

Community Services for Children Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 13 April 2026

Serving Berks & Schuylkill Counties

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Region 13 Updates

Region 13 Provider Supports

Director's Network

The ELRC 13 Directors' Network meetings are a great way to stay connected! Each month we meet to reflect on relevant early childhood topics, share updates, and reflect on the leadership role. In April, we will be discussing the benefits of outside learning. Join us virtually on April 8th at 1 PM for meaningful conversations, the opportunity to collaborate, and to inspire each other. See [flyer](#) for more details and to register.



Community of Practice

Quality Coaches offer a short virtual learning session each month for classroom staff. These opportunities are aimed at exploring new skills and strategies to enhance the learning experience for children. Each month a different topic is the focus of the session and idea sharing. On April 21st at 1 pm we will be discussing the benefits of outside learning. Encourage your teachers to attend! See this [flyer](#) for more details and to register.

Regional Calendar

Check out our [calendar](#) for a quick reference of all regional support activities and professional development opportunities.

Trauma Informed Care and Cultural Responsiveness in Early Intervention

Thursday, April 30th

8:30 am – 3:30 pm

Berks County Intermediate Unit

See this [flyer](#) for details and registration information for this free event.

Save-the-Date

The United Way of Berks County will be offering free professional development on Monday, October 12th. See this [flyer](#) for details and save the date!



Reading School District Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten registration for Reading School District is running through the month of May. Please share the flyers below with families living in the Reading School District.

- [K Registration - English](#)
- [K Registration - Spanish](#)

Community Opportunities

Earth Day at City Park

Saturday, April 18th

12:00 pm – 6:00 pm

City Park – Reading

Click [here](#) for more information.



Early Childhood Exploration Day

This event is designed to connect families with valuable resources that support early childhood development and family well-being, and to provide a fun morning for families to engage with their children.

Saturday, April 18th

9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Centro Hispano – Reading

- [Engage Grow Invite English](#)
- [Engage Grow Invite Spanish](#)

Pre-registration is encouraged.

RRT Toolkit Training

ELRC Region 13 Quality Coaches have been leading RRT Toolkit Trainings across the region. Everyone enjoyed the opportunity to network and share experiences. All participating childcare programs received a resource book and USB drive containing social emotional resources for their programs. If you have not already attended one of the trainings, check out the upcoming dates below.



Attendees have shared this feedback:

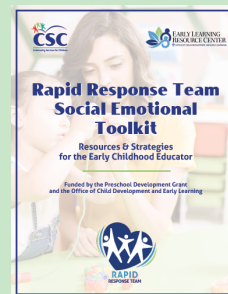
"Grateful we attended the RRT ToolKit Training — it's always beneficial to be in a room with other providers, talking through practical strategies and realistic situations. It is especially nice to be able to walk away with a tool we can implement immediately. Our staff are already pulling documents from the toolkit to use in their classrooms to help to prevent challenging behaviors."

"Thank you for your time and the great resource book. This is definitely going to be the next few staff meetings at all of our locations and the videos will also be part of staff training. Our focus this year is getting back to that INTENTIONAL TEACHER!! and this training really will help pull that all together"

"I wanted to drop an email about the RRT- social emotional toolkit. This is AMAZING!!!! The information you all put together in this resource is outstanding! My 2 Pre-K teachers that were there yesterday couldn't wait to tell me all about it."

Rapid Response Team Toolkit Free Professional Development

All Region 13 providers are invited to attend the FREE, 2-hour PD, "Rapid Response Team Social Emotional Toolkit." This training will support providers to identify social-emotional skill gaps, and how to apply proactive, relationship-based strategies to prevent challenging behaviors.



Attendees will be given a RRT Toolkit (one per facility) full of resources to use with classroom staff.

These trainings will be offered throughout the Spring 2026.

Saturday, April 18, 2026, 10:00am - 12:00pm

ELRC Region 13 Office
1138 Rockland St
Reading, PA
Event ID 395360

Tuesday, April 28, 2026, 6:00pm - 8:00pm

ELRC Region 13 Office
1138 Rockland St
Reading, PA
Event ID 393644

Monday, May 4, 2026, 6:00pm - 8:00pm

ELRC Region 13 Office
1138 Rockland St
Reading, PA
Event ID 395361

Once a program has attended this training, they along with their program staff, will be invited to attend a monthly Community of Practice. Look for more information to come on these supportive sessions.

Rapid Response Team

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

Funding has been made available to continue the 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.

ELRC Updates

CCW Reminders



Please review your payment summaries as soon as you receive your payment from the ELRC.

- Check that all children are accounted for and that their schedules are accurate.
- When you are looking at their schedules, it is important to check the number of days that you were paid for them and whether the days are full or part time.
- Check copays match the child's enrollment summary.

If you find any discrepancies, please contact your Provider Specialist at the ELRC and report it to them.



Child Care Staff Retention & Recruitment Grant

Provider payments for the CCSRR grant will be paid by April 15, 2026. Payment will reflect both the retention and recruitment award. To reflect the importance of the early learning workforce, OCDEL had reviewed available funding for the Retention and Recruitment Bonus amounts and determined the opportunity for an increased award amount.

Policy Reminders:

- Providers must pay retention awards to staff within 45 days of receipt of payment from the ELRC.
- Awards must be paid through payroll with appropriate taxes withheld.
- Recruitment awards must be spent or returned to the ELRC by June 30th.
- Final Expense Reports will be due by July 31st.

Staff Employment Changes:

- Staff who have given notice when the program receives their payment, must be paid their award.
- Staff who have left employment prior to the receipt of award from the ELRC, provider may move those funds into the recruitment award to pay a sign on bonus for the staff replacement (cannot exceed number of recruitment slots).

Supports for Spanish Speaking Providers



Thursday, April 16th – 1-2pm: ECE Latinos Roundtable. [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#) Join

an informal conversation with other caregivers and ELRC representatives. This meeting is delivered in Spanish.

Wednesday, May 6, 2025: E.C.E. Latinos Caravan to Harrisburg; You will be registered for full day event, transportation option may be included and individual Legislator meetings will be planned specific to your location.

- Berks County child care providers and parents interested in going to event, contact Michelle Wunder, PACCA Regional Ambassador. Email M.wunder@pacca.org
- Luzerne, Carbon and Schuylkill counties child care providers and parents interested in going to event, contact Kim Bastian, PACCA Regional Ambassador. Email: kbastian@ptd.net

Message from PACCA



Please complete the [PA Child Care Staffing Crisis Survey](#) being conducted by Start Strong PA to gather updated information on the ongoing staffing crisis? Even with the 2025–26 budget funding bonuses for eligible teachers, programs across the state are still struggling to retain teachers and keep classrooms open. Your responses to this survey will help show why the next state budget must increase funding for the Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention Program so workforce bonuses can grow.

Please complete the survey **by April 5, 2026**.

Also, we had an increase for the new line item for Teacher Retention and Recruitment funds! Now the governors budget includes \$35 million for teachers! This is funding to encourage teachers to stay in the field. Asking the field to **Take Action**, by clicking the link seen here and telling their legislators to consider including the proposal of the governor in their review of the new budget. <https://startstrongpa.org/take-action>

Rapid Response Team Tip of the Month

Catch Them Being Good

Tip of the Month:

Make it a daily habit to notice and name positive behaviors as they happen.

Why it works:



Children are more likely to repeat behaviors that get attention. When adults focus on positive actions instead of only correcting negative ones, it helps reduce challenging behaviors and builds confidence and connection.

Try this:

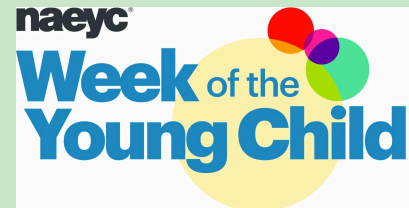
Use specific praise so children know exactly what they did right:

- “I love how you’re using gentle hands.”
- “You cleaned up right away—that’s being responsible!”

Try to give more positive comments than corrections throughout the day. Even small moments—like sharing, waiting, or following directions—are opportunities to reinforce the behavior you want to see more of.

Time to Celebrate!

Every April, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) promotes the Week of the Young Child. This week celebrates the importance of high-quality early learning, and the critical role early childhood educators play in a child’s development and learning.

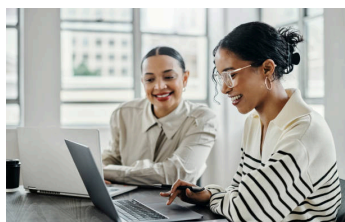


The ELRC would love to see the creative ways you are engaging families, children and other partners in the WOYC activities. Send pictures and stories to your Quality Coach and with your permission, we will add some submissions to the Provider Link newsletter or social media.

It’s not too late to take part in this fun week!

- Monday, April 6th: Music Monday
- Tuesday, April 7th: Tasty Tuesday
- Wednesday, April 8th: Work Together Wednesday
- Thursday, April 9th: Artsy Thursday
- Friday, April 10th: Family Friday

Visit NAEYC’s [website](#) for celebration ideas and other resources.



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:

[Budgets, Projections, and Planning](#)

**April 1, 2026
1:00pm - 3:00pm**

[Financial Reports & Internal Controls](#)

**April 8, 2026
1:00pm - 3:00pm**

Marketing Your Program

April 15, 2026
12:00pm - 3:00pm

Recruiting and Retaining Staff

April 29, 2026
10:00am - 1:00pm

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](#)

Pennsylvania Farm to School Network *Food Hubs and Aggregators Serving PA*



This [compilation of food hubs and aggregators](#) from PFSN was designed to help Early Care and Education (ECE) operators and other organizations interested in sourcing local food for meals and snacks in ECE settings. Purchasing from individual farmers is a great way to start procuring local food and building relationships with community growers. If you're facing challenges in identifying farmers or growers in your area or finalizing delivery details for local purchases, a food hub or aggregator may be an option for you.



Your Feedback is Requested

The Berks and Chester County Intermediate Units are partnering to develop a multi-county Early Childhood Conference for Spring 2027. This collaborative effort will bring together early childhood systems and professionals from across our region to learn from one another, share expertise, and strengthen collective capacity.

The conference will serve providers and educators who support children from birth through age eight. We are seeking your feedback to help us design a meaningful, relevant, and engaging professional learning experience that supports your growth and enhances the services you provide to children and families. Thank you in advance for your response. Your input will help shape a conference that truly reflects the needs of our early childhood community.

Please take a few minutes to share your insights by completing this survey:

<https://forms.gle/nygiUXExcQzcoeJk8>

Virtual PA One Book Author Visit

Child care providers and early learning programs are invited to join on April 15, 2026, at 10:00 AM for a special Virtual Author Visit with Jessica Shaw, author of *The Great Cookie Kerfuffle*, the 2026 PA One Book selection!



Gather the children in your early learning program for a fun, interactive storytime experience and a chance to connect with the author

behind this year's featured book. It's a wonderful way to spark early literacy, imagination, and joy in reading.

Register your early learning program at [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#). Learn more about the [Pennsylvania One Book](#).



April is Child Abuse Prevention Month



National Child Abuse Prevention Month recognizes the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. Prevention services and supports developed by this collaboration can help parents, other caregivers, and communities protect children and strengthen families.

For the month of April, we encourage you to promote child abuse prevention awareness with your networks.

- Use #ChildAbusePreventionMonth in your social media posts
- Wear Blue on Friday, April 17th to show your support of Child Abuse Prevention
- Share this website with families enrolled in your program. There are lots of great articles and videos to support parents facing the challenges of parenting. [Discipline Tips for Toddlers, Kids, Teens & Tweens](#)

- Host a refresher of PA Mandated Reporter training for your teachers during your April staff meeting.

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 newsletter 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](#).

Lead Testing Program for Childcare Centers

The PA Department of Environmental Protection has contracted with Terraphase Engineering, to spearhead its Lead Testing Program for schools and childcare centers across Pennsylvania.



This free, voluntary program not only provides lead testing for schools and childcare facilities, but it also includes grant-funded remediation solutions for eligible applicants, including:

- Up to \$3,000 per hydration station
- Up to \$30,000 per building
- Up to \$100,000 per applicant

To learn more about the project, please visit the website at:

<https://www.padepleadtestingprogram.org/> or see this [flyer](#).

How Smoking Affects Oral Health

Smoking can lead to disease and disability, harming nearly every bodily organ. More than 16 million Americans are living with a disease caused by smoking. Secondhand smoke is also dangerous to both adults and children.

Smoking traditional cigarettes, e-cigarettes, cigars, pipes, water pipes, and smokeless tobacco can all cause health problems. Smoking makes it more likely that a person will have tooth decay, gum disease, oral cancer, and poor birth outcomes. It also causes stained teeth, bad breath, and reduced ability to taste and smell.

Not smoking or quitting smoking is important for overall health, including oral health. When a smoker quits, it improves their health and quality of life. It also improves the health and quality of life of those around them, especially young children.

Explore www.smokefree.gov to find out about different [ways to quit smoking](#).

Article Credit: HeadStart.gov ([Oral Health | HeadStart.gov](#))

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 13](#)

Community Services for Children | elrc13@cscinc.org | www.cscinc.org

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