Community Services for Children

Family Connection Newsletter ~ ELRC Region 14 September 2026

Serving Lehigh & Northampton Counties

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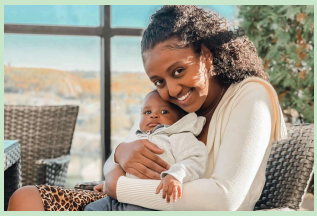
Region 14 News

The ELRC offices will be closed on Monday, October 12 in observance of Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Child Care Works Program



Where can I find answers to my Child Care Works Questions?
The Child Care Works Family Handbook is a great resource to answer program questions. Please click **here** to view the CCW Family Handbook. You can also contact your Family Specialist at the Early Learning Resource Center.

After I'm determined eligible, what comes next?
You will be contacted by the Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC) to set up an appointment for a Personal Interview to discuss the Rights and Responsibilities of the program. You will also be asked to choose a childcare provider within 30 days of being authorized for funding.

What are my rights and responsibilities? What if my information changes? What needs to be reported to ELRC?
Please click **here** to view your Rights and Responsibilities.

As a parent/caretaker who receives CCW, the following are your most important responsibilities.

- Submit accurate information to the ELRC
- Report changes in a timely manner
- Pay your weekly copayment timely

How often will ELRC review my case?
When you have completed your application and meet the guidelines for CCW, the ELRC will review your case every 12 months. This process is called a redetermination of eligibility. At the redetermination, the ELRC will review your family income, work and training status and your continued need for subsidized childcare. You will be asked to provide up-to-date proof of your family's income and also proof of address if your address has changed.

If I submit my redetermination on COMPASS, can I also submit the other required documents on COMPASS too?
No. The ELRC will only receive your redetermination on COMPASS. COMPASS does not allow for the submission of other documents such as paystubs or other forms. You will have to mail, email, fax or bring your paystubs and other documents into the ELRC.

If I want to transfer to a new provider, what is required?
If you wish to transfer to a new childcare provider, please notify the ELRC right away. Your copay must be paid in full before the ELRC can authorize the transfer to the new site.

I know I have to pay my weekly copay to my childcare provider, but can they charge me extra?
If your childcare subsidy does not pay the full amount that your childcare program charges, the provider may ask you to pay the difference. The ELRC only pays the state approved amount and your registration fee.

Does the ELRC provide referrals to other community resources?
Yes! Please contact the ELRC to discuss available community resources that will set you on a path to success.

Participate in the SPARK Study

Researchers from Lafayette College are studying how children understand faces and feelings. They are looking for children who are 6-8 years of age along with at least one of their parents, to visit Lafayette College in person for 2 hours to participate in their study. Individuals will receive a $50 gift card for taking part in the study.
Click **here** for more information and to register.

Parenting and Fatherhood Classes

Pinebrook Family Answers
SOLUTIONS FOR GENERATIONS

Pinebrook Family Answers is offering 12-week Parenting and Fatherhood Classes. These community-based parenting programs are designed to strengthen families, promote healthy child development, and build effective parenting skills.
Click **here** for more information and how to register for one of these programs.

Early Head Start and Head Start

Did you know Early Head Start and Head Start are free programs available to families who live in Lehigh and Northampton Counties? Priority is given to families who are below 100% the federal poverty guidelines. The Early Head Start program is for pregnant women and children 0-2 years of age. Head Start is for children 3-4 years of age.

Click **here** for more information on what these programs include and how to register.

Lehigh Valley Space Fest

Lehigh University is proud to sponsor **Lehigh Valley Space Fest**. This free, family-friendly event brings space "back down to Earth" with interactive exhibits. Visitors of all ages are encouraged to wear their favorite space-themed costumes or NASA gear and enjoy a day of hands-on exploration and discovery.

Saturday, September 26, 2026 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Lehigh University Mountaintop Campus Building C
111 Research Dr.
Bethlehem, PA 18015

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

Family Mealtime

Did you know that eating together as a family has lasting benefits for your child? Even if it's only a few nights a week, sitting down for a meal together can strengthen bonds and build trust.

Family mealtimes can also promote communication skills, healthy eating habits, positive social emotional development, better academic performance and stronger emotional connections. Give it a try! Put all those screens away, sit down for a

meal together and engage in conversation! Share fun things from your day, ask intentional questions, include everyone at the table and ENJOY!

Check out some of these articles for more ideas:

- **The Hidden Benefits of Family Mealtime for Mental Health**
- **Creating Lasting Memories at Family Mealtime**
- **Chew on This: Family Meals Are a Sign of a Healthy Home**
- **Benefits of Family Dinners - The Family Dinner Project**

Encouraging Good Sleep Habits

Sleep is essential. It's important for children to sleep well at night because sleep helps them learn, concentrate, and manage their behavior and emotions. The American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM) recommends the following sleep for each age group.

- Infants (4-12 months old): 12-16 hours
- Toddlers (1-2 years old): 11-14 hours
- Pre-schoolers (3-5 years old): 10-13 hours
- School-age (6-12 years old): 9-12 hours
- Teens (13-18 years old): 8-10 hours

Here are some general tips to encourage good sleep habits for your child.

- Keep the environment/bedroom calm and quiet - avoid toys, electronics, and dedicate the space only for sleeping.
- Establish a consistent nighttime routine, such as taking a warm bath, reading a story, and listening to soft music.
- Put babies down when they are drowsy and avoid having them fall asleep in your arms or in swings or bouncy chairs.
- Avoid having your child sleep in the same bed as you. Provide them with a special stuffed toy or blanket so they feel secure.
- If they leave the bedroom, be consistent and continue to return them back to bed with minimal talking.
- Make sure your child is getting plenty of physical activity throughout the day.
- Set a curfew for screen time, at least an hour before bedtime.

Source: ***Children and Sleep***

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?

In the first year, babies hear all the sounds needed to speak their native language. The more books read to them during the first year, the better they will be able to talk.

Child Development

Building Social and Emotional Skills

As children grow, they learn much more than their ABCs and 123s. They are also learning how to understand their feelings, make friends, solve problems, and work with others. These abilities are known as social-emotional skills, and they play an important role in a child's success at home, in school, and throughout life.

Social-emotional development begins in infancy and continues throughout childhood. Every conversation, hug, shared activity, and positive interaction helps children build confidence and learn how to manage their emotions.

Children with strong social-emotional skills are better able to:

- Express their feelings in healthy ways.
- Build positive relationships with peers and adults.
- Take turns and share with others.
- Solve simple conflicts peacefully.
- Follow directions and classroom routines.
- Show empathy and kindness.
- Develop confidence when trying new things.
- Bounce back from challenges and disappointments.

These skills provide the foundation for learning. When children feel safe, valued, and emotionally supported, they are more willing to explore, ask questions, and engage in new experiences.

You can strengthen your child's social-emotional development through simple everyday interactions:

- Talk about feelings. Help your child name emotions like happy, frustrated, excited, worried, or proud.
- Read books together. Ask how characters might feel and what they could do to solve problems.
- Practice taking turns. Play games that encourage patience, cooperation, and sharing.
- Model kindness. Children learn by watching adults treat others with respect and compassion.
- Offer choices. Giving children simple choices help build confidence and independence.
- Celebrate effort. Praise persistence, problem-solving, and kindness—not just achievements.
- Teach calming strategies. Practice taking deep breaths, counting to ten, or finding a quiet space when emotions become overwhelming.

Families and teachers are important partners in helping children develop social-emotional skills. By working together, you can create consistent expectations and provide children with the encouragement they need to become caring, confident, and resilient individuals.

Resource & Referral

Back-to-School Resources

Are you in need of some back to school supplies like backpacks, notebooks, pens, or other items.

View a list of school supply assistance programs on **pa211.org**: just filter by your zip code. You can contact each program to inquire into eligibility and current availability, as supplies are limited.

Resource: https://www.uwp.org/2022/08/back-to-school-resources/

September is National Early Literacy Month

Help your children build the language, communication, and literacy skills that support lifelong learning. This September, take time to encourage reading, storytelling, singing, and conversation part of your everyday routines.

Research shows that shared reading experiences strengthen vocabulary, comprehension, social-emotional development, and caregiver-child relationships while helping children prepare for success in school and beyond.

Check out this article for creative ways to engage your child in literacy activities. **10 Ways to Support Your Child's Literacy at Home**

Health & Safety

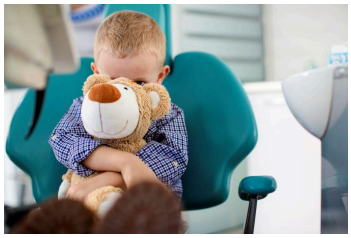
ECELS Health & Safety Newsletter

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.

Oral Health

Brush, Book, Bed: A Nighttime Routine



1. Brush - Each night, help your child brush their teeth. Young children need help with brushing to do it well. Have your child spit out any extra toothpaste. Do not rinse with water; the little bit of toothpaste left behind is good for teeth.
2. Book – After brushing, find a comfortable spot and read a book with your child. Reading aloud will help with your child's language development and social-emotional skills. You can also make up stories, sing songs, or use silly voices while you enjoy spending time with your child.
3. Bed – Sleep is very important. Keeping a regular bedtime and having a predictable bedtime routine can help your child wind down at the end of the day.

For more information, visit: **https://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/oral-health/Pages/Brush-Book-Bed.aspx**

Family Engagement

September Family Activities

Families who participate in regular activities together, build stronger bonds and report higher levels of happiness. Spending time outdoors can significantly reduce stress levels. Here are some suggestions to create memories that will last long after September ends:

- Go Apple Picking at a Local Orchard and Read a Book About Apples
- Take a Family Hike, Enjoy the Fall Foliage, and Collect Different Types of Leaves
- Watch a High School Football Game Together
- Visit a Pumpkin Patch
- Enjoy a Family Movie Night with Fall-Themed Movies

For more ideas: **https://thebeehiveconnection.com/september-bucket-list/**

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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