Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11 February 2025

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

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Region 11 News

Please note that the ELRC offices will be closed on Monday, February 17th in observance of Presidents' Day. All offices will reopen on Tuesday, February 18th.

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 copayment is identified as an Intentional Program Violation and may result in loss of subsidy benefits.

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

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

American Sign Language Beginner Class

The **Dietrich Theater in Tunkhannock** is offering a beginner class in American Sign Language. This is a great opportunity to become confident in communicating with the hearing impaired. This skill can also be helpful in communicating with nonverbal children.

Click **here** to view the Dietrich Theater's posting for this class.

VITA offering FREE tax preparation in Montour and Columbia County

Do you live in Montour or Columbia County and need help with filing your taxes? The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program is here to help you free with Federal, State and Local tax filing.

Please click **here** to see the VITA flyer for more information on how to make an appointment today!

Region 11 Community Resource Spotlight

Wyoming County HANDS Supporting Early Childhood Development

HANDS of Wyoming County provides parents early childhood expertise and family support with the goal to strengthen the lives of families and children for the future of Wyoming County community. HANDS provides opportunities for parent and child activities, trainings and workshops, educator resources, and opportunities to meet and support each other. Parent support groups such as Special Needs Parents and Parents Seeking Support in Raising Children are available.

HANDS of Wyoming County
1687 Scottsville Rd. Mehoopany, PA 18629
570-833-2350
https://hands-wyco.org/

Cyber Security Awareness Training

The PA Department of Banking and Securities is presenting a FREE virtual event on Wednesday, February 26th at 1:00pm to educate the public on scams and common tactics used to deceive us out of our hard earned money. All you need to participate is an e-mail account and access to Zoom. Please see the attached flyer for more information on how to register by February 19th for this valuable training.

- Cyber Security Training 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

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)

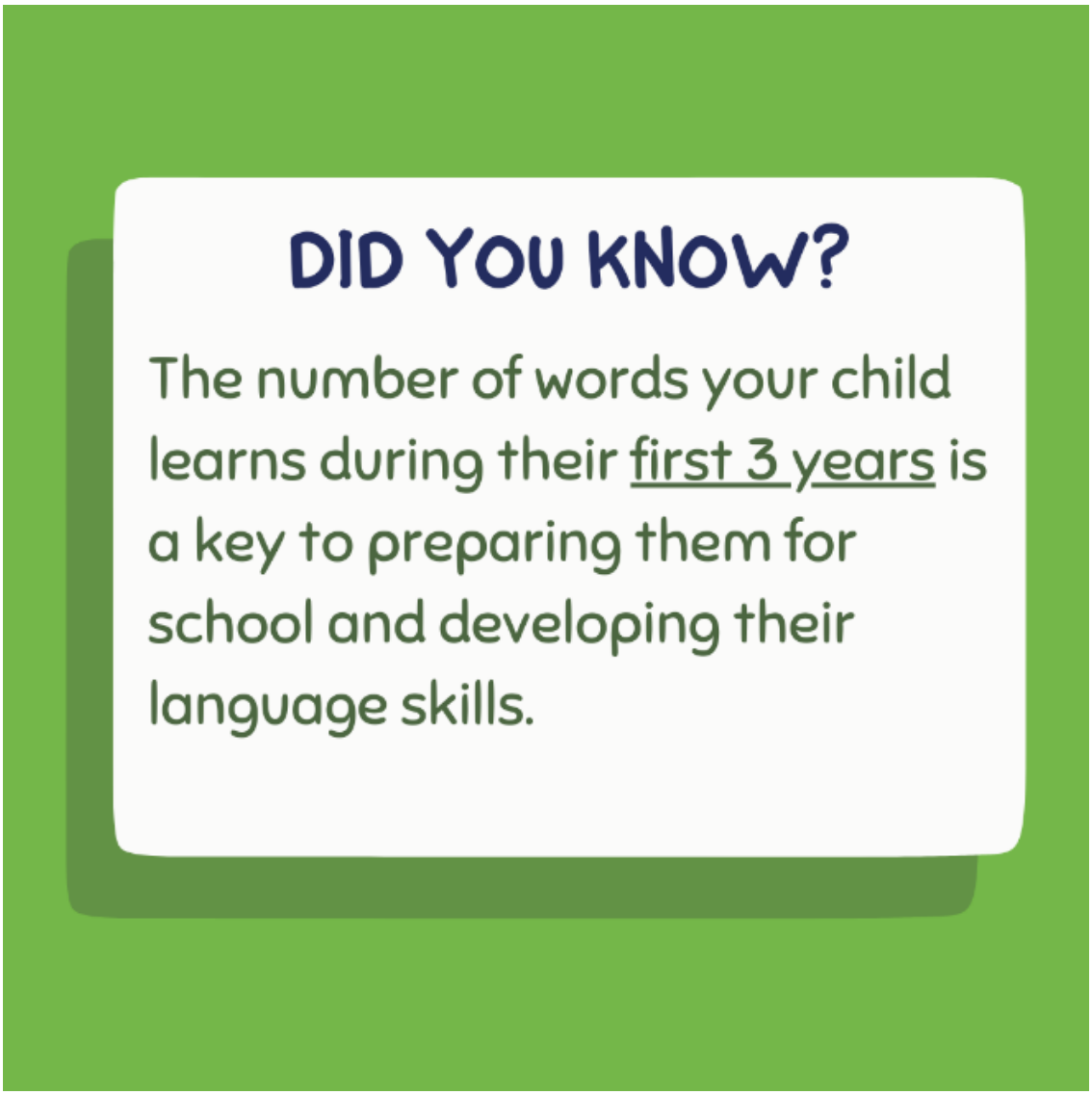
Potty Training

Potty training is a big developmental milestone for your child. Here are some general tips to help begin the process:

- Wait for cues from your child to see if they are ready. This may include staying dry overnight or during naps, asking you to change their diaper, or going to the same spot in the house to go in their diaper. This behavior typically happens after age 2, but each child is different and not all will be ready at that age. Most children are potty trained by the age of 4. If you are experiencing a long delay, please speak to your child's pediatrician.
- Be consistent with your potty-training plan. Children need a routine/schedule to help them learn. For example, when you first start, you may be taking your child to the bathroom every 30-60 minutes or set specific times such as when they wake up, after a meal, before/after naptime, and before bedtime. Communicate with the staff at your childcare provider about your child's progress and plan, so they can help support what you are doing at home. Remember, potty training needs to start at home.
- Reward your child with lots of positive praise when they use the toilet. Stay calm and don't punish if there is an accident. Setbacks can happen. You may need to take a break and then resume in a few months. Remember, they are learning, and it can take time for them to be able to listen to their bodies and be confident in this skill.

For more information and tips, please visit these websites:

- Potty Training - UC Davis
- HealthChildren.org
- Toddler Toilet Training



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 Nyanda Finley de Santos from Community Services for Children, as she encourages parents to advocate for their child and gives tips to build relationships with teachers. Click here to listen.

Child Development

Benefits of Attending a Parent-Teacher Conference

Keystone STAR 2, 3 and 4 programs must offer parent-teacher conferences to families each year. Conferences are an important part of a quality early learning program. They offer teachers and families an opportunity to discuss a child's strengths, struggles, and developmental milestones. Every child's first and most important teachers are the family members who nurture their development and learning. When a child enters an early learning program, the family's partnership with the teachers ensures that the experience is comforting and successful for all. According to the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC), "Families and teachers both have information that can be exchanged as part of an ongoing reciprocal relationship. Together, you support the healthy development and learning of each child."

Research shows that children succeed when their families are involved. Here are some other ways to connect with your child's teacher:

1. Get to know your child's teacher as soon as possible so you can feel comfortable communicating with each other about your child.
2. Ask about ways you could be involved in your child's program.
3. Share information with your child's teachers to help them understand your child's skills, preferences, interests, experiences, and needs.
4. Share your own talents, interests, and culture.
5. Communicate in different ways to build a reciprocal relationship with your child's teacher.

Keep in mind that you and the teachers are partners in supporting your child's

early education. Even when you are away from your children, the things you have taught them stay with them. Your values, traditions, songs, and stories are all part of your child's foundation for learning. Don't be afraid to share information, even when the topics are upsetting or worrisome—the more the teacher knows about your child, the better they can support play, learning, and development. The more you know about how your child is spending their day, the better you can support learning at home. Remember that you and the teacher both have your child's wellbeing at heart.

Resource & Referral

Support for Families and Children with Special Health Care Needs

Community to Home Program improves the health of children and youth with special health care needs by assisting them, along with their families, to access the services and supports required to thrive in the community and develop to their full potential. Community to Home assists families to navigate systems and identify resources in order to receive services while empowering them to become strong advocates and self-reliant.

Community to Home provides services within 48 rural counties in Pennsylvania through collaboration between the PA Department of Health and two grantees, CareStar and Health Promotion Council.

Click here for more information.
For any questions or to make a referral for the Community to Home program, contact the Special Kids Network helpline at 1-800-986-4550.

Pennsylvania 211: Get Connected. Get Help.™

If you need to connect with resources in your community, but don't know where to look, PA 211 is a great place to start. Dial 211 or text your zip code to 898-211 to talk with a resource specialist for free. Visit this website for more information: https://www.pa211.org/

Your ELRC Family Specialist can also perform a needs assessment and provide you with referrals and resources to meet your family's needs.

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.

February is Heart Health Month

February is Heart Health Month and it is never too early to start young children on the path of taking care of their hearts. Here are some tips of things that you can do at home to teach children about their heart health:

- Eat Heart Healthy Snacks—fresh fruit, veggie sticks with hummus, whole grain crackers, and yogurt all make for healthy snack choices for children.
- Exercise—nothing gets your child's heart pumping more than some fun exercises. Jumping jacks, dancing, and stretching are all great choices. Explain that moving our bodies helps our hearts stay strong. You could also have a heart-themed obstacle course or a "heart health dance party" to get the kids moving!
- Heartbeat Listening—let your child listen to their own heartbeat. You can use a toy stethoscope or simply encourage them to place their hands on their chest to feel their heart beating. This is a great way to introduce the concept of the heart and its important job in our bodies.
- Read Books about Heart Health—here are some good stories that you can read to your child about heart health:

"My Heart" by Iris L. F.
"A Healthy Heart" by Becky L. Spratford
"The Magic of a Healthy Heart" by Dorothea Hurley
"The Adventures of the Heart" by Leslie K. John

Schedule of Vaccinations

Vaccines can prevent common diseases that used to seriously harm or even kill infants and children. Without vaccines, your child is at risk of becoming seriously ill or even dying from childhood diseases such as measles and whooping cough. It is always better to prevent a disease than to treat one after it occurs.

- Vaccination is a safe, highly effective, and easy way to help keep your family healthy.
- The recommended vaccination schedule balances when a child is likely to be exposed to a disease and when a vaccine will be most effective.
- Vaccines are tested to ensure they can be given safely and effectively at the recommended ages.

Please see the updated 2025 recommended immunization schedule for children birth through 6 years old from the CDC and American Academy of Pediatrics and visit your child's primary care provider with any questions.

- 2025 Recommended Immunizations

Brush, Book, Bed: A Nighttime Routine

1. **Brush** - Each night, help your child brush their

teeth. Young children need help with brushing to do it well. Have your child spit out any extra toothpaste. Do not rinse with water; the little bit of toothpaste left behind is good for teeth.

2. **Book** – After brushing, find a comfortable spot and read a book with your child. Reading aloud will help with your child's language development and social-emotional skills. You can also make up stories, sing songs, or use silly voices while you enjoy spending time with your child.
3. **Bed** – Sleep is very important. Keeping a regular bedtime and having a predictable bedtime routine can help your child wind down at the end of the day.

For more information, visit: https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/oral-health/Pages/Brush-Book-Bed.aspx .

Family Engagement

Recognizing and Identifying Emotions

Did you know that recognizing and identifying emotions are a kindergarten readiness skill? The first step in learning how to express emotions in a healthy and appropriate way is when your child can recognize the emotions they are feeling.

Reading books about feelings and emotions can be a special time for you to spend with your little one, and you can use your local library as a resource. Ask your local children's librarian if you need help finding appropriate books for your child's age.

Take fun photos of family members showing various emotions, then look back at the photos together and ask your child to name the emotions they are seeing. Talk about a time you felt that way and allow your child to share with you.

Sing "If You're Happy and You Know it" with your child. For each verse, change the lyrics to other familiar emotions like sad, scared, proud, excited, mad, etc. Have your child make a face that shows that emotion and make up an action to go with it. Children love repetition, so you can sing this song is lots of ways and in many variations. If you don't know the song, here is a link- [If You're Happy And You Know It](#) .

Visit ELRC Region 11

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Connect with us

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