EARLY CHILDHOOD

EDUCATION PROGRAMS FAMILY NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2026

TOPICS THIS MONTH

- EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM INFORMATION
- WHAT IS EARLY INTERVENTION?
- HEAD START NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING
- THE IMPORTANCE OF BEDTIME ROUTINES FOR CHILDREN
- FAMILY INVOLVEMENT, EDUCATION, & ENROLLMENT
- FAMILY EVENTS, ACTIVITIES, & IMAGINATION LIBRARY
- PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM SEPTEMBER

IMPORTANT DATES

- FRIDAY, OCT. 9TH - EARLY RELEASE DAY / PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TIME FOR STAFF
- MONDAY, OCT. 12TH - HIGH SCHOOL EHS CONFERENCE/HOME-VISIT DAY (NO SCHOOL FOR HIGH SCHOOL EHS STUDENTS)
- FRIDAY, OCT. 16TH - EARLY CHILDHOOD & ELEMENTARY CONFERENCE/HOME-VISIT DAY (NO SCHOOL FOR EC/EI STUDENTS)
- FRIDAY, OCT. 23RD - EARLY RELEASE DAY / PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TIME FOR STAFF

EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM INFORMATION

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) Program uses the **Frog Street curriculum** for both our Early Childhood/PreK/Head Start classrooms and our Early Head Start (infant/toddler) classrooms.

The **Frog Street Pre-K** curriculum is a comprehensive program designed to meet the needs of diverse learners while supporting all of the developmental learning domains (language & literacy, mathematics, science, social-studies, the creative arts, and social-emotional). This engaging, interactive curriculum celebrates the joy of learning and helps prepare children to be successful in kindergarten and beyond.

The Frog Street **Infant** and **Toddler** curriculum options are designed around early brain research and equips caregivers with everything they need to foster essential growth and build a strong foundation for learning.

The ECE Program also uses **Conscious Discipline**, which is embedded into the Frog Street daily routines. Conscious Discipline is a research-based social emotional & classroom management program that gives students and teachers the language to work through situations and feelings. Teachers use Conscious Discipline to give children the language they need to communicate their emotions and the tools they need to help regulate them. Children learn to resolve conflicts, express their needs, and manage their emotions so they can focus on learning. Each month we will share some Conscious Discipline tips and/or resources in our newsletter that families can use at home to support their child's social-emotional growth.

Our teachers use all of this curriculum information to ensure our children are growing and developing appropriately. This is assessed three times a year (fall/winter/spring) using the **Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP)**. After each assessment period families will receive a report from their child's teacher that shows their progress in reaching age-appropriate goals in literacy, math, social-emotional, and physical development. Families are welcome to discuss their child's development with their teacher at any time during the year.

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WHAT IS EARLY INTERVENTION?

Pennsylvania's Preschool Early Intervention (EI) Program serves over 50,000 children (ages 3-5) who have disabilities and/or developmental delays. Here at PPS we serve over 1,600 children throughout the city of Pittsburgh annually - about half of which are in our EC classrooms where the services are embedded so children are not pulled out or removed from their class or peers.

Pre-School Early Intervention is:

- A program for children ages 3-5 who have developmental needs and/or disabilities. This includes:
  - Physical development, including vision and hearing
  - Cognitive development
  - Communication development (speech & language)
  - Social or emotional development
  - Adaptive development
- Administered by the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) through a collaborative effort between the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS).
- Mandated program for pre-school children with disabilities who seek them under state and federal law.

All children in the ECE Program (preschool and infant/toddler) are screened upon program entry to see if they need further evaluation for EI services; however, if a family is concerned with their child's development, they can also request a developmental screening by reaching out to their child's EC teacher or calling the Early Intervention office at 412-529-4000.

HEAD START NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULE MAKING

On August 7, 2026, the Administration for Children and Families at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking that, if enacted as a final rule, would roll back the Head Start Program Performance Standards (the rules that guide every Head Start program) and replace them with a much shorter version. Some of these changes could weaken the services families count on, such as health screenings, class sizes, support for children with disabilities, and a real voice for parents.

What You Can Do

Head Start parents, in collaboration with the National Head Start Association, wrote a letter asking the government to protect the Head Start standards that work. Add your name to the letter by scanning the QR code by October 2, 2026.

7 Things the Letter Asks to Protect

- Keep the health, vision, hearing, dental, and developmental screenings that catch problems early, before they get in the way of a child's learning.
- Keep enough teachers for every group of children, and pay for the ratios programs already choose today.
- Preserve the early identification and individualized support that help children with disabilities.
- Let programs build children's English skills while still communicating with families in a language they understand.
- Keep a safe, dignified path to enroll for families who are homeless, fleeing abuse, or without easy access to paperwork.
- Protect real parent decision-making power through the Policy Council and Parent Committees, not just the chance to give input.
- Keep the career pathways and coaching that help parents move from classroom aide to credentialed early educator.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEDTIME ROUTINES FOR CHILDREN

Establishing a consistent and calming routine is essential in signaling to your child that it's time to wind down and get ready for sleep. A ritual helps the body recognize that it's time to slow down and prepare for rest, thus making the transition from waking hours to sleeping ones smoother.

The Benefits of a Bedtime Ritual: A well-crafted bedtime ritual can: Reduce stress and anxiety, strengthen the parent-child bond, improve sleep onset and quality, establish lifelong healthy sleep habits, provide a sense of security and stability.



Elements of a Successful Bedtime Routine: A bedtime routine doesn't need to be complicated or lengthy. In fact, simplicity often yields the best results. The key is to include activities that are calming, enjoyable, and easily repeatable every night.

Dinner and Evening Snacks: Start the evening right with a balanced dinner. The goal is to ensure your child is full but not too stimulated before bed. Serve a dinner that includes complex carbohydrates and protein to help induce sleepiness. If your child gets hungry before bed, offer a small, healthy snack like whole-grain crackers or a piece of fruit.

Physical Activity: Engaging in physical activity during the day can help your child feel more tired at bedtime. To help, encourage outdoor play and avoid rigorous activity too close to bedtime as it can have the opposite effect, making it harder for kids to settle down.



Limiting Screen Time: Screens emit blue light, which can interfere with the body's natural sleep rhythms. Establish a "no screens" rule for at least an hour before bed to help your child disconnect and relax.

Hygiene and Health: Incorporating hygiene into the bedtime ritual not only promotes cleanliness but also cues the body that sleep is approaching. Baths or showers can be very relaxing, especially if you add a few drops of a calming essential oil like lavender. Brushing teeth should be a non-negotiable part of the routine as it also instills good habits.

Quiet Activities: Choose activities that encourage calmness and make them a regular part of the night-time routine. Reading together can be a perfect way to wind down. Listening to soft music or audiobooks can also create a tranquil environment. Consider incorporating mindfulness or relaxation techniques, like deep breathing or gentle stretches.

Create a Sleep-Inducing Environment: The bedroom should be a sanctuary that promotes sleep. Make sure the room is dark, quiet, and cool. Invest in pillows suitable for your child's size and weight. Consider using a white noise machine to drown out disruptive sounds.

Finishing Thoughts: Establishing a bedtime ritual is a gift to your child that goes beyond the here and now. While challenges may arise, the benefits of perseverance and patience will be reflected in your child's behavior, well-being, and development. Remember, the secret ingredient to any bedtime ritual is love and consistency. Your presence, understanding, and commitment to the routine comfort your child and guide them towards a lifetime of healthy sleep habits. With time and dedication, your kid's bedtime ritual will become a cherished part of the day for both of you.

From GoodSleepHub

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FAMILY INVOLVEMENT & EDUCATION

Here is a sneak peek of the information your Family Services Specialists will be sending home this month. We welcome all parents, caregivers, and community partners to join us and become involved in the ECE Program!
(Click below for full-sized flyers)

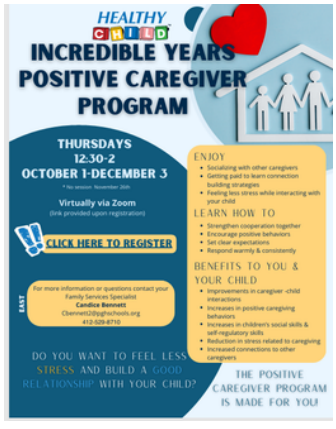
PARENT INFORMATION WORKSHOP



CONSCIOUS DISCIPLINE AT HOME



INCREDIBLE YEARS POSITIVE CAREGIVER PROGRAM



MALE-FATHERHOOD INVOLVEMENT PROGRAM



EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

We're still accepting applications and enrolling income-eligible students (below 300% of the FPL) in both our district classrooms and in childcare partnership sites.

Here's the list of our district sites where we availability if you know of another qualifying family looking for preschool:

- Chartiers Early Childhood Center (West End)
- Crescent Early Childhood Center (Homewood)
- Miller (Hill District)
- Minadeo (Sq. Hill)
- Peabody/Obama (Highland Park)
- Spring Garden (North Side)

PLEASE SHARE

Please share our flyer, location map, and childcare partnership information with others in your community!

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION NETWORKING

Our Family Services Specialists (FSS) have been working closely with a variety of community partners throughout the city to help bring resources directly to you. You can read more about these partnerships & collaborations **here.**

Please remember, if there's anything you or your family needs, to connect with your Family Services Specialist - they're here to help!



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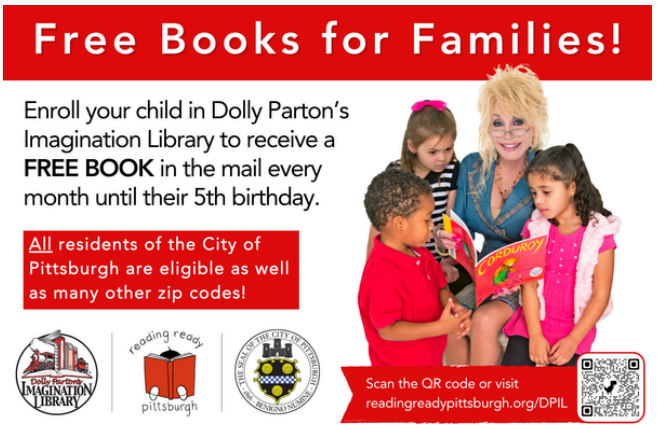
OCTOBER FAMILY EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

THERE ARE MANY FUN EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES HAPPENING ACROSS OUR AREA DURING THE MONTH OF OCTOBER. A FEW ARE LISTED BELOW, BUT YOU CAN CHECK OUT MORE ON THE KIDSBURGH & PITTSBURGH PARENT WEBSITES.

- OKTOBERFEST PITTSBURGH RETURNS FOR ITS THIRD YEAR WITH NEW AND RETURNING ATTRACTIONS, INCLUDING AN ACTUAL FERRIS WHEEL RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE CLEMENTE BRIDGE, PLUS WEINER DOG RACES AND KINDERPLAY ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN.
- TRAX FARMS FALL FESTIVAL: THE FESTIVAL OPERATES ON WEEKENDS WITH HAYRIDES, PUMPKIN PICKING, A THREE-ACRE MAZE, YARD GAMES AND FARM ANIMALS. FESTIVAL ADMISSION IS FREE. HAYRIDES ARE $12 ONLINE, $14 ONSITE, FREE FOR AGES 2 AND YOUNGER.
- FALL FESTIVAL AT SOERGEL ORCHARDS: PICK APPLES, PUMPKINS AND FLOWERS, TAKE A TRACTOR RIDE AND ENJOY GAMES, SEASONAL FOOD, CIDER DOUGHNUTS AND DRINKS FROM ARSENAL CIDER. ADMISSION IS FREE; ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCE ARE PRICED SEPARATELY.
- PUNKIN CHUNKIN AT HARTWOOD ACRES AMPHITHEATER: OCT. 17: JOIN THE ALLEGHENY COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT AND SHARP ROBOTICS FROM 11:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M. TO WATCH AS PUMPKINS ARE LAUNCHED ACROSS THE AMPHITHEATER FIELD AT HARTWOOD ACRES PARK BY A FULL-SIZE TREBUCHET. THIS EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO ALL AGES, WITH FUN AND GAMES FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY! REGISTRATION IS RECOMMENDED TO ENSURE THERE ARE ENOUGH SUPPLIES.
- CAMPFIRE GHOST STORIES AT ALLEGHENY COUNTY PARKS OCT. 22-25: FALL NIGHTS AND THE SPOOKY SEASON SET THE SCENE FOR FAMILY-FRIENDLY GHOST STORIES AND SONGS BY THE GLOW OF A ROARING CAMPFIRE. HALLOWEEN COSTUMES ARE ENCOURAGED. HEAD TO NORTH PARK, SETTLERS CABIN PARK, BOYCE PARK OR HARRISON HILLS PARK. NO REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED.

IMAGINATION LIBRARY

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available in the Pittsburgh region. Through this program each child in your home under the age of five can receive one free, high-quality, age-appropriate book each month from birth to their fifth birthday.
The program is available to all City of Pittsburgh residents, as well as those living in 20 additional zip codes outside the city, with more communities being added over time.
Dolly parton imagination library



WE ARE HIRING!!!

The Early Childhood Education Program is hiring for full-time Assistant Teachers (EAIIA and EAIIB) at a number of locations as well as Food Service Aides for our Children's Museum and Kamin Science Center sites. We are also looking for day-to-day substitute teachers in both our Early Head Start (infant/toddler) and Early Childhood / preschool classrooms, which is great for those who want a flexible schedule.
If you or someone you know is interested, please **apply online** today - We'd love to have you join our team!



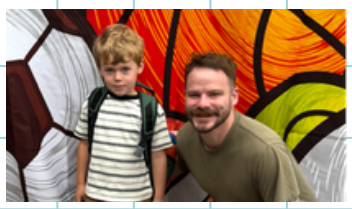
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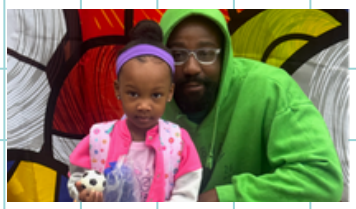
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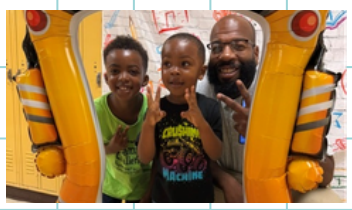
PHOTO HIGHLIGHTS FROM SEPTEMBER

See more on our Facebook page - updated regularly!

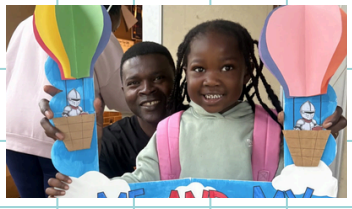
THANK YOU TO ALL OF THE PARENTS, CAREGIVERS, AND FRIENDS WHO PARTICIPATED IN TAKE A CHILD TO SCHOOL DAY!







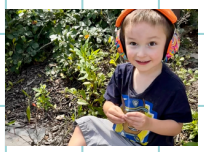

OUR CLASSROOMS WERE BUSY THIS MONTH ADJUSTING TO SCHOOL, DIVING INTO CURRICULUM, AND ENJOYING THE OUTDOORS!














WE ALSO CHEERED ON THE STEELERS – CLICK HERE TO SEE A VIDEO FROM CHARTIERS ECC!