Math + nature = fun

“Let’s go out and play—with math!” Sticks, rocks, seeds, and leaves are a few of the “please touch” materials your youngster can use to practice counting, measuring, and making patterns. Together, gather some objects from the ground, and enjoy these math activities.

Counting
Help your little one draw 10 circles on a sidewalk with chalk and number them 1–10. Then she can fill each circle with the correct number of natural objects. She might put a single feather in the “1” circle, two leaves in the circle labeled “2,” three sticks in the “3” circle, and so on. She’ll practice matching each number with the amount it represents.

Measuring
Have your child choose a stick and use it to measure bigger objects. Point to a low-hanging branch and ask “how many sticks long” it is. She could measure the length by moving the stick down the branch end to end. Also, she might find little pebbles, all the same size, and measure how many pebbles long her stick is (say, “14 pebbles long”).

Pattern making
Arrange items into a pattern (twig, acorn, dandelion, twig, acorn, dandelion). Your youngster continues the pattern by adding the next three items (twig, acorn, dandelion). Next, let her start a pattern for you to continue. Another idea is to leave an item out of the middle of the pattern—the other person’s job is to add the missing piece.

Throw a dance party
The family that wiggles together giggles together—and gets active together! Try these dance ideas.

Change the tempo. As a song plays, have one person randomly shout, “go,” “slow,” or “freeze.” For “go,” dance at top speed. For “slow,” slow down your moves in s-l-o-w motion. If the leader says “freeze,” everyone stops in place. Let a different dancer call out tempos for the next song.

Add a move. Stand in a circle. Your youngster does one dance move (a jump, a spin, a wiggle). The next person copies that move and adds a new one. Keep going around the circle, copying all the previous dance steps. (Help out if anyone forgets a move.) When you’re all had three turns, perform the whole dance together.

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www.childdevelop.org

We are an E.O.E. Employer and Provider
570-544-8959
Relying on myself

What should your child do when he makes a mistake? How can he find something to play with when he's bored? These strategies will teach your youngster to rely on himself more.

Solve problems. Oops, your youngster accidentally knocked over his sister's block tower or made crayon marks on the table. How could he fix the problem all by himself? Suggest that he pretend he's in a time machine so he can go back and "erase" what happened. He might decide to rebuild the tower or wipe off the marks on the table. Then, it's time to put his plan into action!

Head off boredom. Does your child ask you for help because he doesn't know what to play? Together, brainstorm activities for when he's bored. Examples: Drape blankets over chairs to make a cave, design "cakes" with play dough. He can illustrate a poster with the ideas and hang it on his bedroom door. If he's looking for something to do, he could pick one.

Activity Corner

A basket full of poetry

A-tisket, a-tasket, create a poetry basket! When your youngster puts together her own poetry baskets, she will visualize what's happening in a poem and build reading comprehension skills.

Materials: children's poetry books, basket, household items

Select a poem to read aloud. Then, encourage your child to use a basket to collect objects related to the poem. If you read, "Cottony clouds seen out a window," she might get cotton balls from the bathroom and a miniature window from a block set. Or if the poem is about wind, she could fold a paper fan and wave it around to create wind.

Reread the poem, and let her use the items in her basket to act it out. She'll build reading comprehension as she follows along. Next, help your youngster read a new poem. This time, you can gather objects and act it out for her.

Q&A

Q: My daughter says that another girl is always mean to her at school. It sounds like bullying. What should I do?

A: First, try getting a little more information from your daughter. You might ask, "What does your classmate do that's mean?" Then, contact the teacher to share your child's concerns. The teacher can keep an eye on the situation and help you figure out what's going on.

This could be bullying, where a youngster with more "power"—perhaps she's a little older or more popular—hurts, teases, or excludes another child. Or it's possible the girls just aren't getting along.

Regardless, talk to your daughter about bullying. Let her practice being assertive. For instance, she can look her classmate in the eye and say, "I don't like it when you call me names. Stop." And tell her she should always go to an adult if she's scared or upset. If the problem continues, follow up with the teacher to discuss next steps.

Parent to Parent

Backseat learning games

Whether my sons and I are going to the store or heading out of town to visit relatives, we make the most of our car time by playing games along the way. My three-year-old, Lance, is learning his colors so we invented a game called "Rainbow." We race to see who can find something to match each stripe in the rainbow—in order. The first to get to violet wins.

Mason, who's five, is learning letters. We keep a bag of magnetic letters in the car, and the boys take turns choosing one. Then we see how many words we can spot on signs or buildings that start with that letter.

The games give us something to do together, and I'm glad the boys are practicing what they're learning in school.
April is the National Month of Laughter and Fun. Think about laughter! Sometimes laughter is the best medicine. Even playwrights will write humor into their tragedies to give the audience a little break. Have you thought about why laughter is good for your mental health? There is a scientific reason. In 2003, research reveals that there is a specific area of the brain where pleasurable feelings reside.

Laughter is strong medicine. It draws people together in ways that trigger healthy physical and emotional changes in the body. It strengthens your immune system, boosts your mood, diminishes pain, and protects you from damaging effects of stress. By seeking out more opportunities for humor and laughter, you can improve your emotional health, strengthen your relationships, find greater happiness, and even add years to your life.

What can you do to bring laughter into your life? Plenty! Host a game night; share funny stories with friends; when you hear laughter move toward it; play with people who laugh easily; learn to laugh at yourself; read humorous books; keep a journal of jokes; go see funny movies; and read the comics.

Laughter is a powerful antidote to stress pain and conflict. Nothing inspires hope more, connects us to loved ones or keeps us grounded. Laughter keeps us focused, helps to relieve anger, and allows us to be more forgiving. Ever hear someone say, "I'm so glad I'm not the only one to have done that." Laughter relaxes the whole body. A good hearty laugh releases tension leaving muscles relaxed for as much as 45 minutes after.

Laughter decreases stress hormones and increases immune cells and infection fighting antibodies. It releases endorphins, protects the heart, and improves the cardiovascular system. Guess what? It burns calories! Okay, it's no replacement for the gym, but laughing for ten to fifteen minutes a day burns 40 calories which could be enough to loose three or four pounds over a year!

Laughter lightens the load. Nothing defuses anger and conflict faster. Looking for the humor in situations gives you a different perspective and enables your to move away from resentment and confrontation. Laughter may even help you live longer. A study in Norway found people with a good sense of humor live longer than those who don't laugh much, particularly those fighting cancer. It adds, joy and zest to your life, eases anxiety, relieves stress, improves mood, strengthens resilience and relationships. Humorous people attract others. Humor enhances team work; defuses conflict and promotes bonding.

So, in April, let’s relax, bring a little laughter to people and have a little fun! Laughter is contagious. Be spontaneous, let go of your defensiveness, express your true feelings, and bring a little laughter into your life and those around you. Infants begin smiling during the first week of their life and laugh out loud within months of being born. Set aside a special time each week to seek out humor and laughter. Smile at people you meet—even strangers. Instead of always looking down at your phone try looking up and smile at the person across the street. Smile at the person serving you coffee. Count your blessings. Literally make a list. Smile at your co-worker in the classroom or office. If you hear laughter, move toward it and ask what's so funny? Spend time with playful people, watch comedians on TV, bring humor into the conversation. Read the funny papers or Chicken Soup for the Soul, play with a pet, goof around with your kids, get active, find your inner child—the list is endless. DON'T GO A DAY WITHOUT LAUGHTER! Your life depends on it. Everyone! This month of April is fun—go forth and spread a little laughter, your heart will thank you for it!

As always your Mental Health Team holds you in our thoughts, and in our hearts. We wish you WELL and, of course, LOTS and LOTS of LAUGHTER.

P.S. I’m going to tell you a short true story now. Recently I was interviewing a nine year old in my office. She was the last of nine people I saw that day. Her home life is filled with violence, sadness, drugs and alcohol. My little friend suffers from cognitive delays, is visually impaired and had lost her only friend over the holidays. All around us people were fretting about the upcoming blizzard and complaining. As we talked, she looked at me with her glasses falling down her nose and a smile full of crooked teeth. She said she was going to build Olaf in her back yard tomorrow. She said she just loved him and the way his body fell apart into pieces; his head going one way and his arms, legs, and body going other ways. She said he was a lot like her. She loved him because his friends helped put him back together and they all laughed.

Here's to laughter and to all the Olaf's of the world... and here's to you my little friend. Her insight made my day and I hope it made yours!
Five Important Reasons to Immunize Your Child

You want to do what is best for your children. You know about the importance of car seats, baby gates, and other ways to keep them safe. But, did you know that one of the best ways to protect your children is to make sure they have all of their vaccinations?

Immunizations can save your child’s life.
Because of advances in medical science, your child can be protected against more diseases than ever before. Some diseases that once injured or killed thousands of children have been eliminated completely and others are close to being gone – primarily due to safe and effective vaccines. One example of the great impact vaccines can have is the eradication of polio in the United States. Polio was once America’s most-feared disease causing death and paralysis across the country but today, thanks to vaccination, there are no reports of polio in the United States.

Vaccination is safe and effective. All vaccines are only given to children after a long and careful review by scientists, doctors, and healthcare professionals. Vaccines will involve some discomfort and may cause pain, redness, or tenderness at the site of injection but this is minimal compared to the pain, discomfort, and trauma of the diseases these vaccines prevent. The most comprehensive scientific studies and reviews have not found a link between vaccines and autism. Groups of experts, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Institute of Medicine (IOM), the National Institute of Health (NIH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal agencies also agree that vaccines are not responsible for the number of children now recognized to have autism.

Immunization protects others you care about. Serious vaccine-preventable diseases still occur. Unfortunately, some babies are too young to be completely vaccinated and some people may not be able to receive vaccinations due to allergies, illness, weakened immune systems, or other reasons. To help keep these individuals safe, it is important that you and your children who are able to get vaccinated are fully immunized. This not only protects your family, but also helps prevent the spread of these diseases to your friends and loved ones.

Immunizations can save your family time and money. A child with a vaccine-preventable disease can be kept out of schools or daycare facilities. A prolonged illness can take a financial toll because of lost time at work, medical bills, or long-term disability care. In comparison, getting vaccinated against these diseases is a good investment and usually covered by insurance. The Vaccines for Children program is a federally funded program that provides vaccines at no cost to children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay. To find out more about the VFC program, visit http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/programs/vfc/ or ask your child’s healthcare provider.

Immunization protects future generations. Vaccines have reduced and, in some cases, eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people just a few generations before. For example, smallpox vaccination helped eradicate that disease world wide. Your children don’t have to get smallpox shots any more because the disease no longer exists. If we keep vaccinating now, parents in the future may be able to trust that diseases like polio and measles won’t infect, cripple, or kill children.

For more information about the infant immunization, visit http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines.
SCHOOL VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS
FOR ATTENDANCE IN PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOLS

FOR ATTENDANCE IN ALL GRADES CHILDREN NEED THE FOLLOWING:

- 4 doses of tetanus, diphtheria, and acellular pertussis* (1 dose on or after the 4th birthday)
- 4 doses of polio (4th dose on or after 4th birthday and at least 6 months after previous dose given)**
- 2 doses of measles, mumps, rubella***
- 3 doses of hepatitis B
- 2 doses of varicella (chickenpox) or evidence of immunity

*Usually given as DTP or DTaP or if medically advisable, DT or Td
**A fourth dose is not necessary if the third dose was administered at age 4 years or older and at least 6 months after the previous dose
***Usually given as MMR

ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had at least one dose of the above vaccinations or risk exclusion.

- If a child does not have all the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is medically appropriate, the child must receive that dose within the first five days of school or risk exclusion. If the next dose is not the final dose of the series, the child must also provide a medical plan (red and white card) within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.

- If a child does not have all the doses listed above, needs additional doses, and the next dose is not medically appropriate, the child must provide a medical plan (red and white card) within the first five days of school for obtaining the required immunizations or risk exclusion.

- The medical plan must be followed or risk exclusion.

FOR ATTENDANCE IN 7TH GRADE:

- 1 dose of tetanus, diphtheria, acellular pertussis (Tdap) on the first day of 7th grade.
- 1 dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV) on the first day of 7th grade.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF 7TH GRADE, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had the above vaccines or risk exclusion.

FOR ATTENDANCE IN 12TH GRADE:

- 1 dose of MCV on the first day of 12th grade. If one dose was given at 16 years of age or older, that shall count as the twelfth grade dose.

ON THE FIRST DAY OF 12TH GRADE, unless the child has a medical or religious/philosophical exemption, a child must have had the above vaccines or risk exclusion.

The vaccines required for entrance, 7th grade and 12th grade continue to be required in each succeeding school year.

These requirements allow for the following exemptions: medical reason, religious belief, or philosophical/strong moral or ethical conviction. Even if your child is exempt from immunizations, he or she may be excluded from school during an outbreak of vaccine preventable disease.
POSITIVE SOLUTIONS FOR FAMILIES*
SPRING 2017 SESSIONS

Positive Solutions for Families will provide information for families on how to promote children’s social and emotional skills, understand their problem behavior, and use positive approaches to help children learn appropriate behavior.

Here is an overview of what will be covered in each Positive Solutions for Families session:

SESSION 1
Making a Connection!
Identify the importance of building positive relationships with children. Discuss the "power" of using positive comments and encouragement with children.

Making It Happen! Understand how play can be a powerful parenting practice. Learn ways to help children develop friendship skills. Link building relationships, using positive comments/encouragement, and play to children’s behavior.

SESSION 2
Why Do They Do What They Do?

SESSION 3
Teach Me What to Do! Define the concept of emotional vocabulary. Identify feeling words and identify effective ways to teach feeling vocabulary. Demonstrate the use of books to support emotional vocabulary and social-emotional development.

SESSION 4
Part 1 . . . Facing the Challenge
Examine specific strategies that can be used to promote positive adult and child behavior in home and community settings.

Part 2 . . . Facing the Challenge
Identify that problem behavior has meaning. Identify the meaning of behavior by examining what happens before and after the problem behavior. Identify the three parts of a behavior plan: preventions, new skills to teach, and new responses. Learn to use the Family Routine Guide to identify supports for use with children during daily routines.

Identify how the turtle technique can be used to cope with feelings of anger and disappointment. Learn how to teach problem-solving skills.

The schedule for the spring sessions is below:

Fountain Springs Center
Wednesdays
3/29, 4/5, 4/12 and 4/19
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Mahanoy City Center
Tuesdays
3/14, 3/21, 3/28 and 4/4
5:30 PM 7:30 PM

Pottsville Center
Wednesdays
3/15, 3/22, 3/29 and 4/5
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

St. Clair Center
Wednesdays
3/15, 3/22, 3/29 and 4/5
5:00 – 7:00 PM

Tamaqua Center
Wednesdays
3/22, 3/29, 4/5 and 4/12
9:45—11:45 AM

* Positive Solutions for Families is made possible through a grant from Schuylkill County Drug & Alcohol.
# Happenings

## MEETINGS

**Policy Council MONTHLY Meeting**
Monday, April 24, 2017 at 9:30 AM
Holy Apostle Church
Nicholas & Hancock Streets • St. Clair, PA

**PROGRAM GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
Friday, April 7, at 10 AM
Fountain Springs Center

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE MEETING**
Thursday, April 20 at 3 PM
Administrative Office

## CENTER COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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### SCHUYLKILL COUNTY SOCIETY FOR CRIPPLED CHILDREN

**2017 PEDIATRIC ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC SCHEDULE**

*All clinics subject to change as per doctor's schedule.*

**MARCH 03, 2017**
*Re-Scheduled to APRIL 07, 2017*
HELEN D. STEWART, R.N. MEMORIAL CLINIC
Sponsored By Richard L. Yuengling, Jr. Charitable Foundation

**APRIL 21, 2017**
*Re-Scheduled May 19, 2017 CANCELLED*
Sponsored By Service Circle of the Kings Daughters

**JULY 14, 2017**
Sponsored By The Schuylkill Health School of Nursing

**SEPTEMBER 01, 2017**
Sponsored By OMNOVA Solutions Inc.

**NOVEMBER 03, 2017**
PARTICIPATING MEMBER OF United Way

Sponsored By Schuylkill United Way
Ringtown Area Community Fund
Tri-Valley Charities

### OPEN ENROLLMENT AT THESE CHILD DEVELOPMENT LOCATIONS

#### APRIL 2017

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**April 24 –28, 2017**

**is Week of the Young Child but we’re “Celebrating Our Youngest Learners” all month long!**

**Fountain Springs Center**

**4/25/17** — Geisinger will be here promoting Dental Health and will have a dental health program for our students

**4/26/17** — We will have an Art Show here featuring our young artists and a guest feature local artist Phyllis Gallagher will be here with some of her art work and she will be creating a piece of her work for all to see.

**Tamaqua Center**

**4/19/17** — The Butterfly Guy (Rick) will be at our Center!

**4/25/17** — Porcupine Pat, environmental education coordinator, will be at our center!
Enroll Your Preschooler For Fall NOW!

1-800-433-3370, Ext. 212

Don’t be put on a waiting list because you waited too long to register your preschooler. See our list of Open Enrollment Dates on page 7 of this newsletter. If those dates don’t work for you call us to set up an appointment at your convenience!

The 5th Annual EARLY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP EARLY CHILDHOOD FAIR

SATURDAY—APRIL 29
10 AM TO 2 PM
Center Court
Fairlane Village Mall

Working Together for a Better Tomorrow for our Children
This event is sponsored by the Early Childhood Community Partnership (LICC) of Schuylkill County.
For more information call: 570-544-9131 ext. 1222

*Children who complete their ticket will receive a FREE Activity Packet*

Bring the whole family to enjoy this FREE educational event! Schools, Child Cares, Libraries and other local organizations will be on hand, offering crafts, games, stories and FUN for all!

Working Together for a Better Tomorrow for our Children
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For more information call: 570-544-9131 ext. 1222

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Early Years, Child Development, Inc.’s newsletter is distributed monthly. If you are a non-profit Schuylkill County agency that is offering a free service that you feel our families might be interested in or benefit from and would like an announcement placed in our newsletter please let us know by the 10th of the previous month. You can send your event to:

kwolfe@childdevelop.org

2880 Pottsville Minersville Highway, Suite 210
Minersville, PA 17954