



Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 12

September 2025

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

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Region 12 News

School Year Changes

If your childcare arrangements have changed for the school year (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 or if you are deciding to suspend care for the school year.



Mobile 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. Please see the [flyer](#) for upcoming dates and locations. We look forward to seeing you there!

Pocono Fun



Pocono Latin Fest

Pocono Latin Fest is hosting their FREE annual event on Saturday, September 20, 2025 from 5:00pm-10:00pm.

Pocono Latin Fest is a wonderful community-building event designed to celebrate and promote cultural difference with the community.

- [Pocono Latin Fest](#)

Nature Walk at Night

- Take a walk in the woods to listen for owls, look at stars, and enjoy the music of the night. Enjoy fun activities that test your night vision. A flashlight is recommended! Registration is required; call: 570-828-2319. \$5 per person. 09/28/25 7:00pm-8:30pm
- 10/25/25 7:00pm-8:30pm
- 11/29/25 6:00pm-7:30pm.

Visit this [website](#) for more information.



Fall Fest at Yenser's Tree Farm

This is a great family event at the farm! Open weekends from September 27th to October 26th from 11am to 6pm. FREE Admission, FREE Parking, FREE Hayrides.

- Visit their [website](#) to learn more.

West Scranton Fall Festival

Neighbor Works Northeastern Pennsylvania is excited to present its annual West Scranton Fall Festival! This two-part event is FREE to the public and will be held on **Friday, September 19th, 2025** from 6:00pm to 9:00pm & **Saturday, September 20th, 2025** from 12:00pm to 9:00pm.

- Visit the [website](#) for details!



Frequently Asked Questions about the Child Care Works Program

Where can I find answers to my Child Care Works Questions?

The Child Care Works Family Handbook is a great resource to answer program questions. Please click [here](#) to view the CCW Family Handbook. You can also contact your Family Specialist at the Early Learning Resource Center.



After I'm determined eligible, what comes next?

You will be contacted by the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) to set up an appointment for a Personal Interview to discuss the Rights and Responsibilities of

the program. You will also be asked to choose a childcare provider within 30 days of being authorized for funding.

What are my rights and responsibilities? What if my information changes?

What needs to be reported to ELRC?

Please click [here](#) to view your Rights and Responsibilities.

As a parent/caretaker who receives CCW, the following are your most important responsibilities.

- Submit accurate information to the ELRC
- Report changes in a timely manner
- Pay your weekly copayment timely

How often will ELRC review my case?

When you have completed your application and meet the guidelines for CCW, the ELRC will review your case every 12 months. This process is called a redetermination of eligibility. At the redetermination, the ELRC will review your family income, work and training status and your continued need for subsidized childcare. You will be asked to provide up-to-date proof of your family's income and also proof of address if your address has changed.

If I submit my redetermination on COMPASS, can I also submit the other required documents on COMPASS too?

No. The ELRC will only receive your redetermination on COMPASS. COMPASS does not allow for the submission of other documents such as paystubs or other forms. You will have to mail, email, fax or bring your paystubs and other documents into the ELRC.

If I want to transfer to a new provider, what is required?

If you wish to transfer to a new childcare provider, please notify the ELRC right away. Your copay must be paid in full before the ELRC can authorize the transfer to the new site.

I know I have to pay my weekly copay to my childcare provider, but can they charge me extra?

If your childcare subsidy does not pay the full amount that your childcare program charges, the provider may ask you to pay the difference between the subsidy payment and their private charges. The ELRC only pays for the cost of childcare and your registration fee.

Does the ELRC provide referrals to other community resources?

Yes! Please contact the ELRC to discuss available community resources that will set you on a path to success.

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)*

Encouraging Good Sleep Habits

Sleep is essential. It's important for children to sleep well at night because sleep helps them learn, concentrate, and manage their behavior and emotions. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) recommends the following sleep for each age group.

- Infants (4-12 months old): 12-16 hours
- Toddlers (1-2 years old): 11-14 hours
- Pre-schoolers (3-5 years old): 10-13 hours
- School-age (6-12 years old): 9-12 hours
- Teens (13-18 years old): 8-10 hours



Here are some general tips to encourage good sleep habits for your child.

- Keep the environment/bedroom calm and quiet - avoid toys, electronics, and dedicate the space only for sleeping.
- Establish a consistent nighttime routine, such as taking warm bath, reading a story, and listening to soft music.
- Put babies down when they are drowsy and avoid having them fall asleep in your arms or in swings or bouncy chairs.
- Avoid having your child sleep in the same bed as you. Provide them with a special stuffed toy or blanket so they feel secure.
- If they leave the bedroom, be consistent and continue to return them back to bed with minimal talking.
- Make sure your child is getting plenty of physical activity throughout the

- day.
- Set a curfew for screen time, at least an hour before bedtime.

For more information on helping with bedtime routines and sleep, visit the following websites:

- www.HealthyChildren.org
- [Children and Sleep](#)
- [Pediatric Sleep Experts Reveal Ways Parents Sabotage Their Kid's Sleep](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

The number of words your child learns during their first 3 years is a key to preparing them for school and developing their language skills.

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 Denise Continenza. She is a food, families and health educator at Penn State Extension and she shares information on this Podcast about youth mental health. Click [here](#) to listen.

PARENT PROJECT PODCAST



Child Development

Smooth Morning Drop-Offs: Starting the School Year Strong

The beginning of a new school year is an exciting time filled with fresh opportunities, new friendships, and new routines. But for many young children, and their parents, morning drop-off can also bring big feelings. Whether it's your child's very first school experience or just a transition into a new classroom, separation may feel challenging at first. With a little preparation and consistency, you can help your child start each school day with confidence.



Create a Consistent Routine

Children thrive on predictability. Establishing the same steps each morning, breakfast, getting dressed, brushing teeth, a quick story, and then heading out, helps children know what to expect. The more consistent the routine, the less room there is for anxiety.

Keep Goodbyes Short and Positive

Lingering at the classroom door can make separation harder. Offer a warm hug, a cheerful "Have a great day," and then confidently leave. A positive goodbye communicates to your child that you trust they will be safe and cared for.

Develop a Special Goodbye Ritual

Some families create a unique goodbye handshake, a kiss on the palm (like in book, *The Kissing Hand*), or a short phrase only they share. A ritual can comfort your child and provide a reassuring bridge between home and school.

Acknowledge Feelings, but Stay Calm

If your child cries or clings, it's okay to validate their feelings: "I know it's hard to say goodbye. I'll see you after snack and playtime!" Staying calm and steady reassures your child that they are safe and capable of handling the day ahead.

Build Connections with Teachers

When children see that parents trust their teachers, they feel more secure. A quick wave or friendly word with the teacher can reinforce that school is a safe, happy place.

Talk About the Day Ahead

On the way to school, talk about something fun your child will do that day; playing outside, circle time, or seeing a friend. Focusing on the positives helps shift attention away from separation worries.

Celebrate Small Successes

Every smooth drop-off, every brave goodbye, is worth celebrating. Encouragement and recognition help build confidence, making each morning easier.

Morning drop-offs may feel challenging at times, but with consistency, encouragement, and trust, they become an opportunity for your child to build independence and confidence. Remember, children take cues from you—when you stay calm, positive, and consistent, they will too!

Resource & Referral



Compass Health Systems

Compass Health Systems provides individualized Intensive Behavioral Health Services (IBHS) in Northeast PA, focusing on supporting children with unique needs and their families. They use Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) strategies to encourage

positive behavioral changes, improve communication skills, and strengthen social development.

Their services are designed to help children succeed beyond the classroom by providing support in the home and community. The goal is to help each child thrive, build independence, and prepare for a fulfilling life as they transition into adulthood.

Compass Health Systems is in-network with the following insurance providers:

- BCBS
- Aetna
- Optum / United
- Medicaid / UPMC (Geisinger Family Plan, Aetna Better Health, and Ameritas Caritas)

For more information or to request services, you can click [here](#)

Virtual event for PA families with children receiving Early Intervention Services. Connect with other parents and share your stories. The events are held on three dates:

September 23 - 6PM-8PM

October 30 - 11AM - 1PM

November 18 - 6PM-8PM

Click [here](#) for more information and how to register.

Health & Safety

September is Baby Safety Month!

Baby Safety Month began in 1983 by Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) and sponsored by the [Baby Safety Alliance](#). The Baby Safety Alliance website has a wealth of information for keeping your baby safe, including baby carrier safety, car seat safety, baby monitor safety and so much more. When it comes to safety, it is important to be proactive.



Some items you may choose to install to help prevent injury include:

1. Safety locks and latches for cabinets and drawers to help prevent poisoning and other injuries.
2. Safety gates to prevent access to unsafe rooms or falls down the stairs.
3. Doorknob covers and door locks to prevent access to unsafe rooms.
4. Anti-scald devices for faucets and showerheads to prevent burns.
5. Window guards and safety netting to prevent falls from windows or balconies.
6. Corner and edge bumpers on furniture and fireplaces to help prevent injuries from falls against sharp edges.
7. Outlet covers and outlet plates to help prevent electrocution.
8. Anchors for furniture and appliances to help prevent injury from tip-overs.

You can find further information on these general baby safety tips and more at [Baby Safety Foundation Baby Safety University - Baby & Child Proof](#).

Image credit: [MCR Health](#)

Oral Health -The Importance of Caring for Baby Teeth

Healthy mouths are important, especially for babies and young children.

Poor oral health can cause children to have problems eating, speaking, and learning.

Additionally, baby teeth hold space for adult teeth.

But a healthy mouth is more than just for eating. It is important for overall health. Cavities can be painful and lead to infections and other health problems. The good news is cavities can be prevented with proper oral care.

Click [here](#) to view a flyer about the importance of caring for baby teeth.



Family Engagement

Routines: Building a Strong Foundation for All Ages

With Fall in the air and a new school year beginning, routines are important at every stage of childhood, from newborns to pre-teens.

Routines support children of different ages. Below are ways a routine benefits each age.

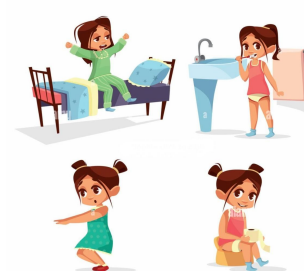


Image credit: alamy.com

- **Newborns and Infants (0-1 Year):** Routines help establish a sense of security and predictability. Consistent sleep, feeding, and play routines help regulate their sleep patterns and support their overall development.
- **Toddlers (1-3 Years):** Provides structure and helps them understand what to expect. Regular schedules for meals, naps, and activities support their growing need for independence and help them develop a sense of control over their environment.
- **Preschoolers (3-5 Years):** Benefit from routines that offer predictability and structure. Consistent daily schedules for learning activities, playtime, and rest help them navigate their day with confidence and foster social skills through structured group interactions.
- **Early School Age (6-8 Years):** Support academic and social development. Regular homework times, extracurricular activities, and bedtime routines help them manage their responsibilities and balance their activities.
- **Older School Age (9-12 Years):** Benefit from routines that encourage responsibility and self-management. Structured schedules for homework, chores, and leisure activities help them develop time-management skills and prepare for more complex responsibilities.

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