

Community Services for Children

Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 12

January 2026

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

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

Region 12 Updates

Please note that the ELRC offices will be closed on Thursday, January 16th for staff training. We will also be closed on Monday, January 19th in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr's birthday.

Region 12 Provider Supports

Directors' Network

Our Director's Network this month will be held on Tuesday, January 20th at 1pm. We will lead a discussion around goals and plans for 2026. This is a great time of the year to reflect on this past year and look ahead to all the new possibilities we can create in the new year. Click [here](#) to register and view the flyer.



Quality Coach 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

****Update for the Rapid Response Team****

Funding has been made available to continue to Rapid Response Team through December 2026! If you have any questions about referrals to the Rapid Response Team, please reach out to your Quality Coach.



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.

Community Resource Spotlight

PA Navigate

PA Navigate connects Pennsylvanians with services in their local communities. Find help now with food, utilities, child care, financial assistance and more. Enter your zip code at pa-navigate.org to get started today!



ELRC Updates

CCW Reminders



Winter Weather Closures

- This is the time of year when winter weather can prompt program closures. Providers who use Provider Self Service (PSS) will have until the 5th of the following month to report closures. Providers who do not use PSS must contact their provider specialist within three days of reopening the facility in order to receive a paid closure.

Provider Self Service

If you are not using Provider Self Service already, here's some of the benefits:

- PSS saves you time reporting attendance, reporting delinquent co-pays, and updating closure days.
- Users receive email notifications for child enrollments, invoice changes and more.
- Submit attendance invoices in real time and receive a confirmation receipt.

To sign up go to www.pelican.state.pa.us/provider and click on "Create Account"

STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Awards

Final Expense Reports - due March 27

All providers who received a Continuous Quality Improvement Award are required to submit a Final Expense Report no later than March 27, 2026. Keep all receipts for eligible expenses, including payroll records to verify staff bonuses have been paid through payroll and taxes deducted appropriately. All expenses must have occurred from July 1, 2025 - March 13, 2026.



Click [here](#) to access a copy of the Final Expense Report. Providers should follow the instructions attached to the Final Expense Report and return the completed form to their **Quality Coach**. Quality Coaches have office hours available to assist you in completing the expense report if needed.

For eligible expenses, please see the [Announcement ELRC#25-03](#).

Child Care Staff Retention & Recruitment Grant

Deadline 1/29/26

Community Services for Children is offering child care providers several information sessions regarding the new Staff Retention & Recruitment Grant released on December 15, 2025. The Child Care Staff Retention and Recruitment program is intended to provide funding to eligible DHS certified child care providers for the sole purpose of staff retention and staff recruitment bonuses.

These sessions are restricted to providers in ELRC Regions 11, 12, 13, 14 & 16.

We strongly encourage ALL providers to attend a session prior to submitting their grant application.

Sessions will cover:

- Program eligibility
- Staff retention award eligibility
- Required documentation
- Recruitment awards
- Process for application
- Timeline for submission and payment

All sessions are the same content so pick the session that is most convenient for you. Please click on the link below to join:

[January 5 - 10:00 am](#)

[January 8 - 2:00 pm](#)

[January 12 - 1:00 pm](#)

Qualified providers must submit a completed application, [2025-2026 Child Care Retention and Recruitment Application](#), to elrc-ksgrants@cscinc.org by **January 29, 2026**.

For full information, please see [Announcement ELRC #25-05 Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention Program](#).

Communication is an essential skill that children need to express their emotions, needs, and wants. Using visuals cues such as sign language and communication boards is an excellent start to support children to develop their communication skills. When paired with strategies like modeling alternative communication methods, creating communication-rich routines, reinforcing attempts, and collaborating with families, children with limited communication skills can develop meaningful ways to express their needs, emotions, and ideas.

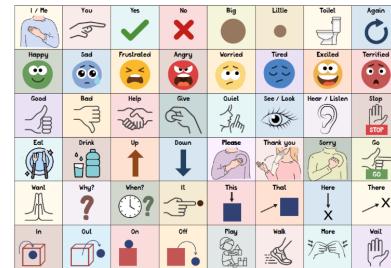
Here are several effective strategies to support children with limited or no communication skills. These approaches help children express their emotions, needs, and wants while building long-term communication competence.

Visual Supports

- Communication boards/books with pictures, symbols, or real photos.
- Visual schedules to reduce anxiety and increase predictability
- Emotion charts to help children label and point to their feelings
- Important people and places in their lives.
- Regulation visuals help children choose how to regulate their emotions. “When I feel _____, I can _____.”



MY COMMUNICATION BOARD

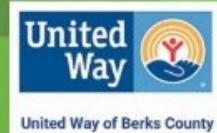


Gestural and Manual Systems

- Sign language or keyword signing to support expressive communication
- Gestures and pointing taught and modeled consistently

DID YOU KNOW?

Limit toddler screen time to less than an hour a day.



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:

[Recruiting and Retaining Staff](#)

February 3, 2026
9:30am - 12:30pm

[Budgets, Projections, and Planning](#)

January 13, 2026
9:30am - 11:30am

[Financial Reports & Internal Controls](#)

January 20, 2026
9:30am - 11:30 am

[Marketing Your Program](#)

For future module offerings for **Center & Family-Based providers**, 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**](#)

Have an International Degree? Get it evaluated at no cost to you!

OCDEL and the Pennsylvania Key have developed an initiative to better support the Early Childhood Education workforce who obtained education outside of the U.S. by creating an internal process for foreign degree evaluations. This new resource helps reduce administrative and financial burden to our workforce members and limits out-of-pocket expenses.



Foreign Degree evaluations for individuals applying for placement on the Career Pathway will occur seamlessly through services provided by the Educational Credential Evaluators. More information can be found on the Pennsylvania Key webpage: [**International Education Evaluation**](#).

To better support the field and to help determine strengths and opportunities of this new initiative, this service is available at no cost for the duration of this fiscal year (June 30, 2026). After this fiscal year, the service will be available at a substantial discount. Participants are encouraged to share their experiences at registry@pakeys.org to help inform future implementation and improvements.

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](#).

Oral Health – The Importance of Fluoride

There are several important ways to make teeth strong and prevent tooth decay. These include drinking tap (faucet) water with fluoride, brushing with fluoride toothpaste, and having a professional apply fluoride varnish. Fluoride is safe. It is found in nature in plants, soil, and water.

See this [Cavity Fighter flyer](#) and the [Getting Fluoride flyer](#) for more information, and please post this information and/or share with families.



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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