

December 2023



## KID BITS

### What's in the bag?

Inspire your child to explore her sense of touch. Secretly put an object in a paper lunch bag, and encourage her to reach in, carefully feel it, and try to identify it. You could choose objects with a variety of textures, such as feathers, rocks, and coins.

### Speak up for yourself

Help your child learn to ask for what he needs and express his opinions by encouraging him to be assertive. You can give him opportunities to practice in everyday situations. For example, he could order his food in a restaurant, answer questions his doctor asks, and participate in conversations when you visit with relatives.

### Car seat safety

Keep your child in a car seat and then a booster seat until she reaches the weight limit of each seat—even if your state's law doesn't require it. Studies show that staying in each seat as long as possible reduces her chances of being hurt in a crash. *Note:* Be sure she rides in the correct seat in other people's cars, too.

### Worth quoting

"Each day comes bearing its own gifts. Untie the ribbons." *Ruth Ann Schabacker*

### Just for fun

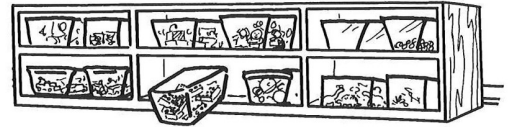
**Q:** What do snowmen eat for breakfast?

**A:** Snowflakes!



## Hands-on math

For little ones, learning math starts with objects they can see, touch, and play with. Try these activities using familiar items to help your child recognize, count, and compare numbers.



### Recognize

Your youngster can use Legos to practice recognizing numbers and putting them in order. Write the numbers 1–10 in washable marker on same-size bricks. Have your child mix up the Legos—can he stack them in the correct order? Encourage him to say each number as he goes.



### Count

On separate sheets of paper, write big numbers (1–10). Let him draw the matching number of circles on each (1 circle on 1, 2 circles on 2, and so on). Now your child should count as he puts a small item in each circle. He might say, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5" while placing 5 buttons in the circles on 5.

### Compare

Are there more grapes or crackers on that plate? Your youngster can use math to find out. Suggest that he pair each grape with a cracker. Then, he could count the leftovers to see how many more of one food he has than another. ("There are four extra grapes.")♥

## Dealing with disappointment

Does your child know how to "make lemonade when life gives her lemons"? Show her with these ideas.

- **Find the benefit.** Put a positive spin on something your youngster is upset about. Perhaps she has to wait until Monday to finish her art class project. You might say, "This weekend, you can have fun thinking about what you might add to your mural."
- **Brainstorm alternatives.** Say it snows and you have to cancel a trip to Grandpa's house. Help your youngster think of an idea that would make her and her grandfather happy. For instance, they might "visit" with a call or video-chat.♥



# Kindness is easy!

Being kind to others is a habit that your child can start early. Here are simple ways for her to show kindness wherever she goes.

**Be inviting.** Suggest that your youngster ask another child to be her buddy at school. Maybe there's a student who tends to play alone or who cries when his dad drops him off.



She could invite him to read or play with her. She'll brighten her classmate's day—and perhaps make a new friend.

**Spread cheer.** Encourage your child to smile warmly and say hello to people she sees throughout the day, such as the crossing guard, a substitute teacher, or cafeteria workers. She'll discover how rewarding it is to make others smile.

**Lend a hand.** Helping people makes their lives easier—an excellent way to show kindness. Suggest that your youngster find opportunities like reaching a toy on a shelf for her little brother or picking up papers for a teacher who dropped them in the hallway.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Crafty pinecones

Little fingers can make wintry decorations that add a festive touch to your home. As your youngster decorates pinecones, he'll build fine motor skills.

**Materials:** old newspaper, pinecones, paint, brush, decorations (stickers, pom-poms, beads, glitter), cotton swab, glue



Spread out newspapers, and let your child paint the pinecones. When they're dry, he can glue on pom-poms or add stickers. Or he could use felt and googly eyes to create faces—perhaps a cute little owl or hedgehog. Another idea is to dip a cotton swab in glue, spread glue on the pinecone, and sprinkle on glitter for a little sparkle.

When they dry, let your youngster display his pinecones in a basket or clear vase on a table. Or help him arrange his pinecone critters on a bookshelf.

*Idea:* Your child's pinecones would make ideal gifts for friends and relatives!♥



## Q & A

### Learning-filled weekends

**Q:** Can you suggest places our family can go on weekends that will be educational for our daughter but won't cost a lot of money?

**A:** Try calling local businesses to ask if they offer tours. Maybe your youngster can get a behind-the-scenes look at a pizza parlor, an ice-cream shop, a yarn shop, or a newspaper office. *Tip:* After a tour, help your youngster write and mail a thank-you note so she gets in the habit of showing gratitude.

Public agencies may offer educational programs, too. Your child could learn about life cycles and habitats at a fish hatchery or discover how cans and bottles are cleaned and processed at a recycling center.

Local performances also make good family field trips. Look for free or low-cost plays and concerts at middle or high schools or community centers. Your youngster may even be able to meet the actors or musicians after the show.♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Put on your thinking cap

My son's class recently made paper "thinking caps" to wear when the students do problem-solving activities. Henry liked his hat so much that he wanted to wear it at home.

While we were looking for problems to solve, my older daughter came in and noticed the hat. She showed Henry an activity she remembered doing at his age. She helped him mix dry beans, uncooked rice, and salt in a bowl. Then, she got a colander,

a strainer, and two more bowls, and asked her brother to separate the three foods. Through trial and error, Henry eventually solved the problem. He figured out that the salt would go through the strainer into one bowl and the rice would go through the colander into the other bowl. That left the beans in the colander and the three items separated.

He was proud of his success, and he keeps asking for more problems to solve. Now when we run into a dilemma, we ask Henry to put on his thinking cap!♥



## 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



# Winning Ways to Mental Well-Being



Be Safe | Be Respectful | Be a Team Player | Be Kind

YOUR MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM . . . Beverly Weikel | Mary Louise Fanelli | Stacy Meredith | Marie Groody | Mary Ann Devlin

## Teaching children the true spirit of holidays...

*Caring is sharing and what better time of the year than now to role model this for your child!  
Here are some suggestions to help you do this:*

1. Deliver cookies to the volunteers at a fire station.
2. Choose a child's name off a giving tree and pick out the gift together as a family.
3. Pool together some money to buy a tank of gas for a friend or relative.
4. Recruit several families and adopt a nursing home. Make cards and visit with residents..
5. Send letters and greeting cards to our military personnel overseas.
6. Prepare a meal together as a family and take it to an elderly neighbor.
7. Leave a greeting card in the mailbox for the mail carrier.
8. Volunteer to read a book to your child's class.
9. Take balloons or small gifts to a child in your local hospital.
10. Go to the supermarket and pick out a few items for your local food pantry.
11. Clean out your coat closet and take them to a local shelter.
12. Donate a few books for your local library.
13. Choose a day to serve each other inside your own family. Take out the trash for your partner, encourage your children to pick up their siblings' toys, and show appreciation for one another.
14. Encourage everyone in your family to look each person in the eye, smile, and express their appreciation with a simple thank you or a compliment.

***Have a safe and joyful holiday!"***

---

As always we leave you with the knowledge, that your mental health team holds you in their thoughts, keeps you in their hearts and wishes you all wellness through the practice of patience.

**YOUR MENTAL WELLNESS TEAM**  
*Beverly, Mary Louise, Stacy, Marie and Mary Ann*



# Early Childhood



*With all the talk of lead in the news lately, we felt we needed to include something in our newsletter this month that you might find helpful.*



## Lead Poisoning Home Checklist

The following questions will help you determine if your family is at risk for lead poisoning. Place a ✓ for every YES answer:

\_\_\_\_\_ **1. Was your home built before 1978?**

A majority of homes built before 1978 (especially homes built throughout the 1940s to 1960s), contain lead-based paint, which can have a dangerous effect on the health of young children (under the age of six) and pregnant women.

\_\_\_\_\_ **2. Do you see walls, furniture, or window sills in your home with chipping or peeling paint?**

Lead-based paint is unsafe if it peels, chips, or cracks. Harmful lead dust is created when windows, doors, edges of stairs, rails, or other lead-based painted surfaces wear away over time. You or your landlord can get your home checked for lead by hiring a trained, certified professional. Many young children put their hands or other objects covered with lead dust in their mouths, which can cause serious damage to their health. Wash children's hands, bottles, pacifiers, and toys often.

\_\_\_\_\_ **3. Do your children play in lead-contaminated soil near your home?**

Soil around homes with lead-based paint may have lead chips, dust, or flakes in it. Children can accidentally swallow this soil while playing outdoors, or the soil may be tracked indoors from shoes onto carpet and floors where children can eventually come into contact with it. Teach children to wipe and remove their shoes, as well as to wash their hands, after playing outdoors.

\_\_\_\_\_ **4. Do you store food in imported pottery that contains lead?**

Imported pottery and dishware usually contain lead. To protect your family from lead poisoning, use imported pottery only for decoration, and keep food and drinks in other safe, storage containers.

\_\_\_\_\_ **5. Do you work with lead in your job?**

You may be exposed to lead on the job if you work as a painter, ironworker, construction worker, cable splicer, automobile radiator repair mechanic, firearms instructor, metal shop worker, stained glass artist, or battery maker. If you work in a lead-related industry, change your work clothes before entering the home, wash your work clothes separately from the clothes you wear around your family, and remove your shoes before entering your home, as lead can be tracked indoors onto carpets, floors, and furniture.

**If you have answered yes to any of these questions, have your home tested by a certified professional by contacting 1-800-424-LEAD (5323) or visiting [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead). If you rent, find out if your landlord has checked your home for lead. Have your children tested for lead poisoning by asking your doctor or your health specialist at a Head Start center to do a simple blood test. Medicaid should pay for the cost of the lead poisoning test.**



To find simple ways to prevent lead poisoning in your home look for the "Chance of a Lifetime" brochure at your Head Start center.



# Early Childhood HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

## Tooth Decay—PART 1

**What causes tooth decay?** Bacteria in the mouth changes the sugar in foods and drinks into acid that attacks the teeth. Every time you eat or drink, acid can attack the teeth for 20 minutes or longer. After many attacks, tooth decay can develop.

**What is early childhood caries?** Early Childhood Caries is tooth decay in the primary (baby) teeth of young children. It happens when the child's teeth are around sugary liquids often and for long periods of time. Such liquids include fruit juice, soda and other sweetened liquids.

**What's so bad about tooth decay in my child's baby teeth?** Decay in baby teeth can cause pain. If decay is not treated, it can destroy the teeth of an infant or young child. And if a child has decay in the primary teeth, he or she is more likely to have decay in the permanent (adult) teeth as well. That's why it's just as important to take care of baby teeth as it is permanent teeth.



Healthy Primary (baby) Teeth



Moderate Decay



Moderate to Severe Decay



Severe Decay



**Why should I be concerned about my child's sipping habits?** Frequent sips and snacks in between meals expose teeth to repeated acid attacks. Do not let your child constantly sip on liquids containing sugar (including milk and juice drinks). If your child needs a between-meal snack, choose healthy foods.

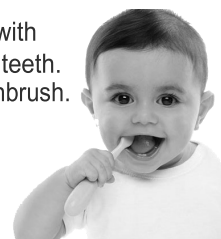
Infants should not be allowed to fall asleep while breastfeeding or with a bottle because the sugary liquid can pool around the teeth.

Do not add sugar to your baby's food to make it taste better. If your child is thirsty between snacks or meals, offer water in the cup.

**Why is it important to keep my child's mouth clean?** After each feeding, wipe the baby's gums with a clean, damp gauze pad or washcloth. This will help remove plaque and bits of food that can harm new teeth. When your child's teeth begin to erupt or push through the gums, brush them gently with a child's size toothbrush.

Talk to your dentist or physician about using fluoride toothpaste for children under 2 years.

When your child can be counted on not to swallow toothpaste (around age 2), begin brushing the teeth with fluoride toothpaste. The ADA recommends a pea-sized amount



**When should I make an appointment for my baby's first dentist visit?** It is a good idea to have this visit within six months after the first tooth erupts, but no later than the first birthday. Discuss this with your family dentist.



Although this may seem early, a dentist can show you how to properly clean your child's teeth, check for problems such as dental decay, and offer advice on your child's diet and pacifier use. You should consider this checkup for your child.



Having a well-baby checkup at this age connects your child to a dental home. This is a "home base" for dental care, a place where you can take your child from year to year. This helps the dentist get to know your child's and your family's specific needs, so he or she can provide the best care.

Geisinger **St Luke's**  **Corner** 

# Winter Health Safety

**Love it or hate it, winter is coming!** Here are some great tips from a Pediatrician and the American Academy of Pediatrics to keep your kids safe and healthy this season:



1. Dress kids warmly for outdoor activities. Several thin layers are most effective. Remember warm coverings for feet, hands and heads. Dress little ones in one more layer of clothing than an adult would wear.
2. Avoid bulky layers and snowsuits in car seats which can decrease safety by keeping littles less secure.
3. Avoid loose bedding, pillows and bumpers in infant cribs which can lead to suffocation.
4. Recognize signs of hypothermia in your child like shivering or becoming lethargic or clumsy. Get kids indoors and out of wet clothes to warm up. Give a warm drink. Seek medical attention for persistent symptoms.
5. Watch for frostbite on exposed areas like fingers, toes, ears and noses. If skin appears red, pale or blistered, bring your child indoors and apply a warm (not hot) compress. Seek medical attention if things don't improve quickly.
6. Encourage your child to ice skate only on approved surfaces and in the same direction as the crowd. Don't skate alone or eat/chew gum while skating. Consider helmets and pads while learning.
7. Supervise kids while sledding. Have them sit up feet first to avoid injury. Consider a helmet. Avoid crowded areas with obstructions like trees or fences.
8. Have kids taught to properly ski (age 4 and up) or snowboard (age 7 and up) with a qualified instructor. All should wear helmets and be supervised by an adult. Make sure equipment fits and includes eye protection. Avoid crowds and difficult slopes while learning.
9. Snowmobile drivers should be at least 16 years old, and riders should be over 6. Travel at safe speeds in designated areas wearing helmets and eye protection.
10. Remember sun protection for exposed faces and lips.
11. Keep kids well-fed and hydrated before outdoor winter activities to avoid fatigue and dehydration.

**STAY SAFE AND HAVE FUN!!**



**Dr. Koehler** is a board-certified general pediatrician and a fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics. She is particularly interested in breastfeeding support and preventative care for children of all ages and abilities, including coordination of care for patients with complex medical issues. **She is currently accepting new patients from birth to adulthood.**

**St. Luke's Tamaqua Primary Care**  
 143 North Railroad Street | Tamaqua, PA 18252  
**570-645-1540**



Things you need to know—all in on place!

### Important Information



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!

### WINTER BREAK CLOSINGS

Dec. 25 — **All centers & office CLOSED**

Dec. 26 — **All centers & office CLOSED**

Dec. 27 — **Head Start & Pre-K CLOSED\***

Dec. 28 — **Head Start & Pre-K CLOSED\***

Dec. 29 — **Head Start & Pre-K CLOSED\***

Jan. 1 — **All centers & office CLOSED**

*\* Child Care Classrooms and the Main Office will be open on these days.*

## EVENTS

### Policy Council MONTHLY Meeting

Mon., Dec. 18, 2023 at 9:30 AM

Conference Room

Child Development Main Office & Zoom



## ~ REFER A FRIEND ~

Do you have a friend or relative with a preschool age child (or children) and lives within Schuylkill County? If so, please give them this coupon to complete and return to you so you can turn it in to your child's teacher or family advocate.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Referring Family: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred Family: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Best time to call:  Morning  Afternoon

Family is interested in the following center:  Fountain Springs  Mahanoy City  Pottsville  Pottsville 2  Saint Clair  Sch. Haven  Shenandoah  Tamaqua



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.**

## Emergency Closings and Delays



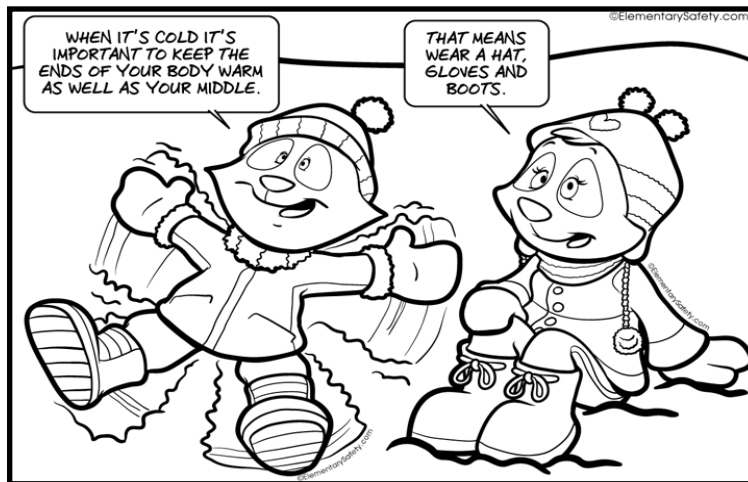
In case of an emergency closing or delay due to weather, an announcement will be made on the local radio and television stations.

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.

## WINTER SAFETY TIP COLORING FUN



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@childdevelopment.org](mailto:kwolfe@childdevelopment.org)



2880 Pottsville Minersville Highway, Suite 210  
Minersville, PA 17954