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## Community Services for Children

### Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 12

### June 2025

Serving Carbon, Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike, Wayne and Susquehanna Counties

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## Region 12 News

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### Juneteenth

The ELRC offices will be closed on Thursday, June 19th in observation of the Juneteenth federal holiday. Known to some as the country's "[second Independence Day](#)," Juneteenth celebrates the freedom of enslaved people in the United States at the end of the Civil War. For more than 150 years, African American communities across the country have observed this holiday.



### Free Blood Lead Screening

The PA Department of Health in Lackawanna County is providing free lead screening through July 2025. Screenings are available for children ages 1-6 years old. An appointment is needed to complete your child's screening. For more information, click [here](#).



### Mobile Community Days

ELRC staff are out in the community to meet with families at our mobile site locations. The mobile sites allow families to meet with family specialists in locations that may be more



convenient for them.

Please stop by to obtain information on the Child Care Works program, pick up/drop off applications, or to receive assistance in finding resources in your local community. [View our flyer](#) for upcoming dates and locations. We look forward to seeing you there!

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## Sharpen Children's Social and Life Skills

Matrix Behavior Solutions are currently enrolling for their [Center-Based Summer Programs](#) for ages 3-18 years old. They have 5 convenient locations in East Stroudsburg, Milford, Lehighton, Pottsville and Northampton. MBS accepts most insurances. Call today for availability or learn more about Matrix [here](#).



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## Child Care Works Reminders

If your children receives CCW funding, here are a few reminders as we move into the summer months.

- If your child is returning back to care or has changed providers for the summer break, please reach out to your Family Specialist to report this change.
- CCW funding does not cover "drop-in" care. Your child must be enrolled with a provider and have a set weekly schedule.
- CCW children are allowed up to 40 days of absence a year. If you are close to that limit, know that this count will reset on 7/1/25. Please note that absences can accumulate quickly, especially over the summer months if you don't take your children on their scheduled days for care.



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## 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:



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## Parenting Corner

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### 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 childcare 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.



*If you have concerns that your child may be suspended or expelled from childcare 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)*

## Prevent the “Summer Slide”

Summer is a time for sunshine, fun, and a much-needed break. However, that doesn’t mean learning has to take a vacation too. Keeping your child engaged during the summer months helps prevent the infamous “Summer Slide.” This is where some academic skills learned throughout the year can be forgotten.



The good news is summer learning doesn’t have to be as structured as a classroom. It can be fun, flexible, and combined into everyday experiences such as:

- Baking a cake for Math and Science skills.
- Turning a trip to the park into a Nature Scavenger Hunt.
- Enhance reading time by enjoying a book in a hammock, on a towel at the beach, or even through audiobooks on long car rides.
- Letting your child choose books and topics they’re curious about or interested in learning.

When learning feels like playing, motivation skyrockets. Instead of replicating a classroom, help children learn through exploring everyday experiences. You will keep curiosity alive and make learning feel natural.

Additionally, there are a ton of great tools out there to help parents keep their children’s minds active without spending a dime.

- [Start with a Book](#) offers themed reading lists and activity guides tied to topics like dinosaurs, weather, space, and more.
- [PBS Kids for Parents](#) is a great resource of simple learning ideas and hands-on activities you can do with things you already have at home.
- For young learners, [Khan Academy Kids](#) offers free, interactive lessons in Math, Reading, and more all through using characters and games.
- If your child is more of a visual learner, [National Geographic Kids](#) delivers amazing videos, games, and facts about animals, science, and geography in a way that keeps them coming back for more.
- Utilize your local library. They host summer reading challenges, story times, craft kits, and sometimes, even STEM workshops.

Just 15-20 minutes a day of meaningful, engaging activity can make a big difference come the new school year!

## DID YOU KNOW?

Language develops in a baby's brain before they can talk -- reading and speaking to your child early is important!

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### 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 Katie Fries a registered play therapist and owner of [All of You Therapy, LLC](#). She walks listeners through the ways to meet a child's emotional needs. Click [here](#) to listen.

# PARENT PROJECT PODCAST



## Child Development



### Developmental Screening

As part of their commitment to high-quality care, Keystone STAR 2, 3 & 4 providers use research-based developmental screeners to assess the developmental progress of the children in their care. These tools help identify whether children are meeting important milestones in areas like cognitive, social-emotional, physical, and language development. Your provider should be using these tools and sharing the results with you. This is important for several reasons:

1. **Early Identification of Delays or Concerns:** Developmental screenings help identify any potential delays or concerns in a child's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Early identification allows for timely intervention, which is crucial in providing the best support for your child's growth and well-being.
2. **Informed Decision Making:** Research-based screenings provide objective and reliable data about a child's development. This helps families and caregivers make informed decisions about potential next steps, whether it's seeking further evaluation, accessing resources, or making adjustments to the child's environment or routine.
3. **Collaboration with Families:** Sharing the results of developmental screenings helps foster open communication between childcare providers and families to best meet the child's needs.
4. **Planning Individualized Care:** Childcare providers can use screening results to tailor their care and activities to each child's unique developmental stage and needs. It helps create a more personalized approach to caregiving, ensuring that children receive the appropriate level of support and challenge in their learning environment.

By conducting screenings and sharing the results, childcare providers not only help ensure the best outcomes for each child but also promote strong partnerships with families to support the child's overall development. Often times program staff will request that you also complete a screening. This allows the two reports to be combined and provides a more accurate picture of the child's development.

## Resource & Referral

### The PA Parent and Family Alliance



This is a statewide organization that provides free, specialized support to parents and caregivers of children and young adults (up to age 26) who experience mental health, emotional, behavioral, or learning challenges.

Key services include:

- One-on-One support from Family Support Partners (FSPs) trained professionals who have personal experience navigating their own children's mental health needs. They help families understand systems like special education, mental health services, and juvenile justice.
- Weekly Online Support Groups that offer a safe space for parents to connect with others who understand their experiences, share challenges, and offer mutual encouragement.
- Educational Resources such as webinars, fact sheets, and articles that cover topics like IEPs, trauma-informed care, anxiety, depression, self-care, and more.
- Learning Labs and Trainings to help families become stronger advocates and build leadership skills.

The Alliance serves all types of families ensuring that every caregiver has the support and tools needed to help their child succeed.

For immediate assistance, you can call their support line at 570-664-8615. To explore more resources or connect with a Family Support Partner, visit their website at [paparentandfamilyalliance.org](http://paparentandfamilyalliance.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 on mosquito and tick protection and preventing hot car deaths.

## Water Safety

Summer is here! Many of us like to cool off during the hot summer days in pools or at the beach. It is important to understand the dangers bodies of water pose and some tips to make it a safe and fun experience for all.

1. **Active Supervision.** Never assume that because there are a lot of adults around, someone is watching your child. Determine who will be watching and remain close to your child the entire time they are in and around water, without being distracted. Download this [Water Watch Card](#) so it is clear who is currently responsible for the children in and around the water.
2. **Learn CPR.** You never know when you'll need it. If nothing else, it will give you peace of mind. Check with your child care provider for agencies in your area who offer CPR.
3. **Swim/survival skills lessons.** Necessary survival skills include floating and treading water, exiting safely, enter and resurfacing, breath control, and the ability to move to safety. Local YMCA's or your community pool, will often offer swim lessons for children.
4. **Bright Bathing Suits.** The color of your child's bathing suit can determine how easy it is to see them when they are in the water, especially in an emergency situation.

## Brush Those Teeth!

Brushing is one of the main ways to keep a child's teeth healthy. [Sesame Workshop](#) has a variety of games and songs to help children learn how to brush their teeth along with their Sesame Street friends. There are also multiple resources. We encourage you to visit the Sesame Workshop website: <https://sesameworkshop.org>.



## Family Engagement

### Family Fun

June is a great time to kick back and slow things down. Kids are out of school and schedules become a bit more relaxed. Families typically have more time to be together. This is a great time to incorporate fun activities that are also educational. Below you will find some ideas for inexpensive ways to have family fun and create memories that will last a lifetime.



### Backyard Obstacle Course Extravaganza

Create a mini-Ninja Warrior course in your backyard! Use household items like hula hoops, pool noodles, and cardboard boxes to design a challenging yet fun obstacle course. This activity promotes physical fitness, coordination, and problem-solving skills. Plus, it's a great way to burn off some of that boundless energy!

### **Art in the Park**

Take your art supplies outdoors and let your kids unleash their creativity in nature. Whether it's painting landscapes, drawing with sidewalk chalk, or making nature collages, this activity encourages artistic expression and appreciation for the outdoors.

### **Storytime Adventures**

Encourage your children to write and illustrate their own stories. This activity boosts literacy skills, creativity, and self-expression. Share their stories with family and friends or create a special storybook to treasure their creations.

### **Family Game Night Under the Stars**

Take your favorite board games outdoors and enjoy a game night under the twinkling stars. From classic games like Monopoly to newer favorites like Codenames, this activity fosters friendly competition and family bonding.

### **Family Talent Show**

Host a talent show where each family member gets to showcase their unique skills and talents. From singing and dancing to magic tricks and storytelling, this activity celebrates individuality and boosts confidence.

For more great ideas visit [The Beehive Connection](#)

*Adopted from: The Beehive Connection*

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Visit ELRC Region 12

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