

February 2025



KID BITS

Attending school events

When your youngster brings home a notice about a program at school (play, open house, spirit night), have her post it on the refrigerator. Try to attend as many events as possible. You'll get to know her teachers and friends, and you'll show her how important her school is to you.

Drive through the maze

A masking-tape maze is a fun place for your child to drive his toy cars—and to develop his spatial skills. Help him make the maze by arranging strips of tape on a kitchen or basement floor. He can label an entrance and an exit and add a few wrong turns.

What do animals need?

Pets can teach your child that all living things have needs. Ask her to tell you what her pet (or a relative's pet) requires, such as food, water, shelter, and exercise. She could draw a picture of the animal along with everything it needs.

Worth quoting

"There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly."
Richard Buckminster Fuller

Just for fun

Q: What runs around a farm but doesn't move?

A: A fence.



Tips for better behavior

Every parent knows that whining, tantrums, and bossiness can be part of life with little ones. The good news is that as children get older and learn to control themselves, they usually outgrow these habits. In the meantime, here are tips from other parents to help you handle common—but challenging—behaviors.

Whining

"I stumbled on this idea by accident. One day, my son was talking in a whiny voice, and I couldn't understand him. After I asked him to repeat himself three or four times, he finally spoke in his normal voice. Now when he whines, I say, 'I can't understand you unless you talk like a big boy.' It usually works like a charm!"

Tantrums

"Casey's tantrums were exhausting for both of us until I learned to watch for 'triggers.' Now if I notice she's getting tired or hungry, we take a break or eat a snack. That way, I can usually head off a meltdown. When she does throw a tantrum, yelling or threatening a punishment



won't stop it—and giving in doesn't teach her not to do it in the future. The tantrums seem to end faster if I calmly move her to a quiet spot."

Bossiness

"Alex had a habit of bossing his little brother around. Evan was getting tired of it, so we came up with the 'question' rule. When Alex wants his brother to do something, he has to turn it into a question. Instead of, 'You sit in this chair,' he should say, 'Can you sit in that chair, and I'll sit in this one?' Of course, sometimes Evan says no, but at least Alex is learning to ask nicely for what he wants."♥

Imagine and learn

You and your youngster need only your imaginations to play these learning games. Try one the next time you're in a waiting room or standing in line.

- **What's in my "bag"?** Pretend to take an object out of an imaginary bag and use it. You might act like you're putting on a pair of boots or cracking an egg, for example. Let your child guess the item, and then ask her to pick something from an imaginary bag for you to guess.
- **What am I drawing?** Secretly think of a simple object (say, a heart). Give your youngster step-by-step instructions for drawing it in the air with her finger ("Start at the bottom, slant up and left, then stop..."). How quickly can she figure out what it is? Next, let her give you something to "draw."♥



We love music!

Did you know that music can help your child learn a variety of skills? Add a little singing, wiggling, and giggling to her day with these musical activities.

Act out songs. Let your youngster pick a song and make up motions to go with it. She could pretend to row a boat while singing "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Or she might sing "The Bear Went Over the Mountain" and climb an invisible mountain. She'll practice listening to lyrics and thinking about their meanings.



Dance with streamers. Make streamers by tying lengths of ribbon to a key ring. Then, turn on the radio, and encourage your child to dance with the streamers. She could wave them quickly for a fast song or make long, sweeping motions for a slow one—she'll learn to pay attention to tempo.

Put on a parade. Play upbeat music on the radio or your MP3 player, and take turns leading a parade around the house. With each new verse, the leader chooses a different way for everyone to move (march, skip, tiptoe). Your youngster will get exercise and build large motor skills.♥



Q & A Show-and-tell: No toys allowed

Q: My daughter isn't allowed to bring toys for show-and-tell. How can I help her think of other things to take?

A: The no-toys rule still leaves plenty of things for your daughter to share. Ask her what she has that is special or unique, like a family photograph or a pair of her baby shoes.



Another idea is to share something that's related to a lesson at school. If she's learning about weather, she might take a book on rainbows. Or when she studies dinosaurs, she could share a brochure that she got at a natural history museum.

After she picks her object, help her practice what she'll say so she feels confident in front of the class. For example, she could explain what was happening in her photo or describe her favorite page in her book.♥

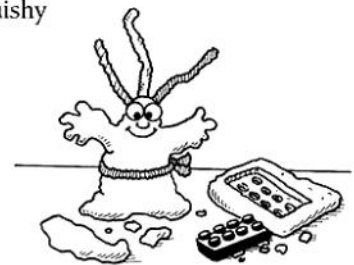
ACTIVITY CORNER Homemade play dough

Encourage smooshy and squishy fun by making your own play dough at home.

To whip up a batch, help your youngster measure and stir together 2 cups flour, 1 tbsp. cream of tartar, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt. Add 1 cup hot water and 2 tbsp. vegetable oil. Have him mix it with his hands until a dough forms. (If it's sticky, he can add more flour, 1 tbsp. at a time.)

Then, suggest these ways to use it:

- Your child could mix in food coloring, glitter, or cinnamon. He'll experiment with colors, textures, and scents.
- Encourage him to notice different textures. Have him walk around the house with a handful of dough and make impressions of objects. He might press a Lego or a button into the dough, for example.
- Let your youngster get creative. He can make silly creatures by adding pipe cleaners, wiggly eyes, and other craft items to the dough.♥



PARENT TO PARENT Three's company

My son David recently had his two best friends over. After a short time, I saw that two was company but three was complicated. Someone was always left out.

I asked their teacher for advice. She said that odd numbers of kids often need extra adult help to get along. If I stay nearby while they play, I can step in if one of them gets left out. She also said that planning activities ahead of time is a good idea.

The next time David's friends came over, we were ready. It was a Sunday afternoon, when I wasn't busy and could easily keep an eye on them. David set up a line of chairs to make a "school bus," and when the children arrived, I suggested that they take turns being the driver.

They all got along for a while, and then I suggested they switch to a board game. The afternoon went much more smoothly this time—we discovered that three can be good company!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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



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Mental Wellness Corner



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FEBRUARY—THE MONTH OF LOVE



As I was thinking of what message I could share with you that connected love with mental wellness, the obvious seemed to float to the surface but fall short of the mark. Everyone knows love is good for mental health so what unique spin could I add?

One evening in November at 2:00am (it appears most of my inspiration comes at this hour), I remembered a story I was told in November. I'd like to share with you the story of a little bouncing brown haired blue eyed beauty, who I'd like to call "T". She's a bright little nine year old who happens to have the creative imagination of a novelist, the passion of an artist and the soul of a Shaman.

About five weeks before Christmas our young lady, Miss T lost her grandmother to an eight year struggle with cancer. Grandma had the heart of a worrier and a very gentle and kind spirit. The loss for little T's heart was felt so deeply that when her parents told her of grandma's death, her only comment was, "I don't want anyone to know". In her grief, T thought like many adults, if you don't give sorrow words, maybe it won't be true.

As Christmas began to draw near, however like most of us, memories of those who love us and take the time to show us in so many little ways, well these memories come creeping into our thoughts. So it was for little T.

One day while grocery shopping with her father, she broke away from him to look for a box of Twigs Christmas Tea. She ran to the very aisle and spot on the shelf she remembered grandma taking her to buy it. The tea wasn't there—only an empty spot. Her father who had followed her, asked her what she was looking for. With great urgency in her voice and dismay, she told him she was looking for grandma's Christmas tea and explained they had always bought it together. She asserted it had always been in this spot and it just wouldn't be Christmas without it! "Dad," she said "we have to find it." Heartbroken for his daughter, the father questioned the store manager and together they searched every isle for it. Unable to locate the tea the father went home and called his mother. I need your help mom, I have to find this tea, he just couldn't let his little girl down, and truth be known, they both felt the need to find grandma's love in that cup of tea.



The important part of this true story is not the location of the tea, which by the way was eventually located in a different store; but, the real gift was grandma's time year after year shopping with her granddaughter, who came to find grandma's love in a cup of Christmas tea that would forever connect her to grandma's spirit. Proof that LOVE doesn't come in a grand flourish once a year on Valentine's Day with flowers, hearts full of chocolate candies or even homemade cards. Love comes in the everyday mundane moments, like shopping for a box of Christmas tea.

This Valentine's Day take the time to simply share the moments that connect us everyday to one another in something as simple as caring. Don't overlook the little things and hang on to your traditions. LOVE is often an over used word in our everyday lives. I love your hair, I love the weather we are having, I love your new car, I love this chocolate cake, etc. True love is seldom spoken and more often put into action. It is the simple moments when you touch someone's soul with a thought, a gesture, a simple shopping trip, a cup of tea.

Keep taking the time to create memories—no matter how busy you are and never ever forget, all around you love is happening when you least expect it—in a touch, a word, a thought, a simple cup of tea! Love is the memories we get to keep forever in our minds and in our hearts. This Valentine's Day find reasons to celebrate one another everyday!

As always, your mental health team holds you in our thoughts, in our hearts, and we wish you well. This February spread a little



Early Childhood HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

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 minimizes 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

Geisinger St Luke's Corner

SPOTLIGHTING DENTAL HEALTH MONTH



Oral Health Facts Every Parent Should Know Good Oral Health Starts Early and Helps Set the Foundation for Lifelong Healthy Habits.

By Jessica Brennan, BSDH, RDH, PHDHP, CDA
Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioner
St. Luke's Hometown Primary Care & Dental



Here are key facts to keep in mind:

- Baby teeth are important! They help children chew, speak, and guide adult teeth into place. Baby teeth are vulnerable to decay if not cared for, leading to pain and potential dental issues in adulthood.
- The "2x2 Rule": Brush your child's teeth twice daily for two minutes with fluoride toothpaste. Use a rice-sized smear for children under 3 and a pea-sized amount for those 3 and older.
- Flossing matters too: Once your child's teeth touch, flossing becomes essential to clean between teeth where brushing cannot reach. Make it a part of their bedtime routine!



- First visit by age 1 or when the first tooth appears: Regular check-ups every six months can prevent problems and reinforce healthy habits.
- Fluoride is your child's best defense against cavities: Fluoride strengthens enamel and reduces the risk of decay.
- Sugar hides in unexpected places: such as fruit snacks, juice, granola bars, and flavored yogurts. Limit sugary foods and drinks to mealtimes only. Water is the best drink for healthy teeth!

- Protect teeth during play: If your child plays sports, a mouthguard can help prevent injuries.
- Thumb-sucking and pacifiers: These habits are normal in early childhood, but prolonged use beyond age 3 can affect how teeth grow and align.
- Stress can impact more than just our mental well-being—it can affect oral health too!
- Stress may lead to teeth grinding (bruxism) and clenching, usually during sleep, resulting in jaw pain, headaches, and worn-down teeth. Additionally, stress can disrupt daily routines, making it difficult to maintain consistent brushing and flossing habits.

Did you know? Cavities are the most common chronic disease in children, but they are preventable with proper care, a healthy diet, and regular dental visits. This February, celebrate National Children's Dental Health Month by building healthy habits for a lifetime of smiles!

St. Luke's Hometown Primary Care & Dental is conveniently located at 34 S. Railroad Street in Tamaqua. Jessica Brennan, Public Health Dental Hygiene Practitioner, has been with the clinic since 2019 and Dr. Bendjilali joined as its dentist in December 2020. The dental health clinic accepts Medicaid.


For more information, contact the clinic at (570) 645-1950.



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

2025-2026 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Any parent of a Child Development student that needs help with the online process at any of the schools, please inform your child's Teacher of Family Advocate.

DISTRICT / SCHOOL	REGISTRATION/SCREENING DATES	CHILD MUST BE "5"
1. Blue Mountain EAST: 570-366-1065 WEST: 570-739-4461	2025 KINDERGARTEN PACKETS are be available for pickup at either elementary school or by printing from Blue Mountain's website (https://www.bmsd.org/kindergarten-registration) If printing from website, please print single sided .	on or before 9/1
2. Mahanoy Area 570-773-3443, Ext. 4038 or 4039	BY APPOINTMENT ONLY – Call after TBD Screening dates: TBD Items needed: Updated immunizations; 2 proofs of residency, and custody papers if applicable.	before 9/1
3. Minersville 570-544-1400, Ext. 1014	Once the online registration process is complete at: https://miasd.focusschoolsoftware.com/focus/auth/ the registrar will contact you to set up an appointment. REGISTRATION BY APPOINTMENT ONLY: DATES AND TIMES TO BE DETERMND NOTE: Child needs to be present at registration because health screenings will take place during this appointment. <i>(NOTE: Child must be potty trained.)</i>	On or before 9/1
4. North Schuylkill 570-874-3661	Registration Date: The WEEK OF TBD BY APPOINTMENT ONLY – parents can call the elementary office beginning TBD. Parents will be sent information and a packet that must be completed and brought to appointment.	on or before 7/1
5. Panther Valley 570-669-9411, Ext. 1	Parents can start calling the elementary school beginning TBD to set up an appointment and for more info.	on or before 10/1
6. Pine Grove 570-345-2731, Ext. 3	TO BE DETERMINED* More information to follow in the next few weeks on website.	before 9/1
7. Pottsville 570-621-2915 or 570-621-2914	ONLINE REGISTRATION Starts NOW at: https://skyward.iscorp.com/scripts/wsisa.dll/WService=wsedupottsvillepa/skyenroll.w <i>Screenings will take place the week of TBD</i>	 on or before 8/15
8. St. Clair 570-429-2716, Ext. 1	Packets can be picked up and to schedule an appointment at the main office you can call for more information. Registration must be completed by TBD before a screening appointment is given. Kindergarten Screening will be held: TBD Stay informed at: http://www.saintclairsd.org/ AND at the Saint Clair School Connections Facebook page.	on or before 8/1
9. Schuylkill Haven 570-385-6731, Ext. 3, Ext, 1	CALL NOW between 9am- 2pm to register. Screenings will take place the week of TBD YOU MUST HAVE AN APPOINTMENT FOR THE SCREENING!	on or before 9/1
10. Shenandoah Valley 570-462-1957, select Elem. School	Call to set up an appointment. The first screening appointment is TBD. There will be another one in April (TBD) and they will have appointments over the summer.	by 8/15
11. Tamaqua 570-668-2570, Ext. 5, Ext. 0	~ APPOINTMENT REQUIRED ~ You can visit their website at their link: https://www.tamaqua.k12.pa.us/domain/19 You can call starting week of 3/18-21/2023 to schedule an appointment.	on or before 8/31
12. Tri-Valley Hegins-Hubly Elem.: 570-682-9011 Mahantongo Elem.: 570-648-6262	You must first register on-line to receive more information when it becomes available: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRkiXbWvNcmVCad3mQrMm5cECPz917isilJFfxkCrrK5sZHw/viewform <i>(This link can be found on the school district's HOME page)</i>	BEFORE 10/1

* This information will be revised as we receive updates.



Things you need to know—all in on place!



Do we have your most current e-mail address?



Please make sure we do, so that you receive important messages from us regarding your child's center.

We use an automated message system to alert families and staff when the centers or the Program are closed due to inclement weather or other emergencies.

It is very important to keep your emergency contact information accurate and up-to-date. As long as we have a **current e-mail address**, we can send you automated messages.

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

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 the local **TV stations**. You can also the **FREE WNEP TV16 app!**

MEETINGS

Policy Council MONTHLY Meeting
Monday, February 24th
at 9:30 AM
Main Office & Zoom

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
Thursday, February 6 at 9:30 AM
Main Office & Zoom

PROGRAM STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
Friday, February 14 at 10:00 AM
Main Office & Zoom

REMINDER TO FAMILIES



Friday, February 7th
ALL centers/classrooms
will be CLOSED.
 Centers/classrooms will re-open on Monday, February 10th.

Holiday Closing

All centers & main office
CLOSED

Monday, February 17, 2025

Happy President's Day



The month of February is PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES/Home Visits
 Check your child's Communication Folder for the date of your conference.



WOULD YOU LOVE A **FREE** PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION FOR YOUR CHILD?







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Saint Clair | Sch. Haven | Shenandoah | Tamaqua



SCAN TO START ENROLLMENT PROCESS

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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:

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fountain Springs | <input type="checkbox"/> Mahanoy City | <input type="checkbox"/> Pottsville | <input type="checkbox"/> Pottsville 2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saint Clair | <input type="checkbox"/> Sch. Haven | <input type="checkbox"/> Shenandoah | <input type="checkbox"/> 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.

Child 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



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