



## Community Services for Children

### Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11

### July 2025

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

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## Region 11 News



### Shark Week is Almost Here! Let's Dive into Books!

Keep your children interested in reading during the summer months! Make a splash during Shark Week starting July 20, 2025 by sharing stories that spark curiosity and learning at home. The PA's [Promise for Children](#) website features a kid-friendly list of shark-themed books perfect for children and families. Turn Shark Week into a jaw-some reading adventure at home with your children by visiting the website.

### Connect with Outreach

The Outreach Center helps build strong families. Outreach is a community program that offers resources for life skills, literacy, employment training, parenting, early childhood education, youth mentoring, wrap-around case management, and more.



For more information visit <https://outreachworks.org/> or stop by a location below:

**Luzerne County Office 570-558-7575**  
138 South Main Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

**Lackawanna County Office 570-348-6484**  
431 North 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Scranton PA 18503

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## 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Walk/Run

Family Service Association of NEPA serves 17 counties in northeast PA as an information and referral service and first response point for crisis calls.

They are hosting their 17<sup>th</sup> annual 5K walk/run on Sunday, August 3, 2025 in Kingston. Bring your family out to this event to help support this fabulous community resource. Click [here](#) to see the flyer for more information on the event and to register.

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## Fresh, Locally Grown Produce

The Food Dignity Movement offers locally grown food markets throughout Luzerne County. The fresh produce markets are set up to take what you need and pay what you can at designated produce stands. Click [here](#) for the fresh produce stands dates and locations.



## Child Care Works Reminders

### Summer Schedule Changes

If your child's childcare arrangements have changed for the summer (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 be in care due to a vacation for 5 or more consecutive days.

Children receiving CCW funding are allowed up to 40 days of absence a year and they reset every year on 7/1/25. Please note that absences can accumulate quickly, especially over the summer months if you do not send your children on their scheduled days for care.



## 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:



## 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 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)*

### Benefits of Outdoor Play

If you have ever taken your child to a community park, you probably remember how excited they were to get there. Maybe they ran to the slide and climbed the steps with a friend or got on the swing and pushed their legs back and forth to go high in the sky. Maybe they played hide and seek with other children at the park. Whatever they did, they were having fun!



Children do not know that they are building their muscles and bones by running or climbing, they also do not know that they are practicing their social and emotional skills when they invite another child to play with them. They just know they are happy and having fun!

Outdoor play provides children the freedom of choice to move their bodies, and opportunities to build their brain by problem solving and social interactions. How many times have you heard, "Look at me, I did it all by myself," when they master a new skill. It strengthens their independence and self-confidence. The next time you take your child to the park, remember that you are giving them the gift of healthy development. You will be watching them problem-solve, make new friends, strengthen their muscles and build strong bones. They will be happy and tell you how much fun they had!

## DID YOU KNOW?

90% of your child's brain forms during the first 5 years – before they enter kindergarten!

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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 Missy Wise, Assistant Director of United Way Training Initiatives. She discusses the topic of De-escalation and Regulation. Click [here](#) to listen.

# PARENT PROJECT PODCAST



## Child Development



### Keep Learning Fun This Summer!

School might be on break, but your child's learning doesn't have to stop! Kids thrive when they can explore and grow in different environments, whether in a summer care program or right at home. Keep reading for

simple, fun ways to keep your child engaged and learning all summer long.

#### Talk with your child:

- Ask what they'd like to learn or try this summer.
- Share summer plans: what will they do, who will they see? Visit programs ahead of time if possible.
- Help them pick fun books and make a reading list.

#### Connect with your childcare provider:

- Share your goals and what your child enjoys.
- Ask what activities they have planned.
- Set up the best way to stay in touch.
- Check if they offer free summer meals or snacks.

#### Make reading a habit:

- Read with your child every day: take turns or read together.
- Ask questions about the story and explain new words.

#### Make math fun:

- Play board games and card games together.
- Cook together: measuring and counting teaches math!



### Turn everyday moments into learning:

- On the way to childcare, play “I Spy” with letters, shapes, or numbers.
- Talk about the book they read the night before.

### Stay active:

- Play outside, walk together, or try a new sport or game.
- Use fun, educational apps, but balance screen time with playtime.

## Resource & Referral

### The PA Parent and Family Alliance

The PA Parent and Family Alliance is a state-wide organization sponsored in part by the PA Care Partnership.



The Alliance was initiated when families of children with social, emotional, behavioral, and learning challenges began to unite in their local communities to support one another in their efforts to access services.

The PA Parent and Family Alliance offers a vast array of support, training, and information for families throughout Pennsylvania.

Please visit the [PA Parent and Family Alliance](#) for more information.



### Summer Meals

USDA works closely with states to ensure that children who receive free or reduced-price school meals can get the nutrition they need when schools are closed for summer break. Through USDA's summer meal programs, approved sites in communities across the country serve meals and snacks to kids 18 and younger at no cost.

Families can use the [Summer Meals for Kids Site Finder](#) to find directions to nearby meal sites, as well as their hours of operation and contact information.

## 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 UV Safety, Window Safety and Extreme Heat.



## How to Protect Yourself and Family from the Sun

In the month of July, we spend most of our day outside in the beautiful sunny weather. It is very important to protect your skin and eyes from the UVA and UVB rays from the sun. Everyone exposed to the sun, especially children, should wear sunscreen, making sure that it is “broad spectrum,” water resilient, and has an SPF of 30 or

higher. It is not recommended for infants under 6 months old to wear sunscreen, but it can be applied to their face and small areas of the body when shade and protective clothing are not available.

### Below are some sunscreen tips:

- Use enough sunscreen to cover all exposed areas- especially the face, nose, ears, feet, hands, and the back of the knees.
- Apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going outside so that it absorbs into the skin.
- Use sunscreen any time you are outside, even on cloudy days.
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours and after swimming, sweating, or drying off with a towel and apply generously.

### Other ways to protect yourself from the sun:

- wear hats
- wear cool, sun protective clothing
- stay in the shade
- avoid being outside between 10 am and 3 pm, when the sun’s rays are the strongest is also recommended.
- protect your eyes from the sun’s UV rays by wearing sunglasses with at least 99% UV protection.

### In case of a sunburn:

- replace the lost fluids with milk or water
- use cool water on the skin to soothe
- use pain medications
- keep your child out of the sun until the sunburn is healed.
- call your doctor if a baby under 1 year old gets a sunburn or if older children develop blisters, pain, or a fever.

Remember, UV rays are the strongest in the summer, so it is very important for you and your children to stay protected. Click [here](#) for more helpful information on keeping you safe in the sun.

*Source: HealthyChildren.org from American Academy of Pediatrics*

## The Impact of Stress on Oral Health

Stress is a reaction to a physical, psychological, or emotional demand. Everyone has felt stress at one time or another. Some stress is good because it pushes us to do things that are challenging and meet the demands of daily life. However, too much stress is not good and

can have negative short and long-term effects on our health, including our oral health.

Long-term stress can cause problems with your mouth, teeth, and gums. These problems can include:

- Sores in or around the mouth
- Teeth clenching and grinding
- Tooth decay and gum disease



Here are some tips to help you manage stress:

- Eat healthy foods
- Take care of your mouth
- Seek treatment for unhealthy habits
- Practice relaxation techniques
- Talk to someone

This [Brush Up on Oral Health tip sheet](#) describes how stress affects oral health and offers more detailed tips to help you manage stress.

## Family Engagement

### “Are We There Yet?”

#### *Tips for Families on Road Trips*

Do you remember going on a road trip as a child, whether it was on a long stretch of highway or riding through the countryside? The “are we there yet,” starts early! Driving with your loved ones can be stressless and carefree if you follow these road trip tips.



1. Bring plenty of supplies - everything you can think of that you, and especially your children, will need to make the trip successful. Consider packing a small overnight bag to be ready for an emergency.
2. Don't hold back on snacks - small, not-so-messy snack foods can help to calm a child and satisfy your driver. Bring plenty of finger snacks that are individually packaged and don't forget the drinks.
3. Factor in extra time -Allow extra time for bathroom, food stops and stretching breaks. At each stop, allow your children to get some energy out before returning to the vehicle. Picking a rest stop that has a small park, climbing apparatus, and/or walking trail, may be ideal.
4. Think about bending screen-time rules - this means give children extra time on their screens. Be mindful that screentime can lead to belly aches or headaches in some children due to the movement of the car. Install educational and puzzles games on devices ahead of time.
5. Car Games - Don't underestimate how important and entertaining car games and activities are. Car games and activities can cater to you and your children's interests, offer a great bonding opportunity, and help with socialization. Some examples of car games are iSpy, Alphabet game,



License Plate Bingo, and Restaurant Race to name a few. For more ideas, check out this site: [PARENTS](#).

When you are traveling with your children, remember that timing is everything. Consider what time of day you want to take your trip and the schedule for the day. There will always be bumps in the road, an unexpected stop, something to slow you down, but you can model how to adapt and stay calm, cool, and collected, and show your children a good time on any journey.

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[Visit ELRC Region 11](#)

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