



Community Services for Children Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 11 October 2025

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

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Region 11 News

ELRC Region 11 offices will be closed on November 11th in observance of Veterans Day.

Java for Joes

Are you or a member of your family a veteran? Java for Joes is an opportunity for 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 for the flyer with more information.



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference

The 19th Annual Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference will be held on Friday, October 24, 2025, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM at The Woodlands Inn in Wilkes-Barre.

View the Conference flyer [here](#).



This annual gathering provides support, education, and resources for grandparents stepping into the caregiving role. Admission is free for grandparents raising grandchildren. The day will include access to resource tables, snacks, and a hot lunch, making it both informative and interactive.

Learn More About Pennsylvania's Early Learning Programs

Have you ever wondered how our State helps make sure children are safe while they grow and learn? Curious if programs like PA Pre-K Counts, Early Intervention, or Family Support might be the right fit for your child?

These short, easy-to-follow videos share everything you need to know to help your child grow and learn. They are family-friendly and available in both English and Spanish.

- Pennsylvania's Child Care Certification: What it means for you. [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Pennsylvania's Child Care Works: Helping Families Afford Safe Child Care. [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Pennsylvania's Early Intervention: Supporting Young Children. [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Pennsylvania's Family Support Programs for Pregnant or Parenting Families of Young Children. [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Pennsylvania's Keystone STARS: Quality in Child Care. [English](#) [Spanish](#)
- Pennsylvania's Pre-K Counts: Providing a Strong Start in School. [English](#) [Spanish](#)

Child Care Works Reminder

As a friendly reminder, families are allowed up to 40-days of absence per year (July 1- June 30) and this includes children who only attend care before and after school hours. Please continue to reach out to your family specialist as soon as you become aware that your child(ren) will be absent from care for five consecutive scheduled days.



If you should encounter any need for schedule changes, like sports or other seasonal activities, please reach out to your Family Specialist to let them know.

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)



Is It Important to Read to Your Child?

Children are exposed to language and literacy through a variety of electronic devices, television programs and toys. But it's important to still find time to read to your child. By reading together, you are giving your child undivided attention, engaging them in a fun activity and making special memories with them that will last a lifetime. You are also exposing your child to new vocabulary, new perspectives and preparing them to be successful in school. Your child's

vocabulary and comprehension increase with each new book you read to them. The stories come alive when you read them out loud together.

Books can be expensive, so take your child on a trip to your local library. Let your child explore the children's section and choose the books they want to take home. They will have fun finding new books and topics to read and they will enjoy picking out books all by themselves. The more varied the topics of the books they choose, the larger their knowledge base grows.

Next time you read to your child, notice all the new words they have learned from one book! Videos and talking toys are fun but they do not compare to spending time curled up in a chair, reading a book with your child, laughing and learning together.

For more information, check out this [article](#) on reading to your child.

DID YOU KNOW?

Children who read succeed!
They are better behaved, have
better school attendance, feel
more confident and capable in
school.

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 Deidra Vachier, CEO and President of CSC, who shares about the importance of routines. Click [here](#) to listen.

PARENT PROJECT PODCAST



Child Development

Health Care Planning in Childcare

Child care providers may require a health care plan to be completed by a medical professional for any child at risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition requiring health and support services beyond what's typical for other children. Health care plans are essential for young children with special needs because they provide structure, safety, communication, and consistency in both educational and caregiving environments.



Here are the main reasons why they are so critical:

Individualized Support

- Every child with special needs has unique medical, developmental, and behavioral considerations.
- A health care plan ensures that teachers, caregivers, and medical staff know exactly what interventions, accommodations, or treatments are necessary for that child.
- Examples include seizure action plans, asthma protocols, or allergy management steps.

Safety and Emergency Preparedness

- Children with special needs may be more vulnerable to health complications.
- A clear, written plan outlines what to do in emergencies: who to call, what medications to administer, and how to respond quickly.

- This reduces confusion and ensures timely action, which can prevent serious outcomes.

Consistency Across Caregivers

- Many children with special needs are supported by a team: teachers, aides, parents, therapists, bus drivers, and medical providers.
- A health care plan ensures consistency, so everyone follows the same procedures and understands the child's triggers, needs, and calming strategies.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

- In schools and childcare centers, health care plans are often required to comply with state licensing rules and best practices in early childhood education.
- They help programs meet legal obligations to provide safe, inclusive, and equitable care.

Promotes Child Development and Inclusion

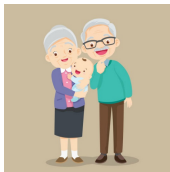
- By addressing medical needs, children can participate more fully in daily activities.
- This helps ensure that health concerns don't become barriers to social, emotional, or academic growth.

Peace of Mind for Families

- Parents feel reassured knowing that their child's health is monitored and respected.
- Builds trust between families and educators, creating stronger partnerships in the child's care and learning journey.

Health care plans protect children's health, guide staff in emergencies, ensure equal access to education, and promote safe, inclusive participation in early childhood programs.

Resource & Referral



Resources for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren *PA KinConnector Hotline*

PA KinConnector Hotline: A hotline to connect grandparents with local, state and federal resources. A new hotline is available to help connect thousands of grandparents who are raising their grandchildren to the resources and programs available to them.

General Resources for Grandparents

- [Grandparents Raising Children in NEPA](#)
- [PA Parents and Family Alliance](#)

Sharing Resources Through COMPASS

Are you aware of all the community resources that are available through COMPASS? COMPASS is



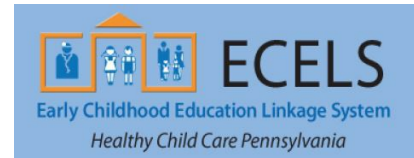
an online tool for Pennsylvanians to access many health and human service programs and manage benefit information. The COMPASS website is a fast and easy way to learn about benefits, check on the eligibility requirements, apply for benefits and re-apply when it is time for renewal. The website offers resources such as Health Care, Food and Nutrition, Home and Community Based Services and Child Care Works, just to name a few.

For more information, you can go to the COMPASS website by clicking the link below. www.compass.state.pa.us

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.

Health and Safety Tips for Autumn

Autumn is officially here and below are some helpful tips to keep yourself and your family healthy.

1. Have regular doctor checkups and protect your family from preventable diseases like the flu by keeping up with vaccinations.
2. Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water.
3. Get outside and get some physical activity together!
4. Eat a healthy diet- choose healthy foods and drinks that fit into your budget.
5. Get enough sleep. Sleep plays a vital role in mental and physical health, safety, and quality of life.
6. Drink water every day to stay hydrated.



Keep in mind that seasons change very quickly which can create other chores.

- Make sure to clean up fallen leaves as they can be an ideal habitat for ticks.
- Fallen leaves can also be slick when wet so use extra caution when driving.
- Weather can become severe at times, so make sure to replace wiper blades and be alert to road hazards like fog, rain, deer, and fallen leaves.
- Air out your house by opening the windows and clean out vents in your house.
- Use caution when using candles. They can create a cozy atmosphere with the changing seasons but make sure to not leave them unattended.

Oral Health

Choosing Healthy Drinks for Young Children

Be mindful about what drinks are served to your child(ren). 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 helpful tips.

Family Engagement

Family Fire Escape Plan

Creating and practicing a home fire escape plan is simple. Follow the steps below to make sure everyone in your home is prepared and knows what to do in case of a home fire.

- Make a written escape plan and practice at least twice a year. Draw a map of your home including doors and windows. You should have two ways out of every room and two ways out of your house. Choose a meeting place a safe distance from your home. Practice getting out in less than 2 minutes.
- Make sure you have smoke alarms on every level of your home and in each bedroom. Test them twice a year. Test the alarms with your children so they learn what they sound like.

For more information visit the [website](#). You can also download this [Activity Guide](#) for fun activities and ideas to help you practice fire safety skills with your children.

1



Draw a map of your home. Include all doors and windows.

2



Find two ways out of every room.

3



Make sure doors and windows are not blocked.

4



Choose an outside meeting place in front of your home.

5



Push the test button to sound the smoke alarm.

6



Practice your drill with everyone in the home.

7



Get outside to your meeting place.

Visit ELRC Region 11

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