National Awareness Campaigns

**February**

**National Children’s Dental Health Month**
Have children brush their teeth daily and rinse their teeth by drinking water after eating. Use the ECELS Oral Health Self-Learning Module available online at www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org. National Tooth Fairy Day is February 28.

**National Child Passenger Safety Week**
February 11-17, 2007. Check whether all trips to and from child care are safe rides — whether provided by the program or by parents. Proper use of age-appropriate seat restraints are the best way to prevent passenger injuries. In Pennsylvania, call 1-800-CAR-BELT for more information.

**March**

**National Poison Prevention Month**
Check all product labels for warnings. To obtain details about risks and how to reduce exposure to toxic chemicals, ask product manufacturers for their MSDS — the Material Safety Data Sheet. For more help, contact the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at www.epa.gov.

**April**

**National Child Abuse Prevention Month**
Bonnie Finney’s grandson died from the actions of her own daughter, the boy’s mother. Two of her other grandchildren were abused also. Bonnie began an awareness campaign with a blue ribbon tied to the antenna of a van. The blue color was for the bruises she saw on her grandchildren. Bonnie’s campaign had a boost in 2006 when President Bush designated April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.

The message is clear. If you suspect anything bad is happening to anyone’s children, do not be silent. **Act** on behalf of the children.

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2007 Child Immunization Schedule

The recommended 2007 Immunization Schedules for children and adolescents in the United States include some changes. In Pennsylvania, child care providers must document that children in care have received vaccines according to this nationally recommended schedule. ECELS offers WellCareTracker™ — an Internet tool to check child immunization and health screening records for up-to-date status. WellCareTracker™ uses the new recommendations so all the records you have entered are automatically checked. Learn more about WellCareTracker™ and subscribe at www.wellcaretracker.org.

2007 changes to the immunization schedule are:

- **Rotavirus vaccine** (Rota) helps prevent diarrhea in infants. Infants should receive this vaccine in a 3-dose schedule at ages 2, 4, and 6 months. The first dose is due between 6 weeks and 12 weeks of age and the next doses at 4 to 10 week intervals. Rotavirus vaccination should not be started for infants who are older than 12 weeks of age or given to babies who are older than 32 weeks (about 8 months) of age.

- **Influenza vaccine** should be given to all children between the ages of 6 months and 59 months. All caregivers of children in this age group should receive influenza vaccine also.
Pennsylvania Family Support Alliance (PFSA) is a statewide leader in child abuse prevention. PFSA coordinates an annual blue ribbon campaign for Child Abuse Prevention Month.

PFSA programs teach parents about healthy discipline, communication and child development. PFSA also educates professionals who are mandated to report suspected child abuse and neglect. Programs are available for many types of professionals, including early childhood education practitioners. To learn more about PFSA services and Child Abuse Prevention Month activities, call PFSA at 717-238-0937 or 800-448-4906 or visit www.pennsylvaniasfamilysupportalliance.org.

Quality Reminder

In the photo on the left a Child Care Health Consultant is pointing out strengths and areas to improve. Compare what you see in the photo with the Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) Notes in the adjacent right column.

Regularly scheduled visits by a CCHC can be very helpful. Such visits are required by national standards. In Caring for Our Children, the National Health and Safety Performance Standards for Out of Home Child Care, the requirement for centers serving infants and toddlers is for monthly visits. Centers serving preschool age and older children should have at least quarterly visits. Family child care homes should have at least an annual visit. See http://nrc.uchsc.edu for details. The Accreditation Standards of The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) also require visits by a Child Care Health Consultant according to the age group served. See www.naeyc.org for details.

To get help in arranging for a health professional to be your Child Care Health Consultant, ask your Regional Key and ECELS. The cost of visits, telephone and e-mail advice from a CCHC varies. A nurse from your state or county health department may be your CCHC at no cost. ECELS may be able to find a health professional to be your CCHC. To cover a CCHC honorarium or fee, ask for advice from your Regional Key.

Web Links on Seasonal, Pandemic and Avian Influenza

The ECELS website has a list of definitions and web links to updated information about the three types of influenza outbreaks and what to do about them. Go to www.ecels-healthychildcarepa.org; click on either the section for Early Education and Child Care Professionals or the section for Health Professionals, and then select Web Links.

Child Care Health Consultant (CCHC) Notes

In the photo on the left, the consultant is pointing out a strength: the caregiver keeps the diapering supplies on a shelf, putting out the amount she needs from the container before she brings a child to be changed. This reduces the transfer of germs to containers. The CCHC will call the caregiver’s attention to some areas to improve: the food preparation area is too close to the diapering table (see microwave oven left). Also, microwave heating of infant foods is risky.