

November 2023



## KID BITS

### Watch closely

Boost your child's concentration with this fast-paced game. Line up three colored plastic cups upside down, and put a coin under one. Have him watch the cup with the coin as you quickly rearrange the cups for 10 seconds. Then, ask him to tap the cup the coin is under. Was he right? Switch roles, and see if he can stump you.

### Getting enough sleep

A good night's sleep prepares your youngster's body and brain for a new day. It may be tempting to let her stay up late or sleep in on weekends and during school breaks, but try your best to keep a consistent schedule. This will help her get the 10–13 hours of sleep she needs each night.

### Thanksgiving helper

Involve your child in your Thanksgiving plans. If you're hosting guests, he could hang up coats or refill water glasses. Or if you visit relatives, he might pick out a game to take and share with his cousins. He'll feel proud to contribute, and he'll learn to be a good host or guest.

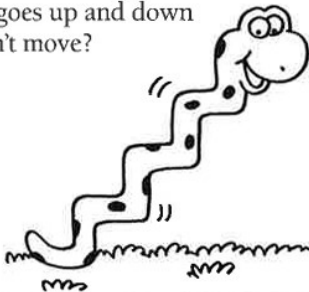
### Worth quoting

"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have." *Maya Angelou*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What goes up and down but doesn't move?

**A:** Stairs.



## Ready to read

Before your youngster can identify letters or read words, playing with sounds and syllables in words lays a strong foundation for reading. Try these ideas.

### Match beginning sounds

Gather pairs of small household objects with beginning sounds that match. *Examples:* ball and bowl, pencil and paper, fork and fan. Mix them all up—can she put each item with its partner? Now have her collect objects for you to pair up. Each time, she'll work on hearing beginning sounds in words.

### Spy the rhymes

Play this version of "I Spy," and your youngster will practice hearing rhymes. You might say, "I spy something green that rhymes with *beef*" (*leaf*) or "I spy something on the table that rhymes with *boy*" (*toy*). She could point to or bring you the correct item. Then, let her come up with "I Spy" rhymes for you.



### Jump for syllables

Help your child hear individual syllables in words. Think of a familiar word with multiple syllables (*tomato*, *helicopter*). Say the word slowly while she does a different movement for each syllable. Since *tomato* has three syllables, she might hop for *to-*, spin around for *-ma-*, and stomp for *-to*. What four movements will she do for *he-li-cop-ter*?♥

## Keep going!

A child with grit knows how to work through challenges and handle setbacks. Use these suggestions to promote a stick-with-it attitude in your youngster:

- Encourage him to use positive phrases like "I can try" or "Can you help?" instead of saying "I can't" or "I don't know how." This shift in thinking will make a big difference! *Tip:* Remember to model positive language when you talk to him. ("I know you can do it!")
- Do a new activity together, such as making your own play dough or bubble solution. It might take a few attempts to get the recipe just right, but you'll show your child that continuing to try leads to learning—and fun.♥



# Good behavior habits start early

Encourage your child to behave well by letting him know what you expect—and following through if he doesn't meet your expectations. Here's how.

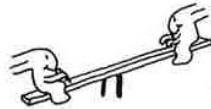
**Be clear and positive.** Tell your youngster how you want him to behave—and that you know he can do it. Before you go into a movie theater, you might say, "We want everyone to be able to hear the movie, so I know you'll



whisper quietly if you need something." Or at bedtime, maybe you'll say, "You've been doing better at staying in bed and not asking for things. I bet you'll do great tonight."

**Be consistent.** Set consequences that your child can count on. If he talks loudly in the theater, you might take him into the lobby and explain you'll need to leave if he does it again. Or if he gets out of bed to ask for another snack, perhaps you will have him go to bed earlier the next night. It

may not be easy to follow through, but when he sees you mean what you say, he'll be more likely to meet your expectations in the future.♥



## Q & A Holding a pencil

**Q:** I'm not sure my son holds his pencil correctly. Is it important for him to hold it a certain way?

**A:** A strong "tripod" grip will help your child write comfortably. That means he should grasp his pencil between his thumb, forefinger, and middle finger.



If your youngster isn't using a tripod grip, try this when he writes. Let him hold a small toy, such as a bouncy ball, in his palm with his ring and pinky fingers. That will keep those two fingers out of the way, leaving the other three to grip the pencil.

Or if your son's fingers are too far from the tip of his pencil, give him a pencil that's about half the length of a regular one. He'll need to move his fingers down to control it.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Put together a healthy plate

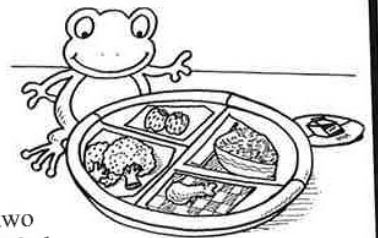
What does a nutritious meal look like? Your youngster will find out with this activity.

**Materials:** paper plate, marker, old magazines or grocery circulars, scissors, white paper

Help your child draw lines to divide a paper plate into four sections, two slightly larger and two a little smaller (see [choosemyplate.gov](http://choosemyplate.gov)). She can label the bigger sections "Vegetables" and "Grains" and the smaller ones "Fruits" and "Protein." Then, she could cut a small paper circle to represent "Dairy."

Browse through magazines together, and have her cut out healthy foods from each group. *Examples:* Strawberries (fruit), spinach (vegetables), brown rice (grains), chicken (protein), milk (dairy).

Let her experiment with different combinations of foods, creating delicious meals by putting photos into the right sections of the plate. Each time, she'll see that a healthy plate has a variety of foods. Now make it for real! Your youngster might fill up her dinner plate that looks a lot like her favorite paper plate.♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Conferences: Involve your child

I had my first parent-teacher conference last year, and afterward my daughter Vera was worried about why I met with her teacher. I explained that having a meeting is one way her teacher and I work together to help her learn.

This year, I decided to talk to Vera about the conference ahead of time. I asked if there was anything she'd like me to

say or ask. And there was! She wanted her teacher to know that she likes math group—and she loves being the calendar helper. Vera also wondered if her class will get to study butterflies this year.

I wrote down Vera's ideas and added my own, such as "What does she like to do during playtime?" and "What can I do at home to help her learn?"

I feel prepared for this year's conference, and Vera is looking forward to hearing what her teacher says.♥



## OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote school readiness, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.



2880 Pottsville Minersville Highway, Suite 210  
Minersville, PA 17954

# Early Childhood HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

As much as we hate to admit it, cold and flu season is upon us. Here is a chart to keep handy to help you decide what you our your child may be fighting.

## Flu Information



# The Flu: A Guide for Parents

Influenza (also known as flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. Flu is different from a cold, and usually comes on suddenly. Each year flu viruses cause millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospital stays and thousands or tens of thousands of deaths in the United States.

Flu can be very dangerous for children. CDC estimates that since 2010, between 7,000 and 26,000 children younger than 5 years have been hospitalized each year in the United States because of influenza. The flu vaccine is safe and helps protect children from flu.

### What parents should know

#### How serious is flu?

While flu illness can vary from mild to severe, children often need medical care because of flu. Children younger than 5 years and children of any age with certain long-term health problems are at high risk of flu complications like pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus and ear infections. Some health problems that are known to make children more vulnerable to flu include asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system.

#### How does flu spread?

Flu viruses are thought to spread mainly by droplets made when someone with flu coughs, sneezes or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. A person also can get flu by touching something that has flu virus on it and then touching their mouth, eyes, or nose.

#### What are flu symptoms?

Flu symptoms can include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, feeling tired and sometimes vomiting and diarrhea (more common in children than adults). Some people with the flu will not have a fever.



### Protect your child

#### How can I protect my child from flu?

The first and best way to protect against flu is to get a yearly flu vaccine for yourself and your child.

- Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months and older every year.
- It's especially important that young children and children with certain long-term health problems get vaccinated.
- Caregivers of children at high risk of flu complications should get a flu vaccine. (Babies younger than 6 months are at high risk for serious flu complications, but too young to get a flu vaccine.)
- Pregnant women should get a flu vaccine to protect to protect themselves and their baby from flu. Research shows that flu vaccination protects the baby from flu for several months after birth.
- Flu viruses are constantly changing and so flu vaccines are updated often to protect against the flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the upcoming flu season.

#### Is flu vaccine safe?

Flu vaccines are made using strict safety and production measures. Millions of people have safely received flu vaccines for decades. Common side effects from the flu shot are soreness where the shot is given, headaches, muscle aches, and fever. These side effects are generally mild and go away on their own within a few days. A flu vaccine cannot cause flu illness. CDC and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommend an annual flu vaccine for all children 6 months and older.

#### What are the benefits of getting a flu vaccine?

- **A flu vaccine can keep you and your child from getting sick.** When vaccine viruses and circulating viruses are matched, flu vaccination has been shown to reduce the risk of getting sick with flu by about half.
- **Flu vaccines can keep your child from being hospitalized from flu.** One recent study showed that flu vaccine reduced children's risk of flu-related pediatric intensive care unit admission by 74%.

- **Flu vaccine can prevent your child from dying from flu.**  
A study using data from recent flu seasons found that flu vaccine reduced the risk of flu-associated death by half among children with high risk medical conditions and by nearly two-thirds among children without medical conditions.
- **Flu vaccination also may make your illness milder if you do get sick.**
- **Getting yourself and your child vaccinated also can protect others** who may be more vulnerable to serious flu illness, like babies and young children, older people, and people with certain long-term health problems.

**What are some other ways I can protect my child against flu?**

In addition to getting a flu vaccine, you and your child should take everyday actions to help prevent the spread of germs.

Stay away from people who are sick as much as possible to keep from getting sick yourself. If you or your child are sick, avoid others as much as possible to keep from infecting them. Also, remember to regularly cover your coughs and sneezes, wash your hands often, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth, and clean surfaces that may be contaminated with flu viruses. These everyday actions can help reduce your chances of getting sick and prevent the spread of germs to others if you are sick. However, a yearly flu vaccine is the best way to prevent flu illness

**If your child is sick**

**What can I do if my child gets sick?**

Talk to your doctor early if you are worried about your child's illness.

Make sure your child gets plenty of rest and drinks enough fluids. If your child is 5 years and older without long-term health problems and gets flu symptoms, including a fever and/or cough, consult your doctor as needed.

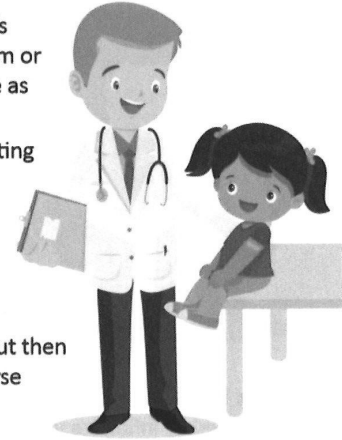
Children younger than 5 years of age – especially those younger than 2 years – and children with certain long-term health problems (including asthma, diabetes and disorders of the brain or nervous system), are at high risk of serious flu-related complications. Call your doctor or take your child to the doctor right away if they develop flu symptoms.

**What if my child seems very sick?**

Even healthy children can get very sick from flu. If your child is experiencing the following emergency warning signs you should go to the emergency room:

- Emergency warning signs of flu:
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish or gray skin color

- Not drinking enough fluids (not going to the bathroom or not making as much urine as they normally do)
- Severe or persistent vomiting
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with rash



**Is there a medicine to treat flu?**

Yes. Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that can be used to treat flu illness. They can shorten your illness and make it milder and they can prevent serious complications that could result in a hospital stay. Antivirals work best when started during the first 2 days of illness. Antiviral drugs are recommended to treat flu in people who are very sick (for example, people who are in the hospital) or people who are at high risk of serious flu complications. Antivirals can be given to children and pregnant women.

**How long can a sick person spread flu to others?**

People with flu may be able to infect others from 1 day before getting sick to up to 5 to 7 days after. Severely ill people or young children may be able to spread the flu longer, especially if they still have symptoms.

**Can my child go to school, day care, or camp if he or she is sick?**

No. Your child should stay home to rest and to avoid giving the flu to other children or caregivers.

**When can my child go back to school after having the flu?**

Keep your child home from school, day care, or camp for at least 24 hours after their fever is gone. (The fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) A fever is defined as 100°F (37.8°C) or higher.

**For more information, visit  
[www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu)  
or call 800-CDC-INFO**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

# How to Talk to Your Child about Substance Use

By: Chris Gauthier, D.O.

It is (almost) never too early to talk with your children about alcohol and other drugs. According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), children as young as nine years old start viewing alcohol in a more positive way, and approximately 3,300 children as young as 12 try marijuana each day. About 10% of 12-year-olds also report having tried alcohol; by age 15, that number increases to 50%. And, by the time they are seniors, almost 70% of high school students have tried alcohol, 50% have taken an illegal drug, and more than 20% have used a prescription drug for non-medical purposes. So, how should you go about talking to your children? Here are some suggestions by age.



**Children Younger than 10:** Prevention at a young age is critical. Get your child involved in extracurricular activities such as sports, Girl Scouts or Boy Scouts, school clubs, hobbies, or other activities. Kids do great when they are active, supported in their passions, and feel like part of a community. Look for activities that you and your child or your entire family can do together. Even just sharing a meal together can provide an opportunity to talk and learn what's going on. This is also a critical time where kids are absorbing and mimicking, so when you engage in healthier habits, you are modeling for your kids to do the same.

Take advantage of “teachable” moments that happen naturally. For example, if your child sees a character in a TV show or movie with a cigarette, it might be an opportunity to cultivate an open dialogue about smoking. When they ask questions, it's a good thing! Be engaging. They need to know the why as much as they need to know smoking is bad. This can lead to a conversation about the danger of other drugs.

This is the time to help build a foundation of healthy habits and instill good boundaries for your child. Remember to be positive and open with your child; this will stay with them throughout their life. This is the most important takeaway for this age group.

**Children Ages 10-14:** As your child grows, it's important to be transparent and to educate them, not lecture. They are at an age here where they are identifying as separate from you. Give them the facts before they're in a risky situation or rely on friends for answers. You want to make discussions around substance use relatable to your child so that they are more likely to engage with you. It's important to show that you're genuinely listening and paying attention to their concerns and questions. Ask your child what they've heard about drugs in a non-judgmental way. Kids in this age group are still usually willing to talk openly to with their parents about sensitive subjects. Talking now, transparently, will help keep the door open as they get older.

Remember, your child is highly attuned to your emotions, even when you think you are hiding them, so it's critical that you are honest in an age-appropriate way about alcohol and drugs. It's important your child knows the things that will harm them and help them. Contrast the negative impacts of drugs and alcohol with the positives of playing/being active, communicating, having boundaries and self-worth, thinking for yourself, and whole fruits and vegetables as well as vitamins and minerals.

**Children Ages 14-18:** By this age, your child has, most likely, been exposed to drugs. They probably have peers who use substances and friends who drive. The ways you have been modeling honest, open communication and helping to support their passions are all important because it teaches them to think for themselves and to trust you when things go wrong. Transparent conversations are imperative now. Talk about your teen's thoughts and feelings as well as the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.



You can make your expectations clear and help your teen feel safe coming to you. For example, you can promise to pick your child up at any time, no questions asked (that night), if they call you when they are in a situation where the driver has been drinking or using drugs. This is the next chapter in them learning good – and bad – consequences for their actions. Boundaries are critical here, and so is involving your teen in the harder conversations. They push harder at this age, and they need to know that you will catch them but not enable them.

Parents have a significant impact on their children's decisions to try alcohol and/or other drugs. That is why the sooner you talk to your child about drugs and alcohol, the greater chance you have of influencing their decisions to try these substances. Knowledge is so powerful. It is important to establish an open and honest relationship with your child. When you create a supportive environment, model good self-care, and explain age-relevant reasoning, your child is more likely to make better decisions. Mistakes on every side will happen, but when you can process mistakes with them, and in doing so, model reasoning skills, boundaries, self-worth/individualism and respect, that can be the difference between an experiment and an overdose or worse.



Prevention is primary, but your child will likely have questions at some point about someone who is already struggling, maybe it's a friend or family member. That is a prime opportunity to teach your child about the dangers of substances as well as the compassion necessary in helping loved ones overcome addiction.

Instill in your children early and often that there are many kinds of people in this diverse world, and each has value — everyone struggles in both different and similar ways. Make choices that will create connection, an independent yet balanced mind, and sense of purpose. By talking directly and honestly with your child, they are more likely to respect your rules and advice about alcohol and drug use.

## **RED FLAGS**

### **That Your Loved One May Be Struggling with Addiction**

#### **Drastic Changes in Behavior**

- ◆ Secretive
- ◆ Moody
- ◆ Agitated
- ◆ Distancing from family
- ◆ Changes in peer group

#### **Problems at Work or School**

- ◆ Frequently missing work or school
- ◆ A sudden disinterest in work or school activities
- ◆ A drop in work performance or grades

#### **Lack of Interest in Clothing, Grooming, or Looks**

#### **Sudden Requests for Money Without a Reasonable Explanation**

#### **Discovering That Money is Missing or Items Have Disappeared From Your Home**

#### **What To Do**

- ◆ Educate yourself about drugs and alcohol
- ◆ Ask for help; seek counseling and/or use support groups
- ◆ Take care of yourself and your emotional health
- ◆ Be an example of balance and self-care

#### **What Not To Do**

- ◆ Ignore the symptoms
- ◆ Keep it a secret
- ◆ Talk yourself/allow others to talk you out of concern
- ◆ Assume it is a one-time thing
- ◆ Think it can't be happening to you
- ◆ Don't act



807 Lawn Avenue, Sellersville, PA 18960 • 215-257-6551 • PennFoundation.org

### **WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR**

If you're interested in volunteering, please let your child's teacher know. You will need to complete the **FREE background checks** and a **Disclosure Statement for Volunteers** which will need to be submitted to your child's teacher.



Please see our website for more information at: <http://childdevelop.org/volunteer-opportunities/> All the links to obtain the volunteer clearances are on this webpage.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

***FYI . . . Volunteering in Child Development often leads to part-time and full-time employment!  
Just ask any Team Member!***



Things you need to know—all in on place!

### CLOSINGS FOR NOVEMBER

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAY

Friday, November 3

Centers will be **CLOSED** for staff training but the Main Office will be open.

#### THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Thursday, Nov. 23 — **CLOSED**

Friday, Nov. 24 — **CLOSED**

Monday, Nov. 27 — **CLOSED**

All Child Development, Inc. Centers and the Main Office will be **CLOSED**.

### Emergency Closings and Delays



In case of an emergency closing or delay due to weather, an announcement will be made on the local radio and television stations.

All decisions regarding the emergency closing or delay of either Program-wide or a specific centers will be made with your child's safety and well-being as our primary concern. The cancellation or delay will be aired on the stations below:

WMGH	Tamaqua	FM 105.5
WPPA	Pottsville	AM 1360
T102	Pottsville	FM 101.9
WPAM	Pottsville	AM 1450
WNEP TV	Scranton	Channel 16

Cancellations and delays will be made as early as possible. We will be specific as to whether it is the Head Start and PreK Counts Programs only or the Child Care Program (which includes the Administrative Office) that will be closed or delayed.

## MEETINGS

### Policy Council

MONTHLY MEETING

Mon., Nov. 20th at 9:30 AM

In-Person Meeting

(a ZOOM link for the meeting will also be emailed to members)

### Finance Committee

Thurs., Nov. 9th

5 PM Pension Meeting

6 PM Regular Committee Meeting

In-Person Meeting

(a ZOOM link for the meeting will also be emailed to members)

### Health Advisory Committee

Thurs., Nov. 16th at 11:30 AM

In-Person Meeting at

Administrative Office of Child Dev.

(a ZOOM link for the orientation will also be emailed to members)



Old Man Winter will be here before we know it. With that in mind we wanted to remind you that Child Development, Inc. uses an automated message system to alert parents and staff when the our centers or the Program are closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies.

We also use this message system to inform and remind families of other important Program and center events.

As long as we have a current cell phone number, which is the same one that is listed on your emergency card, and/or an e-mail address, you will receive automated messages. **Therefore, it is very important to keep your emergency contact information accurate and up-to-date.**



# The 2023-2024 Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program **OPENS 11/1/2023**

**How to Apply:** There are two ways you can apply for LIHEAP, online OR on paper.

1. **Online:** Apply for benefits online using COMPASS, the online tool for Pennsylvanians to apply for health and human service programs and manage benefit information.
2. **On paper:** You can download a paper application, print it, fill it out, and return it to your local county assistance office.

Click on the links for either an English or Spanish Energy Assistance Application and return it to your local county assistance program located at: **(THE APPLICATION LINKS WILL BE AVAILABLE WHEN THE PROGRAM OPENS.)**

Go to this web site to learn more about either of the above options:

<https://www.dhs.pa.gov/Services/Assistance/Pages/LIHEAP.aspx>

The physical address for the Schuylkill County Assistance Office is:

**Schuylkill County Assistance Office**  
**OFFICE HOURS: 8:30 AM to 5 PM**  
 2640 Woodglen Road • P.O. Box 1100 • Pottsville, PA 17901-1341  
**LIHEAP 570-621-3072 • Toll Free: 1-877-306-5439 • Phone: 570-621-3000**  
**FAX: 570-624-3334**

*Individuals with hearing impairments may call the TDD number at 1-800-451-5886*

**Crisis Grants:** In addition to the LIHEAP cash program, households experiencing a heating crisis may be eligible for additional benefits through the **LIHEAP Crisis Program**.

Additional money may be available if you have an emergency situation and are in jeopardy of losing your heat.

Emergency situations include:

- Broken heating equipment or
- Leaking lines that must be fixed or replaced

**Lack of fuel:** The main heating source or second heating source (a source that is used to operate the main heating source or used if the main heating source is not working) has been completely shut-off.

Danger of being without fuel (less than a 15 day supply) or of having utility service terminated (received a notice that service will be shut off within the next 60 days)

Assistance with home heating crisis situations will be available 24 hours a day; in most counties, you should contact your local county assistance office.

*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](mailto:kwolfe@childdevelop.org)

