

Community Services for Children Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 12 November 2025

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

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Region 12 Updates

Please note that the ELRC offices will be closed on Tuesday, November 11th for a staff professional development day. Offices will also be closed on Thursday, November 27th & Friday, November 28th for the Thanksgiving holiday.



As we take a moment this time of year to reflect on what we are thankful for, know that everyone from the Early Learning Resource Center appreciates all you do for the children and families in your care. In spite of challenges, the ECE community continues to serve children and give them a safe place to be nurtured, to learn and to thrive.

Keystone STAR Movements

The following programs have demonstrated their commitment to quality by moving to a higher STAR level from July - September 2025.

congratulations

Congratulations to the providers who have moved to a STAR 2:

- Daniels Dynasty Child Care Center
- Inch by Inch Childcare, LLC

Congratulations to the provider who moved to a STAR 3:

- Little People LLC

Congratulations to the providers who have moved to a STAR 4:

- Discovery MI Providence
- Mountain View Child Care

Region 12 Provider Supports

Directors Network

Our Director's Network this month will be held on November 25th at 1pm. Come ready to discuss strategies to help better manage your workload and your program. Click [here](#) to register and view the flyer.



Teacher's Community of Practice

We will be holding our Community of Practice for teachers on November 19th at 1pm on TEAMS. This month we will be discussing transition strategies to bring order to your classrooms. Did you know that most supervision lapses happen during transitions? Come and share your transition procedures with our group. Please ensure participants are not in ratio and ready to participate. Please click [here](#) for the registration link.

Provider Team Monthly Calendar

Print out a copy of the Region 12 Provider Team 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 needed supports. Click [here](#) to view this month's calendar.

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.

Rapid Response Team Grants Update

Community Services for Children is deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to implement a Rapid Response Team approach in collaboration with OCDEL. Unfortunately, due to changes in federal funding, OCDEL will no longer be able to support the RRT initiative in the same capacity. CSC is committed to

the support of childcare providers and families and is working on ways to continue this service in some capacity. Continue to refer to this Provider Link newsletter for updates to the RRT program.

2025 ELRC Fall Conference

Thank you to those who attended the ELRC Fall 2025 conference "Beyond Behaviors: Creating Calm, Connected Classrooms". With 180 attendees and 9 breakout sessions to choose from, it was a busy and rewarding day!

If you attended the conference but have not yet completed the follow up survey, please do so [here](#). Your feedback will help us plan for next year's ECE Conference.

Save the date for next Fall - Monday, October 12, 2026.



Winter Coat Distribution

We have started distributing winter coats in both our offices in Region 12. We currently have sizes 3T to 14/16. Remaining coats are in our Stroudsburg office. Please pass along this information to families while supplies last!



Click [here](#) to access the flyer.

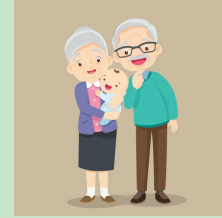
Community Resource Spotlight

Resources for Grandparents

Families come in all shapes and sizes and have unique needs. Below are resources to share with grandparents raising

grandchildren in your care. Just click on the resource name to access the website.

[PA KinConnector](#) - Provides guidance, advice, and support for grandparents raising grandchildren and other relative and non-relative Kinship Caregivers. Call 1-866-546-2111 for the new hotline to connect to resources.



[Grandparents Raising Grandchildren in NEPA](#) - Contact 570-262-3443 to find more information on child support, custody, adoption, legal assistance, education, healthcare, support groups, financial issues and other referrals.

[PA Parent and Family Alliance: Grandfamilies](#) - Helpful resources gathered to empower caregivers with the information needed to help their children as well as links to reach out to Family Support Partners for personalized help. Families can call 570-664-8615 for resources as well.

ELRC Updates

CCW Reminders



- As we approach the holiday season, please take a moment to review the closures you submitted to ensure they are still correct. If there are any changes or updates, please contact your Provider Specialist.
- Any changes to a child's care schedule should be reported to your Provider Specialist prior to the submission of your invoice.

Co-payment Delinquencies

- It is important to report delinquent CCW co-payments timely to the ELRC. Per Appendix A of the ELRC Certified Provider Agreement, providers must report a delinquent co-payment to the ELRC on the business day following the day the co-payment becomes delinquent. For example, if a co-pay is not paid by Friday for that service week, the delinquency must be reported on your next business day, which is typically Monday.
- Please note, delinquencies can only be reported for co-payments. Delinquencies regarding additional fees your program charges must be handled privately with the family. If you are aware that a family is currently under adverse action, please urge them to resolve this as soon as possible in order to maintain their eligibility and prevent any disruptions in care.
- When delinquent co-pays are resolved, please notify us, or report on Provider Self Service, so we can satisfy the client's adverse action. When families are seeking to transfer enrollments, an ELRC Family Specialist will contact you to verify if that family is current with their co-payment before authorizing the transfer.

Sleep Time

- Parents who work overnight hours may be approved for additional sleep time through CCW. This time allows working parents to have time to sleep while their child is safely in care. Parents may choose to use their sleep time before or after their work hours.

PQAS Cohort

Have you considered applying for a PQAS certification?

The Pennsylvania Quality Assurance System (PQAS) maintains a registry of approved Professional Development Instructors and Technical Assistance Consultants/Coaches to help ensure that professional development activities and technical assistance meet quality standards.



Professionals who receive their PQAS certification can

- enter trainings on the PD Registry
- issue training hours to their own staff which are accepted by certification and Keystone STARS
- partner with the ELRC to deliver PAID trainings to other child care providers.

The ELRC is forming a FREE cohort of professionals interested in becoming PQAS certified to work together through the process. In order to be eligible for this cohort, candidates must:

- work in ELRC Regions 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 or 16
- be approved at a level C or above on the Career Pathway
- have experience training (formally or informally) others within the last 5 years

Cohort will run on the following Wednesdays over TEAMS at 11:30 am. Sessions will run about a half hour to 45 minutes:

- November 19
- December 3
- December 17
- January 7

Interested applicants can register here:

[Cohort Registration](#)

Email estair@cscinc.org with any questions.



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](#).

STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Awards

Deadline to apply is December 1st!

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. 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.

Changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)



Changes to the SNAP eligibility requirements went into effect on September 1st.

SNAP recipients must report at least 20 hours of work, education, training, or volunteering per week (or 80 hours per month) if they:

- Are 18-54 years old,
- Do not have a dependent child under 18, and
- Are physically and mentally able to work.

SNAP recipients who do not meet these requirements can only receive three months of SNAP benefits within a three-year period.

On November 1st, SNAP recipients will not receive their November benefits due to the federal government shutdown. [If you're struggling with food insecurity or have the ability to help, you can find a local food bank here.](#)

If you have questions about how to report work, education, training, or volunteer activities, you can contact your caseworker at your local [County Assistance Office](#) or call the Customer Service Center at 877-395-8930



Rapid Response Team Tip of the Month

Building Family Connections Through Classroom Involvement

November is National Family Engagement Month! Family engagement doesn't have to mean big events—it can be woven into everyday classroom life. When families feel welcomed and involved, children feel a greater sense of belonging, and challenging behaviors often decrease as a result.

Simple Ways to Involve Families:

- **Family Story Time:** Invite parents or caregivers to read a book or share a family tradition during circle time.
- **Take-Home Connection Bags:** Send home a small activity (like a storybook with discussion cards) that promotes social-emotional learning at home.
- **“Getting to Know You” Board:** Create a classroom display where families can share photos, cultural celebrations, or favorite family activities.
- **Home-to-School Reflection:** Ask families to share one “success moment” from home each week that can be celebrated in the classroom.

These small, consistent opportunities for family participation help children feel seen, valued, and connected—reducing stress, improving regulation, and ultimately supporting fewer behavioral challenges.

School Age Professional Development

Join in on these FREE PD modules designed for school-age staff.



November modules include:

- School Age Care Spotlight on Social Emotional Standards
- What to do with Older SAC Kids

December modules include:

- SAC Child Development
- Introduction to Youth Behavior Reflection Support Tool (YBRST)
- SAC Youth with Big Emotions

Details and registration links on the [SAC PD Flyer](#)



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 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](#)
-

Learning Standards for Early Childhood Now Available in Spanish

The Office of Child Development and Early Learning is excited to announce that the 2024 Infant, Toddler, and Pre-Kindergarten Learning Standards for Early Childhood are now available in Spanish! This resource is a valuable tool to support the learning and development of our youngest learners.

Providing this key resource in Spanish will better support Early Childhood educators, professionals, and families across the Commonwealth who communicate primarily or more comfortably in Spanish.

You can now view, download, and print the complete documents directly at the [Pennsylvania Key website](#).

Keystone STARS Tip of the Month

Workshop Topics for Standard FC 3.4.5

Keystone STARS indicator FC3.4.5 looks for opportunities for families to attend educational workshops. Workshops have to provide space for participants to come together and engage in discussion and activity. Some sample workshop topics could include making healthy food choices at home, early literacy, developmentally appropriate activities or as the holidays draw close, selecting educational toys and activities for young children. Bringing caregivers together to discuss and learn about a topic is a way for parents to network with other families in the program.

To strengthen attendance in your workshop, consider the following:

- Is the workshop scheduled at a time that will fit into families schedules (not during their work hours)?
- Can we offer child care or include children in the workshops activities?
- Have we asked parents what topics would be meaningful to them?
- Can we bring in a guest speaker, like a local pediatrician or librarian, to enhance our content?

If your program is struggling to think of workshop topics, reach out to your Quality Coach.

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health consultation provides support for parents and child care professionals who work with children experiencing persistent or puzzling challenges.

The program offers a combination of support through IECMH Virtual Office Hours and IECMH Consultations.

IECMH Virtual Office Hours is a free service where you can:

- Meet one-on-one with an IECMH Consultant.
- Get a supportive place to share your concerns about a child who is struggling with behavior, attachment, peer relationships, or emotion regulation.
- Figure out the meaning of a child's behavior.
- Find solutions and next steps to help a child through the power of nurturing relationships.

IECMH Consultation is also a free service where you can:

- Collaborate with a Consultant to reflect and problem-solve when a child is struggling with behavior, attachment, peer relationships, or emotion regulation.
- Build teamwork with a child's family.
- Develop an Action Plan to support children and classroom staff.
- Learn new ways to help children learn skills like sharing, getting along with others, and expressing emotions in a healthy way.

Consultation comes in the form of virtual Consultation and in-person/on-site Consultation.

To learn more about ICEMH services, check out their most recent newsletter and [subscribe](#).

- [Bright Start, Bright Kids, Bright Future](#)

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.



Making Healthy Food Choices

When you're feeding young children, it's not just about what looks good; it's about what supports their growth, development, and lifelong habits. Think about these points as you plan meals and snacks for the children in your care:

1. Build meals around the major food groups

Children benefit when meals include a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified alternatives. For example, aim to fill half the plate with fruits and veggies, and the other half with a mix of whole grains plus protein foods.

2. Limit added sugars, saturated fats and excess sodium

Young children do best when their diet emphasizes nutrient-dense foods (foods rich in vitamins, minerals and fiber) rather than higher-sugar or highly processed items. Replace sugary snacks like fruit snacks or cookies with fresh fruit. Choose lean proteins instead of processed meats and serve water or low-fat milk instead of sweetened drinks.

3. Make meal time a fun time!

Meal time is more than 'just eating.' Staff and children can sit down together and talk about their day, what did you do at home last night, or what do they hope to do this afternoon? Involve children in food prep when possible. When kids help peel vegetables, pick a new fruit, or serve at the table, they're more likely to try the foods and feel ownership.

4. Snacks are an opportunity

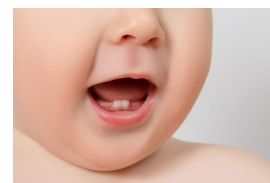
Young children snack frequently because of small stomachs and high energy needs. Use snacks as a chance to provide nutrient-rich options: cut vegetables and hummus, yogurt with fruit, whole-grain crackers with nut butter. Avoid defaulting to sweets or high-fat packaged items.

For more detailed tips and printable tools, click on this link:

<https://www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/healthy-eating-families>

Oral Health

Encourage Children to Drink Water



Water is important for good oral health and overall health and well-being. Drinking water every day helps move nutrients throughout the body, gets rid of waste, gives skin a healthy glow, keeps muscles moving, and promotes a healthy weight. Here are some reasons why drinking water helps keep teeth healthy:

It strengthens teeth. Drinking water with fluoride is one of the easiest and best ways to help prevent tooth decay. Water with fluoride makes it hard for the bacteria that cause tooth decay to create acid. Fluoride also strengthens the outer layers of the teeth, making them more resistant to acid attacks. If the local, county, or state health department says not to drink water from the tap, make sure the new water source contains fluoride.

It keeps the mouth clean. Drinking water washes away the bacteria that cause tooth decay and also washes away food left in the mouth after eating. Water

also dilutes acids made by the bacteria that cause tooth decay. Even though drinking water helps keep the mouth clean, it is still important to brush the teeth with fluoride toothpaste twice a day.

It fights dry mouth. Water helps create saliva, which is the mouth's first defense against tooth decay. Saliva contains calcium and other minerals that work into the outer layers of the teeth to keep them strong. It also keeps food moist so it can be swallowed easily and clears away food left in the mouth after eating.

It does not contain sugar. Water is sugar-free, so drinking it doesn't allow the bacteria that cause tooth decay to make acid. Drinking water instead of beverages that have natural or added sugar lowers the risk for developing tooth decay.

For tips to share with families to encourage children to drink water click [here](#). For a toolkit that explains why you should serve water to the children under your care and information on how to do it, click [here](#).

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

[Visit ELRC Region 12](#)

Community Services for Children | elrc12@cscinc.org | www.cscinc.org

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