



Community Services for Children Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 14 July 2026

Serving Lehigh & Northampton Counties

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Region 14 News

Child Care Works Reminders

Summer Schedule Changes

If your child's childcare arrangements have changed for the summer (new provider, change in hours, no longer needing care) please remember to notify the ELRC of these changes. You can reach out to your ELRC Family Specialist with any updates or questions.

The ELRC will also need to be notified if your child(ren) will not be in care due to a vacation for 5 or more consecutive days.

Children receiving CCW funding are allowed up to 40 days of absence a year and they reset every year on 7/1. Please note that absences can accumulate quickly, especially over the summer months if you do not send your children on their scheduled days for care.



Backpack Giveaways

Touch a Truck & Backpack Giveaway Event 2026

Come visit the ELRC at this free community event focused on raising awareness about healthcare and showcasing local resources! Families can explore fire trucks, construction equipment, and police vehicles while connecting with helpful services. The event is free and will take place rain or shine.

August 2nd, 2026



9:30am - 12pm
Wilson Area Intermediate School
2400 Firmstone St, Easton, PA 18042

22nd Annual Backpack Giveaway & Community Street Fair

Get ready for an exciting community event filled with FREE backpacks, school supplies, fun activities for kids, and awesome giveaways! Come out on August 21st, bring your school aged children, and enjoy a day of giving and community spirit!

August 20, 2026
10:00am to 2:00pm
144 N. 8th Street, Allentown, PA, 18101
Click [here](#) to see the flyer.

Image Credit: Clipart Library

Summer Meals 2026

The city of Allentown and Allentown School District (ASD) are in partnership with local organizations to offer free meals to kids this Summer.



Locations offering community meals this summer include:

- St. Luke's at Star Community Health
- Lehigh Valley Hospital School of Nursing
- Allentown Public Library
- The Caring Place
- Mack Pool
- Casa Guadalupe

ASD Meal Sites are South Mountain Middle School and Trexler Middle School. The meals must be eaten on-site, but no registration is required.

For more information:

- Click [here](#) to see a full list of free meal sites in Allentown and across the country.
- Families can text "Summer Meals" to 914-342-7744 or call 1-866-348-6479 to find a summer site in their community.
- Click [here](#) for the flyer.

Learn to Swim 2026

The City of Allentown and River Crossing YMCA are offering free swim lessons this summer at Cedar Beach & Irving Pools for city residents — open to ages 3+ (adults included)



Next Session:

July 20–August 13

Tuesdays & Thursdays – Two 4-Week Sessions

Cedar Beach Pool, 101 N Ott Street, Allentown, PA 18104

- Click [here](#) for more information and to sign up.
- Or register in person at the Allentown YMCA branch.

Job Now



The Allentown's Public Library offers JobNow as an online resource. Live, anytime, anywhere job assistance, including up-to-date nationwide and local job search engines, professional resume critique and proven interview techniques.

- Click [here](#) for more information

JobNow's features include:

- Homework Help Interact with live tutors in math, science, reading/writing, social studies, PSAT/SAT, ACT, AP and state standardized tests.
- JobNow participants receive live job coaching, real-time interview practice, full-service resume lab, 24/7 access to local job resources and more!
- Resume Assistance - Prepare your resume with help from JobNow resources including resume templates; receive expert feedback via live interaction or the resume lab.
- Prepare for Your Interview - Review interview tips and resources; connect with a job coach to practice interviewing.
- Live Assistance- Interact with live tutors in math, science, reading, writing, history, GED, college placement tests and more!
- Career Resources - Begin your job hunt with JobNow's powerful tools.
- Skills-Building - Choose your topic to receive real-time help.
- Personalized eLearning Tools - My File Sharing, My Session Replay, My Tutoring Archive, My Tests Archive, and more!
- 24-Hour Writing Lab - Submit essays and other forms of writing for constructive feedback.
- Homework Help - Submit homework questions for expert guidance.
- Adult Learning Center - Access a library of rich adult learning content (GED) and live, professional assistance in resume/cover letter writing, U.S. citizenship prep, MS Office Essential Skills Series, and more!
- Foreign Language Lab /Spanish-Speaking Support

Community Mental Health Survey

Please take a moment to complete this important survey. Maternal Health and Family Services designed this survey to gather valuable insights on maternal health experiences, needs, and barriers to care. The information collected will help make new plans, develop more resources, and strengthen our impact across Northeastern Pennsylvania

- Click [here](#) for the survey, or scan the QR Code above



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:



ECEhire.com
a PHMC program

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?

Children who read succeed!
They are better behaved, have
better school attendance, feel
more confident and capable in
school.

Bathing Suit Colors Matter!

Keep your child safe in the water by choosing the right bathing suit colors that stand out in the water. Bright, neon colors like pink, orange, yellow, and green are easiest to spot in the water. Since these colors aren't typically part of the normal environment, they stand out against dark color water or blue pool liners and are easier to spot. Muted colors blend with the water, so avoid shades of dark blue, green, white, and pastels.

Take a look at this chart to see which colors blend and which ones stand out.

For more information, please visit the following websites:

- [Geisinger](#)
- [LVHN](#)
- [Akron Children's](#)



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 Missy Wise, Assistant Director of United Way Training Initiatives. She discusses the topic of De-escalation and Regulation. Click [here](#) to listen.



Child Development



Summer Learning Happens Everywhere

Summer is a wonderful time for children to explore, play, and learn. While school may be on break, young children continue developing important skills every day through everyday experiences with the people who love them most.

The best part? Learning doesn't require expensive toys or carefully planned activities. Some of the most meaningful learning happens during simple family moments.

Here are a few easy ways to support your child's development this summer:

Explore Nature Together

Take a walk around your neighborhood, visit a local park, or simply spend time in your backyard. Encourage your child to notice colors, shapes, insects, birds, flowers, and clouds. Ask open-ended questions like, "What do you think that bug is doing?" or "How many different leaves can we find?" These conversations build language, observation, and critical thinking skills.

Read Every Day

Reading for just 15–20 minutes each day helps children build vocabulary, strengthen listening skills, and develop a lifelong love of books. Visit your local library to discover free story times and borrow new books to enjoy together.

Get Creative

Sidewalk chalk, finger painting, water painting with a brush, homemade playdough, or recycled materials can inspire hours of imaginative play. Creative activities help children strengthen fine motor skills, problem-solving abilities, and self-expression.

Water Play Builds Skills

A bucket of water, measuring cups, funnels, and sponges can become an exciting science and math activity. Children learn about pouring, measuring, floating, sinking, and cause-and-effect while staying cool on hot summer days.

Cook Together

Invite your child to wash fruits and vegetables, stir ingredients, count scoops, or help set the table. Cooking builds math skills, language development, independence, and healthy eating habits.

Make Time to Talk

Conversations are one of the most powerful ways children learn. Talk about your day, ask questions, listen to your child's ideas, and encourage storytelling. These simple interactions build confidence, communication skills, and strong family relationships.

Most importantly, remember that children learn best through play, exploration, and positive relationships. Your time, attention, and encouragement are the greatest gifts you can give your child this summer.

Image Credit: [Pixnio](#)

Resource & Referral

Family Resource Spotlight: Feeding Pennsylvania



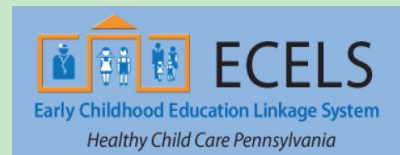
If your family needs help with groceries, Feeding Pennsylvania can help you find food banks, food pantries, and other food assistance programs near you. Just enter your ZIP code to find local resources. You can also learn about programs like SNAP and WIC that may help your family put food on the table.

- Click [here](#) to learn more.

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.

How to Protect Yourself and Family from the Sun

In the month of July, we spend most of our day outside in the beautiful sunny weather. It is very important to protect your skin and eyes from the UVA and UVB rays from the sun. Everyone exposed to the sun, especially children, should wear sunscreen, making sure that it is "broad spectrum," water resilient, and has an SPF of 30 or higher. It is not recommended for infants under 6 months old to wear sunscreen, but it can be applied to their face and small areas of the body when shade and protective clothing are not available.



Below are some sunscreen tips:

- Use enough sunscreen to cover all exposed areas- especially the face, nose, ears, feet, hands, and the back of the knees.
- Apply sunscreen 15-30 minutes before going outside so that it absorbs into the skin.
- Use sunscreen any time you are outside, even on cloudy days.
- Reapply sunscreen every 2 hours and after swimming, sweating, or drying off with a towel and apply generously.

Other ways to protect yourself from the sun:

- wear hats

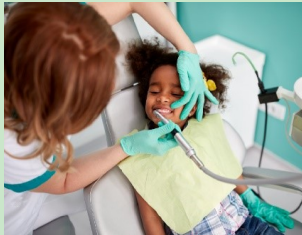
- wear cool, sun protective clothing
- stay in the shade
- avoid being outside between 10 am and 3 pm, when the sun's rays are the strongest is also recommended.
- protect your eyes from the sun's UV rays by wearing sunglasses with at least 99% UV protection.

In case of a sunburn:

- replace the lost fluids with milk or water
- use cool water on the skin to soothe
- use pain medications
- keep your child out of the sun until the sunburn is healed.
- call your doctor if a baby under 1 year old gets a sunburn or if older children develop blisters, pain, or a fever.

Remember, UV rays are the strongest in the summer, so it is very important for you and your children to stay protected. Click [here](#) for more helpful information on keeping you safe in the sun.

Source: [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) from American Academy of Pediatrics



Finding a Dentist

Did you know that tooth decay is the number one chronic disease for children but can be prevented and managed with good oral care? Oral care starts during pregnancy, and dental visits should begin by a child's 1st birthday.

For help finding a dentist use the following links:

- Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center: [ECLKC](#)
- Find a Pediatric Dentist: [AAPD](#)
- Find a Dentist: [ADA](#)
- Pennsylvania Dental Association: [PA Dental](#)
- Find Dentists Accepting Medical Assistance: [Insure Kids](#)

Article Credit: [HeadStart.gov](https://www.headstart.gov) ([Oral Health](#) | [HeadStart.gov](#))

Family Engagement

Look at the Sky in July

A great family activity in the summer is stargazing. It is amazing what you can see and learn just from looking up! Whether you live in the city or the country, you have a chance to see incredible and breathtaking occurrences in the sky as a fun, free, and fascinating family activity.

Here are some phenomenal events happening in July in our night sky:

July 17th



Planetary Parade

Six planets will create a Planetary Parade in the night sky if you look west right at sunset. You will be able to see Venus and Jupiter with the naked eye; Mercury will be visible near the horizon. Saturn, famous for its rings, can be seen without optical equipment. Uranus and Neptune will be considerably fainter and will require some kind of special equipment.

This occurrence, called the Planetary Parade, happens because the planets travel around the Sun on paths that are relatively close to the same flat plane. As they move through their orbits, there are occasions when several of them appear clustered along the same region of the sky when viewed from Earth. *Credit:*

[BeyondX astronomy Facebook](#)

July 17th – August 24thth

Perseids Meteor Shower

The most popular meteor shower peaks in August, however you can also see them in late July. The Perseids are particles released from comet 109P/Swift-Tuttle during numerous returns to the inner solar system. You can see them around the area of the constellation Perseus the hero. Meteor showers are a celestial event where Earth passes through the dusty debris left behind by a comet or asteroid. As these tiny space rocks slam into Earth's atmosphere they burn up, creating bright streaks of light across the night sky or what we call "shooting stars."

Credit: [American Meteor Society](#)

Stargazing Tips:

Visit your local library and check out books about stargazing to prepare and to educate yourself and your child(ren). You can also visit [NASA](#) or search for "celestial events."

Try to get away from light pollution and find a dark place. Also let your eyes adjust for at least 20-30 minutes before trying to view the night sky. You can use a telescope or binoculars to enhance your viewing. Remember, you need clear skies with little to no clouds.

Visit ELRC Region 14

Community Services for Children | elrc14@cscinc.org | www.cscinc.org

Connect with us



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

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