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## Community Services for Children

### Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11

### October 2025

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

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To distribute this newsletter to others, copy and share this link:

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## Region 11 Updates

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*The ELRC offices will be closed on Monday October 13th for Indigenous Peoples Day. We look forward to seeing many of you at the ELRC conference!*

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### Region 11 Provider Supports

#### Directors Network

The Region 11 Director's Network Roundtable meets monthly to share ideas and resources and to build partnerships in the childcare community. Each meeting will include a Community of Practice for leadership. Topics will focus on strategies for reducing suspension and expulsion, classroom management, and behavior management through the lens of the director. We hope you will join us for our next meeting, Thursday, October 16<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am for "Connecting with Families - Workshops, Conferences and Conversations". Click [here](#) for details and to join the discussion.



#### Teacher's Community of Practice

This is an opportunity for teachers to learn about classroom and behavior management. Communities of Practice allow teachers to share ideas, ask questions, and learn new strategies to implement. The Teachers' Community of Practice is scheduled for the second Wednesday of each month, August through May, via Teams. Join us on Wednesday, October 8<sup>th</sup> from 2:00 - 3:00 pm for "Schedules, Routines and Transitions". Click [here](#) to view the flyer with all dates, topics and links to join.

## Quality Coach Monthly Calendar

Print out a copy of the Region 11 Quality Coach Monthly Calendar for a quick reference to all regional support activities. Remember, your Quality Coach has office hours scheduled on the calendar and is available to meet with you and provide any support needed. Click [here](#) to view this month's calendar.

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### Rapid Response Team

The Rapid Response Team provides prompt support in the event a child is at risk of suspension or expulsion. It is a short-term, collaborative approach, designed to connect families and providers with existing tools and resources. Supports are customized to fit a child's or teacher's needs.



Requests can be made using this [RRT Referral form](#). Referrals are processed on a first come, first served basis and we ask that providers prioritize one child referral at a time. One of the goals of the RRT is that strategies and supports will be used across classrooms at the provider so that all children and staff will benefit from these supports.

Before submitting a referral, please discuss with the parent as parental consent is required. Child observations, screenings, and parent conferences should also have been completed so that you can provide the referral coordinator with detailed information regarding the case.

If you have any questions regarding the RRT supports, please reach out to your Quality Coach.

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### 2025 ELRC Fall Conference

Registration is now closed for the Fall 2025 conference titled *"Beyond Behaviors: Creating Calm, Connected Classrooms"*.

For those who are attending, registration will begin at 8:30 and the first session will begin promptly at 9:00 am. Reminder that participants must attend the full day in order to receive PD credit hours.

*Monday October 13, 2025  
8:30 AM - 4:00 PM*

*Hilton Scranton  
100 Adams Ave  
Scranton, PA 18503*

## Beyond Behaviors: Creating Calm, Connected Classrooms

### ELRC Regions 11 & 12 Fall Conference

**October 13, 2025  
8:30 am - 4:00 pm**

Registration  
required on PD  
Registry  
Event #385824

- First session will begin promptly at 9:00 am and late arrivals will be turned away.
- Open to all childcare directors and staff from ELRC Regions 11 & 12
- 6 hours of FREE PQAS training (must be present for full training to receive credit)

- **8:30-9:00 Registration**
- **9:00-12:00 Breakout Session 1. Select from the following courses:**
  - An Introduction to the Ages and Stages: Administration, Scoring, and Interpretation of the ASQ-3
  - De-escalation Strategies for the Early Childhood Classroom
  - Flip It: Transforming Challenging Behaviors in Young Children
- **12:00-12:45 Lunch Provided**
- **12:45-2:15 Breakout Session 2. Select from the following courses:**
  - How to Get Your Staff to Show Up and Work as a Team (Leadership Track)
  - Don't Know What Parents Want? Ask Them!
  - Positive Discipline
- **2:30-4:00 Breakout Session 3. Select from the following courses:**
  - Administrators Influence: Building Better Teams (Leadership Track)
  - Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
  - Effective Classroom Centers

**Hilton Scranton**  
**100 Adams Ave**  
**Scranton, PA 18503**

Parking available in the garage for a fee.

- Once registered, participants will receive an email to select breakout sessions.
- Conference registrations and breakout sessions will be first come, first serve.
- Participants must attend the full day to receive PD hours.



[WWW.CSCINC.ORG](http://WWW.CSCINC.ORG)

This conference is funded by the Preschool  
Development Grant and the Office of Child  
Development and Early Learning

Questions?

Email [estair@cscinc.org](mailto:estair@cscinc.org)



## Teacher Shout Out!

During the Teacher Community of Practice, we discussed the importance of celebrating when children are kind to one another and/or when they demonstrate class expectations. The Kindness Tree strategy provides positive reinforcement by putting a leaf that states the act of kindness onto a tree display.

Brittany from Little People, Kingston, implemented this strategy in her classroom and shared how the Kindness Tree has helped the children to understand and use kindness towards others!

The classroom tree is blank now because they are preparing the room for the



new school year, but Brittany shared her excitement to implement the strategy from the beginning of the year. Brittany said, “I noticed that the tree helped with the class last year because a lot of (not all) the behaviors stopped because the children wanted to earn their leaf. I made a big deal out of when they did receive them. I would pause whatever we were doing and write out the leaf right then and there and hang it up and say, ‘so and so earned a kindness leaf by helping clean up a mess they didn’t make; let’s all clap for them while I hang the leaf on the tree!’ It got to the point towards the end of the school year that they were coming up to me to tell me about a kind thing their peers did that I maybe didn’t observe myself.”  
Well done, Brittany!

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## Community Resource Spotlight

### *Java for Joes*

Do you have families with military veterans enrolled in your program? If so, please share this information with them. Java for Joes is an opportunity for our veterans to meet once a month and enjoy a free cup of coffee while socializing with other veterans and learning what their community has to offer. This program is available in [Bradford](#), [Sullivan](#) and [Wyoming](#) Counties. Click on your county name above for the flyer with more information.

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## ELRC Updates

### CCW Reminders



- Please remember to review your invoice each month before submitting. Check that all children who are enrolled are listed **and** that those who have left the program, have been removed. Report any changes to your Provider Specialist.
  - Please let your Provider Specialist know when there are changes to a child's enrollment. If you notice a pattern of absences, discuss with the family to see if an adjustment to their schedule is needed, rather than add to their 40-day absence count.
  - If you are a new director and would like any support with Child Care Works, reach out to your Provider Specialist or Quality Coach. They are happy to schedule a meeting with you to review processes and answer any questions you may have.
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### 2025 Market Rate Survey

Providers are being asked to complete the 2025 Child Care [Market Rate Survey](#) between September 8 and December 8, 2025.

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) is required to collect up-to-date tuition information from all licensed providers every three years. This survey helps OCDEL set child care subsidy payment rates that are



reflective of the private pay market. Even if your program doesn't accept subsidies, your information is still important. When all providers complete the survey, the data gives a more accurate picture of child care tuition rates across Pennsylvania.

Why your participation matters:

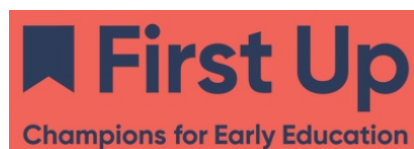
- The results help set payment rates for child care subsidies over the next few years.
- When more providers respond, rates are fairer and reflect real tuition rates.
- It supports policies that better reflect the real structure and value of child care services statewide.
- It strengthens the case for public investment in child care for everyone.
- If you don't respond, decisions may be based on other programs that don't reflect your rates.

Want to know more? OCDEL Bureau of Certification has released a Podcast to discuss the benefits of the Market Rate Survey and how it directly affects child care providers. Listen [here](#).

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## Supports for Spanish Speaking Providers

Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> – Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> is Hispanic Heritage Month.



Oct. 15: ECE Fellowship Info Session (virtual) – 7 PM. Click [here](#) to register.

First Up's ECE Advocacy Fellowship, is designed to educate, connect, and support emerging leaders who are passionate about driving positive change in early childhood education. Recruitment has begun for this 2026 program. To better serve our diverse community, this program will be offered in English and Spanish, please see flyers:

- [ECE Fellowship \(Spanish\)](#)
- [ECE Fellowship \(English\)](#)

Oct. 16: ECE Latinos Roundtable – 1 PM. Spanish ECE providers can gather virtually to hear updates regarding state budget and resources for their programs. Registration [link](#).

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## STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Awards!

Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Award acceptance letters have been sent to all eligible STAR 2, 3 & 4 providers. The intent of the award is to improve, support, and recognize the quality of Pennsylvania's early learning and school-age programs that are invested in the Keystone STARS Program.

Providers in ELRC Regions 11, 12, 13, 14 & 16 were emailed their acceptance letter. If you are expecting a letter but did not receive it, please reach out to your Quality Coach.

Providers should complete their acceptance letter and email back to [elrc-ksgrants@cscinc.org](mailto:elrc-ksgrants@cscinc.org). All acceptance letters must be returned by December 1, 2025.

For full details, please see the [Announcement ELRC #25-03, 2025-26 Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Awards](#). This Announcement contains important information regarding general provider eligibility requirements, a policy eligibility exception for STAR 1 programs, special consideration for STAR 2 and 3 programs, award amounts, allowable expenses, ineligible expenses, processes and a timeline.

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### **Rapid Response Team Tip of the Month** *Creating a classroom space to support social and emotional development*

Creating a safe and inviting space in an early childhood center/program is crucial for supporting children's social and emotional development. The physical environment plays a key role in how children interact with one another, regulate their emotions, and feel a sense of belonging and security.

**Create Zones for Different Activities:** Designate specific areas for various activities, allowing children to choose spaces based on their emotional needs and preferences. These zones should be clearly defined but flexible.

- **Quiet Zone:** A calm space with soft seating, pillows, or mats where children can retreat when they need to relax, self-regulate, or reflect. It may also include calming visuals like nature scenes or soft lighting.
- **Cooperative Play Zone:** This is an area where children can engage in collaborative activities such as building materials, dramatic play, or group projects. Include materials like costumes, blocks, and pretend setups.
- **Art & Creativity Zone:** A space with easels, paper, crayons, and other creative materials where children can express their emotions through art. This zone can promote emotional expression and creativity.
- **Ensure Accessibility and Comfort:** Make sure the space is welcoming to children by considering their physical and emotional comfort. Use child-sized furniture like tables, chairs and cushions that make children feel comfortable.
- **Warm and welcoming atmosphere:** Use soft, calming colors like pastel blues, greens and yellow. These colors help create a soothing environment that is not overstimulating.
- **Natural Light:** Maximize natural light when possible. Natural light has a calming effect and helps regulate mood. Use light, sheer curtains to let in sunlight without overwhelming the space.
- **Sensory-Friendly Space:** Include sensory-rich materials like tactile toys, textured fabrics, calming scents (like lavender), or soft music to help children who need sensory input or who are overstimulated. This could include a small water table or soft light-up toys.

### **Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Tools**

- **Emotion Regulation Tools:** Provide small tools such as fidget toys, stress balls or weighted blankets that help children manage their emotions.
- **Social Stories and Visual Cues:** Use visuals (such as posters or cards) with simple social stories or steps on how to express emotions, manage conflicts, or ask for help. This supports children's learning in social-emotional regulation.

Creating a Welcoming and Warm Space for Kids in Childcare resource:

## PA Nutrition & Wellness Grant *Application Closes 10/3!*



This grant provides an opportunity to engage in a continuous quality improvement process focused on obesity prevention practices and policies within an early care and education setting. The program utilizes Go NAPSACC, an on-line, evidence-based tool, to guide self-assessment, implementation, and reflection. The process empowers program leadership and includes individualized technical assistance to increase knowledge and improve quality of practice and policy. Programs will also be linked with a Child Care Health Consultant at no cost to the site.

Please read the full grant description [here](#).  
Interested providers must apply by Friday, October 3rd.

## October is Farm to ECE Month



[Farm to ECE](#) strategies and activities for early childhood environments focus on:

- Using local food – buying or using locally sourced foods in meals and snacks
- Gardening – offering hands-on opportunities for growing and caring for plants
- Food, nutrition, and agriculture education – teaching about healthy foods, where food comes from, and how it grows

The early years are an important time for forming taste preferences and building healthy eating habits. Farm to ECE offers several benefits, including:

- [Healthier eating habits](#) – Farm to ECE encourages healthy eating habits by giving children fresh, locally sourced foods. Children are more likely to try foods they have helped grow, clean, or prepare. It's a great way to encourage them to eat more nutritious foods.
- [Stronger communities](#) – Buying local food supports farmers and makes your community food system stronger. It also gives families and staff information about where to get local food in their community. Buying locally often creates a sense of belonging, especially for familiar or traditional foods that are part of children's cultures.
- [Mental wellness](#) – Gardening can increase pride, self-confidence, and a sense of accomplishment. Garden spaces can also reduce stress, improve focus, provide teaching opportunities, build social connections, and support emotional regulation for children and staff.

Here are some tips to build your farm to ECE program:

- Use [state resources](#) to learn more about farm to ECE and how it fits with your program's goals. Find tools and guidance for finding activities that fit into your program activities.
- Connect with [Master Gardener programs](#), cooperative extensions at universities, and local farmer associations for expert advice and support.
- Start small and build slowly. Choose one or two activities. For example, start with small container gardens or introduce locally grown fruits and vegetables with meals.

- Create a [pollinator garden](#) where children can experience nature, practice mindfulness, and regulate their emotions.
- Include [age-appropriate garden activities](#), from infant sensory exploration to preschool projects.

#### Resources to Learn More

- [Farm to ECE: Getting Started](#)
- [Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings](#)
- [Farm to CACFP](#)
- [Farm to Early Care and Education](#)



### Strengthening Business Practices

The National Center on Early Childhood Quality Assurance is offering a curriculum series, ***Strengthening Business Practices for Child Care Programs***. The training content and activities are designed to strengthen child care providers'

foundational knowledge of sound fiscal management and business operations.

The series began in September with a module on Budgets, Projections and Planning. You can still join in on the other modules. Click on each title to register:

#### [Module 2- Financial Reports and Internal Controls](#)

Monday October 13

1:00pm - 3:00pm

#### [Module 3- Marketing Your Program](#)

Monday November 10

12:30pm - 3:30pm

#### [Module 4- Recruiting and Retaining Staff](#)

Monday December 8

12:30pm - 3:30pm

For future module offerings, click on this flyer

- [2025-2026 Business Practice Registration Flyer](#)

For an overview of sessions offered, click on this flyer:

- [Business Practices for Child Care Programs](#)

### Certification Podcast

*Preventing Child Behaviors that Challenge Us and Resources Available to Providers*

In this episode, Ruby Martin, Director of the Bureau of Certification Services, will explore a variety of prevention strategies for behaviors we know are occurring in programs and potentially could cause health and safety concerns. Staci Kenney, Division Chief of Bureau of Early Intervention and Family Supports, joins to provide insight on when and how to request early intervention.

[Episode #6: Preventing Child Behaviors that Challenge Us and Resources](#)



## Keystone STARS Tip of the Month

### *Family Handbooks*



The purpose of a family handbook is to share the policies and procedures of your program with the families that you serve. It's also an opportunity to share your program's strengths and to provide clear expectations so that families can determine if your program will be a good fit for their child.

Family handbooks should be reviewed at least annually and be revised whenever necessary. Requesting input from staff can also be helpful when updating your handbook. They may be aware of trends or concerns that could be addressed with updated policies. If your handbook has been created electronically it can easily be updated and sent out to your families.

Your family handbook is a reflection of your business, your educational philosophy and your daily policies and procedures. It provides clear communication between families, staff and the director and should be updated as needed. If you are looking for a sample handbook or want to know what policies should be included in your handbook, contact your Quality Coach who will provide a variety of samples and resources.

## Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program

PennAEYC has created a new resource for early care and education providers and the families you serve about the Infant and Toddler Early Intervention program, which provides services to children who have or are at risk of developmental delays.

This one-page handout includes valuable information on:

- Eligibility criteria and the enrollment process
- Available services and how they can support child development
- Contact information for referrals and questions

[PennAEYC Infant Toddler Early Intervention Handout](#)



## Inclusion & Belonging for Children with Disabilities Training Series

EITA has created this series of webinars. Webinar 1, *Supporting the Physical and Instructional Environment for Young Children*, was held on September 19th but two more sessions are available.

### **Webinar 2 - Inclusive Engagement and Joyful Learning Across Developmental Domains**

October 16, 2025; 1:00pm - 2:00pm

The second webinar will guide participants to embed inclusive engagement and instructional strategies into natural routines and activities that ensure joyful learning for all children across developmental domains.

### Webinar 3 - Co-Constructing an IFSP/IEP with Families

November 13, 2025; 1:00pm - 2:00pm

The third webinar will describe how the IFSP/IEP can define and describe goals and service delivery based in rightful presence and facilitate inclusive engagement and joyful learning across developmental domains.

For PQAS hours register through the PA PD Registry:

[https://www.papdregistry.org/v7/trainings/search/\(slider-new:386562/detail\)](https://www.papdregistry.org/v7/trainings/search/(slider-new:386562/detail))

For general registration information and questions, contact Molly Martz at

[mmartz@pattan.net](mailto:mmartz@pattan.net)

## 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 staff, children and families.



Click [here](#) to view their newsletters and download the most recent edition.

### Virtual Office Hours

You can now connect with ECELS staff during office hours. ECELS staff can discuss any questions and concerns you may have, pertaining to healthy childcare practices. Please register for an appointment for their office hours by following this [link](#). After you register, you will receive an email confirmation with your appointment information.

For a full list of topics visit their [webpage](#).



### Fire Prevention Month

October is Fire Prevention Month! The National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA) has an abundance of resources available on their website, including lesson plans and classroom activity ideas.

Fire Safety may also be an interesting parent workshop idea (STARS indicator FC3.4.6). Invite a local fire house to visit the center one evening to show the trucks to the children and ask a firefighter to discuss home fire safety with families. You can provide the following resources and handouts to families to supplement the workshop.

- [Fire Escape](#)
- [Escape Planning Tips](#)
- [Smoke Alarms at Home](#)
- [Safety Action Plan](#)

### Oral Health

## Choosing Healthy Drinks for Young Children



Providers should be mindful about what drinks are served to children while in care. Limit drinks with natural or added sugar. Even 100% fruit juice is full of sugar that can lead to tooth decay.

### Tips for Choosing Healthy Drinks:

- Give children plain water with fluoride. Water from the tap (faucet) is safe and cheap.
- Give children milk at scheduled meal and snack times.
- Do not lay a child down for nap with a bottle or sippy cup. If you do, the bottle or sippy cup should contain only water, nothing else.
- Give children cut-up or whole fruit instead of fruit juice.

Click [here](#) for additional resources that can be shared with families.

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Want to add staff or other members of your team to this newsletter? Email [estair@cscinc.org](mailto:estair@cscinc.org) and specify which Regional Newsletter you would like. Requests will be added to next month's distribution.

Visit ELRC Region 11

Community Services for Children | [elrc11@cscinc.org](mailto:elrc11@cscinc.org) | [www.cscinc.org](http://www.cscinc.org)

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