

COMMUNITY SERVICES FOR CHILDREN
PRE-K COUNTS



PARENT HANDBOOK

2025-2026



Community Services for Children
1520 Hanover Avenue
Allentown, PA 18109

Phone: 610-437-6000
Fax: 610-437-6500

Visit us on the web at www.cscinc.org

A BRIEF HISTORY

Community Services for Children, Inc. was established in 1981 by Patricia W. Levin as the grantee for Head Start of the Lehigh Valley. Since then, CSC has added Early Head Start, Pre-K Counts, Early Learning Resource Centers, PreK Scholarship Organization, and Educational Innovation Organization. CSC affects the lives of an estimated 40,000 children a year in 17 counties of Pennsylvania.



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Early Learning Resource Center

- ☐ Child Care Works
- ☐ PA Keys to Quality

Early Education Academy

Educational Innovation Organization

Head Start/Early Head Start of the Lehigh Valley

Pre-K Counts Preschool

Pre-K Scholarship Program

Pre-K Counts

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Classroom Information

Name of My Child's Site:	
Name of My Child's Classroom:	
Site Address:	
Classroom Telephone Number:	
Classroom Hours:	
Classroom Teacher:	
Classroom Assistant Teacher:	
Early Education Manager:	

Site Information

To Enter the Building/Site:	
Site Security Information:	
Parking Information:	
Emergency Evacuation Site:	

Bus Information (If applicable)

Bus Driver:	
Bus Stop:	
Bus Times:	AM Pick Up: PM Drop Off:
First Family Workshop Date:	

Our Mission

Prepare young children and their families to succeed in learning and in life through innovative, comprehensive, leading-edge services.

Our Vision

Engaged communities where every child thrives and every family succeeds.

Program Management

Deidra Vachier	CEO/ President
Sandra Genzel	Vice President of Preschool Services
Jennifer Knelly	Director of Early Education
Denine Micklus	Assistant Director of Early Education
Jeremy Smale	Assistant Director of Early Education
Julianna LaStella	Assistant Director of Early Education
Michelle Lambert	Early Education Manager
Sandra Silva	Early Education Manager
Michael Smith	Early Education Manager
Melissa Sweder	Early Education Manager
Angela Hoy	Early Education Manager
Kristina DalPont	Early Education Manager
Bianca Gloss	Early Education Manager
Jamie Bachman	Early Education Manager
Heather Cimerol	Director of Child Health Services
Andrea Mease	Assistant Director of Child Health Services
Christa Held	Director of Program Operations
Sandra Stewart - Barrett	Assistant Director of Enrollment
Pamela Melo	Enrollment Manager
Amy Rontz	Enrollment Manager



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Welcome to Pre-K Counts
A Program of
Community Services for Children



Congratulations! Enrolling in Pre-K Counts will help to ensure you and your preschooler are prepared for the exciting transition to Kindergarten. Your Pre-K Counts team are experts in school readiness and family development and we are confident this year will be filled with new friends and new experiences in a fun, safe, and stimulating learning environment. We look forward to our partnership with you and we believe that by working together we will achieve amazing outcomes for your child and your family. Welcome to Pre-K Counts!



Sandra Genzel
Vice President of Preschool Services

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE BELIEVE

Pre-K Counts is a program of Community Services for Children. We have been partners with parents, children, and families since the program began. Together we plan and provide quality-learning opportunities in the classroom, at home with families, and in collaborations throughout Northampton and Lehigh Counties.

You are now part of that story.

Our program is based on certain beliefs about children, parents, and families.

We Believe:

Every child is unique and has his/her own learning style.

Every child can achieve and reach his/her full potential.

You are responsible for your child and family.

You are your child's first and most important teacher.

Your child is part of a family.

Strong families make strong communities.

All family members need to grow and develop.

Children, parents, and families have great value and strengths.

SCHOOL READINESS PLEDGE

Preparing children and families for Kindergarten is a key focus of the Pre-K Counts program. Over the course of the school year, we will partner together to stimulate and support your child's growth and development in areas that are important for school success.

We define school readiness as, children ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning, and schools are ready for children.

Together we will ensure that your child:

- writes and recognizes his/her name
- communicates information and asks questions
- names colors and shapes
- identifies alphabet letters and their sounds
- identifies numbers and understands basic math ideas like "more or less"
- shows appreciation for books and reading
- independently uses the bathroom including dressing, hand-washing and tooth-brushing

We will support your child in developing:

- relationships with other children and adults
- self-control when managing behaviors
- a positive attitude toward learning
- persistence (ability to stay focused on a task)

We are excited to continue with you on this journey of learning and we look forward to a positive school experience. As a team, we can help your child develop the skills and attitudes necessary for school success.



Accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children

The **National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)** is the largest organization worldwide working on behalf of young children to raise the quality of programs for children from birth through age eight. A major strategy to implement the mission of NAEYC has been the accreditation of programs through a process by which programs meet NAEYC national standards of quality in early childhood established beginning in 1985. These Early Childhood Program Standards are based on the latest research on the education and development of young children. These standards address: Relationships, Curriculum, Teaching, Assessment of Child Progress, Health, Teachers, Families, Community Relationships, Physical Environment, Leadership and Management.

NAEYC accreditation is an extensive process that includes self-study, staff and parent questionnaires, and classroom and program portfolios to evaluate the program against the NAEYC standards and criteria.

When the program has completed self-assessment and believes that it meets the standards, program documentation is submitted to NAEYC. There is then an on-site visit to review all of the material and documentation as well as to observe the classrooms in operation. The results of the site visit and observation are submitted to NAEYC where a panel reviews the information and makes the final decision. If accreditation is granted, it is for a period of five years with reports due annually.

NAEYC accreditation is given by facility. 100% of the long-term Head Start/Pre-K Counts classrooms are accredited. Because of site changes, newer classroom sites are in the process of accreditation.



Accredited by the Middle States Commission on Elementary Schools

Middle States Association (MSA) of Colleges and Schools Commission (CESS) began as a response to the call for better quality and accountability in the public schools. Accreditation acts as an external, objective validation of school quality. The Middle States Commission is now recognized by the national educational community as the leader in improving the quality of education through accreditation. MSA now accredits programs from early childhood through post-secondary institutions.

Middle States accreditation is a process that uses recognized standards for self-study and evaluation, for improvement and providing growth experiences for staff. When the program is ready, there is a rigorous peer review process. MSA-CESS has a multi-tier review process to ensure consistency, objectivity and quality. Recommendations are made by the team, the MSA-CESS staff, an advisory committee, the Membership and Accreditation Committee and finally the full Commission to make a final accreditation decision.

Accreditation is given to a program for a period of seven years. Accredited schools are committed to ongoing school improvement and the planning process continues throughout the duration of the accreditation term.

PROGRAM OPTIONS

Pre-K Counts



- Pre-K Counts offers a comprehensive educational program for children ages 3-5 living in Lehigh and Northampton Counties.
- Children attend school 5.25 or 5.5 hours per day, 5 days a week during the 180-day school year.
- Each classroom is staffed by 2 qualified teachers, as well as an Early Education Manager to monitor quality.
- Teachers complete 1 home visits and 2 parent/teacher conferences per year with families.
- Classrooms are self-transport only.

Early Head Start

- Early Head Start of the Lehigh Valley offers Home Based Early Head Start services to pregnant women and children, birth to age 3 in Easton, Bethlehem, Allentown, and some surrounding communities.
- Child Development Partners visit the families in their home once a week for 90 minutes to 2 hours, 12 months a year.
- Families attend Family Play Groups in which they can expose their infants and toddlers to a group setting, socialize with other families, and participate in program governance activities.

LEARNING AND GROWING TOGETHER

Learning is a life-long process. In Pre-K Counts, we support all efforts made by children, parents, and staff to learn more and become the best each of us can be. We have included many opportunities for you and your child to grow and to develop a strong parent/child relationship. Together, with the support of highly qualified teachers and a positive learning environment, we can make sure your child enters school ready to learn!

Daily Routines

Establishing daily routines helps to support your child's learning and feelings about being at school.

Daily Schedule

The daily schedule varies depending on the tone of the classroom and the needs of each individual child. All activities are guided and supported by teachers.

We have included a sample daily schedule, so you can get an idea of what your child's daily activities might look like.

Sample Daily Schedule

Arrival
Handwashing
Snack
Toothbrushing
Morning Group Meeting /Second Step
Individual /Small Group/Self Selected
Activities
Gross Motor /I am Moving I am Learning
(IMIL)
Handwashing /Bathroom
Lunch
Afternoon Meeting
Individualized /Small Group /Self Selected
Activities
Gross Motor/Outdoor
Wrap Up
Dismissal

You will receive a copy of the daily schedule specific to your child's classroom.

Outdoor Experience

Your child will go outdoors daily to explore their community, surrounding environment and to participate in planned outdoor experiences. We view the outdoors as an extension to the learning that takes place in our classrooms. Please dress your child for the weather so your child can comfortably participate in this experience. To ensure the health and wellbeing of your child we will not take children out if:

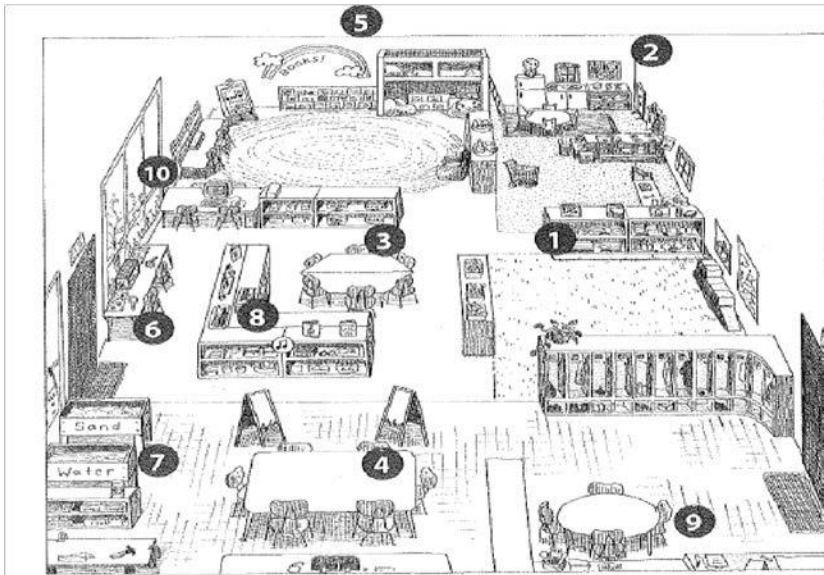
- There is a cold or heat or air quality advisory
- When the temperature is 25 degrees or below
- When the temperature is 90 degrees or above

Clothing

Classrooms are busy places with many activities such as painting, water and sand play, cooking, and outdoor play. Please dress your child in comfortable play clothes that are all right for your child to get messy. Dress your child according to the weather. If possible, have them wear boots with socks when it is snowy or wet and rainy. On cold days, include a hat and mittens, along with their coat. Clothing should be easy for children to fasten and unfasten themselves for trips to the bathroom. Children should come with sneakers, no open toed shoes like sandals and flip flops, so they are safe on outdoor play equipment. If your child does not have sneakers, please speak with the teacher and they may be able to problem solve ways to help.

Classroom Set-Up

The classroom is set up so that your child can be independent and free to explore materials and activities. Our classroom environments are safe, predictable, fun and provide all the important resources for school readiness. The picture below is a model of how your child's Pre-K Counts classroom might look:



- 1— Blocks
- 2— Dramatic Play
- 3— Toys and Games
- 4— Art
- 5— Library
- 6— Discovery
- 7— Sand and Water
- 8— Music and Movement
- 9— Cooking
- 10- Computers

Curriculum/Curriculum Areas

Our high-quality pre-Kindergarten prepares your child for all school readiness skills including paying attention, following directions, and getting along with others. We utilize a nationally recognized curriculum, *Creative Curriculum for Preschoolers*, as well as Second Step a social emotional curriculum and Child Protection Unit, to individualize this to your child's development. It is our goal to help each child feel good about themselves, have a positive attitude about school and learning, and acquire the skills needed to function in the world. Play and learning will help your child grow socially and academically.

We help by:

- Encouraging your child to explore and experiment.
- Using ground rules as a model for encouraging positive ways of behaving.
- Offering choices.
- Providing activities that your child can complete and help them to clean up by themselves.
- Speaking positively to each child.
- Planning for each child individually.
- Involving parents in their child's education.

We provide learning opportunities that promotes proficiency in math, science, social studies, creative arts, language and literacy, physical development and social/emotional development. The curriculum is aligned with PA Early Learning Standards and is implemented by teachers who meet all credentialing regulations.

Ground Rules

The classroom environment promotes development when all members observe and follow classroom ground rules.

1. We use quiet voices inside.
2. We walk inside.
3. We use gentle hands.
4. Our work is returned to the shelf.

Assessment

You are the source of information regarding your child's interests, skills and abilities. Teachers gather your input before they start working with your child. Throughout the year, teachers observe your child's language, skill development, choice of materials and their progress. This information is collected during the course of their play activities in the classroom and through a scientifically valued assessment tool, which implemented by the teacher, called Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). It measures child progress over time in the following areas of learning:

- Approaches to learning- self regulation
- Social and emotional development
- Language and Literacy development
- English language development
- Cognition, including math and science
- Physical development- health
- History- Social Science
- Visual and Performing arts

Individual Planning

Desired Results Developmental Profile Documentation Observations will highlight your child's questions, their discoveries and their involvement with materials. This information, along with input from you, the parent, is used to develop your child's individualized school readiness profile. Regularly, we review each child's progress and use teaching methods and learning activities that are best for each child.

Positive Guidance, Philosophy and Strategies

To help your child feel safe, develop independence, and become successful in the classroom community, we use the *Second Step Curriculum*. This curriculum will support your child's development in areas such as naming feelings, developing empathy and developing personal and social behaviors. It will also help your child develop problem solving and conflict resolution skills. Through a consistent routine, classroom ground rules, and positive relationships with teachers, your child will build his/her self-esteem.

In addition to the *Second Step Curriculum*, the *Second Step* Child Protection Unit develops children's knowledge and skills for protecting themselves in unsafe and possibly abusive situations. Through a series of 6 themes, children will learn about ways to stay safe, rules for safety, and safe and unsafe touches. The *Second Step* Child Protection Unit, combined with the *Second Step* program, provides a comprehensive approach to help children feel safe and supported.

Positive Teacher – Child Relationships

- We believe that children have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- We ensure that any physical contact between a teacher or other staff member and a child is purposeful, appropriate, respectful, and nurturing.
- We believe in helping children with their development of self-control by using positive methods of guidance, such as:
 - modeling respectful behavior;
 - listening to children;
 - redirecting children to activities that are more acceptable; and
 - setting limits and reasonable consequences.
- We support the development of appropriate behavior and social skills for children by implementing the following practices:
 - developing a positive, supportive relationship with each child;
 - establishing appropriate routines and expectations;
 - providing developmentally appropriate materials that promote children's engagement;
 - using positive attention and encouragement to support pro-social behavior; and
 - teaching children about the expectations of the environment, using friendship and problem solving skills and developing a pro social classroom community.

Managing Unsafe Behavior

It is our priority to maintain a safe and nurturing environment for all children in our care. There may be times when a child's behavior becomes unsafe. Unsafe behavior is defined as excessive and dangerous to the child, other children and/or staff and may include the following:

- *Excessive biting*
- *Excessive hitting/kicking*
- *Excessive spitting*
- *Throwing dangerous objects*
- *Self-injurious behaviors (i.e. running out of the classroom or playground area)*

When a child is in serious danger of hurting themselves or others staff will use positive child guidance and non-restrictive strategies to attempt to calm the child:

- Be at the child's level
- Validate the child's feelings
- Use calm soothing voice
- Offer preferred choices

If the child continues to present a danger to themselves or others, emergency services may be contacted. Staff will notify parents/guardians immediately if emergency services is contacted regarding their child. Staff will partner with parents to develop a plan of action.

Child Mental/Behavioral Health Services

While your child is in Pre-K Counts, he/she will be learning how to understand and manage his/her feelings, how to make friends and be a friend, and how to solve problems with other children.

- Daily classroom activities are designed to develop social and emotional skills through the *Second Step Curriculum*.
- A Mental Health Professional visits the classroom and is available to support a child, the family and the teachers with consultation, resources, referrals and strategies to support social and emotional skills in the classroom and at home.
- Activities are provided that foster positive family relationships.
- Parents may receive referrals to community agencies or mental health professionals when needed.

Disabilities Services

Pre-K Counts partners with the Carbon Lehigh Intermediate Unit #21 and the Colonial Northampton Intermediate Unit #20. As we identify learning concerns or developmental delays, we can access services to give specialized supports to a child with special needs in the classroom.

The staff will:

- Inform parents about the type of services available and have written permission for all referrals.
- Work with families to make referrals to local agencies.
- Work with parents to arrange for special testing, and if additional help is needed, to plan jointly for their child.
- Work with specialists to provide help for a child with speech, emotional, or other special needs.
- Work with staff, a child and parents in the classroom to help a child develop the skills they need.
- Make home visits to help families understand their child's behaviors and to promote productive social interaction.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences are scheduled twice a year. At these conferences, you and your child's teacher can share and exchange information about your child's progress and development. You may request additional conferences at any time by contacting your child's teacher.

Teacher Home Visits

Teachers will complete one home visits with each family to identify and plan for your child's learning at home and to assist in meeting your child's developmental goals. This gives you an opportunity to talk about your child's accomplishments as well as any concerns and plan for your child's ongoing development.

Classroom Pictures

Our programs do not arrange for class or individual child pictures to be taken. Out of respect for all of the children and families in the Pre-K Counts program, we do not permit parents or visitors to photograph or videotape the children or classroom. Classrooms located in school district buildings do not participate in individual or class pictures through the host school.

Transition Support

This year is an exciting one for you and your child! The staff will assist you in supporting your child as he/she transitions into the Pre-K Counts program and as they journey into Kindergarten by:

- Providing materials that will help you support your child's development.
- Being a resource for activities and suggestions to individualize and practice skills at home.
- Guiding you through the Kindergarten registration process.
- Encouraging you to visit the schools and to meet with the Kindergarten personnel.

Classroom Participation

Parents are always welcome in the classroom. Visiting your child's classroom is an important way to show your child how important he/she is to you. This is a great way for you to understand how your child is growing and developing. It will also give you ideas on ways to be involved with your child at home. Your involvement in the classroom illustrates your commitment to education.

Ground Rules for Adults in the Classroom

To set an example for the children in the program and ensure a safe environment, we request that all adults visiting the classroom follow these rules:

- Arrive at the classroom with an identity document that includes a photograph of the holder.
- Sign-in.
- Wash your hands.
- Use respectful language and behaviors at all times.
- Follow directions of classroom staff.
- No photographing or videotaping the children.
- No cell phone use.
- Allow staff to give any First Aid, needed by a child.

Confidentiality of Records

All information in the child's Pre-K Counts file is considered confidential. Information gathered about your child or family is for the purpose of providing services to your family. Families are informed of the Confidentiality Policy at the time of enrollment. A copy of the policy is included in this handbook.

Accessing Your Child's Records

We will only transfer your child's records to other agencies with specific written and signed consent. You may request to review or obtain a copy from your child's file. All requests must be made in writing and signed. A request for information form may be obtained from the teacher or at the main office. Please allow a minimum of 5 business days for requests to be processed. Release of records may take up to 45 days.

Parents' Rights

- Parents have the right to review their children's records.
- Parents have the right to know about and attend meetings concerning their child.
- Parents must give permission for the release of their child's and family records.
- Parents have the right to discuss concerns and questions with Pre-K Counts staff.
- Parents have the right to expect a timely response.
- Parents have a right to know that child and family's records are kept in locked, restricted file cabinets.

Parents' Responsibilities

- Involve yourself in your child's education
- Communicate regularly with teachers
- Talk to your child about school
- Provide medical and dental care as needed
- Maintain medical records for yourself and for the school

Parent Worry, Inquiry, or Concern

We want you to have a rewarding and satisfactory experience in the Pre-K Counts program. If you should have a worry, question, or concern that you would like to bring to our attention, please explain directly to the staff person with whom you have contact. If you are unable to resolve your concern or inquiry then you may contact the supervisor of the staff person.

Classroom Cameras

To enhance the safety, health and well-being of children, families and staff cameras may be installed in approved classroom locations and other educational spaces like gyms and hallways occupied by Pre-K Counts. Cameras only have visual recording capabilities to protect the privacy of individuals. The cameras are property of Community Services for Children (CSC) and access is restricted to authorized CSC staff, legal and/or law enforcement.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

In addition to your ability to visit your child's classroom at any time, family workshops, depending on the location of the classroom may be, scheduled once a month. This is a wonderful opportunity to participate in your child's classroom through hands-on activities and learn skills to support your child's education. Please contact your child's teacher or Enrollment and Engagement Specialist for dates and times.

Family Participation Guide in Classrooms

In order to have a safe, positive, educational environment, the following ground rules apply.

1. All posted classroom rules must be followed while in the classroom.
2. Participants must wash their hands before entering the classroom, after using the bathroom, and before meals to ensure healthy practices.
3. No outside food or drink is allowed in the classroom or agency owned vehicles.
4. Potentially dangerous items are not allowed into the classroom, including medications, cigarettes, and lighters, and weapons of any kind. Leave personal belongings at home whenever possible.
5. Use of cell phones in the classroom is not allowed. During meetings, they should be placed on vibrate.
6. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times.
7. Participants will not discuss children or families outside of the classroom, including posting information about the program on social media sites, such as Facebook.
8. Please schedule an appointment with the teacher if you have questions or concerns. Please do not use classroom time for personal discussions.
9. Siblings are not permitted to participate in classroom activities.
10. Taking pictures or videos in the classroom is not allowed.
11. Loud or offensive language is not allowed in the classroom.
12. Behavior issues in the classroom will be dealt with by Pre-K Counts Staff.
13. Participants will not be left alone with children at any time.
14. If you are interested in assisting classroom staff in daily routines (i.e. preparing for meal service, helping with handwashing/toothbrushing, reading to the children), please speak with the teacher for further guidance and support.
15. If you are planning to volunteer or participate in your child's classroom for 6 or more hours a week, you will need to talk with your child's teacher about completing a TB test and obtaining the required clearances.

Celebrations

Developmentally appropriate activities for preschoolers are things that they can see, touch, taste, hear, smell and explore with their whole body. Holidays are abstract concepts and do not have meaning for your preschooler in everyday life, even though they have meaning for you, as an adult.

- Pre-K Counts models respect and shows appreciation for each child and their family's individuality.
- Pre-K Counts provides an environment that respects and supports culture, gender, language and family composition, and supports each family's practice of their traditions in their home.
- We do not "celebrate" birthdays, religious, or cultural holidays in our Pre-K Counts classrooms.

Parent Employment Opportunities

Pre-K Counts parents are encouraged to apply for positions posted by Community Services for Children, Inc. for which they are qualified. All positions require the ability to obtain TB, PA Child Abuse Certification, PA Criminal Certification, and FBI Certification. Current openings are posted on the parent bulletin board and are available at www.cscinc.org.

Other Resources

Where can I find information about child care?

- Child Care Works Helpline - 1-877-4-PA-KIDS

What school should my child attend?

- <http://www.greatschools.org/school-district-boundaries-map/>

Families Experiencing Homelessness

Pre-K Counts staff of Community Services for Children works with families to provide resources for support in times of need. If you are experiencing homelessness, you can do the following:

- Speak with your Enrollment and Engagement Specialist or teacher about available resources in the community
- Call the 2-1-1 hotline, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Dial 2-1-1 or (855) 567-5341

What is a Parent Professional Learner: Classroom Aide?

A Parent Professional Learner Classroom Aide is a parent/guardian volunteer who assists professional staff in the classroom. Parent Professional Learner Classroom Aides submit a formal volunteer application and are required to obtain the necessary clearances in order to manage various responsibilities as a classroom's "Parent Leader". Volunteering in one of our classrooms as a Parent Professional Learner Classroom Aide is a truly empowering opportunity for parents/guardians to learn and grow, both personally and professionally while advocating for children and families in our community!

What does a Classroom Aide do?

- Becomes an official volunteer for the program
- Greets children in the morning and helps them settle into the classroom environment
- Under the direction of the Lead Teacher, partners with students for learning activities
- Engages children and extends their learning through meaningful interactions
- Assists with snacks, lunch and basic classroom clean-up in order to maintain a clean, orderly and safe environment
- Escorts children to and from the gymnasium for gross motor activities
- Participates in shared reading experiences
- Helps to oversee learning activities (both indoors and outdoors)
- Assists with afternoon pack-up and dismissal
- Develops relationships with other parents and staff to understand the interests and needs of others
- Whenever possible, assists with translation and interpretation for families

Volunteers are assigned specific tasks and may have a regular schedule, which is tracked at point of service. The following are required for all parent volunteers:

1. Criminal Record / Background Certification (free for volunteers):

PA Criminal Background Check

<https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>

2. Child Abuse History Certification (free for volunteers):

PA Child Abuse History Clearance

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

3. (TB) testing:

- Varies according to medical provider

4. FBI fingerprint-based background certification (\$22.60):

FBI Fingerprint Registration

<https://uenroll.identogo.com/>

Once clearances have been received and accepted, you will be scheduled to complete a parent volunteer orientation training. If financial assistance is needed to obtain your clearances, funds may be available. Your Enrollment and Engagement Specialist can assist you in the process for applying for clearances and requesting funds.

ATTENDANCE INFORMATION AND POLICY

ATTENDANCE

Consistent attendance is a cornerstone of School Readiness. Preschool is a great time to start building a habit of good attendance! Studies have shown that children who attend school on time every day are the most successful in school and in life. Parents – especially in the early years – are best positioned to ensure children attend school regularly, and to build that expectation.

Children can't learn if they aren't in school. Chronic absence in the early years is associated with lower academic performance in 1st grade among all children, and can predict the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of fifth grade.

Our programs are state and federally funded and must remain fully enrolled to ensure continued funding. Children who have 10 or more consecutive unexcused absences or more than 10 percent unexcused absences over the course of the school year and have not responded to program support may be dismissed from the classroom.

Here's what we will do:

1. Monitor your child's attendance and keep you apprised of how you are doing.
2. Send you a message if your child is absent and the reason for absence is not known.
3. Support you if your child is absent from school, even only one time.
4. Help you evaluate the cause of your child's absence(s) and develop a plan to improve their attendance.
5. Recognize parents whose children achieve excellent school attendance!



Here's what you need to do:

1. Send your child to school on time every day.
2. Schedule routine appointments after school hours so your child can participate in every class activity.
3. Contact the teaching staff before the classroom start time, if your child is going to be out and let the teacher know the reason.
4. Plan family vacations during school closings.
5. Celebrate excellent attendance each week with your child to help them value being in school!

Keeping your child healthy is an important step towards achieving consistent attendance. Your child may come to school even with the following symptoms:

- Common cold, runny nose
- Fever (100.4° or above) **without any other signs or symptoms of illness.** If the child's fever does not negatively impact their ability to learn in the classroom, we welcome their attendance.
- Watery eye discharge
- Yellow or white eye drainage without pink or red conjunctiva (whites of the eyes)
- Rashes without fever
- Lice or nits – treatment may be delayed until the end of the day

There are some illnesses which require you to keep your child home, for his sake as well as for the other children and staff. The following symptoms require that you keep your child at home, or would require you to come to the classroom to take your child home:

- Fever 100.4° or above by ear or oral thermometer **with other signs and symptoms of illness**
- Diarrhea (uncontrolled)
- Vomiting 2 or more times, or with fever
- Uncontrolled Coughing
- Skin Rash with fever
- Wheezing with severe cough
- Communicable Diseases: Chicken Pox, Impetigo, Pink Eye, Covid 19, Strep Throat, Influenza and others as diagnosed by a doctor; if your child has a communicable disease, ask your doctor when they may return to school.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLNESS SERVICES

HEALTHY CHILDREN ARE READY TO LEARN

Nutrition

- Children receive lunch and a snack while at school.
- All meals meet the Child & Adult Care Food Program and/or National School Lunch Program requirements and contribute to your child's nutritional growth and development.
- Menus will be shared at the beginning of the year and posted in the classroom.
- The teacher will contact you to discuss food allergies that you identified when your child was enrolled. Food allergies will be listed in the classroom for staff that serve meals.
- All meals are contracted through a licensed food service provider and are approved by a registered dietician or school cafeteria.
- Due to the number of children with allergies and our need to keep your children healthy, do not send food into the classroom. These restrictions apply to both holidays and birthdays.
- If needed, special foods will be provided for children with dietary needs.
- Our classrooms are nut and pork free.

CACFP (Child and Adult Care Food Program)

When your child enrolls in a program operated by Community Services for Children, Head Start/Early Head Start or Pre-K Counts they may also be enrolled in the CACFP. CACFP is a federal program that provides healthy meals and snacks to children and adults receiving day care.

Each day more than 2.6 million children participate in CACFP. Through CACFP, participants' nutritional needs are supported on a daily basis. The program plays a vital role in improving the quality of care and making it more affordable for low-income families.

CACFP facilities follow the meal patterns established by USDA:

- Breakfast consists of 3 components: milk, fruit or vegetable, and grain.
- Lunch consists of 5 components: milk, meat or meat alternative, fruit, vegetable, and grain
- Snacks include two different servings of the five components: milk, fruits or vegetables, grains or bread, or meat or meat alternate.

CACFP reimburses participating centers for serving nutritious meals to eligible children.

CACFP Nondiscrimination Statement

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/USDA-OASCR%20P-Complaint-Form-0508-0002-508-11-28-17Fax2Mail.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. **Mail:**
U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. **Fax:**
(833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. **Email:**
program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

I Am Moving, I Am Learning

Throughout the year, you will hear about ways to ensure your child stays healthy for life. Your child will learn how to keep healthy and participate in fun activities to keep your child moving. You will likely hear from your child about the I Am Moving I Am Learning mascot, C.H.O.O.S.Y. (Choose Healthy Options Often Starting Young). We also share nutrition tips with you and provide information on how your family can stay healthy.

Keep Children Healthy and In School

- Keep your child healthy by completing all preventive health care on time (physical, dental exams, immunizations, and lead level).
- Your child will need proof of a well exam, immunizations, and their lead level upon entry to the program. If you have difficulty obtaining this information, please contact your Enrollment and Engagement Specialist or teacher. Your child must have these completed and current before entering the program, in order to remain in Pre-K Counts.
- If your child has a medical problem, that affects the immune system and your doctor believes it is important to keep your child home when there is a communicable disease outbreak, please contact the Health Manager so we can keep your child healthy.

Hearing Screenings

An Otoacoustic Emissions (OAE) machine is used for hearing screenings. It is a handheld device that evaluates the tiny echoes produced by the ear in response to a mild clicking sound delivered by the probe. Parents will receive results electronically once their child is screened.

Vision Screenings

Children will be asked to identify LEA symbols (pictures) to test near and distance vision. Children will wear special glasses to test each eye's visual acuity. Parents will receive results electronically once their child is screened.

Medication

- Medication is administered to a child, only with the current orders from a physician or certified nurse practitioner.
- We must also have written permission from you to give any medications to your child.
- Most medications can be given at home before school or after school.
- Medications, both prescription and over-the-counter, must be in original container with childproof caps and must be labeled, with a prescription label, with all of the following information:
 - Child's name, physician's name, name of medication, expiration date, dosage instructions (frequency and amount), and how medicine is to be stored.
- All medication will be stored in a locked box out of the reach of children and the classroom staff will keep a daily medication log.
- Expired medications will not be administered and will be returned to the parent.

Accident/Injury/Emergency Procedures

- A classroom staff member will be certified in child CPR and First Aid and will be able to provide treatment for minor injuries.
- All classroom accidents will be reported to parents by classroom staff and an accident/injury report will be completed and maintained by the Health Manager.
- In case of a medical emergency, you will be contacted. If we cannot reach you, we will contact the person or persons listed on your child's emergency card. Please be sure this information is always up to date.
- If necessary, your child may be transported to the nearest hospital by ambulance.
- Your child's contact information, listing medications, food allergies, special conditions or restrictions will be sent to the hospital with your child. Let your teacher or Enrollment and Engagement Specialist know immediately if any of this information changes.

Child Abuse and Neglect

- Each one of us is responsible for helping to protect children.
- Every employee that works for Pre-K Counts is a mandated reporter and therefore obligated to report suspected abuse or neglect.
- The report must be made when the person has reasonable cause to suspect, based on their professional or other training and experience, that a child coming before them in their professional capacity may be an abused child.
- If you have a concern or suspect a child has been abused or neglected, please call Pennsylvania's ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313 to make a confidential report.
- As a parent, you may be faced with situations that are difficult to handle.
- We would encourage you to seek help before you are unable to cope with stress.
- By sharing your concerns with your child's Teacher or Enrollment and Engagement Specialist, we can provide you with support and referrals to community resources.

Safety of Children - Megan's Law Policy

Pre-K Counts is committed to providing every child in our care with a safe experience. Our Megan's Law Policy is designed to ensure the safety of children and minimize the possibility that they will come in contact with a registered sexual offender.

- Our Pre-K Counts Program receives information from PA State and Local Police when a registered sexual predator moves or begins work within the vicinity of our classrooms. Upon notification, this information is shared with facility staff within 24 hours.
- Program staff are directed to immediately notify the Police and Pre-K Counts management should a sexually violent predator, or any registered sex offender, be seen nearby the facility or attempt to enter the facility.
- Pre-K Counts will check all parents, guardians, and named emergency contacts against the PA Megan's Law website monthly.
- Individuals registered as sex offenders on the PA Megan's Law website will not be permitted to:
 - Enter any Pre-K Counts facility during operational hours when children are present including during drop off or pick up times.
 - Pick up or drop off children or be in the presence of groups of children at bus stops.
 - Be invited into group activities with children present (field trips, Family Workshops)
- Pre-K Counts will not release a child to any parent/guardian or other designated emergency contact who is a registered sex offender unless directed in writing by the Courts of Pennsylvania.
- A parent or guardian who is a registered sex offender will be offered opportunities to participate in the program outside of settings/timeframes where children are present.

Security

Providing a safe and secure environment is of the utmost importance to our program. Everyone who enters a Pre-K Counts site has a role to play in maintaining children's safety. It is important that staff are aware of every visitor entering the facility.

- We ask that you do not hold the door open for others.
- In sites where there are multiple classrooms, you will only be granted access to the building by teachers in your child's classroom.
- Pre-K Counts staff are instructed not to allow entry to parents or visitors from different classrooms.
- Depending on the site your child will be attending, you will receive specific instructions on entering the building, as well as information about parking.
- Arrive at the classroom with an identity document that includes a photograph of the holder.

Help us to ensure the safety of every child in our care by following the safety guidelines at all times. If you have questions or concerns about security at your site, please speak with your child's teacher or your Enrollment and Engagement Specialist.

Evacuation/Lockdown Procedures

Safety in the classroom is our upmost priority. Emergency Preparedness procedures are updated and submitted annually to the Emergency Management agencies for both Northampton and Lehigh Counties. Emergency situations could happen at all times. In an effort to keep our students safe, we practice drills regularly through the school year. This includes the following drills:

- Fire Drills
- Lockdown Drills—used when there is an identified threat outside and inside the building
- Evacuation Drills—moving students to another safe locations when the classroom building is not safe
- Shelter—used when the need for personal protection is necessary during events such as tornados

Communication, cooperation and understanding in emergency situations are key. Additionally, classrooms located in school district buildings will follow the school district emergency preparedness plans.

Weapon-Free Environment

- Community Services for Children (CSC) is committed to providing a safe and secure workplace for employees and environment for children and prevent exposure to gun violence.
- No person, including employees, contractors, temporary workers, parents, guardians, vendors, volunteers or visitors will enter any CSC/Pre-K Counts premises in possession of any form of weapon even if the individual is licensed to carry a concealed or unconcealed weapon.
- Law enforcement agents authorized by federal, state, or local laws to carry weapons in the

- performance of their duties are permitted to enter CSC premises with their weapons.
- CSC will notify the local authorities for any individual entering the premises in violation of the Weapon-Free Environment policy.

Standards of Conduct

- Pre-K Counts Staff adhere to a strict standard of conduct to ensure the well-being of all children.
- We promote the unique identity of each child and family and refrain from stereotyping on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion or disability.
- We follow confidentiality policies concerning information about children and families, as described in our Confidentiality Policy.
- We ensure that no child will be left alone or unsupervised.
- Positive methods of child guidance are used.
- We do not engage in corporal punishment, emotional or physical abuse, or humiliation.
- In addition, we do not employ methods of discipline that involve isolation, the use of food as punishment or reward, or the denial of basic needs.
- In addition to standards of conduct for staff, employees have the right to work in an environment free of verbal or physical intimidation, harassment, assault, or threatening behavior.

Mental Health and Behavioral Health Services

Children in our programs will learn how to understand and manage their feelings, how to make friends and be friends, and how to solve problems with other children.

- Daily activities are designed to develop social and emotional skills through the *Second Step Curriculum* and following the *Conscious Discipline* program approach.
- Teachers implement strategies to help children in the classroom and partner with parents to gain insights, develop strategies, and address concerns.
- A Mental Health Professional visits the classroom and is available to support the child, the family, and the teachers with consultation, resources, referrals, and strategies to support social and emotional skills in the classroom and at home.
- Teachers can recommend activities that foster positive family relationships.
- Teachers and Enrollment and Engagement Specialists coordinate services with community-based mental and behavioral health professionals and agencies, ensuring families have access to the resources they need.

PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Program Calendar:

Please see the site-specific calendar or your child's teachers for School Closures.

Snow/Emergency Closings/Flexible Instruction Days

If our classrooms are closed due to inclement weather or in the case of an unforeseen circumstance the closings will be announced as **Head Start of LV/PreK/SafeStart** on local media outlets.

- Inclement weather closing information is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at www.wfmz.com To receive closings via text message, please log onto www.wfmz.com and follow the instructions.
- You may call Community Services for Children's main line (610) 437-6000 – the automated greeting will be updated as to any delays/closings related to inclement weather.
- An automated SchoolMessage@childplus voice/text message will be sent to all parents for whom we have a current phone number. Updates may also be posted on ClassDojo

The safety of children, parents and staff is important to us. If we change hours for reasons of weather and safe travel, we expect all children to be picked up within the announced times.

If our classrooms use a Flexible Instruction Day families will be notified using our ChildPlus messaging system as early as possible. CSC staff will facilitate live online lessons with children and/or post activities for children and families to engage with at home using the online messaging system. Families will be asked to share pictures and feedback of their experiences completing the activities together.



Smoke Free Environment

- It is important that we serve as role models to the children and do our best to ensure their overall health and well-being.

- Under CSC policy, smoking can never be done in view of the children, whether they are walking to the playground or riding the bus.
- Therefore, all Pre-K Counts classrooms have been deemed smoke free environments.
- Please refrain from smoking in and around the classroom facilities.
- We respectfully request that you refrain from smoking during home visits to protect the health and well-being of our staff and your family.

Child Custody

It is our intent to meet the needs of children, especially when the parents may be experiencing difficult situations such as divorce, separation, or remarriage. Sharing information about such situations can help teaching staff support your child through potentially difficult and challenging experiences. Staff hold this information in strict confidence. Our centers cannot legally restrict the non-custodial parent from visiting the child, reviewing the child's records, or picking up the child. A child shall be released to either parent unless a court order prohibits release to a particular parent. A copy of the order prohibiting release shall be kept on file at the center. In case of conflicts, the proper authorities will be contacted.

Change of Information

If a change of name, address, phone number, emergency contacts, health providers, health conditions, family situation, childcare, or other related information occurs during the year, you must notify the teacher or Enrollment and Engagement Specialist immediately.

Child's Legal Name

A child's first and last name, as it appears on their birth certificate, on file at the center, will be used unless the parent/guardian provides legal documentation of a change of name.

Classroom Placement

Classroom placements are based on availability. Our Pre-K Counts classrooms are mixed 3, 4, and 5 year-olds. All classrooms have a mix of gender and individual needs. Placement requests will be taken into consideration but no guarantees will be made.

Fees

Consistent with state regulations, there are no fees charged to participating children and families for program services. This includes, meals served, activities, and classroom or program supplies.

Pedestrian Safety

Whether your child walks to school, or arrives by car, your child should know about Pedestrian Safety. Some things you should talk to your child about include:

- Remind your children to look for a crosswalk before crossing the street and to hold an adult's hand.
- When crossing the street, stop at the curb or edge of the road. Look left, then right, and

then left again for moving cars before crossing. Keep looking left and right until you are safely across the street.

- If you live in a busy traffic area, please give yourself plenty of time to cross the street safely.
- If your area has sidewalks, teach your child to stay on them at all times.
- Remind your child to wait for the bus or the car to come to a complete stop before approaching the vehicle.

Self-Transporting Your Child

We expect you to bring your child to school each day and to pick up your child in the afternoon. This means so much to your child. However, we do understand that there may be times when it is not possible for you to pick up your child and someone other than yourself may be needed. If this happens, we expect you to follow the guidelines below to protect your child.

Arrival

- The Teacher will greet you and your child as you arrive each day.
- In order for your child to get the most out of the Pre-K Counts experience, have your child arrive on time.
- Separating for the day may be a difficult time for you and/or your child; these are natural feelings.
 - Staff are available to support you and your child during this transition.
 - Staff will help you to get your child involved in the classroom activities.
 - Once your child is engaged in his or her work, separating will be easier for both of you.
 - Always be sure to say "Good-bye" and remind your child that you will return and when you will return.

Departure

- It is important for your child's well-being that you arrive on time to pick up your child.
- Staff will be available to greet you again at the end of your child's school day.
- All parents/guardians/emergency contacts must bring photo ID every day to ensure the safe release of children.
- Staff will not release children to anyone, including parents, who appear under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- We will not release children to anyone except a parent or legal guardian unless you have identified that person as an emergency contact.

**During arrival and departure, do not bring pets of any kind to the classroom.*

Parking

For everyone's safety, please follow the parking/drop off/pick up guidelines provided to you specific to your classroom site. This includes speed limits and designated parking spaces.

Late Pick-Up

During class time children are engaged in learning and play. They are often tired and excited to go home to see their parents and share about their busy day. It is important that your child be picked-up at their scheduled end time. If, after an hour, a child is unmet and we are unable to reach you or a designated emergency contact, we will need to contact the police to ensure your child is returned home safely.

Emergency Contacts

The people you identified on the Emergency Contact Form will be responsible to take your children to or from school if you are unable to do it yourself. It is important that you keep emergency contact information updated at all times.

- Make sure the people you identify as emergency contacts are aware that you have provided us with their name and contact information, and that they are willing to take on the responsibility.
- All emergency contacts will need to show photo identification before we release your child.
- Emergency contacts need to be people who live locally and can be reached during the day.
- If you know in advance that someone else will be picking up your child, please give staff a note in the morning identifying the person who will be picking up your child.
- Call us if there is an emergency during the day that prevents you from coming to the classroom, we will need to know who will be picking up your child.

Safe Release of Children

- Staff will not release children to anyone, including parents, who appear under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- We will not release children to anyone except a parent or legal guardian unless you have identified that person as an emergency contact.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Head Start/Early Head Start/Head Start Pre-K Counts of the Lehigh Valley Office – 610-437-6000

Classroom _____ Classroom Phone # _____

Enrollment and Engagement Specialist _____ Ext. _____

ALLENTOWN EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Police/Fire/Ambulance Dial 911	Police Non-Emergency 610-437-7751
Poison Information Center 1-800-222-1222	Valley Wide Help 610-435-7111

Hospitals

Lehigh Valley Hospital – 17th & Chew Streets, Allentown, PA

Emergency Room..... 610-969-2226	Information..... 610-402-8000
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Sacred Heart Hospital – 421 Chew Street, Allentown, PA

Emergency Room..... 610-776-4823	Information..... 610-776-4500
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St. Luke's Hospital in Allentown – 1736 Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA

Emergency Room..... 610-628-8383	Information..... 610-628-8300
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Lehigh Valley Hospital Center – 1200 Cedar Crest Boulevard, Allentown, PA

Emergency Room..... 610-402-8111	Information..... 610-402-8000
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BETHLEHEM EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Police/Fire/Ambulance Dial 911	Police Non-Emergency 610-865-7187
Poison Information Center 1-800-222-1222	Valley Wide Help 610-691-8711

Hospitals

St. Luke's Hospital, 801 Ostrum Street, Bethlehem, PA

Emergency Room..... 484-526-4500	Information..... 484-526-4000
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Lehigh Valley Hospital Muhlenberg Center, 2545 Schoenersville Road, Bethlehem, PA

Emergency Room..... 484-884-2521	Information..... 484-884-2200
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EASTON EMERGENCY INFORMATION

Police – Emergency 911	Police Non-Emergency 610-250-2282
Fire Non-Emergency 610-330-2200	Valley Wide Help 610-252-4357
Poison Information Center 1-800-222-1222	

Hospitals

Easton Hospital, 21st and Lehigh Streets, Easton, PA

Emergency Room..... 610-250-4242	Information..... 610-250-4000
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Warren Hospital, 185 Roseberry Street, Phillipsburg, NJ

Emergency Room..... 908-859-6767	Information..... 908-859-6700
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Pre-K Counts



PROGRAM

ENROLLMENT

CONSENTS

CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY
2025-2026 PROGRAM YEAR

Confidentiality is the process of protecting the privacy of information shared by and about a family and using that information only to benefit the family while enrolled in a program at Community Services for Children, Inc.

Families have the right to protection of personal information by all staff of Community Services for Children, Inc.

The following guidelines shall apply:

1. Parents/Guardians are the primary sources of information about themselves and information sought from them is limited to that which is essential in providing services to their family. Only information essential to provide services is recorded and maintained in records that are locked or otherwise electronically safeguarded.
2. Parents/Guardians have the right to view their own files by contacting the Teacher, the Early Education or Early Child Development Manager, or the Family Engagement Manager.
3. Volunteers are prohibited from reviewing family records. Interns at Community Services for Children, Inc. may review records to the extent necessary to provide services to the child/family or to participate in their training.
4. Child and family records are open only to assigned staff, funding source representatives, collaboration partners, reviewers, auditors and interns, as assigned, to the extent necessary to provide services and evaluate outcomes.
5. Information shared among staff about a family is done in a private, confidential setting. This policy is implemented with the attitude of utmost respect.
6. Families are informed of the Confidentiality Policy during program registration and/or at Family Orientation. Staff are informed of the confidentiality policy on an annual basis.
7. No verbal and written information is released to anyone outside the program without written consent from Parents/Guardians except in regard to suspected child abuse and neglect, court requests and in emergency situations.
8. Other agencies and individuals are consulted only with the family's consent, and within the limits of that consent, to exchange information which may include coordination of services and/or advocacy to benefit the family.
9. In accordance with the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), health information provided to the agency is used to verify and provide special education services; to provide referral information and to plan appropriate health services with parents/guardians. Child or Pregnant Enrollee health information is not disclosed to anyone without written consent, except where required by law; suspected child abuse and/or neglect; to public health/legal authorities to prevent or control disease; or in response to a valid court order.
10. Health information (i.e. physical, dental, immunization, allergies, and medical conditions) may be shared between collaborating school districts, collaborating health partners and providers, food vendors and Community Services for Children, Inc. for purposes of planning or determining health services and developing Child Health Plans.
11. In accordance with applicable laws, special protection is maintained to ensure child abuse related and legally restricted health information remains private. The information is securely stored electronically and/or in a locked cabinet.

CHILD ABUSE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS
PARENT AGREEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING
2025-2026 PROGRAM YEAR

Based on Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law, child abuse means intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causing bodily injury, serious physical neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation, mental injury or death through any act or failure to act by a parent or caretaker. Certain acts also constitute child abuse even if there is no resulting injury or condition. These acts are listed below:

- Kicking, biting, throwing, burning, stabbing or cutting a child
 - Unreasonably restraining or confining a child
 - Forcefully shaking, slapping or striking a child under the age of one
 - Interfering with the breathing of a child
 - Leaving a child unsupervised with a known sexual offender or predator
- ❖ Any person may make a report of child abuse if there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of abuse. It is not necessary to have proof that a child is abused or neglected before making a report.
- ❖ There are also people who must report suspected abuse- these individuals are called "mandated reporters." **Mandated reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse immediately to Pennsylvania's ChildLine based on their professional training and/or experience.**
- ❖ Every employee who works for Community Services for Children, Inc. is a mandated reporter, based on the Child Protective Services Law.
- ❖ **Reports must be made when a person has reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of abuse based on regular contact with the child in the course of the person's employment or as the person directly responsible for the care, supervision, guidance, or training of the child.**
- ❖ Programs with Community Services for Children, Inc. comply with all Federal and State laws regarding child abuse and neglect.
- ❖ If a mandated reporter fails to report a suspected case of abuse or neglect on purpose, he/she may be penalized with a misdemeanor of second degree up to a felony of second or third degree.

CHILDLINE Phone Number

1-800-932-0313

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT
2025-2026 PROGRAM YEAR

Participation in a program at Community Services for Children, Inc. includes the following:

1. A commitment to good attendance and to work with staff on attendance improvement when challenges arise.
2. Participation in all scheduled classroom and educational activities.
3. Participation in home visits, Parent-Teacher Conferences, mental health consultation services, and/or other services with assigned program staff.
4. Participation in remote program services when offered, including remote learning, home visits, Parent-Teacher Conferences, mental health consultation services, meal pick-up/delivery when in-person services are temporarily suspended.
5. Transportation in private staff cars and agency insured vehicles to and from classrooms, program locations, medical/dental providers and other sites as possible.
6. Consent to release my child to the emergency contact person(s) I have designated if I am unable to receive my child after school or in case of illness. I will provide updated information to the program when changes occur by contacting the program staff with whom I have the next contact.
7. At times, children may be photographed or videotaped individually or in a group for program activities related to the following: home, classroom or program activities, child safety, staff development training, educational curriculum use, special projects with companies, colleges, or groups to promote the program or for educational purposes, which can include promotional media such as newspapers, TV, billboards, social media or brochures. (Personal information, including name and address, will not be disclosed, without written permission from one parent/guardian). ****Your consent for your child to be photographed or videotaped included on the Registration Packet Signature Page.***
8. Educational, nutritional, medical/dental (including hearing/vision), social-emotional, and developmental screenings, as required by Head Start/Early Head Start Performance Standards, PA Pre-K Counts Statutes, Regulations and Guidelines and other related credentialing bodies.
9. Review of my child's health records such as physical exam, dental exam, immunization, allergies, and medical conditions records to ensure my child's health and well-being.
10. Consent to receive emergency medical and/or dental treatment at the nearest emergency room in case of serious illness, accident or injury and/or time does not permit my personal presence and consent. ****Your consent to your child receiving emergency medical care is included on Emergency Contact/Parent Consent form.***
11. Consent to receive important program alerts such as school closings, early dismissals, school delays, program reminders, and attendance follow-up via phone call, text message and/or e-mail through both ClassDojo and ChildPlus. I will keep the program informed of my current contact information to receive such communication. ****Details on how to remove or modify your communication preferences is available on the Emergency Contact/Parent Consent form.***

CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE
PARENT AWARENESS
2025-2026 PROGRAM YEAR

Admission to Community Services for Children, Inc., including USDA Child Nutrition Programs and the Child and Adult Care Food Program, is open to all eligible children regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. All meals served to children under the Child and Adult Care Food Program are served at no separate charge regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. There is no discrimination in admission policy, meal service or the use of facilities. In accordance with applicable Federal and State civil rights laws and regulatory requirements, you and your children, as a client of this facility, have the right:

- ❖ To be provided services at this facility and to be referred for services at other facilities without regard to your race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age or sex.
- ❖ To file a complaint of discrimination if you feel you have been discriminated against on the basis of your race, color, religious creed, handicap, ancestry, national origin, age or sex. Complaints of discrimination may be filed with any of the following:
- ❖ To file a complaint regarding meal service, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form (AD-3027), found on line at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/fdd/how-file-complaint> and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by mail, fax, or email using the contact information provided below:

Provider

Community Services for Children, Inc.
1520 Hanover Avenue
Allentown, PA 18109
610-437-6000

Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission

Executive Offices
333 Market St., 8th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101-2210
717-787-4410

Department of Public Welfare

625 Foster St. Suite 333
Harrisburg, PA 17105
717-787-2600

DPW Bureau of Equal Opportunity

Northeast Region
100 Lackawanna Avenue, 3rd Floor
Scranton, PA 18503
570-963-4376

Office of Civil Rights

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
535 Market St
Philadelphia, PA 19106
202-619-1343

USDA/CACFP Discrimination Complaints

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410
Phone: 202-720-3808
Fax: 202-690-1782
Email: program.intake@usda.gov

PA Bureau of Equal Opportunity

223 Health and Welfare Boulevard
Harrisburg, PA 17120
717-787-3336

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

CONSENT FOR DATA EXCHANGE 2025-2026

I understand that information regarding my child, _____, is confidential and may not be shared without my consent or other legal obligations.

I, _____, do consent to the exchange of information regarding my child's enrollment and progress while enrolled in programs at Community Services for Children.

Please initial below next to each data exchange:

_____ Child's name, DOB, address, emergency contacts, allergies, immunizations, medical conditions, and other information required by school districts with whom CSC is collaborating to provide services within a district building to ensure my child's safety at all times.

_____ Educational records/assessment data, and developmental/health screening data gathered while enrolled in CSC programs with the collaborating school district for the purpose of supporting transitions into Kindergarten.

_____ Enrollment status, classroom location and times with Early Intervention, Intermediate Units, or other service providers to support continuity of services.

_____ Child's name and enrollment status to the Early Learning Resource Center of Lehigh or Northampton County for the purpose of coordinating services when requested.

This consent is voluntary and I understand that I can withdraw my consent for my child at any time by sending an email to *ProgramOperations@cscinc.org*. Unless I withdraw this consent, this authorization will be in effect for the duration of my child's enrollment with Community Services for Children.

By signing below, you are confirming that you read, understand and agree to the above data exchange information as initialed.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Print Parent Name

Pre-K Counts

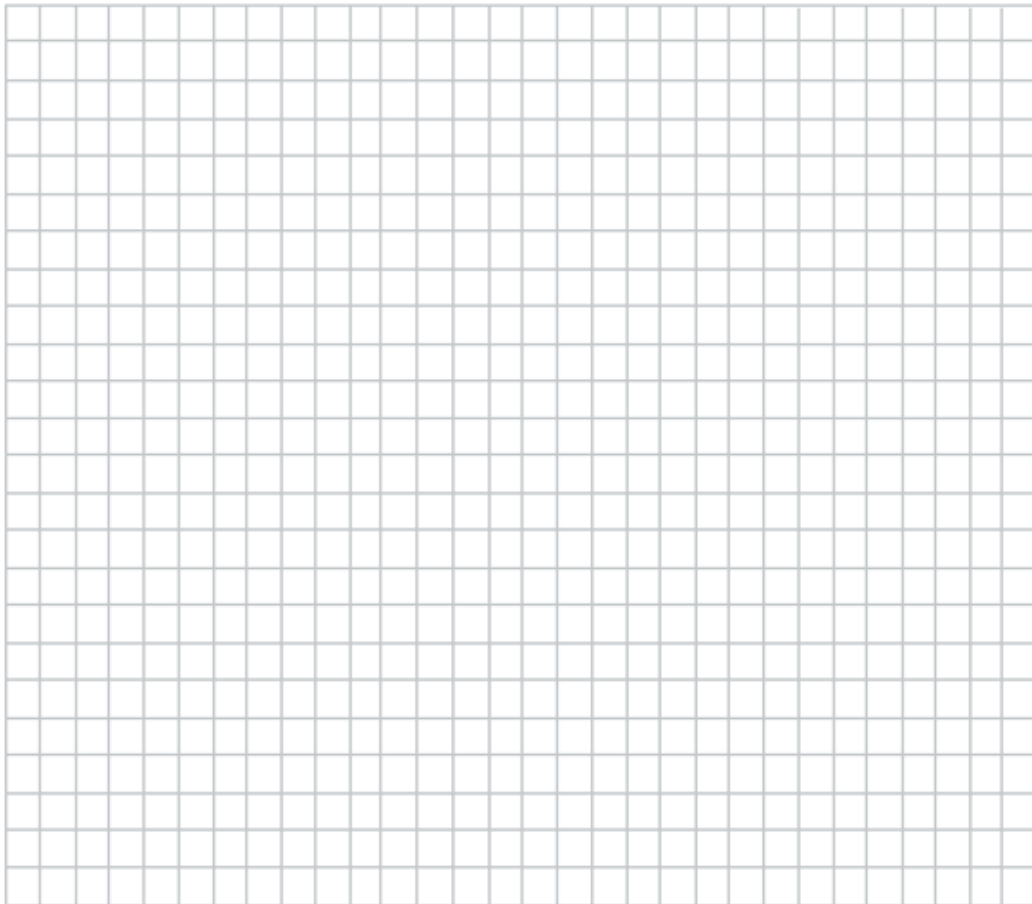
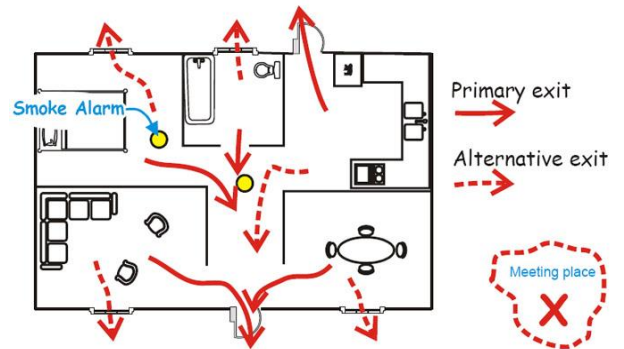


AT HOME ACTIVITIES 2025-2026

Home Fire Safety

Every family needs to develop its own escape plan because every family house and every family is different. Here are some tips you can use to develop your own Fire Escape Plan.

- ☐ Find two ways out of every room.
- ☐ Keep bedroom doors closed at night.
- ☐ Carefully check if door is warm.
- ☐ Stay low to the floor – crawl to safety.
- ☐ Pick a safe place to meet outside.
- ☐ Call 911 from the nearest phone outside.
- ☐ Do not go back in the house for anything.
- ☐ Practice the fire escape plan.



FIRE SAFETY

Home fires can start and spread quickly, which is why we all need to be careful and educated when it comes to fire safety. Just a little bit of planning can make a big difference for your family.

Top Tips

1. Working smoke alarms reduce the chances of dying in a fire by nearly 50 percent. They are a critical first step for staying safe, but in order to be effective, they have to be working properly. For the best protection, install smoke alarms on every level of your home and in every sleeping area.
2. Teach kids never to play with matches and lighters. Make a habit of placing these items up and away from young children.
3. Create and practice a home fire escape plan with two ways out of every room in case of a fire. Get a stopwatch and time how fast your family can escape. The kids will love it.
4. Children should know how to respond to the sound of a smoke alarm. Teach them to get low and get out when they hear it. A child who is coached properly ahead of time will have a better chance to be safe.
5. Use common sense in the kitchen. Limit distractions when cooking and don't leave a hot oven or stovetop unattended.
6. Blow out candles before you leave the room or before you go to sleep.



BASIC CAR SEAT SAFETY

Don't put your child at risk – buckle up the right way on every ride!

**SAFE
KIDS**
WORLDWIDE™

All children must use a car seat, booster seat or seat belt.

- My child always rides in a back seat and never in front of an airbag.
- Everyone in my car buckles up on every ride using the right car seat, booster seat or seat belt for each person's age and size.
- My child's car seat has all of its parts, labels and instructions and has never been in a crash.
- I follow the instructions for my car and my car seat so that my child is buckled in right.
- I never leave my child alone in a car.



www.safekids.org

Proud Program Supporter

GENERAL MOTORS

Babies under 2 use rear-facing car seats

- My child always rides in a back seat and never in front of an air bag.
- My child always rides in a car seat made for his or her size and age.
- My child sits facing the back of the car in his or her car seat.
- The harness straps are snug on my child, and I can't pinch the buckled strap at the shoulder.
- My child's car seat is buckled tightly in the car and doesn't move more than one inch when I pull it at the belt path.
- My child uses a bigger rear-facing car seat until he or she outgrows the harness. Many harnesses go to 35, 40 or 45 pounds.



Toddlers and big kids use forward-facing car seats

If my child is over age 2 AND has outgrown the weight and height limits for the rear-facing seat:

- My child always rides in a back seat.
- My child always rides in a car seat made for his or her size and age.
- The harness straps are snug on my child, and I can't pinch the buckled strap at the shoulder.
- My child's car seat is buckled tightly in the car and doesn't move more than one inch when I pull it at the belt path. I use the top tether designed for the car seat.
- My child uses this car seat until he or she outgrows the harness. Many harnesses go to 50 pounds or more.



Older, bigger kids use booster seats

If my child has outgrown the weight and height limit of the forward-facing car seat:

- My child always rides in a back seat.
- My child always rides on a booster seat using a lap and shoulder seat belt.
- The lap belt sits low on his or her hips, not the stomach.
- The shoulder belt is on my child's shoulder – not on the neck, under the arm or behind the back.
- The seat belt is snug, flat and comfortable on my child.
- My child may be between 8-12 years of age before the seat belt fits without a booster.



Kids ready for seat belts

If my child has outgrown the booster seat:

- My child always rides in a back seat until age 13.
- My child always uses a lap and shoulder seat belt.
- The lap belt sits low on my child's hips, not the stomach.
- The shoulder belt is on my child's shoulder – not on the neck, under the arm or behind the back.
- My child's back is firmly against the vehicle seat back, his or her knees bend at the front edge of the vehicle seat, and he or she can sit this way for the whole ride.
- The seat belt is snug, flat and comfortable on my child. If the seat belt does not fit right, my child must use a booster seat.



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Home Safety Checklist

The following checklist is designed to ensure your house is safe enough for your child. Take some time to walk around your home to check on the following safety issues.

Yes	No	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Windows have protective screens, guards, or locks.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Stairways have safety gates to prevent falls.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Harmful products are stored in containers with child-safety caps and out of reach.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All prescription and over-the-counter medicines are stored in containers with child-safety caps and out of reach.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency numbers for police, fire, rescue squad, and poison control center are kept by the telephone or stored in your cell phone.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Entrance doors have locks.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Smoke detectors are installed and working.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A working fire extinguisher is kept in an easy to find location.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There are no walls with peeling paint. Rooms with freshly painted walls have been well ventilated for at least 2-3 days.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any exposed electrical outlets have been covered.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All sharp objects (such as knives and scissors) are stored out of your child's reach.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Any heavy objects such as TVs or drawers that your child could pull over on top of him or herself are secured or have been removed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yard and play space are free of holes, stones, broken glass, nails, tools and other litter.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Candles are in solid holders and are carefully extinguished when through using.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	We have developed an emergency fire escape plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	A Basic First Aid Kit is kept in an easy to find location.

Basic First Aid Kit

Though major medical implements should be left to the professionals, basic first aid supplies will come in very handy for any household. Cuts and bruises pop up from time to time and it's important to be able to handle them quickly and with ease.



BASICS

Bandages (multiple sizes)

Non-Stick Gauze

Adhesive First Aid Kit

First Aid Cream

Tweezers (for splinters)

Ice Pack

Thermometer (in case of fever)

Aloe

MEDICINES

Calamine Lotion

Ibuprofen

Acetaminophen

EMERGENCY

Doctor's Phone Number

Emergency Contact Information

Local Hospital Information

Gather up the items you may already have. Make a list of the items you may need to purchase – all of these items can be found at the local dollar store. Use a recycled coffee can, plastic diaper wipe container, or shoe box to put all of the items together in an easy to find location.

Is your child getting enough sleep?

The American Academy of Pediatrics endorses the following guidelines to developing healthy sleep habits:

AGE	RECOMMENDATION
Infants 4 months to 12 months	12 - 16 hours (including naps)
1 to 2 years	11 – 14 hours (including naps)
3 to 5 years	10 – 13 hours (including naps)
6 to 12 years	9 – 12 hours
13 to 18 years	8 – 10 hours

Getting the right amount of sleep for your child's age on a regular basis leads to improved attention, behavior, learning, memory, emotional regulation, quality of life, and mental and physical health.

Missing as little as 30 to 60 minutes of sleep per night can have a big impact on your child's overall health and well-being. Signs that your child may not be getting enough sleep include:

- Being sleepy at the wrong time of day (e.g., after waking in the morning)
- Having trouble paying attention during the day
- Falling asleep very quickly (within a few minutes) when going to bed
- Excited or antsy at the wrong time of day (e.g., just before bedtime)
- Easily frustrated and quickly irritated
- Trouble keeping his impulses in check



If you are concerned that your child is not sleeping enough, please discuss your concern with your child's pediatrician and talk to your Family Engagement Partner about establishing a bedtime routine.

In addition to these recommendations, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests that all screens be turned off 30 minutes before bedtime and that TV, computers and other screens not be allowed in the child's bedroom.

**Adapted from materials available on the American Academy of Pediatrics and National Sleep Foundation websites.*

Help Your Child Learn to Love Reading

READ ALOUD

Research shows that the single most important activity for building successful readers is reading aloud to children.

BE A ROLE MODEL

It is important for children to see you reading signs, information on food boxes, the newspaper, coupons, etc.

LIMIT SCREEN TIME

Guide and limit the kinds of technology your child uses each day by moderating “screen time” (which includes TV, videos, DVDs, computers, video games, and handheld devices). Instead involve them in fun activities that they can explore, use their senses, and “be involved” in.

TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN

Listen and talk to your child about what they are doing and feeling. Talking with children gives them a sense of belonging and an understanding of language.

LOOK FOR BOOKS TOGETHER

Make trips to the library regular outings. Talking about books stimulates curiosity and imagination.

STOCK UP

Have a lot of different materials that have print on them available for children to play with: food boxes, junk mail, maps, coupons, magazines, and handmade books. This motivates children to want to read.

MAKING UP STORIES

Let children make up stories, let them “read the pictures” and read aloud to you.



ASK QUESTIONS

Ask questions about the stories you read. How do the characters in the story feel? What might happen next in the story? What do you remember about the story?

LEARN MORE

Ask your librarian about good books written for your child’s age and books about topics that interest your child.

USE YOUR KINDERGARTEN HERE I COME CALENDAR

Choose activities from the calendar as often as you can to encourage learning in your home.

Effective Parenting Tips

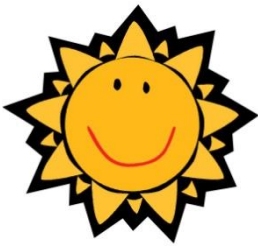
1. **Set a good example:** Children often learn how to act by observing how their parents act. For example, if parents handle frustrations well, their children will probably learn to handle their own frustrations well. If parents swear and become upset when things don't go well, their children may learn to act the same way.
2. **Verbal and physical affection:** Frequent hugging or cuddling between parents and their children is very important. Say "I love you" every day! Positive affection should be provided on a regular basis.
3. **Be consistent and predictable:** Children function best when they know what to expect. Parents should make it very clear exactly what are and are not acceptable behaviors. Management of children's behavior from one day to another should not vary according to parental mood.
4. **Relaxation Corner:** Create a cozy space with a pillow, stress ball, etc. and direct your child there when they need a few minutes to be alone and calm down. Use this instead of time out when your child needs a break, so he/she learns coping skills in moments of stress.
5. **Helpers:** Let your children help with as many everyday tasks as possible. Most children enjoy spending time helping their parents, and it can also be a good learning experience. With younger children, "helping" may involve pretend work in the same area.
6. **When-Then:** Reward your child for following through on a specific behavior, "When you finish picking up your toys, then we can read a book together."
7. **Brag Calendar:** Hang a calendar on the refrigerator or near your child's bed. Each day, write on the calendar one positive statement about your child. Read the calendar to your child often to build self-esteem.
8. **Play:** Spend time playing or being silly with your child every day. Your child will be more cooperative, your relationship will grow in a positive way, and you will be more relaxed too!

Morning Routines

Routines give children a sense of security and help them develop self-discipline. Young children need a predictable sequence to their day in order to feel secure and put at ease any worries they may have about the unknown.

Getting children out of the house on time with their clothes in order, teeth brushed, tummies full, and ready to learn can be challenging. Developing a predictable morning routine will help everyone to start the day on track.

Activity: To create a morning routine with your child, cut out the picture cards below and arrange them in the order that makes sense for your family.



Wake Up



Potty



Breakfast



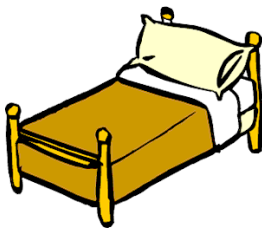
Teeth



Wash Face



Get Dressed



Make Bed



Hugs



Preschool

Bedtime Routines

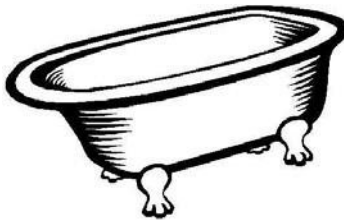
Sleep is a vital need, essential to a child's health and growth. Preschoolers generally need around 10 to 13 hours of sleep within a 24 hr. period. A nightly routine is a great way to ensure that your preschooler gets enough sleep.

Bedtime routines help children learn to transition from the busy activity of the day to settling down for sleep. Bedtime is a time to teach children how to soothe themselves and how to relax. Consistent routines can make evenings less stressful and far more fun -- for everyone!

Activity: To create a bedtime routine with your child, cut out the picture cards below and arrange them in the order that makes sense for your family.



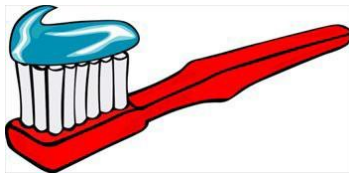
Quiet Play



Bath



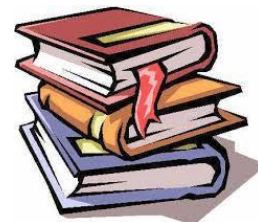
Pajamas



Teeth



Potty



Story Time



In Bed



Hugs



Lights Out

Make Mealtime a Family Time

Family meals allow your preschooler to focus on the task of eating and give you a chance to model good behaviors.

It takes a little work to bring everyone together for meals. But it's worth it and the whole family eats better.

- Start eating meals together as a family when your kids are young. This way, it becomes a habit.
- Plan when you will eat together as a family. Write it on your calendar.
- You may not be able to eat together every day. Try to have family meals most days of the week.



Make family meals enjoyable

- Focus on the meal and each other. Turn off the television. Take phone calls or texts later.
- Talk about fun and happy things. Try to make meals a stress-free time.
- Encourage your child to try foods. But, don't lecture or force your child to eat.
- Involve your child in conversation. Ask questions like:

- What made you feel really happy today?
- What did you have to eat at lunch today?
- What's your favorite veggie? Why?
- Tell me one thing you learned today.
- What made you laugh today?

*Cook together.
Eat together.
Talk together.
Make mealtime a family time.*

- Have your child help you get ready to eat. Depending on age, your child may be able to:
 - Help set the table
 - Put pets, toys, or books in another room
 - Turn off the TV
 - Pour milk (with help)
 - Put down place mats
 - Hand out napkins and silverware
 - Pick flowers for the table
 - Clear the table
 - Wipe the table

Make Food Fun!

Picky eating is temporary and there are many things you can do to deal with picky eating in a positive way. One way is to make food fun!

Get creative in the kitchen:

- Name a food your child helps create. Make a big deal of serving "Dawn's Salad" or "Peter's Sweet Potatoes" for dinner.
- Cut a food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.
- Encourage your child to invent and help prepare new snacks or sandwiches. For example, make your own trail mixes from dry cereal and dried fruit.
- Have your child make towers out of whole-grain crackers, spell words with pretzel sticks, or make funny faces on a plate using different types of fruit.

- Jazz up the taste of vegetables with low-fat dressings or dips. Try hummus or bean spread as a dip for veggies.

Science

Technology

Engineering

Math

Did you know that when you cook a meal at home you are a scientist? And you've become a mathematician and maybe even an engineer? Maybe technology was used to look up a recipe? This is all happening while you are doing an everyday task!

Your children are very much the same. Everything they do involves learning, and much of the learning involves science, technology, engineering and math . . . referred to as **STEM**.

So how do you "teach" these things? At this age, children are learning by trial and error. They try something. If it works – they celebrate; if it doesn't work, they need to be encouraged to try it again in a different way!

That's what an engineer does. You can tell them they did a great job and that now they can try to do it another way that might work better. It is in the trying that they are learning.

Technology in the classroom



Every interaction you have with your child is an opportunity for them to learn something. So work at this at home by asking your child questions, even if you do not know the answer!

Encourage

your child to think creatively. Whenever possible, try to find answers together by looking them up or experimenting.

Take time as often as possible to stop by your classroom. Look around the room and ask the teacher about things you see...or, ask your child to tell you about pictures or projects that you see!

Science

Technology

Engineering

Math

Kid Friendly STEM Fruit Smoothie

Makes: 2 servings

Ingredients:

2 cups fat free or low fat milk

½ cup frozen fruit (peaches, berries, or mango)

1 small banana

Directions: Blend all ingredients in a blender until smooth.

S = blend liquid and solid to make liquid **T** = blender, try mixing it with a spoon

E = try making it with different fruits **M** = 2 cups + 1 cup + 1 banana = how much?

CYBERSAFETY

The internet is a wonderful tool that has opened up a world of information for anyone who has access to a computer. Even very young children can learn to use a computer and access fun, educational programs. Parents must teach them to use technology safely, right from the start.



The basics of Cyber Safety begin with you. Model what you want your children to do. If you are on your phone or computer many hours a day, and spend little time interacting with other people, including your children, they will want to do that, too. If you are too engrossed in your technology to respond to your child when they speak to you, your child will begin ignoring you when you talk to them, too. Your Head Start child is a little young to be using the internet, but there are things to teach them now that will help them learn that there are rules and that those rules are created to keep them safe. Here are some very basic messages to begin to teach even your preschooler:

Always get permission from your parents before using the computer or internet, and get an adult to type in the address in the address bar.

Never give out your name, age, where you live or other information unless you are told to do so by your parents or teacher.

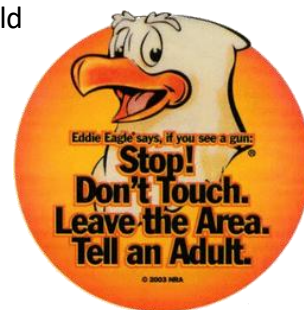
Do not give your user name or password to anyone, not even your best friend or another family member, without your parent's permission.

For more detailed information on Cyber Safety, go to www.attorneygeneral.gov and search for Cyber Safety.

GUN SAFETY

Just as important as teaching your child to safely cross the street, gun safety should be part of every family's safety education. Children are exposed to guns on TV and through toy guns all of the time. So they think guns are safe and fun. Help them learn that what they see on TV is not real, but that real guns can hurt them. It is important to teach your child some very basic rules to keep them safe if they ever come across a gun:

- ✓ STOP
- ✓ DON'T TOUCH
- ✓ LEAVE THE AREA
- ✓ TELL AN ADULT



Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke is smoke from burning tobacco products, such as cigarettes, cigars, or pipes. There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure; even brief exposure can be harmful to health. Children can suffer health and behavior problems from being around parents and caregivers who smoke.

Risks	Preventing Risk
<p>Exposure to secondhand smoke during pregnancy increase risk to both you and your baby, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Miscarriage○ Low birth weight○ Premature birth○ Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) <p>In children, secondhand smoke causes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ear infections○ More frequent and severe asthma attacks○ Respiratory symptoms (for example, coughing, sneezing, and shortness of breath)○ Respiratory infections (bronchitis and pneumonia)○ A greater risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)	<p>You can protect yourself and your family from secondhand smoke by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Quitting smoking if you are not already a nonsmoker○ Not allowing anyone to smoke anywhere in or near your home○ Not allowing anyone to smoke in your car, even with the windows down○ Making sure your children's day care center and schools are tobacco-free○ Seeking out restaurants and other places that do not allow smoking (if your state still allows smoking in public areas)○ Teaching your children to stay away from secondhand smoke○ Being a good role model by not smoking or using any other type of tobacco

Ready to quit smoking?

Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW ([1-800-784-8669](tel:1-800-784-8669)) for support in quitting, including free quit coaching, a free quit plan, free educational materials, and referrals to local resources.

**Adapted from materials available on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website and in the Nurturing the Families of the World: Nurturing Parenting Easy Reader Handbook.*

Substance Misuse

Substance misuse refers to the inappropriate use of any type of drug, both legal and illegal. This includes medications prescribed by a doctor. When parents or caregivers misuse substances, children are impacted.

Risks	Preventing Risks
<p>Exposure to substance misuse, including prescription drugs, during pregnancy increase risk to your baby, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stillbirth• Preterm delivery• Birth defects• Developmental delays• Challenging behaviors• Neonatal abstinence syndrome (NAS) <p>Children who grow up with a parent who misuses substances are more likely to experience the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abuse• Neglect• Child welfare referral• Foster care placement	<p>You can help to keep your children drug free by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrate caring.• Talk to your children about their day and activities.• Raise children without any violence.• Discuss drugs, their dangers and ways to avoid them with your children not to your children.• If you drink, model appropriate drinking.• No drinking under the age of 21 means No drinking.• Do not have or allow illegal drugs in your home. Keep prescription and over the counter drugs in a locked box and out of the reach of children.• Don't back off from your values. Stand your ground.• Say "yes" to a healthy lifestyle.• Talk with and listen to your children.

What is addiction?

When people who use drugs can't stop taking a drug even if they want to, it's called addiction. Even when a person is aware of the harm the drug is causing, the urge to use again is too strong to resist. Addiction is a disease of the brain. Drugs change the way the brain works and cause problems like mood swings, memory loss, even trouble thinking and making decisions.

Ready to get help?

Call 1-800-662-HELP (4357) at any time for drug and counseling treatment near you. Substance abuse services available to children and adults across Pennsylvania can also be found on the following website: <http://www.dhs.pa.gov/citizens/substanceabuseservices>

**Adapted from materials available on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECKLC) website, Easy-to-Read Drug Facts available at easyread.drugabuse.gov and in the Nurturing the Families of the World: Nurturing Parenting Easy Reader Handbook.*

Pre-K Counts acknowledges that parents are their child's first and most important teachers! You can help us keep the ball rolling by continuing to teach your child at home!

For some ideas that are fun and easy to do at home, go online to papromiseforchildren.com. Here you will find the calendar pictured below, as well as many other informative articles and activities.



**The [Kindergarten Here I Come! Activity Guide](#) for families of three and four year olds are intended to get them ready academically and emotionally for Kindergarten.*

**The activities are based on the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. You can download a copy online or request a hard copy!*

Here are some samples of fun things you will find:

*Play shape and color hunt with your child. Ask your child to “find something in the house that is shaped like a circle.” Or, “find something that is blue.” Do the same thing with other shapes and colors.

*Use stuffed animals or dolls to act out things your family likes to do together.

*Look through magazines or catalogs with your child for pictures of children doing different things. Talk about each picture. “What is the child doing in this picture?”

*Take your child to the grocery store. Look at apples and talk about the different colors, shapes and sizes. Use words like same and different.

Developmental Stage: Preschooler

Between the ages of 3 to 6 years, the preschooler reaches out to the world for new experiences, friends, and accomplishments.

Areas	Common Behaviors and Skills
Large Muscle Development (Gross Motor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Takes longer steps when running and walking.• Catches large ball.• Hops on one foot.
Small Muscle Development (Fine Motor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can draw, use scissors and begin to color.• Can begin to read.• Copies shapes.• Can paint with broad strokes.
Intellectual Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is the period of functional language by learning objects and people with symbols.• Asks a lot of questions about names of objects and activities <i>"What is that?"</i>• Asks questions about purpose: <i>"Why does it rain?"</i>
Language Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vocabulary grows from 900 words at three years to 2,000 words between 5 and 6 years.• By the age of five, uses complete sentences.• Uses "because, how, and why" to interpret cause and effect.• Children love to giggle with "toilet talk."
Social-Emotional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children are highly social and want to play with other children.• Children initiate activities due to the need to gain mastery.• If children are made to feel stupid or silly about their activities, feelings of guilt can develop that last a lifetime.• Children play and have imaginary friends.• Most preschooler boys play with boys and girls play with girls around the age of 6 years.• Night time bed wetting can occur.• Fears can develop about monsters and scary people• Masturbation is normal.

Steps in Establishing a Nurturing Bedtime Routine

- Identify a consistent time your child will be going to bed.
- Make a nice, relaxing bath time part of the night routine for going to bed.
- Dress your child in clothes especially for bed time.
- Help your child get dressed for sleep in their bedroom, not in other rooms of the house.
- Have your child brush their teeth every night as part of the nurturing bedtime routine.
- Spend time with your child reading stories.
- Choose bed time stories that are happy and pleasing – books which add comfort, not discomfort.
- When you're finished reading, tell your child it's time to go to bed.
- Tuck your child in and sing a song or tell your child a "power story" by highlighting all of their efforts or accomplishments of the day!



If your child should begin to cry during the night, go into their room and find out what the problem is.

**Adapted from materials available in the Nurturing the Families of the World: Nurturing Parenting Easy Reader Handbook.*

Understanding and Handling Stress

Good Stress...

The emotional response to the normal demands of life.

Bad Stress (or distress)...

When the demands of life cause great suffering and pain.

Tips on How to Handle Stress...

- Exercise.
- Take hot baths.
- Learn to relax.
- Eat healthy foods.
- Have a positive attitude and outlook.
- Set realistic expectations for yourself.
- Feel good about yourself.
- Get organized.
- Have friends!
- Have a sense of humor!

Try this...

Identify five stressors (things that cause stress) in your life:

What is one thing you can do differently to prevent these stressors from affecting the quality of your life?

Identify five stressors in your children's lives:

What can you do to help your children reduce their stress?

**Adapted from materials available in the Nurturing the Families of the World: Nurturing Parenting Easy Reader Handbook.*

Helping Children Handle Their Feelings

Here are some tips for helping your children handle their feelings...

- Let children know that feelings are okay.
- Label the feeling you see or think you see.
- Encourage your children to talk about how they are feeling.
- Ask questions but don't tell children not to feel that way.
- Brainstorm what, if anything can be done.
- Honor children's desires.
- Teach children appropriate ways to express their feelings.
- PRAISE your children when they express their feelings appropriately!

Empathy

Empathy is the ability of parents to care about their children.

Parents with Empathy...

- Help their children get their needs met.
- Try to figure out what their children are feeling.
- Hold and rock children when they need to be comforted.
- Try to understand what their children are thinking.
- Respond to their children in a caring way.

Try this...

Children learn empathy from watching their parents from the way their parents treat them.
Develop a plan for building empathy by completing the following statements:

1. Things I can do to model empathy are...

2. One non-empathic behavior I do that I definitely want to stop is:

3. What is one thing that you can do instead to model show empathy?

**Adapted from materials available in the Nurturing the Families of the World: Nurturing Parenting Easy Reader Handbook.*

Rewards and Punishments

A reward is a consequence that helps teach and guide children to behave properly. Rewards are a necessary part of discipline to guide and teach children right from wrong. A reward lets children know they have pleased their parents.

There are five major techniques that work well as rewards...

1. Praise
 - Telling children they are special is praise for “being!”
 - Telling children you like their behavior is praise for “doing!”
2. Nurturing Touch
 - Gentle hugs, back rubs, holding and gently rocking your child are all nurturing touches!
3. Privileges
 - Staying up a little later, extra time watching TV or playing video games, or an extra story before bed time are all privileges.
4. Objects
 - Almost anything ranging from stickers to toys can be object rewards.
5. Allowance
 - Use allowance with older children for the purpose of teaching them how to manage money.

Punishment...Is a negative consequence that helps teach and guide children to behave appropriately. It is a way of guiding children and teaching them right from wrong.

Here are five types of punishment that work well...

1. Calm down time in a safe quiet space within your eyesight. An appropriate length of time is typically one minute per year in age.
2. Being grounded is being confined to the yard or home for a brief period of time.
3. Disappointment from parents is a statement or look of concern.
4. Pay back. If you make a mess, you clean it up.
5. Loss of a privilege. If you misuse a privilege, you lose it and need to earn it back.

Communicating Thoughts and Feelings

The key to healthy communication is to communicate your thoughts and feelings in a way that does not purposefully hurt someone, or encourage someone to think less of themselves.

We are responsible for the way we feel.

I statements are expressions about me and are clear statements about how I feel, think or need.

- "I am angry."
- "I need a hug."
- "I want some quiet time."

You messages are about someone else. When you use you messages to put the blame on someone else, you do not accept responsibility for you own feelings, thoughts or needs.

- "You make me angry."
- "He made me feel upset."
- "She made me feel sad."

Appropriate Use of You Messages

You messages are used appropriately in five ways:

1. To give choices.
"Carson, you have a choice. You can clean your room now, or you can clean your room later. However, if your room is not cleaned by 6:00PM, you can't watch TV tonight. It's your choice."
2. To give praise.
"You must feel very proud."
"You did that so well!"
3. To gain clarification.
"You don't seem to like the movie."
4. To ask questions.
"Are you hungry?"
5. To reflect feelings.
"Darlinda, you seem to be feeling very sad."



Praising Children and Their Behavior

Praise is a verbal or non-verbal way of letting children know how proud parents are of them or their efforts.

Praise can be...

- a compliment,
- a facial expression,
- or a form of gentle touch.

Research shows that children who are praised often...

- Have a positive self-worth,
- treat others in a positive way, ○
- are more popular in school, ○ get
- better grades,
- and feel good because they pleased their parents!

There are two types of praise. Praise for **being** and praise for **doing**.

1. Praise for being lets children know parents value them for who they are!
2. Praise for doing lets children know parents value them for what they do! Use praise

for being and doing separately. Don't put the two types together!

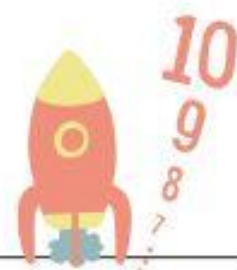
Saying, "I really love you because you try so hard" lets children think you only love them when they try hard.

Steps in Praising:

1. Focus your attention on the child.
2. Move close to the child, if possible.
3. Try to get on the child's level.
4. Gently touch your child.
5. Look Pleasant.
6. Offer your praise.
7. Offer a hug.

**Adapted from materials available in the Nurturing the Families of the World: Nurturing Parenting Easy Reader Handbook.*

LET'S TALK ABOUT MATH



EVERYDAY FUN WITH COUNTING

Research finds that having a strong foundation in early math can lead to higher achievement in both math and reading later in school. Starting from birth, young children benefit from hearing number words and other math language, and later, from practicing math skills that involve counting during daily activities with parents and caregivers.

In the first five years, your child learns about counting by:

- Hearing the number sequence and, with experience, learning number names and repeating them in order.
- Observing adults counting objects and, in time, practicing counting by saying the number sequence themselves. With lots of experience, children learn the rules of counting and can count a group of objects accurately.
- Talking about the amount of things by using number words or words like “more” or “a lot.”
- Using counting in simple math activities: When you ask questions like, “How many will be left if we take one away? Could we count to find out?” this helps children begin to think about counting as a way to solve everyday number problems, including simple adding and subtracting and comparing quantities.

It's fun and easy to help your child learn about counting as you talk, play and explore together. When you count objects with your child, describe the amount of things, and use counting to solve number problems in daily routines, your child learns important early math skills.

HAVE FUN WITH MATH: PLAYFUL PARENT-CHILD COUNTING ACTIVITIES

0-12 MONTHS

Use numbers as you go about your day together. Count the steps as you walk up or down them while holding your baby. Sing simple number songs like “One, two, buckle your shoe.” Count your baby's toes when you're changing his diaper.

12- 24 MONTHS

Play “silly stacks” with your toddler. Count as you or your toddler stacks blocks. Stack two blocks or objects and then ask your toddler, “Do you want one more?” Keep offering “one more” for your child to add to the stack. This teaches your child the meaning of “one” and “more”—both important math concepts.

24-36 MONTHS

Make counting part of everyday routines. At the grocery store, ask your toddler to help you count out 3 green apples or 2 boxes of pasta and put them in the shopping cart. Before putting your toddler to bed, ask if she wants 2 kisses or 3 kisses. Count aloud as you give each kiss.

3-5 YEARS

Take a math walk on the way to the bus. As you walk, play a game where you and your child need to take “4 big steps,” find “6 pebbles” or touch “7 green leaves.” Ask and work together to solve “how many” questions, such as “How many steps from the front door to the sidewalk?” Pose a simple number problem, such as “Grandma is coming to dinner. How many plates should we put on the table?”

YOU CAN FIND MORE TIPS LIKE THESE—AS WELL AS VIDEOS, INFORMATION, AND MORE—AT
TALKINGISTEACHING.ORG OR ZEROTOTHREE.ORG.



ZERO TO THREE
Early connections last a lifetime



TALK, READ AND SING TOGETHER EVERY DAY!

TIPS FOR USING LANGUAGE AT HOME AND IN THE COMMUNITY

Here are eight things you can do every day to help your child learn your family's language and become successful in school!

USE YOUR NATIVE LANGUAGE AT HOME

The easiest, most important step is to use your home language every day. Many families worry that using their home language will confuse their children. In fact, children can easily learn several languages at the same time. They have an easier time learning English when they have a strong foundation in their first language.



TELL STORIES AND SING SONGS

Your family has a rich heritage to pass on to your children. Stories, chants, rhymes, poems, sayings, and songs from your childhood are an important part of their heritage. Share these with your children and have fun!

TELL STORIES AND SHARE BOOKS TOGETHER

Read a book to your child every day—in whatever language you feel most comfortable—beginning at birth. And if you don't feel comfortable reading words, you can point out the pictures in the book and talk with your child about them.

CHECK OUT MATERIALS IN YOUR LANGUAGE FROM THE LIBRARY

Look for books, DVDs, and music in your language. If they don't have what you want, ask the library staff to help you find what you need.

TALK ABOUT YOUR TRADITIONS AND CULTURE

Visit your child's classroom or child care provider. Share your language and traditions, including family songs and games. Encourage your child to retell family stories and share your heritage with their teacher, friends, and others.

LOOK FOR ACTIVITIES IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Attend cultural festivals and concerts and meet other families who speak your home language. Join with other families and organize your own events!

CONTINUE USING YOUR HOME LANGUAGE AS YOUR CHILDREN GROW OLDER

Sometimes children start to prefer English as they get older. Talk with your children about the benefits of speaking two languages. Continue using your language, even if your children respond in English so you keep your lines of communication open.

DON'T FORGET THAT YOU ARE KEY TO MAINTAINING YOUR HOME LANGUAGE

Parents and other family members are the most important people in your children's lives. What you value, your children will learn to value. Help them learn that your family's language and culture are something to be proud of and to treasure. Remember the benefits of your home language and remain committed to continuing to use it, no matter your child's age.



Use this Plan as a general guide.

● These food plans are based on average needs. Do not be concerned if your child does not eat the exact amounts suggested. Your child may need more or less than average. For example, food needs increase during growth spurts.

● Children's appetites vary from day to day. Some days they may eat less than these amounts; other days they may want more. Offer these amounts and let your child decide how much to eat.

Food group	2 year olds	3 year olds	4 and 5 year olds	What counts as:
Fruits 	1 cup	1 - 1½ cups	1 - 1½ cups	½ cup of fruit? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped fruit ½ cup 100% fruit juice ½ medium banana 4-5 large strawberries
Vegetables 	1 cup	1½ cups	1½ - 2 cups	½ cup of veggies? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped vegetables 1 cup raw leafy greens ½ cup vegetable juice 1 small ear of corn
Grains Make half your grains whole 	3 ounces	4 - 5 ounces	4 - 5 ounces	1 ounce of grains? 1 slice bread 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal flakes ½ cup cooked rice or pasta 1 tortilla (6" across)
Protein Foods 	2 ounces	3 - 4 ounces	3 - 5 ounces	1 ounce of protein foods? 1 ounce cooked meat, poultry, or seafood 1 egg 1 Tablespoon peanut butter ¼ cup cooked beans or peas (kidney, pinto, lentils)
Dairy Choose low-fat or fat-free 	2 cups	2 cups	2½ cups	½ cup of dairy? ½ cup milk 4 ounces yogurt ¾ ounce cheese 1 string cheese

Some foods are easy for your child to choke on while eating. Skip hard, small, whole foods, such as popcorn, nuts, seeds, and hard candy. Cut up foods such as hot dogs, grapes, and raw carrots into pieces smaller than the size of your child's throat—about the size of a nickel.

There are many ways to divide the Daily Food Plan into meals and snacks. View the "Meal and Snack Patterns and Ideas" to see how these amounts might look on your preschooler's plate at www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html.




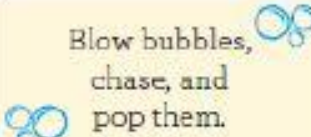





Get Moving and Eat Healthy!



United States Department of Agriculture

Move, Play, Have Fun!

Try these fun activities below. Cross them off as you and your family enjoy each one. Make up your own! How many can you do?

 Ride bikes or scooters.	Play "Simon Says."	Go swimming, toss water balloons, or run through the sprinkler.	Walk to school.
Play hopscotch.	Blow bubbles, chase, and pop them. 	Play with a hula hoop.	Kick a soccer ball back and forth. 
Play "Catch 1-2-3." Count aloud how many times the ball is caught.	Play sock basketball (toss rolled socks into a laundry basket).	Race to the nearest tree or other landmark.	Jump rope.
Take a walk after dinner and look for a specific shape, like circles or triangles.	Hop! Place a broomstick on the floor. Stand on one side with both feet together. Jump over the stick and back 10 times.	Play volleyball with balloons. Keep a balloon afloat by hitting it back and forth. 	Play "ABC Jacks." With each jumping jack, say the letters of the alphabet in order.
Say the days of the week as you touch your toes.	 Go on a bug (or leaf, or different-colored cars) hunt.	Have a treasure hunt and see how fast everyone can find clues.	Play some music and have a family dance party.
Play on a playground.	Take the dolls (or dog or action figures) for a walk.	Play tag.	Rake leaves, build a snowman, sweep, or garden. 
 Walk through the mall on a rainy day.	Choose your own activity: _____	Play "Follow the Leader."	Go skating.



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<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>

Parents

Children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Make family time "active" time.

Choose Healthy. Choose WIC!



WIC provides free nutrition information, healthy foods, breastfeeding support and referrals to eligible pregnant and postpartum women, infants and children under age 5.

Get started online at
PAWIC.COM or call:

1-800-WIC-WINS
(1-800-942-9467)



"WIC has helped me make healthier choices for my family, and I can save on my grocery bill." -- WIC Mom

Even if you receive SNAP, MA or TANF, you may also apply for WIC.

Foster children under age 5 qualify for WIC.

WIC helps working and unemployed families.

Pregnant?
No need to wait.
Apply now!



HEWICOR.010 Rev. 7/25

WIC Income Guidelines

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	*MONTHLY INCOME (Approx.)
1	\$2,413
2	\$3,261
3	\$4,109
4	\$4,957

For each additional family member, add \$848.

*Income (before taxes) effective July 1, 2025.

For each unborn infant, add one to household size. WIC does not require proof of citizenship.

PA WIC is funded by the USDA.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.