ADOPT A SINGLE MOM PROJECT
On January 15, 2019, in partnership with the United Way of Wyoming Valley, the Early Intervention Program participated in a community event for single moms at the Woodlands Inn and Resort in Wilkes-Barre. The Adopt a Single Mom Project was founded in November, 2017, by an individual from upstate New York who provided gifts to disadvantaged moms for the holidays. Brochures about EI services, pamphlets on development and sippy cups were shared with those in attendance.

FAMILY COACHING CONFERENCE
On Friday, April 12, 2019, the Luzerne/Wyoming Counties EI Infant/Toddler Program hosted a Conference on “Family Coaching” at Genetti’s Hotel and Conference Center in Wilkes-Barre. Participants in the local coaching pilot shared their experiences and achievements in implementing “Family Guided Routines Based Intervention” with fidelity through a coaching model of service delivery. The event identified the framework of coaching sessions through the Setting the Stage, Observation and Opportunity, Problem Solving and Planning and Reflection and Review (SSOOPPRR) cycle. Over 60 individuals attended the event.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE
On Thursday, June 6th, the Early Intervention Program shared information about our supports and services at the Miners Medical Center of Excellence event, Reviewing Opioid Overdose and the Importance of the Certified Recovery Role at the Genetti Hotel and Conference Center in Wilkes-Barre. Sippy cups, EI brochures and pamphlets on development were shared with attendees.

Marilee McDonough, EI SC Unit Supervisor and Judy Kresky, EI Program Specialist at the June 6th event.

Pictured facilitating the training on April 12th are Liz Kuschke from Early Intervention Professionals and Colleen Kutchkus, an EITA Consultant.

Pictured at the event are Nicole Thomas and Jaime Love from the EI Service Coordination Unit.
THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

At our March 14, 2019 LICC meeting, Mary Ann Stefko from the Scranton School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing provided a presentation on the NEPA Professional Learning Community (PLC). The NEPA PLC is a group of professionals and family members committed to improving and expanding services for children who are deaf/hard of hearing in the NEPA region of Pennsylvania (Luzerne, Wyoming, Lackawanna, Susquehanna, Carbon, Monroe, Pike and Wayne Counties). The first accomplished objective of the group was to develop a one page resource guide for local parents who are just beginning to navigate the system for their children who are newly diagnosed with hearing concerns.

CHILDREN’S FESTIVAL

Join in on the fun at the Children’s Festival on Sunday, August 25, 2019 from 11AM to 6PM at the Hazleton Township Community Park, 37 Pecora Blvd., Hazleton. There will be give-a-ways, tricky trays, interactive events and food vendors on site. The Festival is a free, family friendly event, with activities and information targeting newborns through teenagers.

TRANSITION STARTS AT TWO

During the month of April, 2019, the Luzerne/Wyoming Counties EI Infant/Toddler Program hosted Transition events for the families of children in the EI Infant/Toddler Program whose children will be turning three years old within the next year and transitioning to the EI Preschool Program. Families had the opportunity to meet staff from the Hazleton Area School District’s EI Preschool Program; learn what education looks like and what options are available within our county joinder; and find answers to their questions and concerns about what happens next for their child.

Folks gathered at McDonald’s Restaurant in Tunkhannock on Wednesday, April 24th and the Supper Bounce in Wyoming on Friday, April 26th. Debbie Shemansky from the EI Preschool Program provided a presentation about the Transition Process at both events.

Pictured left to right are Brittany Shoemaker and Jessica Salas from Luzerne County Early Head Start, Mary Ann Stefko from Scranton School for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Nicolette Burton DeMarco from Wyoming Valley Children’s Association and in the back row, Ruth Gostynski from Support Services for Infants and Toddlers

Pictured is Debbie Shemansky from the EI Preschool Program addressing the group at the Tunkhannock event at McDonald’s.

Maria Scarnulis, a Special Instructor with Encore Therapy Services, amusing some kiddos at the Supper Bounce event in Wyoming.

See more photos of Penn's Valley Children's Association's Migrant Education Program at the EI Preschool Program's event in Wyoming.
AUTISM AWARENESS – NEPA

Autism Awareness – NEPA hosted their 12th Annual 5K Run, Walk and Awareness Fair on Saturday, April 27, 2019 at the Luzerne County Recreational Complex in Forty Fort. Their goal is to promote awareness and support program in our community that serve individuals with autism. Staff from the local Early Intervention Service Coordination Unit and the Supports Coordination Organization manned a table to share information about our supports and services with the individuals who attended the event.

Seated, left to right is Lauren Pavlick and Cathy Zachar from the SCO and Ashley Williams and Jaime Love from the EI SC Unit.

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

On Tuesday, February 26, 2019, staff from the Luzerne County Assistance Office (CAO) shared information about the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF) with our local EI Service Coordination Unit. Christine Creedon and Melissa Jesse, Income Maintenance Casework Supervisors with the CAO shared information about TANF and other CAO programs that benefit the families we work with. The TANF Program was implemented in 1997.

REACH AND RISK ASSESSMENT

OCDEL annually compiles its Program Reach and Risk Assessment Report that provides information on the level of risk for school failure for children (based of 16 risk factors) and the availability, or reach, of most OCDEL programs to children in each county and school district in Pennsylvania. The current data available is from 2016/2017. This is the ninth year of the report. Highlights within the report include: 34% of children under age 5 participate in state and/or federally funded quality early care and education programs; Approximately 24% of Pennsylvania’s infants and toddlers (birth to age 2 participate in publicly funded quality early care and education programs; and almost half (49%) of Pennsylvania’s preschoolers are served in state and/or federally funded quality early care and education programs. Specific information about our county joinder indicates that 70.5% of Luzerne County children under 5 years of age live in economically high risk families and 63.6% of Wyoming County children under 5 years of age live in economically high risk families. To read the full report and access county and school-based specific information, visit the PA Key website.
About Babies & Children

SCO and Ashley Williams and Jaime Love from the EI SC Unit. Seated, left to right is Lauren Pavlick and Cathy Zachar from the event.

Our supports and services with the individuals who attended the event. The Early Intervention Service Coordination Unit and the Supports Coordination Unit serve individuals with autism. Staff from the local Early Learning Center served at the Luzerne County Recreational Complex in Forty Fort. Their goal is to promote awareness and support programs in our community.

The Autism Awareness – NEPA hosted their 12th Annual 5K Run, Walk and Awareness Fair on Saturday, April 27, 2019 at the Luzerne County Recreational Complex.

Autism Awareness – NEPA

Approximately 24% of Pennsylvania’s infants and toddlers (birth to age 2) participate in publicly available early care and education programs; Approximately 24% of Pennsylvania’s preschoolers (age 3-4) participate in publicly available early care and education programs; Approximately 24% of Pennsylvania’s school district in Pennsylvania. The current data available is from 2016/2017. This is the ninth year of the report. Highlights within the report include:

- 34% of Luzerne County children under 5 years of age live in economically high risk families and 63.6% of Wyoming County children under 5 years of age live in economically high risk families. To read the full report and access county and school-based specific information, visit the PA Key website.

Early Learning Language and Communication

Babies express their needs and feelings through sounds and cries, body movements and facial expressions. Your baby will begin using words around 1 year. By the time your baby is 3, you will begin to hear 3 to 5 words strung together.

What You Can Do?

- Watch and listen to see how your baby communicates what she is thinking and feeling.
- Repeat the sounds and words your child uses and have back and forth conversations.
- Read, sing and tell stories. These are fun ways to help your child understand the meaning of new words and ideas.
- Talk about what you do together as you play, do errands, or visit friends or family.

These are really simple and easy things you can do to help your child with their language development.

EI Infant/Toddler Provider Mandated Training

The Luzerne/Wyoming Counties EI Infant/Toddler Program has scheduled a training to cover all of the annual mandated training topics for Friday, July 26, 2019. The event will take place at the Kirby Episcopal House in Mountain Top. Training topics will cover but not be limited to Cultural Competency, Universal Health Procedures and Precautions, and the Transition Process. Lunch will be provided. All EI Infant/Toddler provider staff is encouraged to attend. RSVP by Friday, July 19, 2019 to Sandra.tamanini@luzernecounty.org

The LICC Annual Retreat

Our local ICC held the Annual Retreat on Friday, May 17, 2019 at the Kirby Episcopal House in Mountain Top. The event provides an opportunity for LICC members to review our accomplishments over the past fiscal year and set new goals for the new fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2019. Current topics of interest at a local, state and federal level were also discussed. 17 members attended the Retreat.

Pictured, left, is Claudia Sharp, the Manager of the Kirby House and Judy Kresky, the EI Program Specialist for Luzerne/Wyoming Counties. Ms Sharp provided the group with a brief history of the Kirby House and the Kirby family and also led a tour of some of the recent room renovations.
PLANS OF SAFE CARE

The Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) is the United States’ foremost legislation addressing child abuse and neglect. CAPTA has been amended several times, the most relevant recent changes regarding Plans of Safe Care were made through the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) in 2016. Through CARA, requirements were added to emphasize that plans of safe care address the needs of infants who are identified as affected by substance abuse, experience withdrawal symptoms, or have Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD). Changes to federal law by CARA include, but are not limited to: removes the term “illegal” in regard to substance abuse; and requires that Plans of Safe Care address the needs of both the infant and the affected family or caregiver. On June 28, 2018, Governor Tom Wolf signed Pennsylvania’s Act 54 of 2018 to meet CAPTA requirements. Pennsylvania’s Act 54 of 2018 requires: mandatory notification to the Department of Human Services when a medical provider, who is involved in the delivery or care of a child under one year of age, has determined based on standards of professional practice that the child was born affected by substance use or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder; and the development of “interagency protocols” by the PA Departments of Drug and Alcohol Programs (DDAP), Health (DOH) and Human Services(DHS) to support local multidisciplinary teams (MDT) that will identify, assess and develop a Plan of Safe Care for infants born affected by substance use or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure of FASD. This is a notable shift from the previous law which limited notification to DHS to only those cases including illegal substance use and including an exception to reporting if the pregnant woman was receiving treatment for a substance use disorder. The requirements regarding notification of infants born affected by substance use go beyond the use of opioids and apply to all infants born and identified as affected by substance use, whether legal or illegal substances.

KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION IN TUNKHANNOCK

The Early Intervention Program participated in the Tunkhannock Area School District’s Kindergarten Registration which occurred at the Administration Building on Philadelphia Ave in Tunkhannock the week of April 29th through May 3rd, 2019. Developmental pamphlets, EI brochures and sippy cups were shared with the families that attend the event.

Jaime Love from the EI Infant/Toddler Service Coordination Unit manning a table at the event.

PENNSYLVANIA MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM

On Tuesday, March 12, 2019, Judy Rodriguez, Student Support Specialist and Wendy Bowman, Recruitment Coordinator with the Northeast Migrant Education Program provided an overview about their supports and services to the Luzerne/Wyoming Counties EI Service Coordination Unit. Pennsylvania’s Migrant Education Program is a federally funded program that supplements educational support services for migratory children. They assist school districts and charters in coordinating the continuity of educational services for children who have had their schooling interrupted. EI brochures about our supports and services were given to Ms. Rodriguez and Ms. Bowman to be shared with the families they work with.

Seated left to right, are Judy Rodriguez and Wendy Bowman.
Questions???
Do you have concerns about a child’s ability to move, see or hear? Express their needs or care for themselves? Relate to others or learn?
If the answer is Yes, call the Luzerne-Wyoming Counties Early Intervention Program for a FREE evaluation. The child may be eligible for FREE Early Intervention Services, with no income guidelines or insurance involvement.
For more information: Children Birth through Two years call 570-831-7224
Children Three to Kindergarten call The Hazleton School District 570-826-0850 or 570-454-1870

LUZERNE-WYOMING COUNTIES MENTAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES
111 N. Pennsylvania Avenue, Suite 300
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701-3510

INQUIRIES CAN BE DIRECTED TO:
Judy Kresky, Early Intervention Services
via email: judy.kresky@luzernecounty.org or
phone: 570-831-7281
Visit our Website at:
www.luzernecounty.org/mhds
Or Current Resident

LICC PROVIDER CO-CHAIR
Laurene Gabriel has accepted the role of LICC Provider Co-chair for the two year term beginning July 1, 2019. Ms Gabriel is a Speech and Language Pathologist and the owner of LG Intervention Specialists, an Early Intervention provider agency in our local Network. A special thanks for Ruth Gostynski from Support Services for Infants and Toddlers for holding the position for the last two fiscal years.

Pictured at the LICC Annual Retreat at the Kirby House
are Ruth Gostynski and Laurene Gabriel.

THE WOLFPACK SPRING FLING INTO WELLNESS
On Friday, June 7, 2019, Early Intervention participated in the Wilkes-Barre Area School District’s “Wolfpack Spring Fling into Wellness” event at the Wilkes-Barre Memorial Stadium. Over 900 individuals attended the event and 40 agencies manned resource tables to share information about their supports and services. The event was free and all in attendance enjoyed great food, music, games and face painting.

Pictured at the event is Ashley Morrow, the Community Impact Manager from the United Way of Wyoming Valley.