners.
LIHEAP can help you keep your home warm and safe during the coldest seasons. From **November 4, 2024, to April 4, 2025** , you can apply for a cash grant to help pay your heating bill. You can receive from $200 to $1,000 based on your household size, income, and fuel type. The cash grant is a one-time payment. The grant will be sent directly to your utility provider or fuel company to be credited on your bill.

Pennsylvanians can apply for LIHEAP and other public assistance programs online at www.compass.state.pa.us or by phone at 1-866-550-4355. On-site County Assistance Office (CAO) services are available if clients cannot access online services or need assistance that cannot be accessed through the COMPASS website, the myCOMPASS PA mobile app, or by calling the Customer Service Centers 1-877-395-8930.

Help for Parents

Parenting can be challenging. There's no such thing as a perfect parent, and there are a lot of different ways to be a good one. **The Early Learning GPS** has tips, tools, and resources to help when families encounter challenging behavior with their child.

Parenting is challenging, and this challenge comes with little direction at times. Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) believes every parent needs and deserves two things: Information and support! Visit the **PFSA website** for resources and support.

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.

Reduce Your Risk from Respiratory Viruses

The CDC expects Flu, COVID-19, and RSV illness levels to increase in the winter. The holidays bring large gatherings, travel, and more time indoors, which can mean more viruses spreading. There are strategies to help us stay healthy so we can enjoy the time we spend with our families and friends.

Some prevention steps include:

- Immunizations - Make sure you know which ones are recommended and make a plan to get them. You can talk to your healthcare provider if you have questions about immunizations.
- Staying home and away from others when you are sick (including people you live with)
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- Improving ventilation
- Washing hands often

Click **here** to learn more about everyday prevention steps.

**Information from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Finding a Dentist

Did you know that tooth decay is the number one chronic disease for children but can be prevented and managed with good oral care? Oral care starts during pregnancy and dental visits should begin by a child's 1st birthday.

For help finding a dentist use the following links:

- Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center
- American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry – Find a Pediatric Dentist
- American Dental Association – Find a Dentist
- Pennsylvania Dental Association http://www.padental.org
- Find Dentists Accepting Medical Assistance

Family Engagement

Taking Along a Song

Traveling is a great place to learn and expand vocabulary. Infants often find the movement of travel soothing, while toddlers and preschoolers enjoying singing songs in the car.

Key Learning Area: Creative Thinking and Expression

Infant: Sing to your infant about where you are going and how you will get there. Use different tones and volumes while singing.

Toddler: Sing to your toddler about where you are going and how you will get there. Sing what the two of you will do once you are there.

Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten: While at the library, help your child choose a book about the different ways to travel, then on the way home, make up a song. Sing about different ways to travel (like on a horse, or in a helicopter, or in a race car, for example).

Resource: www.papromiseforchildren.com

Visit ELRC Region 11

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