HEALTH AND SAFETY CALENDAR
Use the calendar to plan ahead.

March

**National Nutrition Month:** As children grow and develop, they watch for clues about food choices. Model healthy decision making when it comes to food choices. For nutritional brochures, use the ECELS order form on page 7.

**National Poison Prevention Week:** March 21-27, 2001. Inhalant abuse is on the rise! For a pamphlet on “Inhalant Abuse: Your Child and Drugs” use the ECELS order form on page 7.

April

**National Child Abuse Prevention Month:** Disciplining children takes creativity. Physically spanking a child only teaches him or her to fear the adult with the power. For pamphlets on preventing child abuse, use the ECELS order form on page 7.

**Easter Eggs:** Refrigerate eggs immediately after cooking and dying. The US Department of Agriculture reminds you to time your Easter egg hunt to make sure eggs are not out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours if they will be eaten. Remind parents to hide eggs early on Easter morning before children wake up, rather than the night before. Hard-cooked eggs are still good to eat for up to a week if they are kept in the refrigerator. If in doubt, throw them out.

May

**Breathe Easy Month:** Call 800/LUNG-USA for information on clean air activities sponsored by the American Lung Association or check out their website at <www.lungusa.org> Use the ECELS Training Request form on the ECELS website www.paaap.org, or call ECELS at 800-243-2357 to ask for a Workshop or Self-Learning Module on Asthma.

(Continued on page 2)
Healthy Child Care America

Now, all states except Mississippi have their own projects. Support for these initiatives comes from several national endeavors supported with federal grants. ECELS is the recipient of a federal grant to Pennsylvania to implement the Healthy Child Care America campaign. That is why ECELS is known also as Healthy Child Care Pennsylvania. For more details on the Healthy Child Care America Campaign, visit the website of the American Academy of Pediatrics at www.aap.org, select the Community Pediatrics box on the opening page, then choose Healthy Child Care America. The HCCA phone number is 888/227-5409.

Child Care Resources

♦ The National Resource Center (NRC) for Health and Safety in Child Care based at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center is the home of the Internet-posted and soon-to-be-published revision of Caring for Our Children, national health and safety standards for out-of-home child care. NRC publishes a subset of the standards extracted from the larger volume as those most likely to prevent death, disability and disease. The subset of the standards is known as Stepping Stones to Using Caring for Our Children. The NRC also maintains current sets of state licensing standards on their website. In addition to maintaining web resources, library resources, providing referrals and technical assistance, the NRC supports a national network of Associate Centers. The director of the NRC is Marilyn Krajicek, a leader in nursing education on the faculty at the University of Colorado. ECELS is an Associate Center of the NRC. The NRC can be reached via the Internet http://nrc.uchsc.edu or by phone at 800/598-KIDS.

♦ The National Training Institute (NTI) for Child Care Health Consultants is now in its fourth year of operation. By training trainers of health professionals to serve as health consultants to child care, the NTI is building a corps of health professionals who can give technical assistance and training to local child care providers. The NTI is based at the University of North Carolina (UNC) and led by Jonathan Kotch, MD, Professor of Maternal and Child Health at the UNC School of Public Health. With a new five year federal grant from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, NTI is moving ahead with website training and evaluation of the work of health consultants to child care. ECELS has a sharing relationship with NTI, and Susan Aronson, MD, ECELS Director is a Special Advisor to NTI. In addition, ECELS has sent two health professionals to receive training at NTI. These two pediatric nurse practitioners have been helping ECELS implement the concepts developed by NTI.

♦ The National Association for Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies has been involved in promoting linkages between child care Resource and Referral (R&R) agencies and health professionals for many years. In some states where the R&R networks are more mature and elaborate than in Pennsylvania, health professionals are on staff at R&Rs to serve as the “school nurse” for the child care providers in their communities. ECELS has advocated for adoption of this concept in PA with the four regional Child Care Resource Developers (CCRD) and hopes that the state will soon allocate the resources needed to add a nurse consultant to the CCRD workforce. A local network of health consultants will require more than just one nurse in the CCRD, but having a nurse in the CCRD would help PA expand and support the loosely knit ECELS Health Consultant Registry of community health nurses and volunteer health professionals.
Healthy Child Care America

At the recent Healthy Child Care America conference, ECELS Director, Sue Aronson spoke in two separate plenary sessions.

One session gave an update on the 2nd edition of the national health and safety standards. Dr. Aronson is the co-chair of the Steering Committee for the preparation of the 2nd edition.

Her other presentation was on the concept of “The Medical Home” for children. A Medical Home is a source of medical care that is accessible, family-centered, comprehensive, continuous, coordinated, compassionate and culturally-competent.

All children should have a Medical Home. For children with special health needs, coordination by child care providers with a Medical Home is especially important. Having health insurance is essential. Without insurance, families are unlikely to use a Medical Home because of concerns about the cost of the care their children need.

For all children, child care providers can play a key role in advocating for enrollment in insurance plans for which the child is eligible, including CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program) and Medicaid where the family does not already have private health insurance to cover the child’s medical care. For more information on CHIP and Medicaid, see a related article on page 6 or call 800/986-KIDS.

Plastic Container Warning

Recently, several caregivers asked ECELS if it was OK to microwave (reheat) children’s lunches in containers that had originally contained microwaveable frozen meals. Parents often wash out these containers and ask staff to reuse them to warm up kids’ meals.

Ray Lin, MS, RD, Pennsylvania Department of Health, answers this and other container questions:

Plastic wraps, food containers, and resealable food bags help keep food fresh, and free from contamination. They are unbreakable, and convenient to use.

Plasticizers make these plastic products soft and flexible. Recently, some scientists have raised concern about the possibility of plasticizers leaching out into the food the products are meant to protect. To minimize the possibility of plasticizers leaching into food, always follow manufacturers’ recommendations. Remember the following common sense approaches too:

♦ When storing food, use only food storage bags designed for this purpose. A brand-new, clean garbage bag is meant for garbage, not for food.

♦ Use containers intended for the microwave to cook, re-heat, or thaw food in the microwave oven. Styrofoam trays, margarine tubs, and cottage cheese containers are made for cold food storage only. They are not for microwave cooking.

♦ Read and follow instructions on the microwaveable food package carefully. Most plates and trays containing microwaveable frozen food are intended for one-time use. They are not recommended for repeated use or for use with any other food items. For food packaged in non-microwaveable materials, always remove the food packaging material, such as plastic wrap, and place the food inside a microwaveable container before thawing or heating in the microwave oven.

♦ Microwaveable plastic wrap should be placed on top of the microwaveable food container so that the wrap does not touch the food. Cover the container loosely, or seal it tight and make a slit in the wrap to let the steam out. Plastic wrap allowed to touch the food may melt when the food gets hot. If you seal the food container tight without cutting a slit to let the steam out, you could experience steam burns when you remove the wrap.
PLAY AND DEVELOPMENT

Part 1

Toys are the tools that propel children’s growth. When choosing toys, think about fostering children’s skill development and safety. To the child, interaction with parents and caregivers is much more important than the toy itself. The frequency and quality of interaction that a grown-up has with a child will have more bearing on the rest of the child’s life than any toy, computer, gadget, or plaything. Parents and caregivers make the difference in “the learning snowball.” Just like a snowball rolling down a hill that gets bigger every inch it rolls, so a child’s knowledge base increases with every experience. The analogy describes how learning is developmental too. What children learn in later experiences is directly related to what they learned in earlier ones. When parents and caregivers interact warmly with young children, they make children feel secure. Children who lack a sense of security are reluctant to explore and experience new things.

Newborns and very young infants:
Parents and caregivers should include young infants in as many activities as possible. By six weeks of age, a baby can sit on an adult’s lap for short periods of time with body support. Young children begin to learn self-regulation by the way the adults in their lives proactively regulate the child’s responses. In other words, if the parent is calm with the child, the child learns calmness. Calmness is very important to focusing, playing, and later learning.

In the first year of life children are doing a lot of work on developing their senses. At three months of age a mobile for the crib or playpen promotes the use of visual pathways in the brain. At four months, toys that have different textured surfaces to grasp, hold and mouth promote fine motor and kinesthetic development. Toys or dolls that make music or noise when they are touched sharpen listening skills. Infants are fascinated by their image in a mirror and a non-breakable mirror is essential in every crib or playpen.

By four months... babies become easily stimulated by objects they can reach. There are many examples of floor blankets that come with toys just in reach. There are also some great cloth books for this age with simple pictures and contrasting colors. The most fundamental cognitive building block for learning is “cause and effect.” By six months children begin to experience cause and effect in their communication: baby cries, caretaker comes ... or in their exploration: they put a block in the hole, and the block disappears. This is the age where children become fascinated with putting things in other things. It doesn’t really matter what items are used. An empty quart size yogurt container and some rolled up baby socks are as interesting to a child as the toys purchased at a store. Children start out putting blocks into a bucket without a lid, and progress to putting blocks through much smaller holes that are shape specific. To further develop fine motor skills a couple of these toys with different kinds of shapes will expand the use of children’s fingers.

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Chas Barrett, MEd

STAY TUNED ... the next edition of HEALTH LINK will feature Part 2: Play and Development for 6-12 months olds

For the pamphlet “Toys: Tools for Learning” use the ECELS order form on page 7.
Criminal charges and custody

It was Christmas 1995. Lynn Shiner's home had no tree, no cookies and no wreath adorning the door. Most of all, it had no children.

On Christmas morning 1994 the Dauphin county woman drove to her ex-husband's home to get her daughter, Jennifer, 10, and son, David, 8 who had spent the night with their father. To her horror, she found her daughter, son and ex-husband dead. The police determined that the ex-husband brutally stabbed and killed the children and then took his own life.

During the investigation, the police discovered that criminal charges for stalking another woman had been filed against the ex-husband. Lynn had no knowledge of this criminal activity when she complied with the custody order.

Following the tragedy, Lynn worked for the establishment of a statewide registry to enable a parent to learn if a person involved in a custody proceeding has been charged with certain offenses. Such a registry has been established in Pennsylvania and is named for Lynn Shiner's children, Jen & Dave.

Today, the Jen & Dave Line, a 24-hour telephone service, provides criminal charge information to help custodial parents better protect their children.

The Jen & Dave Line service is available to anyone who is party to a custody proceeding or to a person who has been granted custody, partial custody or visitation with a child. There is no fee to register with the Jen & Dave Line. If a parent learns of a criminal charge through the Jen & Dave Line, the parent may ask the court for temporary custody or for a change in an existing custody, partial custody or visitation order.

Pass this information on to parents of the children in your care who share custody! For more information about the Jen & Dave Line, call the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts, which administers the program, at 717-795-2000 or visit their web page at http://www.courts.state.pa.us. Materials for distribution are available at no cost.

Judy K. Souleret
Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts
Jen & Dave Program Coordinator

ECELS comments:

Releasing children to a non-custodial adult or to a parent who is unable to bring the child home safely poses a special challenge for child care providers.

In Caring for Our Children, the National Health and Safety Standards for Out-of-home Care, the duty of child care providers includes establishing a mechanism for identifying a person for whom the parents have given the facility prior written authorization to pick up their child. Also, the child care provider must have and use policies to handle the situation if a parent arrives who is intoxicated or otherwise incapable of bringing the child home safely, or if a non-custodial parent attempts to claim the child without the consent of the custodial parent.

Caregivers must not be unwitting accomplices in schemes to gain custody of children by accepting a telephone authorization provided falsely by a person claiming to be the child's custodial parent or by a non-custodial parent who claims to be authorized by the custodial parent to pick up the child.
Kids and Health Insurance

Enrollment in both of Pennsylvania’s publicly funded health coverage programs is climbing steadily. As of July 2000, there were 101,341 children enrolled in the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP), a 25% increase over July 1999. Also as of July 2000, 706,441 children were covered by Medicaid, 86% of eligible children.

Nearly 200,000 children remain eligible for coverage, however, and are not enrolled. How can child care providers help?

Child care settings are ideal places to help families enroll their children in CHIP and Medicaid. You can help families apply by:
♦ having applications available
♦ helping them complete the form
♦ offering the use of your copying machine
♦ referring families to the Healthy Kids Helpline (800/986-KIDS) if they have questions or problems
♦ and encouraging families to complete the process and use the coverage once they enroll.

There is now a new application for CHIP or Medicaid. This new format is available through the County Assistance offices and the seven CHIP providers. Each of the CHIP providers and the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare have customized their application with their own logos and 800 phone numbers but each application asks the same questions using the same language. Any of the applications is good for either Medicaid or CHIP.

CHIP and Medicaid cover:
♦ Check ups for school, camp, child care and work
♦ Immunizations
♦ Sick visits and prescription drugs
♦ Vision testing and eyeglasses
♦ Emergency room care
♦ Lab tests and X-rays
♦ Hearing testing and hearing aids
♦ Mental health and substance abuse treatment

Lots of families are eligible. There are no time limits or work requirements. A family of four whose income is less than $40,068 can be eligible.

If you would like more information about how to obtain applications and help families apply, please contact Ann Bacharach, Covering Kids Project Director at Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children, 800/257-2030.

ECELS Book Review

Before entering kindergarten, children are likely to have spent 4,000 hours watching television - more time than they will spend in school. By the end of elementary school, the average child will have witnessed 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence on TV. Surprisingly, some of these violent acts are on children’s programs. Children’s cartoon / action programs average more than 20 acts of violence per hour, compared with 5 acts of violence per hour during primetime television. Many children also play video games each day; and well over 50% of video games are violent.

Remote Control Childhood: Combating the Hazards of Media Culture provides useful strategies to help minimize the media culture’s harmful effects on children. This 184 page soft-back book shows teachers and caregivers how to help kids make sense of what they see on TV, and how to sort out what’s real from what’s pretend. An especially informative part of the book deals with media-linked toys that have gender stereotypes and sexualized appearances.

Each chapter of Remote Control Childhood features action ideas and learning activities. For ordering information, contact the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) at 800/424-2460.

For the American Academy of Pediatrics’ pamphlet “Television and the Family”, use the ECELS order form on page 7.
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.

This edition, try the US Department of Agriculture’s website at <www.usda.gov> Click “USDA for Kids” for some great ideas on preventing foodborne illness. You can also find step-by-step instructions for food safety presentations (for kindergarteners and first graders) when you click “Educators.” Have the older school-aged kids help you make puppets, posters, and badges to distribute to younger children who attend the presentation. Older children can even help you act out scenes from the presentation … washing hands, rinsing fruit, putting lunchboxes in the refrigerator and cleaning countertops.

Plenty of food safety printouts suitable for parents are available on this site as well!

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.

Brochures/Handouts: (One copy per organization)

☐ Nutritional information
☐ “Inhalant Abuse: Your Child and Drugs”
☐ Child abuse prevention information
☐ “Toys: Tools for Learning”
☐ “Television and the Family”

Don’t forget about ECELS’ audio-visual lending library. Check out what’s playing!

☐ Audio-visual catalog
Self-Learning Module List

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Organization: ______________________________________________________________________

Address: _______________ ___________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________ ______________

City: _____________________________           State: __________         Zip: _____________________

Area Code and Telephone #:  ________________________________________________________

E-mail address (if you have one):
FAREWELL!

ECELS and Pennsylvania are saying goodbye to Bert Smith. She is a source of inspiration and dedication to goodness in all she does. Much of her career has been devoted to improving the quality of child care and the quality of life for everyone else she encounters. Bert is tenacious and patient, never giving up on hard challenges when the cause is right.

Bert has used strong religious beliefs, abundant professional skill, self-less caring for others, a wealth of knowledge. As she retires to Florida, we know she will not rest. Even in retirement, Bert will see something or someone needing help and will do even more good.

Sue Aronson

A Happy Note

ECELS applauds three rising stars who will help fill Bert’s shoes. These health consultants in the Pittsburgh area are working in the ECELS Safe Child Care Project. Lisa Maloney, Ray Cook, and David Macher are Emergency Medical professionals who ECELS linked with child care centers to provide health and safety education. All are volunteers who are bringing first aid training, emergency preparedness, injury and illness prevention to the centers in the project. We appreciate their hard work and urge others to follow their lead! Way to go!

HERBERTA SMITH, RN

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