



Community Services for Children Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 16 November 2025

Serving Bucks County

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Region 16 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 to the providers who have moved to a STAR 2:

- Smarties Academy
- Lightbridge Academy of Doylestown

Congratulations to the provider who moved to a STAR 3:

- Wee Care Too Daycare & Early Learning Center

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

- New Horizon Learning Academy Center
- New Horizon Learning Center
- Antoshka Day Care Center
- Best Friends Forever

Region 16 Provider Supports



Directors Network

The Bucks County Directors' Network meetings are the best way to stay connected to everything that is happening in the early childhood community. Quality Coaches are there to talk about STARS, OCDEL news, grants, training opportunities and much more. While county and state partners share announcements, updates, and ways to support children, families and staff. And, maybe best of all, participating directors get a chance to network and have meaningful conversations with others who share common experiences.

So, if you've never been to a Bucks County Directors' Network meeting, maybe it's time to give it a try! Meetings are held monthly and rotate between in-person and virtual. New participants will be entered into a raffle to win something special.

- [ELRC Directors Network flyer](#)

JOIN US . . . GET INSPIRED ... NETWORK . . . LEARN . . . SHARE!

Quality Coach Community Day & Virtual Office Hours

Your Quality Coaches are here for you! Community Days are scheduled to assist directors who may have questions, need encouragement, or are looking for new ideas. Maybe join a cohort to focus on your Continuous Quality Improvement goals. You might want to meet your coach out in the community to talk about what is on your mind. Or, if you prefer, check out Virtual Office Hours. Please see the Coaches' Calendar for a variety of connection options and for locations, dates and times.

- [Coaches Calendar](#)

Free Training Opportunities

PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT



The Bucks County Chapter of PennAEYC is offering six in-person, ECE training sessions for Early Childhood educators. No registration is required and PQAS hours will be given. Participants do not have to attend all classes to receive credit. One session starts on November 13th at Emilie Christian Day School in Levittown. The other begins on November 19th at First Friends in Doylestown. Please see the flyer for details.

- [Lower Bucks Training Series](#)
- [Doylestown Training Series](#)

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

The Region 16 Fall Conference: *Building Your Toolbox - Supporting the Social and Emotional Needs of the Children in Your Classroom* was a huge success. With 70 participants, the day was filled with engaging discussions and learning innovative, practical classroom strategies. The ELRC plans to make this conference date an annual event with new topics each year. If you haven't already done so, consider making next year's Indigenous Peoples Day (October 12, 2026) a paid closure to allow staff to attend this training opportunity. You won't be disappointed!

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.



Tender Bridges Advisory Council (TBAC) Wants You!

Are you a child care provider who is interested in working with local school district leadership to help children make a smooth transition into the public school setting? Do you want to know more about what is being taught in the Kindergarten and first grade? Do you want to open a line of communication between your program and the local schools? Join a TBAC meeting and make these valuable connections. See the [flyer](#) for upcoming meetings and more information.



Make a Circle Documentary Screening and Reception

Join early childhood educators for a screening of a powerful documentary that illustrates the child care crisis that impacts our families, children and the country. There will also be a celebration of the Bucks County Outstanding Educators for 2025. See this [flyer](#) for more information.

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

Watch this video for directions on how to upload documentation to your SNAP account: https://youtu.be/GVnKpss_n4I



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.

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 (IECMH)

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.

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



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 16

Connect with us



Community Services for Children | 1520 Hanover Ave | Allentown, PA 18109 US

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