

January 2024



KID BITS

Sneezes and coughs

Does your youngster know how to sneeze and cough into the crook of his arm? Just turning his head and lifting his elbow isn't enough. Show him how to put his other hand under his elbow and lift the arm to cover his nose and mouth. This strategy will help him avoid spreading germs.

Comparing kids

It's normal for a parent to wonder why a friend's or neighbor's child reads better or gets upset less often than theirs. Keep in mind that youngsters develop at their own pace, and try to focus on what your child does well without comparing her to others. *Note:* If you have concerns about her development, talk to her teacher.

Stay warm at recess

Colder weather means extra layers of clothing so your youngster can run and play comfortably during recess. Have him practice putting on his coat, hat, and gloves at home so he can do it independently at school. Also, label these items so he can tell them apart from his friends' clothes.

Worth quoting

"Do something wonderful, people may imitate it." *Albert Schweitzer*

Just for fun

Q: What starts with a "p," ends with an "e," and has thousands of letters?

A: Post office!



Responsible for me

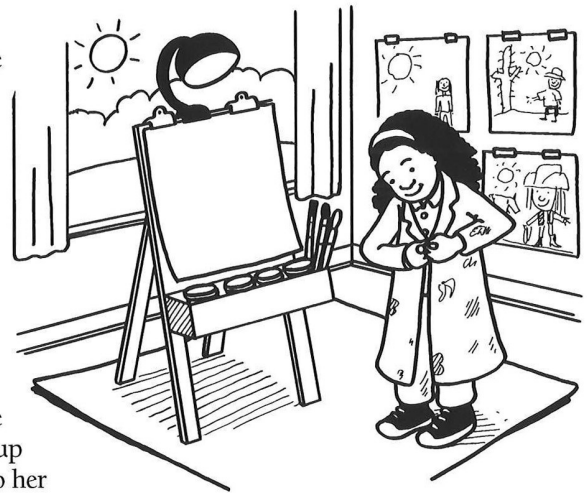
As your child grows, she'll gradually take more and more responsibility for her routines, behavior, and belongings. Try these tips to guide her along the way.

Set expectations

Decide what your youngster should be responsible for. For instance, you might expect her to get up at a certain time on school mornings. But she may not be ready to set an alarm and get up without having you come into her room. Follow her lead—if she takes comfort in seeing you first thing, wait until she's a little older before expecting her to use an alarm clock.

Celebrate successes

When your child shows responsibility, let her know you noticed—and point out the benefit. *Example:* "You found your missing train when you tidied up your room. Now you can play with it." She'll see that responsible behavior has its own rewards, motivating her to repeat it.



Use mistakes as opportunities

Let your youngster learn from mistakes when possible. She'll discover that mistakes are okay and that she's in charge of correcting them. For instance, if she gets paint on her favorite shirt, teach her how to wash it. Then, help her think of ways to keep nice clothes clean when she paints. She might suggest setting aside old clothes to wear for painting or ask to use one of your old shirts as a smock. ♥

Staying focused

Boost your youngster's attention span with these activities that encourage him to focus.

● **Hot and cold.** Hide a toy for your child to find. As he searches, let him know when he's close to it ("Hot!") or far away ("Cold!"). He'll want to stay focused on your words until he locates the toy.

● **Claps and stomps.** How many motions can your youngster copy? Ask him to pay close attention while you do just one (clap), and have him repeat after you. Then add another (clap, stomp) for him to copy. Keep going until he forgets one. ♥



Wonderful words

All the words your youngster learns are stepping-stones on his path toward becoming a successful reader and writer. Use these ideas to grow his vocabulary.

Read books. Each time you read to your child, encourage him to listen for at least one unfamiliar word that he'd like to start using (say, *stupendous*). Look it up in the dictionary together to discover that it means *awesome* or *wonderful*. Now find ways to weave it into



your next conversation. At sunset, you might say, "The sky looks *stupendous* with all those colors." Or perhaps your youngster will say, "Today was a *stupendous* day because I got to play the tambourine in music class at school."

Match synonyms. Synonyms are words with similar meanings, like *pop* and *burst*. Help your child cut two different-color sheets of paper into 12 squares each. On each square of one color, write words your child knows (*shirt*, *cat*). Then, write a synonym (*blouse*, *feline*) for

each word on each square of the opposite color. Together, match up the pairs of synonyms, giving your youngster clues to help him learn the words. ("A *feline* is an animal you might have as a pet.")♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Tell me what you learned today

Whenever my daughter Leah walked in the door from school, I'd immediately ask her what she learned. And she'd usually answer, "I don't know."

Then the other day, I had to take an important phone call when Leah got home, and I couldn't question her right away. When I hung up and asked about her day, she had lots to say!



I realized that Leah needs a few minutes to switch from school mode to home mode before she's ready to chat. Now we sit down and eat a snack together, and I wait for her to start talking. More often than not, she's happy to open up and tell me all about her science experiment or a book her teacher read aloud.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Exploring with senses

This "sensory bin" stimulates your child's brain and boosts her creativity as she plays with objects that have different colors, shapes, and textures. *Bonus:* It's also a calming activity.

First, have your youngster cover the bottom of a clear, shallow container with a layer of shaving cream. Help her add small items like marbles, dice, buttons, beads, dry pasta, and plastic animals. Now encourage her to reach in and describe how the objects feel. ("The marbles are smooth, and the pasta is rough.")

Together, brainstorm ideas for more sensory bins. An ocean bin might include blue gelatin dessert with plastic sea animals and seashells. Your child could even make up stories about them!♥



Q & A Getting your child to share

Q: My son gets upset when he has to share something with his sister. How should I handle this?

A: It may help to offer your child some control over what and how he shares. For example, you may decide he doesn't have to share his stuffed animals but the backyard swing is for sharing.

When possible, try to give your son advance notice that he'll need to share. You could say, "Your

sister wants a turn on the swing. I'm going to set a timer for 5 minutes, and then it's time for her to swing."

Also, talk about sharing in everyday situations. You might let your youngster hear you say to your spouse, "There's

only enough coffee left for one cup—let's share!" He'll see that sharing is an important part of daily life, and he may be more willing to share.♥



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



Tooth Decay—PART 2

In last month's newsletter we talked about childhood tooth decay—what causes it, why it's so bad, your child's sipping habits, keeping your child's mouth clean and your child's first dentist visit. This month we're going to focus on what things can rot not only your child's teeth but your teeth as well!

SOUR CANDY AND SOFT DRINKS ***WILL*** ROT YOUR TEETH!



Over the past few years, a lot of research has been done on the adverse effects that high sugar content and low pH levels (high acidity) of popular candy treats and soft drinks have on your teeth. The chart below shows both the breakdown of both the sugar and the pH level (degree of acidity) of many of the more popular soft drinks and sour candies.

Keep in mind that that 7.0 on the PH scale is neutral. Anything between 7.0 and 14.0 is alkaline and anything lower than 7.0 is acidic. **The acidity level of some of these treats approaches that of BATTERYACID, which is 1.0!!!**

The following two charts explain how the acidity eats away at your tooth enamel, leaving your teeth open to more decay and it breaks down your bone tissue. It's not surprising that our kids are having more dental and bone problems with the acidity level of some of these drinks and sour treats.

In addition, anyone with sensitive teeth is fighting a losing battle if they continue to consume these soft drinks and sour treats. However, when you do consume these, here are a couple of tips that you should be aware of:

- **If you consume soda or candy, do not brush your teeth immediately afterward.** In the tooth's softened state, the enamel is more susceptible of further damage, instead, rinse your mouth with water, milk or eat a piece of cheese to help minimize the acidity!
- **Stay away from sticky, chewy candies.** Obviously, the longer the candy or soda stays in your mouth, the more damage it does. Suckers, taffy and soft, chewy candies only make the problem worse.

For better bone and dental health limit your family's consumption of these products!



You experience loss of tooth enamel with a pH of 4.0 and less!

Water (neutral) = 7.0 Milk = 6.7 pH 3.5 tsp sugar

Acid Levels In Popular Candies:	Acid pH (Low=Bad)
Spree	3.0
Sour Gummy Bears	3.0
Gummy Vitamins	2.5
Airhead Extreme	2.5
Sour Punch Straws	2.5
Shockers	2.5
Skittles	2.5
Baby Bottle Pop	2.5
Brach's Gummy Bears	2.5
Laffy Taffy	2.5
Starburst	2.4
Sweet Tarts Shockers	2.4
Lemon Heads	2.4
Mentos Fruit Chews	2.4
Sour Skittles	2.2
Grape Nerds	2.0
Now and Later Chews	1.9
Pixy Stix Powder	1.9
Wonka Fun Dip	1.8
Warheads Sour Spray	1.6

Acid Levels in Popular Drinks:	Acid pH (Low=Bad)	Sugar* Per 10 oz.
Barq's Root Beer	4.0	11 tsp.
Minute Maid Orange Juice	3.8	9 tsp.
Grape, Apple, Cranberry Juice	3.4	15 tsp.
Propel Fitness Water	3.4	1 tsp.
Red Bull	3.3	10 tsp.
Sprite	3.3	10 tsp.
Mountain Dew	3.3	12 tsp.
Diet Coke	3.1	0 tsp.
Sierra Mist	3.1	10 tsp.
Full Throttle Energy Drink	3.0	11 tsp.
Diet Pepsi	3.0	0 tsp.
Gatorade	2.9	10 tsp.
Sunkist Orange Soda	2.9	13 tsp.
Dr. Pepper	2.9	10 tsp.
AMP- Mountain Dew	2.8	11 tsp.
SoBE Energy Soda	2.6	12 tsp.
Minute Maid Lemonade	2.6	10 tsp.
Pepsi	2.5	11 tsp.
Diet Schweppes Tonic Water	2.5	0 tsp.
Coca-Cola Classic	2.4	10 tsp.

Source: Dr. John Ruby, University of Alabama Birmingham school of Dentistry 2007 Copyright, Minnesota Dental Association. All Rights Reserved

Mental Wellness Corner



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HOW TO FIGHT THE WINTER BLUES



The **Winter Blues** (*Seasonal Affective Disorder* or SAD) affects about 10 million Americans. It can affect people of any age, including children. Here are 20 helpful tips to wait out winter with a smile on your face:

1. **Take a Walk**—A daily one hour walk in the middle of the day could be as helpful as light treatment for coping with the winter time blues.
2. **Get Outside**—Go outdoors in natural daylight as much as possible, especially at midday and on brighter days. Inside your home, choose pale colors that reflect light from outside, and sit near windows whenever you can.
3. **Keep warm**—Being cold makes you more depressed. Being warm can reduce the winter blues by half.
4. **Eat healthy**—A healthy diet will boost your mood, give you more energy and helps you from putting on weight over winter. Balance your craving for carbs, such as pasta and potatoes, with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables.
5. **See the Light**—Sit in front of a light box for up to two hours a day can be helpful. Light boxes give out very bright light— 10x stronger than ordinary lighting. Some people find that using a dawn simulator as their bedside light connected to an alarm clock, mimics sunrise and wakes you up gradually.
6. **Take up a new hobby**—Keeping your mind active with a new interest seems to ward off symptoms. It could be anything, such as playing bridge, joining a gym, keeping a journal, or writing a blog. The important thing is that you have something to look forward to and concentrate on.
7. **See your friends and family**—It has been shown that socializing is good for your mental health and helps to ward off the winter blues. Make an effort to keep in touch with people you care about and accept invitations you get to a social event, even if you only go for a little while.
8. **Talk it through**—Talking treatment, such as counseling, psychotherapy or cognitive therapy can help you cope with symptoms—see what's available locally.
9. **Join a Support Group**—Sharing with others who have experienced the same feelings and symptoms can make your symptoms more bearable.
10. **Seek medical help**—If your symptoms are so bad that you can't live a normal life, see your doctor for help.
11. **Brighten Up Your Surroundings**—Make your environment brighter by opening the blinds and curtains and trim back tree branches that are set closer to the windows
12. **Give Yourself a Treat Now and Then**—Certain food like chocolate can enhance your mood and relieve anxiety. Other foods like candy and carbohydrates can ultimately increase feelings of anxiety and depressions.
13. **Plan vacations.** The simple act of planning a vacation causes a significant increase in overall happiness.
14. **Wear Bright Colors**—Bright colored clothing brightens your mood, get rid of the black and go for bright yellows, purples, reds pinks etc.
15. **Find a Workout Buddy**—Make sure they have similar fitness goals and are willing to push you when you need it.
16. **Increase your omega**—Eating more fatty fish like salmon can actually make you feel more positive.
17. **Prep your meals**—Instead of reaching for a bottle of wine and a box of chocolates, prepare some healthy meals—check out some new healthy recipes on the internet. Use brown rice, whole grains, veggies, fruit and avoid sugar.
18. **Seek out motivation**—Watch motivational movies, read inspirational books and quotes.
19. **Set Some Goals**—Set small goals one each day that will keep you positive and on track. No more than one. Keep it simple and short term. Even daily goals like increasing your water intake can be celebrated.
20. **Try Some Cool Ways to Embrace the Winter**—Build a snowman with the kids; make some home-made frozen yogurt; cross country ski; ice fish; revisit sleigh riding; get a pedicure; make some me time; take the opportunity to get cozy and pamper yourself. Buy yourself some colorful flowers or scented candles indulge your senses and hold on tight.
SPRING IS ON THE WAY!





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



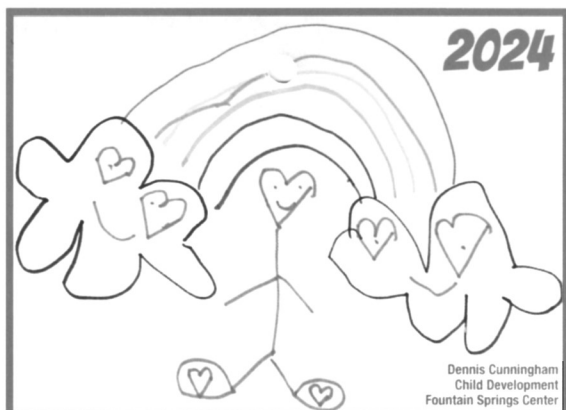
In case of an emergency closing or delay due to weather, an announcement will be made on the local radio and television stations.

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.

We are thrilled to announce that a drawing of one of the children in our centers has been selected to grace the 2024 calendar for the **Schuylkill County Society for Pediatric Orthopedics** (formerly known as Schuylkill County Society for Crippled Children)!



Schuylkill County Society for Crippled Children

Now to be known as **Schuylkill County Society for Pediatric Orthopedics**



Left to Right: Dennis Cunningham (Winner); Vayla Pecika (3rd Place); and Jacob Loftus (2nd Place)

“Congratulations—everyone did a great job.”



Things you need to know—all in one place!



PROGRAM GOVERNANCE MEETINGS




Policies Committee Meeting*
Friday, Jan. 12, 2024
at 10:00 AM

Community Outreach Committee Meeting*
Thursday, Jan. 18, 2024
at 3:00 PM

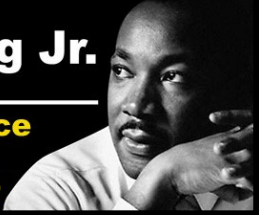
POLICY COUNCIL MEETING*
Mon., Jan. 22, 2024
at 9:30 AM

** Meetings will be IN-PERSON and on Zoom.
A ZOOM link for the meeting will be emailed to all members. When you receive the email with the link, please respond and confirm how you will be attending the meeting—IN PERSON or by ZOOM
~ In-Person Meetings are at our Main Office ~*

January Holiday Closings



Tuesday, January 1, 2024
All centers & main office— **CLOSED**



Martin Luther King Jr.
January 15, 1929 - April 4, 1968

All centers & main office will be CLOSED Monday - January 15, 2024

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!

Geisinger St Luke's Corner *Self-Care for Wellness*

When it comes to your mental health, self-care can help you manage stress, lower your risk of illness, and increase your energy. Self-care looks different for everyone, and it is important to find what you need and enjoy.

Here are some tips to get you started:



Get regular exercise: Just 30 minutes of walking every day can help boost your mood and improve your health.

Eat healthy, regular meals and stay hydrated: A balanced diet and plenty of water can improve your energy and focus.

Make sleep a priority: Stick to a schedule, and make sure you're getting enough sleep.

Try a relaxing activity: Schedule regular times for these and other healthy activities you enjoy such as journaling.



Set goals and priorities: Decide what must get done now and what can wait.

Practice gratitude: Remind yourself daily of things you are grateful for.

Focus on positivity: Identify and challenge your negative and unhelpful thoughts.

Stay connected: Reach out to your friends or family members.

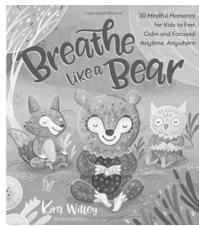


When you're feeling stressed . . .

- ▶ Take care of yourself
- ▶ Speak to someone you trust
- ▶ Keep your day to day consistent
- ▶ Be honest about feeling overwhelmed

Book Recommendations

Additional Resources



- **Breath Like a Bear** by Kira Willey
- **Take Time for You: Self Care Action Plan for Educators** by Tina H. Boogren
- **Everyday Self-Care: The little book that helps to take care of you** by Dawn Bates

- Suicide and Crisis Lifeline: **9-8-8**
- Behavioral Health Walk-In Center (Lehighton): **610-577-0555**
- Outpatient Mental Health Services: **484-822-5703**
- Your Emotional Strength Supported (YESS!) Program: **484-822-5772**



Scan here for all of St. Luke's Mental Health

Brought to you by



We are **#StLukesProud** to celebrate St. Luke's 150th Anniversary with Child Development, Inc.! Geisinger St. Luke's has partnered with Child Development since 2018 to support early childhood education and provide evidence-based initiatives for improved access and connection to care and resources. **#stlukesproud #GSLProud**.

Presenting this gift from Geisinger St. Luke's Hospital (GSL)/St. Luke's Health Network (SLHN) are from left to right): Gabe Kamarousky, President and Angela Morgan — GSLH; Whitney Szmodis; Dr. Rajika Reed—all of SLHN; Mary Ann Devlin, Executive Director—Child Development; Kerri Quick and Rosemarie Lister—SLHN

DO YOU . . .

. . . have a preschool age child or children?
 . . . have a friend or relative with a preschool age child or children and lives in another community within Schuylkill County?



Did you know . . .

. . . we can put a child on our waiting list so that when he turns three he will already be registered?

CALL Child TODAY
 Development, Inc.
Ready for school and a lifetime of learning

1-800-433-3370 or 570-544-8959 • Ext. 212

We have centers located in the following communities:
 Fountain Springs • Mahanoy City • Pottsville
 St. Clair • Sch. Haven • Shenandoah • Tamaqua

(We have Pre-K Counts classrooms in these centers: Fountain Springs, Mahanoy City, Pottsville, St. Clair and Sch. Haven)

We are an E.O.E employer and Provider

WE NEED YOUR HELP! SPREAD THE WORD!

✂ 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: _____

Enrolled Family: _____ Enrolled Child's Name: _____

Referred Family: _____ Child Name: _____ DOB: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Best time to call: Morning Afternoon

This family is interested in the following center:

Fountain Springs Mahanoy City Pottsville Pottsville 2

Saint Clair Sch. Haven Shenandoah Tamaqua

MISSION STATEMENT

We work with families and the community to provide high quality, comprehensive early childhood education with an emphasis on family involvement and supportive services that prepares each child for success in school and a lifetime of learning.

Development, Inc.
 Families * Head Start * PreK Counts
 Child Care * Early Intervention * Community

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

