

March 2026



KID BITS

Memory bag

Build memory skills with this easy activity. Show your child a small object, such as a yo-yo, and put it in a pillowcase. Have her add something—perhaps a block—and without peeking in the pillowcase, name the items. Take turns adding objects and naming all of them until someone forgets one. Then, dump out the pillowcase, and play again.

Huddle up!

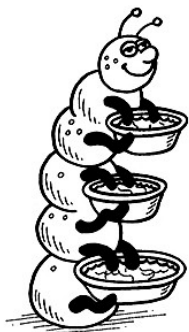
Family meetings can teach your youngster to problem-solve with others. Get everyone into a football-style huddle, and introduce a household problem. *Example:* “How could we waste less food?” Give each person a chance to share ideas (take smaller servings, remember to eat leftovers).

Old toys = new toys

Where’s that toy garage or farm that your child hasn’t played with in ages? Every now and then, rotate his toys so he plays with a variety of things. He may find creative ways to use toys he hasn’t seen in a while. *Idea:* Encourage him to donate those he has outgrown or is no longer interested in.

Worth quoting

“All people smile in the same language.”
Anonymous



Just for fun

Q: What’s worse than a giraffe with a sore throat?

A: A centipede with sore feet.

Number of the day

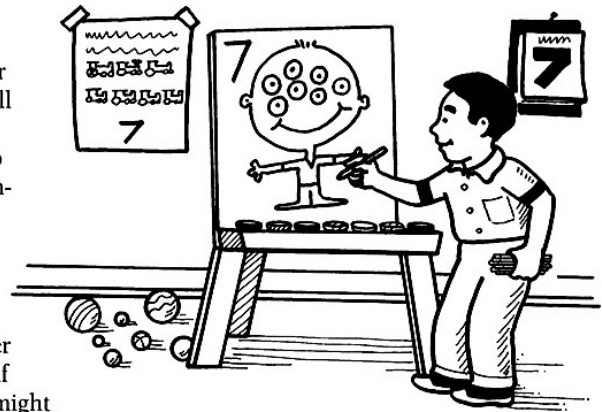
“I have 8 grapes on my plate.” “Look—it’s 8 o’clock!” Have your youngster pick a number to explore each day. You’ll help him develop number sense—the ability to understand and use numbers. Try these ideas.

Recognize it

When you’re out, ask your child to point out the number wherever he sees it. For instance, if today’s number is 2, he might notice it on a license plate (LSJ492). Suggest that he carry a small notebook and pencil and make a tally mark each time he spots the numeral. At the end of your trip, he can count the tally marks to see how many times he saw 2.

Count it

When your youngster counts, he is learning that each number stands for a specific amount. Have him count people or objects that equal the number of the day. If the number is 5, he could count 5 people at a restaurant table, 5 ants



crawling on the ground, or 5 bushes in your yard.

Play with it

Fit the number of the day into your child’s play time. If he’s drawing, and the number is 7, you might ask him to give his monster 7 eyes. Or when he plays with his railroad track, tell him to show you 7 trains. *Idea:* Have him separate the 7 trains into groups to see what numbers make up 7 (for instance, 5 trains + 2 trains or 3 trains + 4 trains).♥

Laugh fest

Laughing together brings families closer and reduces day-to-day stress. Here are ways to include laughter in your child’s day:

- Spice up dinnertime or time spent waiting by reading riddle books or telling jokes you remember from when you were little.
- Hold a silly face contest. Count how many different funny faces you and your youngster can make. Also, try calling out, “Face freeze!” and see who holds a goofy face the longest.
- Sit opposite each other, and stare into each other’s eyes. But there’s one rule: No one can smile or laugh. Chances are you’ll both break down laughing in no time!♥



Stick with it

It's important for youngsters to have *grit*—the determination and persistence to keep trying instead of quitting when something is difficult. The following suggestions can teach your child to persevere.

Learn-it list. Would your youngster like to learn to catch a ball or draw more realistic animals? Help her make a list of challenges she wants to take on. Every time she works



toward one, she could draw a star beside the item. When she accomplishes her goal, have her mark it off and add a new one. She'll see how practice and perseverance help her improve.

Plan B (and C, and D...). Kids who have grit see “mess ups” as opportunities to learn. If your child keeps missing the ball or gets frustrated and crumples up her drawing, encourage her to take a break and then try a different

approach. She might say, “Throw the ball again, and I'll hold my hands closer together.” Or she can focus on what she likes about a drawing—and practice the parts she needs to work on. (“I like my horse's face and tail, but I need to make his legs thinner.”)♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

My post office



Making and delivering “mail” lets your youngster practice reading and writing.

1. Let each family member create a mailbox by decorating a file folder and stapling the sides closed. Hang your mailboxes on your bedroom doors, and add addresses (“Hallway door 3”).



2. Encourage everyone to write messages for each other. *Examples:* “Let's read a book together” or “Thanks for playing Chutes and Ladders with me.” (If your child isn't writing yet, he could dictate his messages to you.)

3. Seal each message in an envelope, and write the recipient's name and address on it. Stickers can go in the corner for a stamp. Now, your youngster gets to deliver each letter to the correct mailbox.

4. Help your child read his mail. Then, reply to each other's messages—and send more mail!♥

Q & A

Is phone play okay?

Q: My daughter always wants to play with my cell phone. Should I let her?

A: When young children spend time looking at a screen, they miss out on the world around them and the opportunity to learn from it.

To make your phone less tempting, keep it out of sight (and out of mind). Instead, offer your daughter a shoebox filled with items that invite her to discover her world. For example, provide a pair of toy binoculars, sit together on the front porch, and ask what plants or buildings she can see. Or include a big magnet, and have her find things it will stick to. Save the box for those times when you're tempted to let her use your phone.

Note: Experts recommend less than two hours of screen time per day for children this age—and that includes phone play.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

An indoor adventure

My son Adam's preschool teacher sent home a list of skills the kids are working on as they get ready for kindergarten. One category that caught my eye was “large motor,” including things like balance, strength, and coordination.

So I suggested to Adam that we make an indoor obstacle course. We put a strip of masking tape on the kitchen floor

to walk on and pillows on the family room floor to jump over. Then, we wove a giant web for him to wriggle under by crisscrossing birthday streamers around and over our living room furniture.

Adam had a blast—and so did I. Next we're planning to make an obstacle course outside. I'm happy because this is getting him to use his thinking skills, as well as his large motor ones!♥



OUR PURPOSE

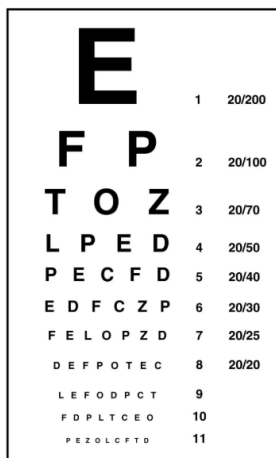
To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote school readiness, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.



2880 Pottsville Minersville Highway, Suite 210
Minersville, PA 17954

Early Childhood HEALTH & DEVELOPMENT

MARCH IS save your VISION month



The American Optometric Association wants you to know that March is **Save Your Vision Month**. This observance is to remind us about the importance of getting regular eye exams to help preserve and maintain good eye health. A general eye exam schedule for people with normal eye health and good overall health is listed below:

- **Infants:** Pediatrician screening at 6 months
- **Preschool children:** Pediatrician screenings from age 3 to 6
- **School-age children:** Regular vision screenings at school
- **Adults:** Every 2 years
- **Adults over 60:** Annually

If your child's pediatrician or school suspects a vision problem, or if you have a history of eye disease or eye problems in your family, a full eye exam by an optometrist or ophthalmologist will be recommended. Children and adults who wear glasses or contacts should have an eye exam every year.

Our nurse, Stacy Meredith, performs eye screenings on more 600 children in our centers within 45 days of the child's enrollment—no matter what time of the year the child enrolls. She uses a special tool that helps her to accomplish this—the **Spot Vision Screener**. It is a handheld, portable device that quickly and easily detects vision issues. The "Spot" screening takes only a few minutes, screens both eyes at once from a non-threatening 3-foot distance and is extremely accurate. If an issue is detected, and since this is only a screening, the child's parents are notified. It's important for parent to then follow-up this screening with a full eye exam by an optometrist or ophthalmologist as soon as possible.



Signs of Eye and Vision Problems

According to the American Public Health Association, about 10% of preschoolers have eye or vision problems. However, children this age generally will not voice complaints about their eyes.

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Parents should watch for signs that may indicate a vision problem, including:

- Sitting close to the TV or holding a book too close
- Squinting
- Tilting their head
- Frequently rubbing their eyes
- Short attention span for the child's age
- Turning of an eye in or out
- Sensitivity to light
- Difficulty with eye-hand-body coordination when playing ball or bike riding
- Avoiding coloring activities, puzzles and other detailed activities

If you notice any of these signs in your preschooler, arrange for a visit to your doctor of optometry.

Cold Weather Safety

Children are more vulnerable than adults to the effects of cold weather. These tips help families and staff keep children safe, healthy, and warm in the winter.

Bundle up

- Children are at greater risk for frostbite than adults. The best way to prevent frostbite is to make sure children dress warmly and don't spend too much time outside in extreme weather.
- Dress children in layers of warm clothing. If the top layer gets wet, they will still have a dry layer underneath.
- Tuck scarves inside coats and jackets to prevent them from becoming strangulation hazards.
- Car seats and winter coats don't mix. Bulky coats can compress in a crash and create a loose car seat harness. Instead, lay the jacket or a blanket over children once you've safely strapped them into their car seat.

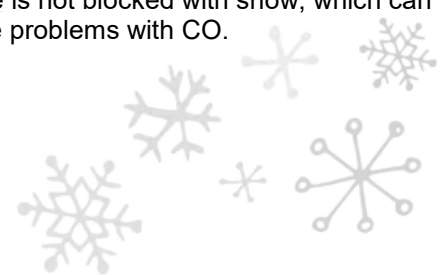


Keeping Healthy Outdoors

- There's no set amount of time for children to play outside safely when the weather is cold. Use your best judgment. When the cold becomes unpleasant, it's time to go inside.
- If you are unsure if weather conditions are safe for outdoor play, check the **Child Care Weather Watch Chart**. (<https://www.c-uphd.org/documents/wellness/weatherwatch.pdf>)
 - Have children come indoors periodically to prevent hypothermia or frostbite. A temperature of 0 degrees Fahrenheit and a wind speed of 15 mph creates a wind chill temperature of -19 F. Under these conditions, frostbite can occur in just 30 minutes.
 - Frost nip is an early warning sign of frostbite. The skin may feel numb or tingly or appear red (on lighter skin).
 - To prevent frostbite, check that mittens and socks are dry and warm. Frostbite occurs mostly on fingers, toes, ears, noses, and cheeks. The affected area becomes very cold, firm, and, depending on the color of the skin, turns white, yellowish-gray, or gray.
 - Even though it's cold outside, it's important to use sunscreen and stay hydrated. Children are more likely than adults to become dehydrated.

Staying Safe Indoors and in Vehicles

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet away from heating equipment, including furnaces, fireplaces, wood stoves, and portable space heaters. ■ Set up a 3-foot "kid-free zone" around open fires and space heaters.
- Remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room.
- Test smoke alarms at least once a month.
- Vent all fuel-burning equipment to the outside to avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.
- Install and maintain CO alarms. Keep alarms at least 15 feet away from fuel-burning appliances.
- If you need to warm up your vehicle, remove it from the garage as soon as you start it to avoid the risk of CO poisoning. Don't leave a vehicle running inside a garage.
- If vehicles are parked outside, check to make sure the tailpipe is not blocked with snow, which can also cause problems with CO.



For additional information from this article on **SLEEPING SAFELY IN ANY SEASON** or **INFECTION CONTROL**, please follow this link:

<https://headstart.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/cold-weather-safety.pdf>



National Center on
Health, Behavioral Health, and Safety

1-888-227-5125
health@ecetta.info
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/health>



Observing National Vaping Prevention Awareness Month

The Health Risks of Vaping on the Young

By Melanie Koehler, MD, Pediatrician – St. Luke’s Tamaqua Primary Care



With the increasing popularity of vaping or using e-cigarettes comes concern about the effects for exposed children. Increasing numbers of teens and even middle schoolers are being exposed to nicotine through these products when they use them, sometimes at very high doses. Children can also be exposed to nicotine from electronic cigarettes in several other ways: directly before birth in the womb of a mother who vapes, secondhand by inhaling exhaled vapor, and thirdhand by coming into contact with surfaces where nicotine residue has settled.

Children and adolescents are at increased risk of becoming addicted to nicotine products.

Nicotine acts on the brain by releasing dopamine which can initially cause a pleasant desirable feeling. Over time these chemicals can affect the ability to learn, mitigate stress and maintain self-control. Kids can become addicted relatively easily and then have withdrawal symptoms when they try to cut down or stop using nicotine. Withdrawal symptoms can include irritability, depression, anxiety, increased hunger, and poor sleep. Over time nicotine has also been shown to cause early heart disease and abnormal lung development leading to more respiratory tract infections and risk of asthma. Effects on the immune system also contribute to these increased infections. Just like with cigarettes, there are chemicals produced in vaping products which can cause cancer. The flavored nicotine pods appeal to younger age groups, and the amount of nicotine can be quite high, up to the equivalent of 2 packs of cigarettes per pod. Some children and teens who develop addiction and withdrawal report needing to use several pods a day to avoid the symptoms. Many kids and teens who vape will wind up eventually smoking cigarettes. Some caregivers may feel that using e-cigarettes is safer for their children than using tobacco products in the home.





Unfortunately, vaping exposes children to significant risks. When pregnant women vape, there is an increased risk of birth defects, preterm birth, stillbirth, and sudden unexplained infant death early in life for their infants. There is also a higher risk that the child will develop behavior issues like ADHD due to disruption in normal brain development. While it is now required for nicotine pods to be sold only in childproof packaging, there are still about 6000 emergency room visits each year in our country related to nicotine poisoning of children in their homes. Less than half a teaspoon of nicotine solution can be life-threatening for a small child. Symptoms of nicotine intoxication include sweating, dizziness, vomiting and increased heart rate. If any of these symptoms are noticed, emergency care should be sought immediately. Even if a young child plays in a room where e-cigarettes were previously used, they can absorb the nicotine into the bloodstream and suffer adverse effects. The best way to protect your child is to never smoke or vape in your house, in your car or any other place where your child spends time. Talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit tobacco products. For more information please visit: www2.aap.org/richmondcenter/ENDS.html

DR. MELANIE KOEHLER, MD - ST. LUKE’S TAMAQUA PRIMARY CARE
143 NORTH RAILROAD STREET | TAMAQUA, PA 18252 | 570-645-1540

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

2026-2027 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, Ext. 5000 WEST: 570-739-4461, Ext. 4	Registration Dates: Begins Monday, February 9, 2026 Packets will be available for pickup at either elementary school or by printing using the link below. If printing, please print single sided. You can also keep checking here for updated information: https://93936300-44ce-4075-8cb9-91e0aa7dfc88.filesusr.com/ugd/397af5_9948dbe89a9641468d7572b283c1ca27.pdf	on or before 9/1
2. Mahanoy Area 570-773-3443, Ext. 4038 or 4039	Registration Dates: TO BE DETERMINED	on 9/1
3. Minersville 570-544-1400, Ext. 1014	Registration Dates: 3/9-20/2026 Pick up a packet at the DISTRICT OFFICE Any questions call: 570-544-1400 Ext. 1014 https://www.battlinminers.com/ OR 	On or before 9/1
4. North Schuylkill 570-874-3661	REGISTRATION BY APPOINTMENT ONLY Parents can call the elementary office beginning 3/23/26 at 570-874-3661 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 3/16/26 to set up an appointment and for more info.	on or before 9/1
6. Pine Grove 570-345-2731, Ext. 3	Screenings will be held Tuesday, 5/19/2026 and, 5/21/2026. Prior to screening you must register child at https://pinegrovees.getalma.com/ Questions: 570-345-2731, ext. 440.	before 9/1
7. Pottsville 570-621-2945, Option 1	Screening Dates: WEEK OF 4/13/2026 ONLINE REGISTRATION PROCESS Scan the QR code or go to the link below to begin the online registration process: https://skyward.iscorp.com/scripts/wsisa.dll/WService=w sedupottsvillepa/skyenroll.w 	on or before 8/15
8. St. Clair 570-429-2716, Ext. 1	Parents must call the Saint Clair Elem/Middle School District main office before picking up a packet. Parents will receive a screening date for child only after completed packet is returned, which is due by 3/6/ 2026 . Screening dates are 3/17, 18, and 19/2026 Stay informed at: https://www.saintclairsd.org/for_parents/enrolling_students 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 3/9, 10, 11 & 12/2026 YOU MUST HAVE AN APPOINTMENT FOR THE SCREENING!	on or before 9/1

This list was updated with the most current information on 2/19/2026.



Things you need to know—all in on place!

2026-2027 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION INFORMATION (Continued)

DISTRICT / SCHOOL	REGISTRATION/SCREENING DATES	CHILDREN MUST BE "5"
10. Shenandoah Valley 570-462-1957, Option 2	REGISTRATION BY APPOINTMENT ONLY Call to set up an appointment. The first screening appointment date is TBD. There will be another one in April (TBD) and there will be appointments over the summer.	by 8/15
11. Tamaqua 570-668-2570, Ext. 5, Ext. 0	Screening Dates: 3/23, 24, 25, 26/2026 ~ APPOINTMENT REQUIRED ~ Registration/Screening	BEFORE 8/31
12. Tri-Valley Hubley Elementary School 1801 W Main St Valley View, PA, 17983 Hegins-Hubley Elementary 570-682-9011 Mahantongo Elementary 570-648-6062	3/26/ 2026, and 3/27/2026 , between the hours of 8:30AM and 3:00PM at the Hegins-Hubley Elementary School To begin the online enrollment process, go to website: https://sites.google.com/a/tvdawqs.net/district01/our-district/hidden-from-navigation/kindergarten-registration	BEFORE 8/16

PROGRAM GOVERNANCE & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

POLICY COUNCIL MONTHLY MEETING
Monday, March 30th at 9:30 AM

HEALTH & MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, March 11 at 11:30 AM

LOCATION: Main Office & Zoom

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* |

* Download the WNEP APP at:
Androids: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/>
iPhones: <https://apps.apple.com/us/iphone/today>

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.

CONTACT
INFORMATION

Do we have your most current e-mail address and emergency phone numbers?

Even though **SPRING** is just around the corner, we still need your current contact information so that we can alert parents and team members when our centers or classrooms are closed unexpectedly. We also use this message system to inform and remind families of other important Program and center events.

Please make sure you also keep all your **emergency contact information accurate and up-to-date. You can check with your Family Advocate to confirm or update you emergency contact information.**

PRESCHOOL OPEN ENROLLMENT



It's time to enroll your child for the fall!

CALL **Child** Development, Inc.

TODAY
570-544-8959
EXT. 212

CENTERS LOCATIONS:

Fountain Springs, Mahanoy City, Pottsville,
Saint Clair, Schuylkill Haven, Shenandoah and Tamaqua

*Qualified Teaching Staff
Individualized Learning Activities
Family Style Meals*



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.

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



2880 Pottsville Minersville Highway, Suite 210
Minersville, PA 17954