**HEALTH AND SAFETY CALENDAR**

Use the calendar to plan ahead.

**September**

- **Time to Check Health Records:** Use the 6th edition Immunization Dose Counter (IDC) to check each child’s record for up-to-date immunizations. Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine is now required by PA child care regulations for children under 2 years of age; it can be considered for children from 2-5 years of age who are in child care. Group care increases exposure to the risk of disease from pneumococcus. The new vaccine is included on the recently revised Child Health Assessments (CY51) and will be checked as part of the DPW inspection process. ECELS sent the new IDC and CY51 form via a special mailing to all child care providers who can order more CY51 forms from the DPW regional office.

- **National Lice Prevention Month:** No significant disease is caused by lice, but they are annoying. Remember to keep bedding and coats separated and watch for signs of infestation. Most nits more than 1/4 inch from the scalp are empty egg casings; if you’re not sure, have children see their clinician. Special combs can remove nits to reduce questions about old versus new nits after treatment. For more on lice, visit the National Pediculosis Association website <www.headlice.org>.

**October**

- **Domestic Violence Awareness Month:** Visit the website of the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence <www.ncadv.org> for information on spousal abuse and predictors of domestic violence. To help minimize stress and avoid child abuse, use the ECELS order form on page 7 for a copy of “How to Deal With Stress.”

**November**

- **Great American Smokeout®:** November 15, 2001. The American Cancer Society reports that more people quit smoking on this day than any other day of the year. For more information, check out <www.ca.cancer.org> For the “Secondhand Smoke” self-learning module, use the ECELS order form on page 7

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**Progress Update:**

**PA Safe Child Care Project hits the mark!**

The purpose of the Safe Child Care Project is to prevent injuries, reduce illness, and promote health for young children by linking emergency medical personnel and community health professionals with child care centers.

4 Since January 2000, ECELS has linked over 50 health professionals with eligible child care centers to reduce safety hazards and improve emergency preparedness. More than 100 centers in Southwest, Southeast, and South-central PA are participating in this federally-funded project. So far, over 150 caregivers have been trained in pediatric first aid with ECELS’ new “PA AAP First Aid Course for Child Care Providers.”

4 To help child care providers recognize which medical conditions require Emergency Medical Services (EMS) notification, and which require medical attention within one hour, use the ECELS order form on page 7 for a copy of the flier, “Situations that Require Immediate Medical Attention.”
PA Safe Child Care Project

ECELS applauds three more health professional volunteers as “rising stars” in the Safe Child Care Project:

P Debra Marino expanded her EMSC Consultant/Trainer role into a paid position as a Child Care Health Consultant for Lawrence County Family Services!

P Darleen Byers delivered First Aid training for 35 child care providers in Beaver County!

P Mandy Doud provided multiple First Aid trainings for staff, as well as consultations and health/safety visits to two centers in Montgomery County!

ECELS appreciates their dedication to making sure that children in child care centers are safe and healthy, and we urge others to follow their lead!

Kids and the Internet

Millions of people are now going online to reach the Internet where they exchange email, surf the Web, post and read messages on bulletin boards, and participate in chat groups. The vast array of services that you currently find online is constantly growing. Reference information such as news, weather, sports, movie reviews, and encyclopedias are readily available online. Users can conduct transactions such as making travel reservations, banking, and shopping online. You can find information about your local schools and government, read an out-of-town newspaper, or obtain health information. Millions of people communicate through electronic mail (email) with family and friends around the world. You can even use the Internet to watch video and listen to audio programs produced by major media companies, businesses, organizations, and even individuals. As an educational and entertainment tool, users can learn about virtually any topic, visit a museum, take a college course, or play an endless number of computer games with other users or against the computer itself.

There are a number of ways to get online. In addition to major commercial online services, there are thousands of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) that provide Internet access. Telephone companies, cable TV companies, and even some local newspapers offer Internet access, usually for a monthly fee. Although most people use personal computers to get online, it’s now possible to purchase a special adapter that allows you to access the Internet from a TV set.

ISPs and online services generally do everything they can to provide their subscribers with an enjoyable, safe, and rewarding online experience, but it’s not possible for these companies to police everyone who uses their service anymore than a local government can control the behavior of its citizens. The Internet is a vast global network of networks that’s not governed by any company or government.

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Honey and Corn Syrup Warning

Caregivers should avoid serving children unprocessed or natural honey. They should avoid consuming unprocessed honey themselves too.

Unprocessed honey may contain grayanotoxin, a poison found in some rhododendrons. While Grayanotoxin poisoning is rare, it should be prevented. All people are susceptible. Honey from farmers who may have only a few hives is more risky than commercially processed honey. The pooling of massive quantities of honey during commercial processing generally dilutes any toxic substance.

Another reason honey can be a problem for infants is that honey has been associated with infant botulism. This illness can be fatal. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that infants younger than 12 months of age not eat honey. Spores of *Clostridium botulinum* can sometimes grow and produce toxins in the infant’s intestinal tract, causing the potentially fatal illness. Foodborne botulism results when food contaminated with spores of *C botulinum* is preserved or stored improperly in air-free conditions that allows the bacteria to grow and make toxin. Honey is not the only source of this problem. Light and dark corn syrups are not sterilized when packaged and may be contaminated by the bacteria spores too.

WHEN THE POWER GOES OUT!

Storms sometimes cause power outages that can be troublesome for adults, and scary for children.

If a power outage occurs, activate your facility’s emergency plan. *Caring for Our Children - The National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care Programs* states that a facility must have a written plan for reporting the event, actions taken to respond and evacuating in case of fire, flood, tornado, earthquake, hurricane, blizzard, power failure, bomb threat, or other disaster that could create structural damages to the facility or pose health and safety hazards to the children and staff.

Individualize emergency plans for any children with special health care needs – especially those who use assistive devices and durable medical equipment powered by electricity. Back-up battery and/or generator sources must be accessible, charged, and ready-to-run. The facility must also provide staff training on emergency plans.

While implementing the emergency plan is in progress, comfort the children and urge everyone to remain calm. The loss of power may frighten some of them and some of the staff too. A calm, cool-headed approach helps everyone deal more easily with the sudden change.

For instance, if you are in the middle of an activity that requires electricity when the outage occurs (e.g., singing along with tapes, or dancing to music videos) try to minimize the effect of the sudden outage. Say, “Oh-oh, it looks like the storm made the lights go out for a little bit. Let’s finish our song. Maybe the music will come back on.”

During the outage, try to maintain as ordinary a schedule as possible. A close, circle activity may help keep the children grouped together and easier to supervise.

Food safety is also a concern when electrical power goes out. Perishable refrigerated foods must be maintained at a temperature of 40 degrees F. or colder. Perishable frozen foods must be maintained at a temperature of 0 degrees F. Discard any perishable food that has not been maintained at safe temperatures for 2 hours or more.

If the power fails, you may want to quickly group refrigerated foods next to each other or quickly move them to the freezer. Otherwise, try not to open the refrigerator or freezer. An unopened refrigerator will generally keep foods cold for a few hours. A full freezer will stay at freezing temperatures for about 2 days; a half-full freezer -- about 1 day. If your freezer is not full, quickly group packages together so they form an "igloo" protecting each other. You may need to add bags of ice to the freezer.

Check the condition and temperatures of foods once the power comes back on. The US Department of Agriculture’s general guideline is, “Perishable foods that are warmer than 40 degrees F. (normal refrigerator temperature) should be discarded if they have been at that temperature longer than 2 hours. This guideline applies especially to meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and dairy products.” For more information on food safety during power outages, call the USDA’s Meat and Poultry Hotline at 800/535-4555. For general information about power outages and other disasters, contact your local chapter or branch of the American Red Cross.
Preventing Lead Poisoning

"Lead Awareness: North Philly Style" is a project of Temple University Department of Nursing. Funded by the National Institute of Nursing Research, the project started with teaching the children of North Philadelphia about lead poisoning through puppet shows and chants developed by the Village of Arts and Humanities in Philadelphia. Next, community partners planned block parties; block captains invited the residents on their streets to local community centers or churches. While enjoying a group dinner, neighbors learned about the serious effects of lead poisoning and how to prevent it. Each person went home with a bucket of supplies to prevent lead poisoning. The plastic bucket contained crayons made in the USA, liquid hand soap, sponges, paper towels, a lead check, a spray & dust product, latex gloves, a pre-school reading book, lead poisoning handouts, and nutritional information. T-shirts and tote bags printed with lead poisoning information were also distributed.

No location in Pennsylvania is free of lead risk. Rita Lourie, MSN, RN, Co-Investigator of the project offers the following lead poisoning prevention facts and tips:

- Lead is the #1 preventable environmental health problem that affects young children. Everyone needs to become a lead detective by figuring out where the lead is coming from and then taking steps to get rid of it.

- Lead is a heavy metal found naturally in the earth. Lead still has some uses in industry, but there is no use for lead in the body. Children get lead poisoned by putting their dirty hands or toys in their mouths.

- Wash hands, wipe feet, don't bring lead in from the street! If lead enters the body it can enter the blood steam and become stored in the bones. Lead poisoning affects the way children behave and think. It can lead to severe behavioral problems, learning disabilities, speech problems and slower growth and development. Because children under the age of 6 develop the fastest, they are most susceptible to lead poisoning and its effects. The longer the child is exposed to lead, the more damage it does. Lead poisoning does not have any specific symptoms like rash or fever. Often children with lead poisoning have stomachaches, act-out, become listless or cranky ... but what child doesn't? The only way to find out if a child has lead poisoning is through a blood test. The sooner it is detected the less harm will be done.

- Where does lead come from? All paint before 1978 contained lead. If your family child care home or center was built before that year, there is probably lead paint under the paint that is exposed. Lead was also used in gasoline until the 1980s so the soil near streets has been contaminated with lead. Pipes in your water system may be soldered with lead so it's important to run the water until it's cold before you use it for drinking. Never cook with hot water drawn from the spigot.
Mini-blinds were made with lead until 1997. You can check if there is lead in yours by a simple test called a lead check available at local hardware stores. Plates, cups and crayons (even if they say non-toxic) made outside the USA often use lead for brighter colors.

What can you do to prevent lead poisoning?
1. Wet mop rather than sweeping or vacuuming to get rid of lead dust.
2. Cover bare play areas with grass or ground covering.
3. Use doormats to wipe feet before entering the home or facility.
4. Wash hands after playing outside and before eating.
5. Wash toys, pets and other dust-exposed play things.
6. Only wet scrape old paint; never dry scrape or burn.
8. Eat foods high in calcium, iron and Vitamin C.
9. Buy crayons made only in the USA.

The receptors in the body for lead are the same as the receptors for iron and calcium. So children should eat an adequate amount of dairy products and protein, cereals and other foods fortified with calcium and iron, and take a vitamin with iron to be protected from lead poisoning. Vitamin C helps the body use the calcium and iron. Fresh fruits, juices and vegetables are good sources of Vitamin C.

**Varicella, Hepatitis B and Immunizations**

In 2002, all new school entrants, as well as seventh graders, will be required to have varicella (chicken pox) immunity. Immunity may be verified by parents, physicians, or laboratory results. A varicella regulation for Philadelphia school children has been in effect since 2000 (see ECELS Order Form on page 7).

Hepatitis B immunizations will be required for all seventh graders beginning in 2002.

**ECELS Reaches Out to Health Consultants**

In an attempt to continue building and strengthening the corps of child care health consultants, ECELS recently completed a dial-in audio conference and two day training session for health consultants.

The audio conference was held January 24, 2001; the topic was Providers as Partners in Preventing Illness in Child (Day) Care. The targeted audience was any health professional who works with or provides medical care for children in child care. A total of 792 people from 13 states registered for the conference, and 596 of them dialed in to listen “live.” Speakers included Dr. Barbara Watson discussing infectious diseases in child care, Dr. Howard Taras speaking about inclusion of children with special health care needs, and Nancy Alleman discussing how to collaborate with child care providers. Audio cassettes of the conference are available free of charge from ECELS.
Looking for some interesting websites you can share with preschoolers and school-aged children in your care? Each edition, HEALTH LINK will spread the news about health and safety websites we’ve found and ideas on how to get kids involved.

School-aged kids can learn how to become lead poisoning prevention experts by visiting the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences’ website at <www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/leadbusters/home.htm>

Kids will first learn that the NIEHS is a part of the National Institutes of Health and is dedicated to studying the effects of the environment on our health. They will learn where lead poisoning comes from, and how to identify lead dangers by clicking a paintbrush and paint from the screen to use in their search. Other interactive activities include a Lead Buster’s Clubhouse Game, a Lead Buster’s Word Search, and a Healthy Food Quiz where children can learn which foods help keep their bodies safe from lead. Kids can learn a “Lead Out” rap tune and finish up with a lead poisoning prevention poster they can paint while online.

### ECELS ORDER FORM FOR PRINT MATERIAL

(Pennsylvania Child Care Providers & Pennsylvania Health Consultants Only)

Please use this form to order any brochure listed below. Check the box beside the items you would like and return the form to PA AAP, ECELS, Rosemont Business Campus, 919 Conestoga Road, Bldg. 2, Suite 307, Rosemont, PA 19010-1353.

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ECELS Reaches Out to Health Consultants

A two day training session was held at six sites simultaneously across the state on April 18 and 19, 2001. Those in attendance included 77 nurses from the PA Department of Health and from the county health municipalities, as well as other Health Consultants eager for more in-depth training. The focus of the training was to help Health Consultants assess, plan and implement strategies to improve the quality of child care.

Many of the nurses who attended stated that they have difficulty connecting with child care centers to provide health and safety training. Any child care providers interested in having a Health Consultant come to your center, please contact ECELS so that we can help link you with a Health Consultant. Health Consultants can provide child care providers with valuable advice about how to address health and safety, and some can make on-site visits, as well as provide telephone consultation to prevent and manage problems in child care.