

Early Years

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

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

January 2025

KID BITS



Family resolutions

Help your little one practice setting and meeting goals by choosing a New Year's resolution as a family. Pick something you can do together, like playing outside every day or making beds every morning. Your youngster gets to put an X on the calendar for each day that everyone sticks to your resolution.

Story star

The next time you read your child's favorite book, make him the star of the story. Replace the name of the main character with your youngster's name. After you read, ask him to draw a picture of himself doing something mentioned in the book. You'll encourage him to connect personally with the story, which can boost his comprehension.

Clean-up hint

Labeled containers make clean-up time easier. Cover empty oatmeal canisters or plastic jars with plain white paper. Then, help your child label each one to tell what goes inside (doll clothes, marbles). She could illustrate the labels, too. *Idea:* Tape labeled index cards to bigger containers (say, for pretend food or musical instruments).

Worth quoting

"Laughter is an instant vacation."
Milton Berle

Just for fun

Q: What do you call a polar bear in the desert?

A: Lost.



Colorful learning

Let your child use a box of crayons to learn color names and observe colors in her world. Try these activities.

Take a walk

Have your youngster carry crayons along on a walk. Encourage her to look for something in nature that matches each crayon, and help her read the color name on the crayon. She might see a brown squirrel, green pine needles, and a blue sky. At home, she could use the crayons to draw a picture showing all the things she spotted.

Guess my crayon

Put a crayon behind your back, and give your child clues to guess the color you're holding. If it's orange, you might say, "The inside of a cantaloupe is this color." Or for purple, your hint could be, "Lavender and violet are shades of



this color." When she figures it out, it's her turn to pick a crayon and give you clues about its color.

Make new colors

Help your youngster make muffin-shaped crayons to see how colors mix. Put cupcake liners in a muffin tin, and have her fill each cup with broken crayons. She could place blue and yellow pieces in one cup and red and blue in another. Then, bake at 275° for about 15 minutes. Cool completely, and remove from the pan. What color crayons did your child create?♥

Be confident!

If your youngster has healthy self-esteem, he's more likely to try new things and bounce back from challenges. Here are ways to boost his confidence:

- Help your child focus on his own accomplishments rather than comparing himself to siblings or friends. For example, he might look at how he wrote his name on the first day of school and compare it to how well he writes it now.
- Allow your youngster to lead. When you spend time together, ask him what he'd like to do (play a game, build a fort). Or have him decide what kind of pasta (spaghetti, macaroni) your family will eat for dinner. You'll send the message that his opinion matters.♥



www.childdevelop.org
570-544-8959



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Schuylkill United Way

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

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Child Development, Inc.
(Schuylkill County, PA)

Great expectations

What do you expect your youngster to be able to do? Having appropriate expectations—and letting your child know what they are—will help him reach his potential. These tips can help.

Be realistic. Set expectations that your youngster is capable of meeting. For example, it's reasonable to expect a preschooler or kindergartner to use an "inside" voice in the house and to carry his backpack to school. But he might forget sometimes and need to be reminded.



Be clear. Let your child hear you talk about your expectations. You could say, "Everyone in our house helps out." Or let him overhear an expectation stated as a compliment: "Jesse always listens to my instructions."

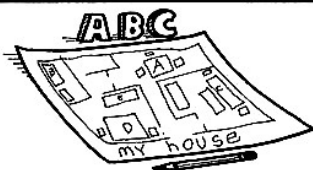
Be flexible. Your expectations should grow as your youngster grows. This year, you might expect him to go to school every day, and next year, perhaps you'll expect him to complete homework each evening. *Tip:* As he gets older, you can say things like "When you graduate from high school..." or "When you're in college..." ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

ABC hunt

Use this game to combine map-making with a fun alphabet hunt.

Materials: paper, pencil, magnetic letters



1. Help your youngster draw a map of your home. She can draw lines to show where each wall is and add shapes for other items, such as rectangles for beds and circles for tables.

2. Place magnetic letters, A to Z, throughout the house, marking the map to show where you put each one. For example, if you place an A under the kitchen table, write "A" on the table on her map. *Variation:* Think of a word, and hide just those letters.

3. Let your child follow the map to gather the letters.

4. Have your youngster put letters around the house and write them on a map—now it's your turn to find them. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

All kinds of jobs

After my daughter Allie learned about careers in school, she started talking about what she might be when she grows up.

Now when we go out, we look for workers and talk about what they're doing. At home, Allie pretends she's working, too. One time she played librarian, putting her books on a shelf and holding story time with her dolls. Another time she acted like a mail carrier, sorting our mail into stacks and delivering a pile to each family member.

We have also talked to relatives and neighbors about their jobs. My cousin teaches ballet, so she told Allie about her training and demonstrated some dance moves. And our next-door neighbor builds furniture—he let us see his workshop and showed us pictures of his favorite projects.

Of course, Allie doesn't know yet what she'll be, but she likes learning about people's jobs and thinking about what she might do one day. ♥



Q & A

Getting enough sleep

Q: My son has a hard time falling asleep at night. How can I make it easier for him?

A: Getting enough sleep—10–12 hours a night—will help your son grow, stay healthy, and do well in school.

First, have him stick to a nightly bedtime routine. Your son might take a bath, brush his teeth, and listen to a story, for instance. Repeating the routine each night helps him recognize it's time for sleep. Also, research shows that

watching TV or playing video games close to bedtime can get kids wound up and keep them from sleeping. If he uses electronics, have him turn them off at least an hour before bedtime.

Finally, encourage the rest of the family to read or do other quiet activities

after he says good night. Your son may have an easier time going to bed—and staying there—if he doesn't feel like he's missing out on the fun. ♥



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 "sharing" in the Search Box in the upper-right corner of the screen.



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How to Help Your Child Learn to Share

Brooke Brogle, Alyson Jiron & Jill Giacomini

Learning how to share is a big challenge for all children because it often means putting aside one's own needs in order to make someone else happy. Sharing is not a skill children have when they are born—they need to be taught how to share and how to see that their efforts have helped someone else feel happy or solve a problem. In order to learn this skill, children need adults to provide them with many different opportunities where they can practice how to share with others and see other children in the act of sharing. When a child learns how to share with others she feels more confident and is better able to play with other children independently. Additionally, learning how to share gives a child a very important and solid foundation of successful friendship skills she can continue to build on as she grows.



Try This at Home

- Read books about sharing with your child. Talk about how the characters might feel as the story unfolds. All feelings are healthy and normal. A character might be feeling a variety of emotions—from frustrated and sad to happy and joyful. A good example is the CSEFEL Book Nook based upon the book *I Can Share* by Karen Katz. This resource has many activities that go along with the book to teach about sharing. <http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/booknook/share.pdf>
- Notice and point out when other children are sharing. "I see that those girls are sharing their snack."
- Notice and let your child know that you see the many moments in the day when he is sharing. "Thank you for sharing your crayons with me. I feel happy when you share." Or "When I came to pick you up from school, I noticed that you were sharing the toys with Sophie. What a good friend!"
- Plan ahead if sharing might be a concern. "Avery is coming over to our house today for a play date. I know how special your blankie is to you. We can put your blankie in a special place that is just for you and all the other toys will be shared with Avery."

- Find opportunities to teach sharing to your child. "Oh no! For desert tonight we only have three cookies left for you, Joey, me, and Daddy. I wonder what we can do?"



Practice at School

At school, children are taught how to share and learn about how sharing makes friends feel. Children learn about sharing through stories, role-playing and puppets. One way teachers help children learn how to share with each other is by pointing out how a friend looks and feels when a child does, or does not, share. Teachers also encourage children to begin to solve problems by themselves. "I see you have five cars and Ryan has none. I wonder what we can do?" Or "I wonder which car Ryan can use?" Most importantly, teachers congratulate children when they solve sharing problems and recognize how proud they must feel after they share.



The Bottom Line

Sharing is a skill that your child will use throughout her life to get along with others during activities and build friendships. Children who learn how to share are better able to understand other's feelings, negotiate difficult situations with confidence and feel secure in their ability to solve problems by themselves.



www.challengingbehavior.org

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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.

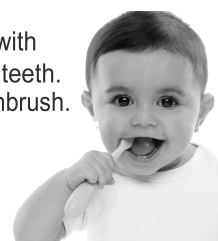
Infants should not be allowed to fall asleep while breastfeeding or with a bottle because the sugary liquid can pool around the teeth.

Never dip pacifiers in a sweet liquid or 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

a "well-baby" dental 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.



Mental Wellness Corner



Beverly Weikel, LCSW
Retired Mental Health Consultant

Mary Louise Fanelli, LBS
Behavioral Specialist

Stacy Meredith, LPN
Health and Development Manager

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 snow man 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 seated candles indulges your senses and hold on tight.
SPRING IS ON THE WAY!



Geisinger StLuke's Corner

Welcoming in the New Year with 'Self-Care for Wellness' Reminders

Tips to help improve your health for you and your family

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.

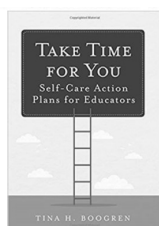
Stay connected: Reach out to your friends or family members.



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



- **Breathe 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

Additional Resources

- 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 Programs:

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StLuke's
Community Health

StLuke's
Behavioral Health

For information on community resources or Geisinger St. Luke's services, contact Angela Morgan, Community Health, Geisinger St. Luke's **1-484-658-4022** or email at angela.morgan@sluhn.org



Things you need to know—all in one place!



PROGRAM GOVERNANCE MEETINGS



MAKE-UP DATE FOR DECEMBER

Policy Council Meeting*
Monday, Jan. 6, 2025
at 9:30 AM

Policies Committee Meeting*

Friday, Jan. 10, 2025
at 10:00 AM

Community Outreach Committee Meeting*

Thursday, Jan. 16, 2025
at 3:00 PM

MAKE-UP DATE FOR DECEMBER

Planning Committee Meeting*

Friday, Jan. 17, 2025
at 10:00 AM

Policy Council Meeting*

Monday, Jan. 27, 2025
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).

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

Notifications will also be posted on our Facebook page as well as on WNEP TV16—which has an app you can also download;

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/>

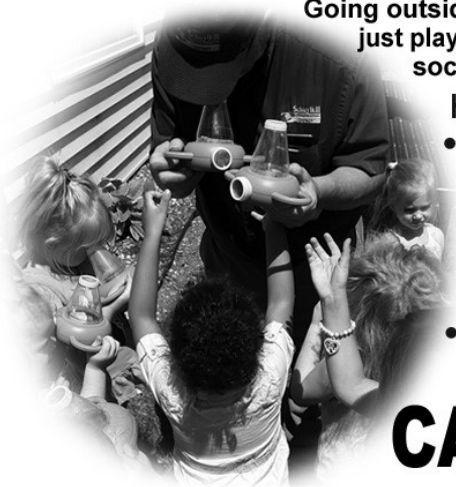
All the links to obtain the volunteer clearances are on this webpage.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Not all learning happens in a classroom!

It happens when a child feels connected and curious.

Going outside and observing insects offers pre-school children more than just playtime. It provides a positive impact on their physical development, social skills, creativity, and learning.



Here are just a few skills preschool children learn . . .

- **MATH SKILLS** used include learning to count and recognize sums of groups
- **SOCIAL SKILLS** used include learning about empathy, respect, and curiosity
- **RESEARCH SKILLS** used include gathering information and solving problems
- **CLASSIFICATION SKILLS** used include learning to classify things based on unique shapes, colors, and patterns

CALL TODAY  **1-800-433-3370**
EXT. 212

to talk with one of our ERSEA Advocates OR scan this QR CODE to start the enrollment process:



CENTER LOCATIONS:

Fountain Springs | Mahanoy City
Pottsville | Saint Clair | Schuylkill Haven
Shenandoah | Tamaqua

www.childdevelopment.org



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.

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@childdevelopment.org



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