

August 2019

Fun activities, aligned with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards, to help prepare children for school success!

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## We're in an early learning program

### Babies

Use a song to describe every day activities. The tune of "London Bridges Falling Down" is an easy one to use--just insert the description of what is being done. "Now we're putting on your socks, on your socks, on your socks. Now we're putting on your socks, my dear baby." Sing and sign the song to your baby, while holding her hand to your throat so she can feel the vibration. If your child avoids music, make picture cards or signs and braille to make task cards. Picture cards posted in the area where the tasks are done. If she responds to movement, add fun gestures that make the activity more enjoyable. [Read more.](#)

### Toddlers

Use a wading pool (or the bath tub) and different sized cups to encourage your toddler to pour water from one place to the next. Help him select the big cup or the little cup, and talk about full and empty. Ask him to make predictions about what will happen when he moves the containers. Will the large cup of water fit in the small cup? How many small cups fill the large cup? Encourage him to move his hands to explore the containers and feel the water moving. Explore what the water sounds like/feels like when it's dumped out of the container. [Read more.](#)

### Preschoolers

What is your preschooler's favorite book about Kindergarten? Visit your local library to discover books with different characters who go to Kindergarten or check out the 11 family recommended books about going to school (below). What does he like best about each book? Try to find books that show a child similar to your preschooler in the illustrations. If your preschooler uses a wheelchair or wears glasses, he will enjoy seeing similar characters in the books. If your preschooler is especially concerned about a certain aspect of school, try to find a book or write a story that directly addresses that concern. [Read more.](#)

### Kindergartners

Make giant ice-cubes by using clean yogurt, cottage cheese or sour cream plastic containers filled with water, then set into the freezer. Add a small item to the water filled container, like a small toy or other item. Have your kindergartner decide what item will be added. Is it too big or will it fit? Can she see the item once the ice is frozen? Once it's frozen, remove it from the container and use the ice block as ice puck to kick around in the grass or hard top (such as a sidewalk). How fast will it melt? What happens when it melts? Provide your kindergartner opportunities to touch the containers, feel the water before and after freezing, feel the weight and compare the containers empty, filled with water, and filled with ice. [Read more.](#)

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## 10 Books About Going to School

*The Night Before Preschool* by Natasha Wing  
*Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come!* by Nancy Carlson

*First Day Jitters* by Julie Danneberg  
*Countdown Kindergarten* by Alison McGhee  
*Do I Have to go to School?* by Pat Thomas

*If You Take a Mouse to School* by Laura Numeroff

*The Bus for Us* by Suzanne Bloom

*The Kissing Hand* by Audrey Penn

*My Teacher Sleeps in School* by Leatie Weiss

*Dinosaur Roar!* by Henrietta Stickland

*My Kindergarten* by Rosemary Wells

[Print this list!](#)



## Featured Article: What Type of Toys are Best?

Families have a lot of options when it comes to choosing toys for their child, but which type of toys are best? [Researchers from Penn State University, University of Delaware and Temple University](#) found that old fashioned toys, like blocks or shape sorters, can help families support their child's development.

While electronic toys that have music or make sounds may be entertaining for children, the study found the parent-child interactions with electronic toys differ from those with traditional toys in important ways. With traditional type of toys, parents are more likely to words to describe activities and directions (like, "Can you put the block inside the cup?") which help children learn skills needed for kindergarten.

Children's interactions with electronic toys tended to be more adult-driven, and some features may be more distracting than teaching.

When considering a toy for a child, think of the different ways a child can use the toy when playing. If there are only one or two ways to use the toy—and imagination and creativity is limited—then it may be better to select a different toy. You can also think how everyday household items may be used in playing and learning.

**Box:** Babies and toddlers can put items, like blocks, inside the box, then empty it. This teaches basic science skills! Help your child count the items, and you've just added math skills.

**Jump Rope:** Preschoolers and kindergartners can lay the rope on the ground and practice walking the line. This teaches large motor skills. Help your child make shapes or letters with the rope on the ground and you've just added the basics for literacy.

[PA's Promise for Children](#) has additional activities to do with young children to help them learn. [When I Play, I Learn](#) has fun activities using everyday items.

[Watch the video from Child Trends to see the difference between traditional and electronic toys.](#)



[Read this article online.](#)

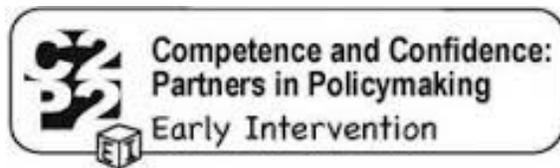
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## Apply Now for Competence and Confidence: Partners in Policymaking, Early Intervention

Families of children who receive Infant-Toddler Early Intervention or Pre-School Early Intervention services are invited to apply to be a part of ***Competence and Confidence: Partners in Policymaking, Early Intervention (C2P2 EI)***.

Families will learn to navigate the Pennsylvania

Early Intervention System, identify best practice supports and connect with community resources.



Applicants should be Pennsylvania family members who:

- Have a child—infant to school age—who receives Early Intervention services.
- Desire to advocate for themselves and others by building leadership skills.
- Are willing to COMMIT TO ALL FOUR 2-day trainings. Training are to be held in Harrisburg and will occur October 11-12, December 6-7, March 6-7, and April 3-4.

Travel and child care expenses are reimbursed, and meals and overnight lodging (for those traveling 40+ miles) are available. Please consider applying and share the [flyer](#) and [application](#) with families and friends. Contact Cathy Rocca-Meier at 215-204-1772 or [cathyRM@temple.edu](mailto:cathyRM@temple.edu) for more information.

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## Early Learning GPS: New Look, Still Great Information

Pennsylvania's Early Learning GPS has a new look, but still has a lot of great information and resources for families and caregivers.

The Early Learning GPS can help you set the right course for your child's success in kindergarten and beyond.



Choose between the infant, toddler or preschooler quiz and find 10 questions about your child. Get information about your child's brain, their development, you and your child, and when your child is not with you. At the end of the quiz, you'll get a list of helpful resources.

You can stop the quiz at any time and jump right to the resources! Responses are not recorded and you don't give any personal information about yourself or your child to take the quiz or get the resources.

Ready to start the quiz? [Visit www.earlylearninggps.com](http://www.earlylearninggps.com).

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# What Early Learning Resource Centers Can Do for You

Pennsylvania's Early Learning Resources Centers, or ELRCs, are a single point-of-contact for families, early learning service providers, and communities to gain information and access services that support high-quality child care and early learning programs.



An ELRC can help you find the best child care for your child. They offer links to or information about services like:

- Individualized list of child care programs based on a child's specific needs
- Child Care Works, Pennsylvania's child care subsidy program
- Keystone STARS, Pennsylvania's quality improvement program for child care providers
- PA Pre-K Counts and Head Start
- Early Intervention Services
- Family Centers
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- And other services

To find your ELRC and additional information, visit [www.raiseyourstar.org](http://www.raiseyourstar.org) and search by your county.

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## Parenting Dad Style

How moms and dads support each other early on can impact their parenting later.

A [study from Ohio State University](#) finds that how a new mom reacts to her partner's early interactions with their baby may affect his parenting quality later on. Researchers found that dads did not perform as well as a parent to their 9-month-old child if the dads felt their partner was critical of their parenting skills six months earlier.

The researchers said that both moms and dads need to be supportive to each other in those early months after their first baby is born. Both parents often feel vulnerable because they are still developing their identities as parents. The study suggests both parents keep communication open and not be so quick to criticize.



ZERO TO THREE has a 4-part web series that explores why dads matter and what matters to dads.

- [I'm Going to be a Dad?!](#)
- [What is a Dad?](#)
- [Am I a Good Dad?](#)
- [For Our Kids](#)

Pennsylvania families may also have access to the Promoting Responsible Fatherhood program. [Contact your Early Learning Resource Center for more information.](#)

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## Is Your Baby Hungry or Full?

Even if they can't talk yet, babies have all kinds of ways to tell us when they're hungry and when they've had enough.

In [this video from healthychildren.org](#), learn all about the practice of responsive feeding and how to understand, recognize, and respond to your baby's hunger or fullness cues. You can practice responsive feeding when breastfeeding, bottle feeding and when providing solid foods.



## August is National Immunization Awareness Month

We all need shots (also called vaccinations or immunizations) to help protect us from serious diseases. Shots can prevent serious diseases like the flu, measles, and pneumonia. It's important to know which shots you need and when to get them.



Everyone age 6 months and older needs to get a flu vaccine every year. Many other shots work best when they are given at certain ages.

- If you have a child age 6 or younger, [find out which shots your child needs](#).
- Use [this chart](#) for adults to see if you are up to date on your shots.
- If you are pregnant, [check out this recommended immunization schedule](#).

Talk to your doctor or nurse to make sure that everyone in your family gets the shots they need.

What to do if you can't afford vaccinations for your child? The [PA Vaccines for Children Program](#) provides vaccines at no cost to children who might not otherwise be vaccinated because of inability to pay. You can also apply for the [PA Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#) that includes coverage like vaccines.

## A family activity that encourages healthy eating

How can your child participate in a valuable learning experience, while having family fun? Where can you get the freshest fruits and vegetables for your family without having to dig or plant? Try a Pick Your Own farm near you!

Children of all ages can help pick fruits and vegetables. Helping also mean they're more likely to try an unfamiliar fruit or vegetable!



Pick Your Own farms allow families to pick and purchase fruits and vegetables that some one else has been planted. There are several locations throughout Pennsylvania where families can pick their own fruits and vegetables. How much you purchase depends on how much you can pick! [Learn more](#).

## August 1-7: World Breastfeeding Week

Having a new baby is an exciting time for a family. By choosing to breastfeed, moms are providing their baby with food that is uniquely made for him and benefits his health and well-being. Breastfeeding is a special gift to a baby that only a mom can provide.

The WIC Program is available to answer any questions and help with any breastfeeding challenges a mom may face. [Get information](#) about how the WIC Program can help moms reach their breastfeeding goals with a little loving support.

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## Starting Kindergarten in the Fall?

Will your preschooler enter Kindergarten in the fall of 2019? [Sign up for the FREE monthly Kindergarten, Here I Am eNews!](#) Each month get activities, tips and resources you can use to help your kindergartner prepare for and have a successful Kindergarten year.

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## Our Favorite Pinterest Pins



[Ten \(Quick and Easy\) Toddler Lunch Ideas](#)  
[22 Kids Activities to Make Bath Time Fun](#)  
[Button sorting cups for toddlers & preschoolers](#)  
[Books for kids who love cars and trucks](#)

Are you following the [Yummy Tummy](#) board on Pinterest?

The PA Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) provides families access to high quality services to prepare children for school and life success.

Find more information about Quality Early Learning in Pennsylvania  
[Pennsylvania Department of Education](#) | [Pennsylvania Department of Human Services](#)  
[Pennsylvania Keys to Quality](#) | [Pennsylvania's Promise for Children](#)  
[Early Intervention Technical Assistance](#)

We are where you are.

