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## Community Services for Children Provider Link Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 16 October 2026

Serving Bucks County

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***The ELRC offices will be closed on Monday October 12th for Indigenous Peoples Day. We look forward to seeing many of you at the ELRC conference!***

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### Region 16 Updates

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#### Region 16 Provider Supports

##### **Bucks County Directors' Network**

The Bucks County Directors' Network meetings offer a chance to build relationships, exchange ideas, and engage in meaningful conversations with peers who understand the unique opportunities and challenges of leading an early childhood program.



If you have not yet attended a Bucks County Directors' Network meeting, we encourage you to join us. Meetings are held monthly and alternate between in-person and virtual formats, making it easy to stay connected and engaged.

##### **October (Virtual): CQI & CCSRR Grants – Please Note the Date Change!**

Join us for our upcoming Bucks County Directors Meeting as we review the new CQI and CCSRR grant guidelines, discuss monitoring expectations, and share important reminders to help programs stay organized, compliant, and prepared. We're excited to welcome Elizabeth Stair, Director of ELRC Service Systems, who will be joining us to share her expertise and serve as a valuable resource on all things grant-related!

Please note the date change. We will be meeting virtually on Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup> from 1-3pm.

- [ELRC Directors Network - October flyer](#)

## Quality Coach Community Days and Office Hours

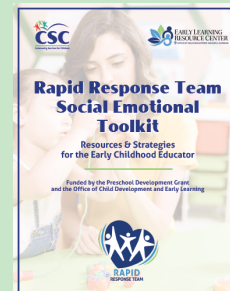
Need support? Your Quality Coaches are here to help. Join a Community Day to ask questions, gain new ideas, and connect with peers; or contact your coach directly to schedule a one-on-one meeting for personalized support. Check the Coaches' Calendar for Community Day details and/or coach contact information.

On October 23<sup>rd</sup>, Quality Coach, Laura Stenger will have a Community Day focusing on this year's CCSRR and CQI grants application process. Quality Coach, Stephanie Ferber hosts another Community Day on October 29<sup>th</sup>, also focusing on grant assistance. Rapid Response Team Communities of Practice will be virtual on the 15<sup>th</sup>. This month the focus will be on problem solving.

- [Coaches Calendar – September 2026](#)

## Rapid Response Team Toolkit Free Professional Development

All Region 16 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 Fall 2026. Registration required on the PD Registry.

### Thursday, October 1, 2026, 6:00-8:00 PM

Judy Sare Nursery School  
2909 Bristol Road  
Bensalem, PA 19020  
Event ID 404328

### Tuesday, October 27, 2026, 6:00-8:00 PM

La Petite Academy  
2000 Horizon Dr  
Chalfont, PA 18914  
Event ID 405479

### Monday, November 2, 2026, 5:00-7:00 PM

Children of God  
414 Mill Street  
Bristol, PA 19007  
Event ID 405971

### Tuesday, November 3, 2026, 12:30 PM-2:30 PM

Life Span Day Care  
2460 John Fries Highway  
Quakertown, PA 18951  
Event ID 404169

## Rapid Response Team

***\*\*Update for the 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.



## Community of Practice

Monthly Communities of Practice are available to all program leadership and staff. These 30-minute sessions are held via Microsoft Teams and focus on helping program staff effectively utilize resources to strengthen the social and emotional climate of their classrooms using the Rapid

Response Team Social Emotional Toolkit.

Join us this month to discuss problem solving and how providing choices can reduce children's challenging behaviors. CoP will be held on October 15th at 1:00 pm.

Click [here](#) and scroll down to the Community of Practice chart for the link as well as upcoming sessions!



## Book Sale

Are you looking to refresh or replenish your classroom library? Bucks County Library locations are hosting book sales throughout October. It's a great opportunity to find affordable books and add new titles to your classroom collection. See the flyer for locations, dates, and times.

- [Bucks County Library Book Sale](#)

## Bucks County Community College Open House

October is a great time to explore how you can reach your education and career goals right here in Bucks County. Be sure to join a Fall Open House at one of the three campuses.

At the Open House, you will have the opportunity to connect with staff, explore the campus, and get your questions answered. Whether you are just starting to explore your options or ready to take the next step, BCCC has you covered. Check out the flyer for more information.

- [BCCC Open House](#)

## Lunch & Learn

### ***Supporting Children and Families: Strategies for Professionals***



A virtual Lunch & Learn will be held on October 22 from noon-1pm. This session will focus on how professionals can create a more friendly and accessible environment. Please RSVP to [jhaffar@bucksiu.org](mailto:jhaffar@bucksiu.org) by October 9th.

Please see this [flyer](#) for more information.

## ELRC Updates

### **STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Awards!**

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](mailto:elrc-ksgrants@cscinc.org). All acceptance letters must be returned by November 30, 2026.

For full details, please see the [ELRC 26-03: 2026-27 Keystone STARS Continuous Quality Improvement Awards - The Pennsylvania Key](#). 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.

### **2026 ELRC Fall Conference**

Registration is now closed for the Fall 2026 conference titled *"Behind the Scenes: Examining How Adults Promote Positive Behaviors"*.

For those who are attending, registration will begin at 8:00 and the first session begins promptly at 8:30 am. Reminder that participants must attend the full day in order to receive PD credit hours.

All registrants have received an email to select breakout sessions. Selections are first come, first served and must be completed by 10/5/26. If you have not received the email, please reach out to your Quality Coach.

***Monday October 12,2026  
8:00 AM - 3:00 PM***

The Ballroom at Hampton Square



OCTOBER 12, 2026



REGION 16 CONFERENCE



8:00AM - 3:00PM

The Ballroom at Hampton Square 400 2<sup>nd</sup> Street Pike Southampton, PA 18966

# Behind the Scenes: Examining How Adults Promote Positive Behaviors

This conference is focused on practical strategies for supporting children with challenging behaviors in early learning environments. This engaging event will provide research-based approaches, real-world tools, and collaborative learning opportunities designed to strengthen staff confidence, improve classroom climate, and promote positive social-emotional development.

## REGISTRATION REQUIRED ON THE PD REGISTRY

**EVENT ID: 401344**

**\$10/PARTICIPANT INCLUDES LUNCH  
AND 6 HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT**

First session starts promptly at 8:30.  
Late arrivals will be turned away.

Participants must attend the full day  
to receive PD hours.

No Refunds. Registration may be  
moved to another staff person  
with approval.

Session registration will be sent to  
participants

Open to all childcare classroom  
staff and directors from ELRC  
Region 16 (Bucks County)



**8:00 – 8:30**

## REGISTRATION



**8:30 – 10:30**

## SESSION 1 BREAKOUTS

- Getting Outdoorsy
- From Chaos to Calm: De-escalation Strategies that Work



**10:30 – 12:30**

## SESSION 2 BREAKOUTS

- Nature Journaling
- Positive Interactions



**12:30 – 1:00**

## LUNCH PROVIDED



**1:00 – 3:00**

## SESSION 3 BREAKOUTS

- Rapid Response Team Supports for Families
- Adapting Curriculum for Children with Limitations



[WWW.CSCINC.ORG](http://WWW.CSCINC.ORG)

Conference is funded by the Preschool  
Development Block Grant and the Office of  
Child Development and Early Learning.



**QUESTIONS?**

Email [sferber@cscinc.org](mailto:sferber@cscinc.org)



## CCW Reminders



- Please remember to review your invoice each month before submitting. Verify that all children who are enrolled are appearing on your invoice **and** that children who have left the program, have been removed. Report any changes to your Provider Specialist.
- Please let your Provider Specialist know when there are changes to a child's enrollment. If you notice a pattern of absences, discuss with the family to see if an adjustment to their schedule is needed, rather than adding to their 40-day absence count.

- If you are a new director and would like any support with Child Care Works, reach out to your Provider Specialist or Quality Coach. They are happy to schedule a meeting with you to review processes and answer any questions you may have.

### **Payment Schedule 2026-2027**

The CCW Payment schedule for 2026-2027 has been released. Please download a copy and take note of invoice due dates and payment dates.

[2026-2027 Payment Schedule](#)

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### **Get to Know Your Child Care Works Provider Agreement Registration Fees**

In the Certified Provider Agreement, Article III. Conditions of the Agreement, Section (a) Payment Rates, # 8 states:

*8) Provider will receive a registration fee for each new enrollment, in the amount determined by OCDEL, regardless if the provider charges private pay families a registration fee. If a provider does charge private pay families a registration fee, and the fee is greater than the amount OCDEL pays, providers cannot charge CCW families the difference.*

This means that providers are not allowed to charge CCW families an additional registration fee or the difference between their programs registration fee and the registration fee that is received from the ELRC.

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### **Rapid Response Team Tip of the Month Supporting Social-Emotional Well-Being from the Start**



The beginning of the school year is an important time to build connections, establish a sense of belonging, and help children feel safe and comfortable in their new classroom environment. The following activities offer simple ways educators can support children as they adjust to new routines, build relationships with peers and adults, express their feelings, and develop a strong classroom community from the start.

#### **Classroom and Educator Activities**

- Morning Meetings: Start the day with quick check-ins, greetings, or asking students to share one word about how they feel.
- Talk About Feelings: Ask open-ended questions like "What are you excited about?" or "Is anything making you nervous?" and validate all emotions.
- Co-Create Class Rules: Involve students in brainstorming community values and rules so they feel empowered and connected.
- Connection Games: Use low-prep icebreakers like Human Bingo, Name Web with yarn, or Emotion Charades to build peer comfort. Plan activities like peer painting, peer sharing, or peer challenges.
- Act It Out: Use role-playing or pretend play to practice social scenarios like entering the classroom, finding a lunch table, solving a peer conflict, or asking a peer to play.
- Create a Calm-Down Toolbox: Teach deep breathing, positive self-talk, and provide opportunities to practice self-regulation.

#### **References:**

<https://www.thepathway2success.com/30-social-emotional-learning-activities-for-back-to-school/>

## Supports for Spanish Providers



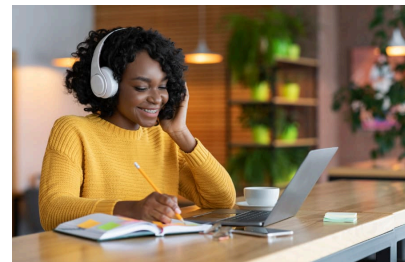
**Sept. 15<sup>th</sup> – Oct. 15<sup>th</sup> is Hispanic Heritage Month.**

Move beyond simply celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with food, flags, or famous people. Teachers can create opportunities for children, families, and educators to see Hispanic and Latino cultures as part of everyday learning and community life, as well as other cultures represented in the classrooms. Consider:

- Inviting children and families to share something meaningful about their own family traditions during a show and tell.
- Invite families into the classrooms to read a book, teach a traditional game, etc. Explore books and music related to the Hispanic culture.
- Have conversations around identity and diversity.

## 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 August but will run throughout the year. Click on the flyer below to register.

### **Module 1 - Budgets, Projections & Planning**

January 12 - 9:30-11:30 am

January 23 - 10:00 - noon

### **Module 2 - Financial Reports & Internal Controls**

October 12 - 1:00-3:00 pm

January 19 - 9:30-11:30 am

### **Module 3- Marketing Your Program**

November 16 - 12:00-3:00 pm

January 26 - 9:30-12:30

### **Module 4- Recruiting and Retaining Staff**

December 16, 12:00-3:00 pm

February 2 - 9:30-12:30

For future module offerings, click on this flyer  
[\*\*2026-2027 Business Practice Registration Flyer\*\*](#)



## Scam Targeting Child Care

It has been recently reported to the ELRC, that some childcare providers have been receiving emails from families requesting

temporary enrollment for their child. They will pay upfront but are unwilling to provide child information.

What has been reported, is they will send a check that is over the amount and ask the provider to send the overage back.

See this article for examples of this scam: [Fake check scam targets childcare providers](#).

Protect yourself. If something feels suspicious, ask more questions, require meeting the family in person and do not send wire transfers or cryptocurrency.

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### **Keystone STARS Tip of the Month** ***Family Handbooks***

The purpose of a family handbook is to share the policies and procedures of your program with the families that you serve. It's also an opportunity to share your program's strengths and to provide clear expectations so that families can determine if your program will be a good fit for their child.

Family handbooks should be reviewed at least annually and be revised whenever necessary. Requesting input from staff can also be helpful when updating your handbook. They may be aware of trends or concerns that could be addressed with updated policies. If your handbook has been created electronically it can easily be updated and sent out to your families.

Your family handbook is a reflection of your business, your educational philosophy and your daily policies and procedures. It provides clear communication between families, staff and the director and should be updated as needed. If you are looking for a sample handbook or want to know what policies should be included in your handbook, contact your Quality Coach who will provide a variety of samples and resources.

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### **Free Lesson Plans from Best Day Ever!**

Back-to-school planning just got easier! Our Fall 2026 Best Day Ever! lesson plans are here, with brand-new themes and refreshed favorites ready for after school, school holidays, in-service days, and more.



Created by certified teachers and tested with real students, Best Day Ever! offers ready-to-use, standards-aligned programming that keeps kids engaged while saving you valuable planning time. And for Pennsylvania providers, they're available at NO COST!

This release includes:

- 10 After School lesson plans – 5 brand-new + 5 updated favorites
- 10 Kids' Day Out lesson plans – 6 brand-new + 4 updated favorites
- Complete schedules, materials lists, activity pages, and hands-on fun!

These lesson plans are written and tested by teachers at The Learning Lamp, a leading out-of-school-time education provider in Pennsylvania. They are available at NO COST through January 2027.

Click [here](#) to access the plans.

A School Age credential is being offered by Northampton Community College beginning in the Spring 2027. The SAPC provides 9 total credit hours in 3 courses. All instruction is over TEAMS one night a week in the evenings.

Click [here](#) to learn more about this opportunity!



## October is Farm to ECE Month

[Farm to ECE](#) strategies and activities for early childhood environments focus on:

- Using local food — buying or using locally sourced foods in meals and snacks
- Gardening — offering hands-on opportunities for growing and caring for plants
- Food, nutrition, and agriculture education — teaching about healthy foods, where food comes from, and how it grows

The early years are an important time for forming taste preferences and building healthy eating habits. Farm to ECE offers several benefits, including:

- Healthier eating habits — Farm to ECE encourages healthy eating habits by giving children fresh, locally sourced foods. Children are more likely to try foods they have helped grow, clean, or prepare. It's a great way to encourage them to eat more nutritious foods.
- Stronger communities — Buying local food supports farmers and makes your community food system stronger. It also gives families and staff information about where to get local food in their community. Buying locally often creates a sense of belonging, especially for familiar or traditional foods that are part of children's cultures.
- Mental wellness — Gardening can increase pride, self-confidence, and a sense of accomplishment. Garden spaces can also reduce stress, improve focus, provide teaching opportunities, build social connections, and support emotional regulation for children and staff.

Here are some tips to build your farm to ECE program:

- Use [state resources](#) to learn more about farm to ECE and how it fits with your program's goals. Find tools and guidance for finding activities that fit into your program activities.
- Connect with [Master Gardener programs](#), cooperative extensions at universities, and local farmer associations for expert advice and support.
- Start small and build slowly. Choose one or two activities. For example, start with small container gardens or introduce locally grown fruits and vegetables with meals.
- Include [age-appropriate garden activities](#), from infant sensory exploration to preschool projects.

Resources to Learn More

- [Farm to ECE: Getting Started](#)
- [Farm to Preschool: Local Food and Learning in Early Child Care and Education Settings](#)

## Infant and Toddler Early Intervention Program

PennAEYC has created a resource for early care and education providers and the families you serve about the Infant and Toddler Early Intervention program, which provides services to children who have or are at risk of developmental delays.

This one-page handout includes valuable information on:

- Eligibility criteria and the enrollment process
- Available services and how they can support child development
- Contact information for referrals and questions

### [PennAEYC Infant Toddler Early Intervention Handout](#)

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## Opt In for OCDEL Newsletters



Staying up to date on current provider news is important!

Child care providers should subscribe to OCDEL newsletters to receive statewide updates, certification changes, important announcements, and helpful resources.

We highly recommend subscribing to at least these two newsletters:

- Certification Service News
- PA Early Education News

Providers can sign up on the PA Key website [here](#).

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## DID YOU KNOW?

Language develops in a baby's brain before they can talk -- reading and speaking to your child early is important!

## 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](#).

## Measles Cases

## What Providers Need to Know

There are more than 570 confirmed cases of measles across Pennsylvania and child care providers can play a critical role in reducing further spread.

### Recommended Policy Measures for Child Care:

Review the immunization status for all children AND talk to staff members/volunteers about their immunization status. Proof of immunity includes:

- Documentation of one or more doses of MMR vaccine;
- Laboratory evidence of immunity (blood test) or laboratory confirmation of measles disease; and
- Birth before 1957. Adults born before 1957 are more likely to have had measles as children and are generally, but not always, considered immune.

Develop a communications strategy for disseminating information about cases occurring in the child care facility setting to the parents, staff, and to the public. Remind families and staff about MMR vaccination, including where it can be accessed, such as primary care providers, urgent care, pharmacies, federally funded health centers, state health centers, and your local health department.

Promote infection control practices, such as respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, frequent handwashing, and disinfect high-touch surfaces. Strongly encourage staff and children to stay home when ill.

Review the signs and symptoms of measles and have procedures in place for handling suspected cases.

- Be watchful for children who may develop a fever and other signs and symptoms of measles.
- Measles starts with symptoms that are common with other diseases: a high fever, runny nose, cough, red/watery eyes, and sore throat.
- Isolate symptomatic individuals in a designated area until they can be picked up.
- Instruct families of ill children to call ahead to their health care provider or urgent care center before arrival.

Exclude individuals confirmed with measles until four days after rash onset. Inform families of unvaccinated children and unvaccinated staff of the exposure and that they may need to stay home for up to 21 days after their last exposure to someone who has had measles. If a child care attendee is exposed to measles and receives a dose of MMR vaccine within 72 hours after their initial exposure, the child may return to child care and other activities.

### If a Measles Case Occurs:

Notify authorities immediately. Contact your local health department or the PA Department of Health at 877-PA-HEALTH (877-724-3258).

Click [here](#) to read more information on what you can do to protect the children and families in your care.

## Symptoms of Measles



High fever



Sore throat



Tiredness



Cough



Runny nose



Red spots in your mouth



Rash



Red or bloodshot eyes



Diarrhea, stomach pain or vomiting



Muscle aches, headache

## Oral Health Tip

### Setting Oral Health Goals



Why is setting goals important? Goal setting can help you create new behaviors. It can also allow you to measure your progress. Finally, it can give you the motivation to maintain good oral health habits.

- Good oral health habits include:
- Regular dental visits and treatment
- Healthy snacks
- Brush with fluoride toothpaste at least twice a day
- No sugary beverages
- No bottle for bed
- Water or milk only in sippy cups
- Drink tap water
- Avoid or limit junk food and candy
- Limit sugar and consider sugar substitutes

Last thing to touch teeth before bed is toothbrush with fluorinated toothpaste. Click [here](#) for an infographic that you can share with families to help them set and meet oral health goals.

Article Credit: [Home - Kids Smiles](#)

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Want to add staff or other members of your team to this newsletter? Email [estair@cscinc.org](mailto:estair@cscinc.org) and specify which Regional Newsletter you would like. Requests will be added to next month's distribution.

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Visit ELRC Region 16

Community Services for Children | [elrc16@cscinc.org](mailto:elrc16@cscinc.org) | [www.cscinc.org](http://www.cscinc.org)

Connect with us



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

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