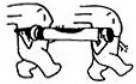


Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

December 2024



KID BITS

Dressed for the weather

When your child picks out clothes for school, suggest that she choose layers, since being too hot or too cold may make it hard for her to focus on learning. She could wear a sweater over a T-shirt or keep a hoodie in her backpack, for example.

Positive feedback

Your youngster is probably proud to show you finished schoolwork that he brings home. Ask him to tell you about a piece of pottery that he made or to explain what he learned from a science experiment. If he struggled with an assignment, try to compliment him on a part that he did correctly.

Work and volunteer!

Do you work during the school day? You can still help your child's school. Ask what you could do at home, and then pick activities that fit your schedule. For instance, you might make classroom decorations, find chaperones for a field trip, or call local businesses to ask for donations to the PTA.

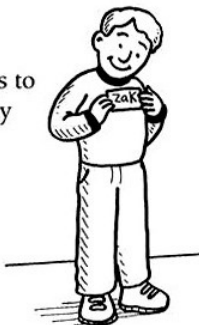
Worth quoting

"It is the sweet, simple things of life which are the real ones after all."
Laura Ingalls Wilder

Just for fun

Q: What belongs to you but is mostly used by other people?

A: Your name.



Compassion in action

Feelings of compassion can lead your youngster to do nice things for relatives, neighbors, and friends. Consider these ideas for helping your child think about how other people feel and what they need—and encourage him to take action.

Talk about it

Help your youngster understand the motivation behind kind behavior. First, have him tell you one nice thing someone did for him today. Then, ask why he thinks the person decided to do that. Perhaps his big sister made a paper airplane for him. He might say, "She wanted me to be happy" or "She knows I like to fly them, and she makes good ones."

Work together

Let your child see you being compassionate, and have him participate. For example, if you make a casserole for neighbors with a new baby, he could stir the ingredients. While you work, discuss the neighbors' feelings, and explain why



you're helping. ("They probably feel tired from taking care of the baby. They'll be glad they don't have to cook tonight!")

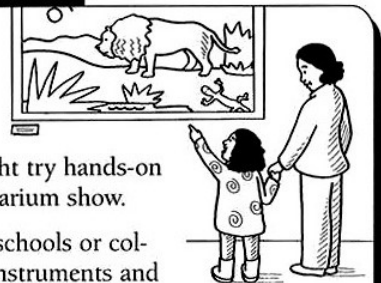
Look for opportunities

Inspire your youngster to feel compassion and act on it. Say a friend falls and scrapes a knee at the playground. You might ask your child how he would feel in that situation and what he would need. Then, suggest that he treat the person the way he'd want to be treated. For instance, he could get an adult to help and keep his friend company.♥

Learning here, there, and everywhere!

Winter is full of indoor learning activities around town. Here are three places to look.

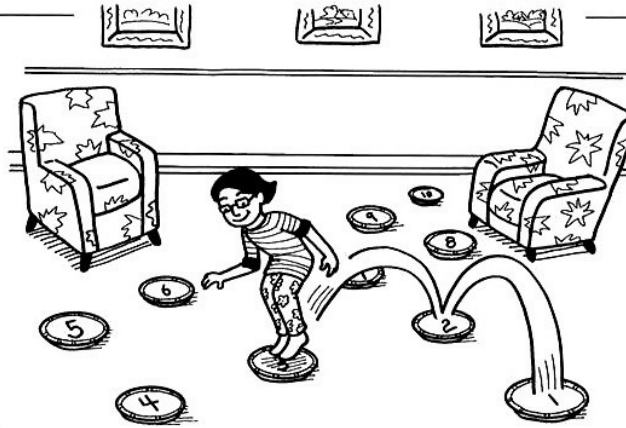
- 1. Museums.** Turn a trip to an art gallery into a safari by asking your child to spot animals in the paintings. At a science museum, she might try hands-on experiments or gaze at the stars during a planetarium show.
- 2. Schools.** Look for free concerts at local high schools or colleges. Your youngster will get to hear different instruments and learn about various styles of music.
- 3. Community centers.** Check the events calendar, and have your child pick an activity or two. She can practice skills like reading, taking turns, or listening during a board game night or puppet show.♥



Play with math

Combine play with physical activity to give your child's math skills a boost. Try these games.

Polar bear hop. Help your youngster number 10 paper plates (1–10). Then, she can arrange them randomly from one side of a room to the other. Now she can be a polar bear jumping from iceberg to iceberg—and counting as she goes. Next time, she can jump and count backward from 10 to 1. *Idea:* Renumber the plates 10–100 to count by 10s, and encourage her to “skip count” as she goes (10, 20, 30...).



finds them all, ask her to arrange them in a pattern (red, green, red, green). Let her try adding a set of snowmen with blue hats. Hide all of them, and have her figure out how to make a pattern when she finds them.♥

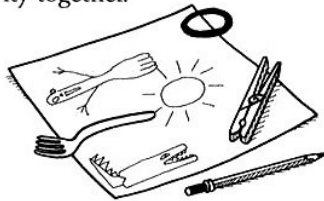
Snowman hide-and-seek. Have your youngster draw a snowman on 12 separate index cards—half with red hats and half with green hats. Hide the cards for her to find. She can pretend that she must race to rescue the snowmen before they melt. When she

ACTIVITY CORNER



Oodles of doodles

Can your child turn a clothespin into a crocodile or a rubber band into a sun? Everyday objects can inspire creativity in surprising ways. Enjoy this drawing activity together.



First, help your youngster find a dozen small household items, such as a pair of sunglasses, a plastic fork, and a crochet hook. Show him how to trace around the object with a pencil.

Then, remove the item, and have your youngster use the tracing to make a completely different picture. Maybe the outline of the sunglasses will become a motorcycle. Or he might turn the tracing of a fork into a monster.

When he's finished, let him trace something for you to turn into a doodle.♥

Reduce holiday stress

If you're visiting relatives this month, you can help your youngster handle the excitement and feel less stressed with these tips:

- Before a trip, encourage your child to pack a bag of his own. Give him a small suitcase or a reusable shopping bag, and let him choose toys and other belongings to put in along with his toothbrush and clothes. He might take a stuffed animal, toy cars, books, and a coloring book and crayons. He will feel more comfortable if he has some of his own things with him.



- Look for signs that your little one needs a break. *Examples:* Crying, complaining of stomachaches or headaches, or displaying habits he has outgrown (bed-wetting, using baby talk). Then, try to make sure he has quiet time each day. For instance, you could snuggle up in a guest room for an afternoon story.♥

Q & A I'm telling!

Q: My daughter loves to tattle on her little brother. What should I do?

A: At this age, kids often tattle to get attention and feel important. Or they report things to adults because they're not sure how to fix a problem on their own.

Together, brainstorm examples of things your daughter should tell you about. For instance, you need to know if your son picks

up a pair of scissors or climbs on a table. Then, encourage her to come up with problems she can probably ignore or solve by herself—say, her brother sticks his tongue out or goes into her room without her permission.

When she tattles, you might simply say, “Okay” or “I bet you can figure out what to do about it.” If she doesn't get a lot of attention for tattling, she'll probably do it less often.♥



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



Backpack Connection Series

About this Series

The *Backpack Connection Series* was created by TACSEI to provide a way for teachers and parents/caregivers to work together to help young children develop social emotional skills and reduce challenging behavior. Teachers may choose to send a handout home in each child's backpack when a new strategy or skill is introduced to the class. Each *Backpack Connection* handout provides information that helps parents stay informed about what their child is learning at school and specific ideas on how to use the strategy or skill at home.

The Pyramid Model



The Pyramid Model is a framework that provides programs with guidance on how to promote social emotional competence in all children and design effective interventions that support young children who might have persistent challenging behavior. It also provides practices to ensure that children with social emotional delays receive intentional teaching. Programs that implement the Pyramid Model are eager to work together with families to meet every child's individualized learning and support needs. To learn more about the Pyramid Model, please visit challengingbehavior.org.

More Information

For more information about this topic, visit TACSEI's website at challengingbehavior.org and type "get attention" in the Search Box in the upper-right corner of the screen.



This publication was produced by the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention (TACSEI) for Young Children funded by the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education (H326B070002). The views expressed do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Education. May 2012.

How to Teach Your Child to Appropriately Get Your Attention

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron, & Jill Giacomini

It is difficult to have a conversation with someone if you do not have their attention—this is true for both children and adults. The ability to successfully capture someone's attention is a fundamental social skill and provides the foundation for future success in social settings and relationships.

Children use a variety of ways to get attention and will often resort to techniques they find most effective, such as yelling or whining. For example, think about a child who wants to get Mom's attention when she is on the phone. He knows that if he continues to yell loudly, Mom will eventually pause her phone conversation and ask what is needed. If yelling and whining gets a child what he needs, he will continue to yell and whine until he learns a new way to get attention.

How can you change this pattern? You can teach your child the way that you want him to get your attention (such as tapping you on the shoulder) and then reward him when that behavior occurs. When you take the time at home to build on the skills your child is learning at school, you reinforce these positive skills and create a solid social foundation for your child which will help to reduce challenging behaviors.



Try This at Home

- Model the behavior you are teaching and do it often! If you need your child's attention, tap her on the shoulder, move to her eye level and begin your communication from there!
- Practice, practice, practice! Play with this new skill. Practice with both parents, siblings and friends. Your child can teach her grandparent or teddy bear how to tap on someone's shoulder to get their attention.
- Remind your child of your expectation. If you are on the computer and she whines or begins to cry for attention, remind her, "It looks like you need something. I will respond if you tap on my shoulder and ask me."
- Celebrate when your child displays this new skill. "Wow, you tapped me on the shoulder because you wanted some milk. I am super happy to get you some. What a great way to get my attention!"



Practice at School

Most peer interactions are initiated when a child wants to give or get something from a friend. Rather than grab or yell across the room, your child is learning to gain a friend's attention before beginning a conversation by:

1. Moving to stand next to the person
2. Tapping the person on the shoulder
3. Looking at the person's eyes to see if they have their attention



The Bottom Line

Behavior is meaningful and communicates a message. If a child does not have an appropriate way to communicate, he will often use challenging behavior (e.g., hitting, screaming, whining) to communicate his needs. If his needs are then met, the behavior is reinforced and he will continue to use the challenging behavior to communicate. When parents teach their child how to appropriately get attention, the child will be less likely use the challenging behavior to communicate.

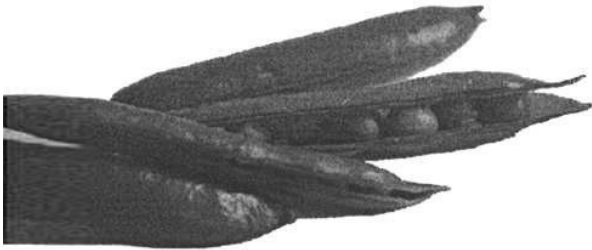


www.challengingbehavior.org

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HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT



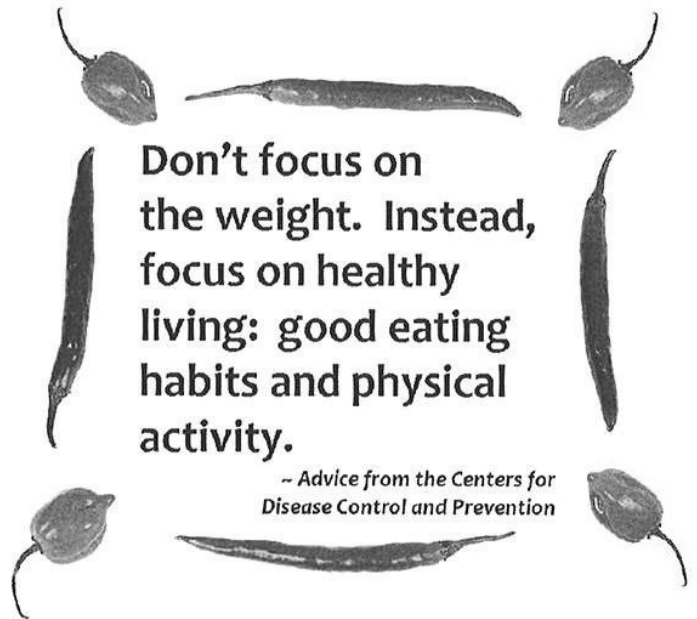
Healthy Eating Makes Healthy Weights

Good food and nutrition helps families stay healthy, and healthy children grow bigger and learn better. Your child learns eating and exercise habits from your family. As with all else...the members of a child's family are his first and most important teachers.

Make this a season to talk about good food at home! Help your child learn about food that is healthy, and food that is not and why.



- Explain that food with lots of sugar, salt and fat may taste good but eating them everyday can hurt our bodies.
- Food that comes in "ready to eat" cartons or in fancy packages often has lots of sugar, salt and fat hidden inside! These are not healthy for our bodies.
- Help your child understand that food packaged in colorful boxes or bags is almost always not as healthy as food that is unwrapped or plainly packaged.



Don't focus on the weight. Instead, focus on healthy living: good eating habits and physical activity.

~ Advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Point out that companies who want to sell lots of food will often put bright colors and cartoon characters on the box to make children beg for them. Don't be fooled!



Created By **PreschoolFirst**

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!!

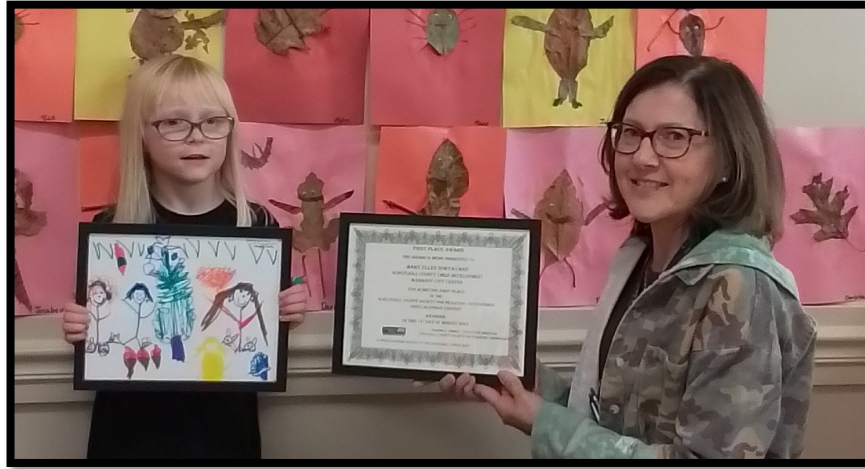


Melanie Koehler, MD

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

Society for Pediatric Orthopedic Clinic 2025 Calendar Contest Winners



1st Place (Mary Ellen - Mahanoy Center)



2nd Place (Sahara - Pottsville Center)



3rd Place (Scarlett-Pottsville Center)

StLuke's CONDUCTS LEAD TESTING AT CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTERS



Thanks to an amazing team! Through our partnership with Geisinger St. Luke's, phlebotomists completed 34 lead tests this Fall and we look forward to continuing these services in Spring 2025.



Things you need to know—all in on place!

WINTER BREAK CLOSINGS

- Dec. 24 — All centers & office CLOSED
- Dec. 25 — All centers & office CLOSED
- Dec. 26 — All centers & office CLOSED
- Dec. 27 — Head Start & Pre-K CLOSED*
- Dec. 30 — Head Start & Pre-K CLOSED*
- Dec. 31 — Head Start & Pre-K CLOSED*
- Jan. 1 — All centers & office CLOSED

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

MEETINGS

Policy Council

MONTHLY MEETING
Mon., Dec. 16th at 9:30 AM
In-Person Meeting

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

Program Planning Committee

Fri., Dec. 13th
10:00 AM
In-Person Meeting
(a ZOOM link for the meeting will also be emailed to members)

Let us help you earn your

GED or HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

So you can reach **YOUR** desired destination!
Lasting connections for the success of your new family.

Are you a pregnant teen or a young parent (female or male) who wants to secure a brighter future for yourself and your family?

The SCHUYLKILL IU's Lifelong Learning Center's ELECT* Program provides one-on-one personalized support, guidance and training to help you achieve both personally and as a parent.

OUR NO-COST SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Individual and group counseling
- Vital information and resources
- Tutoring services and academic support
- Job readiness training and career education

Ready to enroll? Need more information?
CONTACT: Laura Hoppes | 570-628-5761
hoppl@iu20.org



DID YOU KNOW?

Language develops in a baby's brain before they can talk -- reading and speaking to your child early is important!

~ 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.

Sch. County Society for Pediatric Orthopedics

FREE PEDIATRIC ORTHOPEDIC CLINIC

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 2024

Ages Birth through 18 Years of Age or Individuals with Individualized Education Program (IEPs)

PROUD PARTNER AGENCY OF



Schuylkill United Way

TO INQUIRE OR SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT

CALL 570-622-7170



Shriners Children's

We are grateful for the orthopedic physicians from Shriners Hospital Philadelphia who provide care for our children here in Schuylkill County.

SPONSORED BY SYNTHOMER FOUNDATION
Lehigh Valley Health - Schuylkill
420 South Jackson Street, Pottsville PA

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