



Community Services for Children Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 13 May 2026

Serving Berks & Schuylkill Counties

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Region 13 News



The ELRC offices will be closed on Monday, May 25th in observance of Memorial Day.

Local Events

Employment Resource Expo

May 18th from 5pm-8pm

DoubleTree, 701 Penn Street, Reading

This event aims to connect individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and Autism along with families to local employment providers and community partners who support competitive, integrated employment.

- See this [flyer](#) for more information.



Schuylkill County Early Childhood Expo

Thursday, May 28th from 4pm-7pm

Barefield Outdoor Recreation Complex

823 Terry Reiley Way, Pottsville

Bring the whole family to enjoy this FREE educational event!

- Click [here](#) for more information

Project Peace March

Saturday, May 30th from 11am–2pm
RCAA City Line, 1700 City Line Street, Reading.

Each year students from Reading High School and the five Middle Schools come together to hold the Project Peace March. This **free** event is planned by the youth of the Project Peace Clubs with the support of the Community Prevention Partnership and local businesses.

- There will be speakers, music, food, activities, games and helpful resources from local organizations.
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Easter Seals

Please consider taking a few moments to access Easterseals Eastern Pa's ASQ Online Screening Tool. This free questionnaire is an easy way to measure and keep track of your child's development and alert you to any concerns. If you are concerned about your child's development, don't wait. Acting early can make a real difference.

- Click [here](#) or scan the QR code now.



Camp Connect

CAMPConnect^{12th Annual}

Camp Connect is a free bereavement camp for children and teens ages 6-16 who have experienced the death of someone close to them.

- Click [here](#) for more details.
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NOW ENROLLING FAMILIES!



FAMILY CENTER

FREE SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

The BCAP Family Center provides education, guidance, and resources to help families with young children build strong foundations for lifelong success.

HOW WE SUPPORT FAMILIES

PARENTING SUPPORT



- Parenting classes & workshops
- Child development guidance
- One-on-one support for families

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT



- School readiness activities
- Early learning for ages 0–5
- Development resources

FAMILY RESOURCES



- Community resource connections
- Housing & job referrals
- Local services assistance

BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES



- Meet other parents
- Strengthen family bonds
- Support your child's future

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Families with children ages 0–5 who are looking for support, education, and resources.

CONTACT US

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Director of Family Programs

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Berks Community Action Program (BCAP)
645 Penn Street, 3rd Floor
Reading, PA

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 child care 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 as well.



If you have concerns that your child may be suspended or expelled from child care 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)

DID YOU KNOW?

A bedtime routine
without screens
helps kids sleep
better.



The Transition from Child Care to Self-Care

Most childcare facilities care for children up to 12 years old, which leaves many to wonder – ‘what’s next?’ As your child approaches that age, it is important to determine if they are ready to stay home alone before and after school or if there is a need to look into other care options until they are ready to handle that responsibility.



Here are a few things to consider:

- Will your child come straight home after school?
- Will your child be lonely or frightened home alone?
- Can your child manage simple jobs, like fixing a snack?
- Is your child prepared to handle an accident or an emergency?
- Is your neighborhood safe?
- Is there someone nearby that can be on call in case of an emergency?
- Does your child follow family rules and directions well?

If you determine that your child is not ready to stay home alone, a few options to consider include looking to neighbors or family members for support, hiring a babysitter, and looking into activities that occur at the school that they can take part in until they can be picked up.

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 Krystal Perez from the Allentown School District. She is the assistant director of health services, and she shares information on childhood obesity. Click [here](#) to listen.

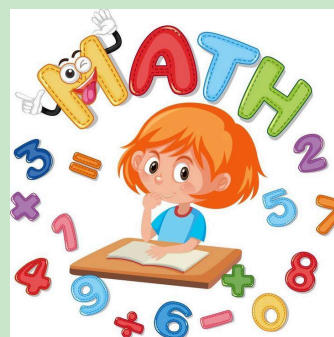


Child Development

Building Math Skills at Home

Helping Children Learn Through Everyday Experiences

Strong math skills begin developing long before children enter kindergarten. From infancy through preschool, children learn math through play, exploration, routines, and everyday experiences. Early math learning helps children build problem-solving skills, confidence, critical thinking, and school readiness.



What Does Early Math Look Like?

- Infants begin learning math by exploring shapes, sizes, patterns, and cause-and-effect through play and daily interactions. Singing counting songs,

- stacking toys, and talking about “big” and “small” all support early learning.
- Toddlers start noticing numbers, sorting objects, comparing amounts, and understanding concepts like “more” and “less.” Everyday routines such as counting snacks, matching socks, or filling and dumping containers help build these skills naturally.
- Preschoolers expand their math understanding by counting, recognizing numbers, measuring, identifying patterns, sorting, building, and problem-solving. Activities like cooking, puzzles, board games, and block play provide meaningful opportunities to practice math concepts.

Easy Ways to Build Math Skills at Home

- Count steps while walking or climbing stairs
- Sort laundry by color or size
- Talk about shapes during car rides or shopping trips
- Measure ingredients while cooking together
- Build with blocks or complete puzzles
- Sing counting songs and nursery rhymes
- Compare sizes, amounts, and quantities during daily routines

Remember:

Math learning does not need worksheets or flashcards to be effective. Children learn best through hands-on experiences, conversations, play, and everyday routines. When families make math a natural part of daily life, children develop confidence and positive feelings about learning.

Small moments every day help build a strong foundation for future success in school and beyond!

Source: [Making Math Meaningful for Young Children | NAEYC](#)

Resource & Referral

Kids Bowl Free EVERY DAY, ALL Summer Long!

- Unlock a Summer of Fun, Laughter, and Lasting Memories - All at No Cost
- 2 Free Games Every Day - Enjoy a daily dose of fun and excitement.
- Family-Friendly Activity - Perfect for making memories together.
- Click [here](#) to find a bowling center near you!



Keystone Scholars

All children born to or adopted by PA residents automatically have a Keystone Scholars account in their name with \$100 for postsecondary education expenses. Parents can activate their child's account at www.pa529.com/keystone or use the QR code.

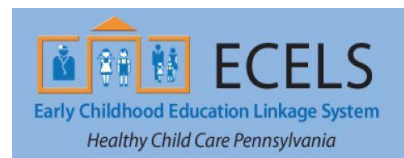


Keystone Scholars

Health & Safety

ECELS Health & Safety Newsletter

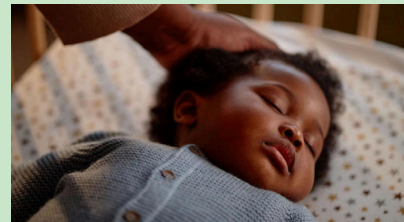
Early Childhood Education Linkage System (ECELS) publishes a monthly newsletter full of valuable health & safety tips and resources for children and families.



Click [here](#) to download the most recent newsletter.

Dangers of Bedsharing

Bedsharing is dangerous because it significantly increases the risk of infant death from accidental suffocation, strangulation, entrapment, or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Adult mattresses, pillows, and bedding can easily suffocate a baby, and sleeping adults may accidentally roll onto or trap an infant.



Why Bed-Sharing Is Dangerous:

- **Accidental Suffocation & Overlying:** An adult or older child can accidentally roll onto a baby, blocking their airway. Soft mattresses, waterbeds, couches, or heavy blankets can also cause suffocation, as babies cannot move away from these dangers.
- **Positional Asphyxiation:** Babies can become trapped between the mattress and a wall, headboard, or bed frame, or get into a "chin-to-chest" position that compromises their breathing.
- **Overheating:** Sharing a bed with an adult can lead to overheating, which is a known risk factor for SIDS.
- **SIDS Risk:** Studies strongly link bed-sharing with an increased risk of SIDS, particularly for infants under 4 months or those born preterm.

Safe Alternatives:

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends room-sharing without bed-sharing. Having the baby sleep in their own crib or bassinet within the parents' room reduces the risk of SIDS by up to 50%.

Source: Cleveland Clinic [How to Safely Co-Sleep \(Not Bed-Share\) With Your Baby](#)



WHAT DOES A SAFE SLEEP ENVIRONMENT LOOK LIKE?

The following image shows a safe sleep environment for baby.



Room share: Give babies their own sleep space in your room, separate from your bed.



Use a firm, flat, and level sleep surface, covered only by a fitted sheet.



Remove everything from baby's sleep area, except a fitted sheet to cover the mattress. No objects, toys, or other items.



Use a wearable blanket to keep baby warm without blankets in the sleep area.



Place babies on their backs to sleep, for naps and at night.



Couches and armchairs are not safe for baby to sleep on alone, with people, or with pets.



Keep baby's surroundings smoke/vape free.

Make sure baby's head and face stay uncovered during sleep.



*The Consumer Product Safety Commission sets safety standards for infant sleep surfaces (such as a mattress) and sleep spaces (like a crib). Visit <https://www.cpsc.gov/SafeSleep> to learn more.



NIH Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development



Pennsylvania School Immunization Requirements



To attend school in Pennsylvania, children need to have received certain immunizations. Next school year might seem far away but now is a good time to start planning for any vaccinations your child will need. You can see the requirements [here](#).

Effective Child Supervision

Effective supervision of young children at home changes as your child gets older. While common, unintentional home injuries are often preventable through a combination of "active supervision" and childproofing your home.

Core Strategies for Active Supervision

Active supervision is more than just being in the same room; it is a proactive safety method that includes these key steps:

- **Strategic Positioning:** Sit or stand in a way that allows you to see your child at a glance. For infants and toddlers, stay within an arm's length at all times.
- **Scan and Listen:** Continually scan the room for hazards and maintain noise levels that allow you to hear sounds of distress, like an infant's cry or a toddler's silence.
- **Anticipate Behavior:** Use your knowledge of your child's abilities and interests to predict when they might take a risk, such as climbing furniture or putting small objects in their mouth.
- **Engage and Redirect:** Use active supervision to guide play and step in before your child attempts something dangerous.



Supervision by Age and Stage

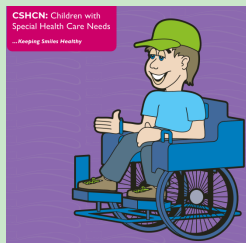
Supervision needs change as children gain independence and physical skills:

- **Infants (0–12 months):** Require constant, "intense" supervision. High-risk activities like tummy time, bathing, or sand and water play require your full, undivided attention.
- **Toddlers (1–3 years):** While they still need close monitoring, "peripheral supervision" (watching while doing other tasks) often increases. However, their curiosity makes them prone to accidents like tip-overs.
- **Preschoolers (3–5 years):** Focus shifts toward teaching rules and identifying hazards together. At this stage, parental responsiveness is critical for supporting self-regulation and social-emotional development.

Common Supervision Challenges

- **Parental Distractions:** Research shows that distractions like cell phones, TV, or computer work can significantly decrease the quality of supervision and increase "risky" child behaviors.
- **The "Listening" Trap:** Some parents rely on listening to supervise children in other rooms. However, experts from PubMed Central (PMC) note that this can increase injury risk, as many hazards (like choking or poison ingestion) are silent.
- **Sibling Supervision:** While common, leaving younger children in the care of older siblings can increase injury risk, unless the older child has been specifically trained in safety protocols.

Click [here](#) to visit PubMed Central for more information and supervision tips



Oral Health for Children with Disabilities

A disability can affect a child's activities and ability to learn. Some children with disabilities need extra health services and support services. Children with disabilities are at higher risk for tooth decay and other oral health problems than children without disabilities.

Oral Health Challenges for Children with Disabilities

- Children with physical disabilities, such as cerebral palsy, may not have the motor skills they need to use a toothbrush safely or to sit still in a dental chair during dental visits.
- Children with communication disorders, such as delayed speech and language development, may not be able to tell their parents that they have a

toothache.

- Children who get frequent medical care, such as having many medical visits or hospital stays, may be afraid of the dental office and may not cooperate during visits.
- Children who take medicines with added sugars or that cause dry mouth are at high risk for tooth decay.
- Children on special diets may be at high risk for tooth decay. Foods that are soft or high in starch (e.g., potatoes, corn) stick to children's teeth and give bacteria in the mouth more time to cause tooth decay.

Strategies to Help Improve the Oral Health of Children with Disabilities

- Click [here](#) to learn more about taking care of teeth, selecting the right toothbrush, adapting toothbrushes, addressing challenges, providing good nutrition, encouraging safety, and going to the dentist.
- Give children with disabilities extra support. Make sure children eat food and drink beverages low in sugar and that children's teeth are brushed with fluoridated toothpaste after meals. Children with intellectual disabilities may need extra time for brushing.

Family Engagement

Create a Miniature Garden!

Did you know that May is National Miniature Garden Month? Gardening brings much joy and is a great opportunity to connect with nature, engage in crafting, and enjoy the beauty of nature. There are many tiny plants and small-scale landscapes that provide endless possibilities! Creating miniature gardens introduces gardening, nurtures an understanding of plant care, landscape design, and environmental stewardship AND it's FUN! It is a relaxing activity that can be done indoors in terrariums or outdoors in containers.

- Click [here](#) for ideas to get you started.



Visit [ELRC Region 13](#)

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