



NewsLetter

Summer 2010

Philadelphia Interagency Coordinating Council:

A Collaboration of Families, Early Intervention Providers,
& Early Childhood Community Agencies



Need Help Accessing Health Insurance

My application for Medical Assistance was denied. What can I do to get coverage for my kid?

Don't worry. Any child in PA can get health care and almost all of them can qualify for some kind of health insurance. If your application is denied, appeal the denial right away by calling the phone number on the denial letter. You can appeal in person or by phone. When you appeal, the County Assistance Office (CAO) must stop the clock on any changes to your benefits and will keep your application "open" until a decision is made.

Every appeal case is a little bit different, but here are some common reasons why the CAO may have denied your application. (For more information visit our website at www.pccy.org/Issues/Health).

- Income "over program limits."
- Lack of documents.
- No "qualified" immigration status.

Income "over program limits": First, make sure the CAO has figured your income cor-

rectly. The denial letter shows how they figured your income. Remember, they are looking at your household's gross income (before taxes, deductions) from all household members including the child who needs insurance, the child's siblings under age 18 and the child's parents living with him or her. The list of income that can be counted includes child support payments, self-employment income, social security, pension and more.

If you think they made an error, you can present proof at your appeal hearing. If it turns out the CAO figure is correct your child will be eligible for CHIP. Tell the CAO to forward your application to one of the CHIP HMOs where it should take about two weeks for approval.

Lack of Documents: Generally speaking, for an MA-only application, you must provide proof of child's citizenship and identity and proof of all household income. There are three common reasons that a claim would be denied for a lack of documents: you didn't supply copies of the documents; the CAO is asking for the documents but cannot actually legally require

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Have you Been Counted?

U.S. Census Bureau
Philadelphia Regional Census Center

If you were not able to mail back your form before mid-April, you will receive a visit from a Census Bureau employee. It is important to cooperate with census takers, since results of the 2010 Census will affect you and your community on a daily operational level. This critical national effort affects how the federal government annually allocates \$400 billion in federal assistance to state, local, and tribal governments. This affects the funding of hospitals, senior centers, schools, public transportation, roadwork and infrastructure, and services like Head Start, public housing programs, home health care, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

The 2010 Census has one of the shortest census questionnaires in the history of the United States, dating back to the nation's first census in 1790.

The personal information provided by each household is kept confidential, and is protected by Title 13 of the US Code. Data released from the 2010 Census will be available only in statistical form; no individual household information can be shared with any federal agency, which includes Immigration and IRS. Information also cannot be shared with the court system, law enforcement, Congress, or the President of the United States. In fact, any Census employee who violates the lifetime oath to protect a household's confidential information can be punished by five years in prison and/or a fine of \$250,000. The 2010 Census will not ask for social security numbers, personal banking or credit card information, political affiliation, or citizenship status.

The 2010 Census will ask for:

- name
- sex
- age
- race
- ethnicity
- relationship
- whether the householder owns or rents the home.

The census interview will take only about 10 minutes on average to complete. You do not need to invite the census taker into your home, but please take the short amount of time necessary to answer the questions.

Please be aware:

- All census employees carry official government badges. Residents are permitted to ask employees for photographic identification to confirm their identity.
- Census workers may carry a "U.S. Census Workers" bag.
- Census workers will never try to force themselves inside of a home.
- Should there be any uncertainty, local law enforcement agencies have a sample image of the badge, and can be called to verify the identity of the employee.

Responses to the 2010 Census questionnaire are required by law. For more information about the 2010 Census, please visit www.2010census.gov.

2010 CENSUS TIMELINE: KEY DATES

May – July 2010: Census takers visit households that did not return a questionnaire by mail.

December 2010: By law, Census Bureau delivers population counts to President for apportionment.

March 2011: By law, Census Bureau completes delivery of redistricting data to states.

The 2010 Census will ask for:

- name
- sex
- age
- race
- ethnicity
- relationship
- whether the householder owns or rents the home.



HELP IS HERE
The
PARENT AMBASSADOR PROGRAM
In Collaboration with Parent to Parent
of Pennsylvania

**FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL PHONE AND EMAIL SUPPORT FROM
PARENTS JUST LIKE YOU!**

WE ARE HERE TO HELP...CALL TODAY!

1-888-727-2706



Do you live in Philadelphia and have a young child with special needs?

Do you have questions about early intervention?

Would you like your questions answered by parents who have been in your shoes before?

Are you interested in learning about community resources?

**CALL THE PA PARENT TO PARENT PROGRAM AND ASK TO BE
REFERRED TO AN ELWYN PARENT AMBASSADOR**

1-888-727-2706



This program is funded by a Children with Special Health
Care Needs Community Activity Grant



Are You Pregnant or Do You Have an Infant Under the Age of 6 Months?

The Infant Brain Imaging Study (IBIS) at the Center for Autism Research (CAR) at The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia is looking for participants!

Twin and family studies have shown that younger brothers and sisters of children with autism are at a higher risk of developing autism than those children who do not have a relative with this condition. Information gained about early brain development in children with autism may improve methods of early detection and intervention for infants who may be at risk for developing autism. Earlier identification and treatment may lead to better outcomes for these young children and their families.

CAR is actively seeking to enroll families who have a child with an autism spectrum disorder and an infant sibling 6 months old or younger for the Infant Brain Imaging Study (IBIS). They are also enrolling families who have a typically developing child and an infant sibling 6 months old or younger. Developmental evaluations and MRI scans will be completed at 6, 12, and 24 months of age. Families will receive thorough feedback reports as well as compensation for their time and travel expenses.

To learn more about participating in this study or other research studies at CAR, please contact Julianne Mesaric at 1-866-570-6524 (toll free) or autism@email.chop.edu.

Early Intervention Survey

In June of this year the state Office of Child Development and Early Learning will be mailing surveys to families in Philadelphia whose children are receiving Early Intervention Services through ChildLink and Elwyn. This survey is sent to families across Pennsylvania once a year. Results are used at the statewide and local levels to help to improve the quality of services. The survey should only take about five to ten minutes to complete. If you receive a survey it is important that you fill it out and return it in the envelope provided. Each family that receives services through Early Intervention is unique and we want to hear from as many families as possible.

We ask that families read each question and base their response on that specific question. We understand that families may have experience with a variety of different people in Early Intervention. We are asking that families consider their experiences with these individuals as a whole as they respond to the questions. Survey responses are confidential and programs will not be able to identify individual family responses.

We thank families in advance for their participation and we look forward to hearing from you!

Below is a smaller version of the survey for you to know what it looks like and can watch for it in the mail. Once you receive the survey, if you need any assistance filling it

out you can ask your service provider, service coordinator or contact someone from OCDEL Please complete it as soon as you receive it!

PA pennsylvania
OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT
AND EARLY LEARNING

Early Intervention
Infant/Toddler Family Survey

pennsylvania
EARLY INTERVENTION
Serving Children with Developmental Delays

This survey is for families with children receiving Early Intervention Infant/Toddler services. Your responses will help guide efforts at the statewide level to improve services and results for children and families. You may skip any item that does not apply to your family.

Please complete using a No. 2 pencil or blue or black ink that does not bleed through the paper.

1 - Very Strongly Disagree
2 - Strongly Disagree
3 - Disagree
4 - Agree
5 - Strongly Agree
6 - Very Strongly Agree

In the past year, Early Intervention (EI) Staff...

- Gave me information about their mission, goals, policies and procedures. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Provided an opportunity for me to share what is important to my child and family. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Gave me choices regarding my family's services and supports. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Built on my child's strengths and interests. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Helped me to understand how the information collected about my child and family is used for program improvement. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Talked to me about how information about my child's performance is used to help teach my child new things. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Explained the relationship between assessment/evaluation findings and my child's outcomes/goals. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Made it easy for me to talk to them about my child and our family. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Explained what options parents have if they disagree with a decision made by EI staff. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Gave my family information about modifications of routines, activities and the physical setting that would help my child. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Gave me ideas of how to support my child's development at home. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Gave me information about organizations that offer support to parents (for example: Parent to Parent of Pa, Support Groups, Parent Training Information Centers, Family Resource Centers) (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Gave me information about opportunities for my child to play with other children. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Made me feel part of the IFSP/IEP decision-making process. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Are available to talk with me at times that fit into my schedule. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Respect my culture. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Are dependable. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Provided opportunities for parent training or information sessions. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Provided all of the services listed on his/her IFSP/IEP. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Provided the services on our IFSP/IEP in a timely way. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Asked me about how well the program is meeting my child's needs. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Asked me what I like and don't like about the program. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Let me know about good things my child does. (1 2 3 4 5 6)
- Were honest with me, even if they had difficult things to discuss. (1 2 3 4 5 6)

Please Complete Both Sides



DIRT DETECTIVE

What is in the dirt under our feet? Discuss the many things that might be found while digging in the dirt.

Materials:

- Brown paper (construction paper, paper grocery bag)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Markers/crayons/colored pencils
- Magazines

Instructions:

1. Discuss the many things that the child would come across if they were going to dig for their treasure.
2. Have the child cut out pictures from a magazine or draw and color the items that they think they might find in the dirt.
3. Paste or draw these items on the brown paper.
4. Be creative and have fun!

Need Help Accessing Health Insurance

(continued from Page 1)

them; or the documents were not attached to your application and got lost at CAO. Find out from your caseworker or the change center which documents are missing and supply them by registered or certified mail, fax or in person and get a receipt. If the CAO is “missing” documents and you have written proof they were submitted, the denial should be overturned and insurance started.

If the documents are not legally required, check with the PCCY Helpline, Community Legal Services, or the PA Health Law Project.

Unfortunately, if you don't have proof that you delivered the documents and you can't convince the caseworker that you did so, you will probably have to start again. Call the Helpline to expedite your new application.

No Qualified Immigration Status: Sadly, in Pennsylvania your children can be denied ongoing coverage if they don't have “qualified” immigration status. You should ask yourself two questions: Is it true that my child is not eligible? Eligible or not, does your child have an urgent or emergency medical need that poses a threat to his/her life or well-being?

Children are eligible for MA if they are citizens, naturalized citizens, permanent legal resident (“green card” holders), refugees, asylees, or one of a number of long-term visa holders. If your child is without documents or is here under a student, tourist or work visa, they may not be eligible for MA

But even without a “qualified” status, your child may be eligible for Emergency Medical Assistance. If your child has an urgent or emergency medical condition and your household is eligible for MA, they can be enrolled for a few months of MA to deal with the crisis. Your application will have to include a statement from a doctor outlining the nature of the need. In PA there is no five year waiting period for MA enrollment for immigrants for children and pregnant moms. If you are denied on this basis, appeal the denial right away.

For more information contact the PCCY's Child Health-watch Helpline at 215-563-5848 x 17. www.pccy.org
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MATTHEW'S EXPERIENCE IN EARLY INTERVENTION

My son Matthew seemed to be born chatty and always had a steady stream of his own language (jargon). However, by his 2 year check up, he was still not producing typical speech and his vocabulary was limited to very few basic single words – “no”, “bye”, etc. At this point, his pediatrician recommended that I contact Early Intervention and our journey into the Philadelphia Early Intervention system began. At that age, we started with Child link and he began receiving intensive services with therapists coming 8 hours a week to our home. I also had an especially hard time with Matthew's feeding patterns, managing his behaviors and frustration with not being able to verbally communicate his needs. I learned so much from his Childlink program, for example better techniques to encourage more appropriate behavior and more effective ways of getting Matthew to eat. I cannot express how instrumental that period of time was to both of us.

Right before his third birthday, Matthew was evaluated by the Elwyn team and it was determined that since he still had social, cognitive, and speech delays, he could further benefit from Early Intervention services. However, this time he was placed in a center based program 3 days a week. The transition from Child link to Elwyn took some getting used to. At one point, I began to have concerns with Matthew's lack of progress at the center. After requesting a meeting, I was able to speak with the center's director and teacher to address my concerns. The team at the center was sympathetic to my worries and suggested different strategies I could try at home to help.

At Matthew's next checkup, again his pediatrician was concerned enough about Matthew's lack of progress and regression in some areas that he directed me to another developmental assessment center. At 3 years 4 months, Matthew was formally diagnosed with autism. Due to my prior concerns, I had again requested an IEP review meeting which happened to fall just a few days after Matthew's new diagnosis. My service coordinator was kind enough to personally attend the review meeting. She was also quick to respond to requests, coordinate and work out scheduling bugs, as well as make her best efforts to accommodate changes to my son's IEP given his recent diagnosis (that she was not aware of prior to the meeting). I was able to have a fellow mom whose child has autism and has been through this system attend the meeting and lend her support.

The staff at Matthew's center have been very accommodating of my requests to meet with them. I was especially glad to be able to meet my son's speech therapist who shared information with me on how my son has been progressing. I really had no idea what was being worked on, what services he was receiving, etc. It was helpful to have his therapist, classroom teacher, as well as the program service director attend the IEP. They shed some light on the centers activities and their impressions of Matthew's progress there.

I am very grateful to these individuals for taking the time to meet with me and begin the adjustment to Matthew's services as needed within the limits of the program. I know the budget is tight, Philadelphia is overwhelmed with kids needing services and not everyone is going to get what they feel their child needs. It really meant a lot to me that my son's team from Elwyn SEEDS took the time to talk with me and address my concerns. I am excited to see how my son progresses as we continue to work with the program.

Ruth Baldwin

THE STORY OF

Medinah & MoorAsya

When I gave birth to our twin girls Medinah and MoorAsya 13 years ago, my husband Charles and I were surprised and a little overwhelmed at the prospect of caring for two young children at the same time. Medinah and MoorAsya were two very healthy and active girls who flourished and developed along a typical developmental time line.

My husband Charles and I did notice that we had a little more difficulty understanding some of MoorAsya's words when she spoke, but we thought that her speech would continue to develop as she got older. We never suspected that she had a language delay and we probably were not prepared to face that reality.

"My advice to other parents would be to get involved with your child's early intervention services and practice the interventions that they show you."

When the girls changed day care providers at age 3, the teacher brought to our attention that she thought MoorAsya needed to be evaluated for early intervention services. Because MoorAsya was in a new environment with new care givers, the teacher could not understand what she was saying and really noticed the difficulty MoorAsya was having with articulating words. We moved forward to have her evaluated, and it turned out that she was eligible to receive early intervention services and did need the services of a Speech Language Pathologist. MoorAsya was able to stay in her day care site with her sister and the speech therapist came to see

her there. It was wonderful because this speech therapist worked very closely with MoorAsya's day care teacher to show her how to work on the language development outcomes also. In just 6 months we could see a remarkable difference in how MoorAsya was able to communicate. It was great to see that she could communicate and be understood by more people than just those in her immediate family.

Little did I know at the time that I would come to work for the City of Philadelphia in the Infant/Toddler Early Intervention program. Because of my experience with my own daughter I can relate very well to what parents are experiencing whose children are recommended for services.

My advice to other parents would be to get involved with your child's early intervention services and practice the interventions that they show you. Even if your child receives their services in a day care setting, take time to talk with the teacher about the interventions that they are working on with your child. Parents should also call the therapist directly to arrange a time to meet at home periodically, or to just discuss the things that can be done at home to work on the IFSP or IEP outcomes.

When we talk with MoorAsya today about the experience she can actually remember working with the speech therapists when she was three and some of the interventions and activities that they worked on together. To hear her talk today, as a teenager, you would never suspect that there was ever a delay in her language communication and that is the whole purpose of early intervention services.

As told by :
Stephanie Bey,
Program Analyst
Philadelphia Mental
Retardation Services

FIVE TIPS

FOR FAMILY READING AT HOME

1 **Set aside time for reading every day.** Pick a time that works best for you and your child. Many children like a story before bed, but story time can be any time of day. Some children may not want to sit still for a story so work in a story with another routine—during bath time or snack time. But whenever you choose to read, make it a habit!

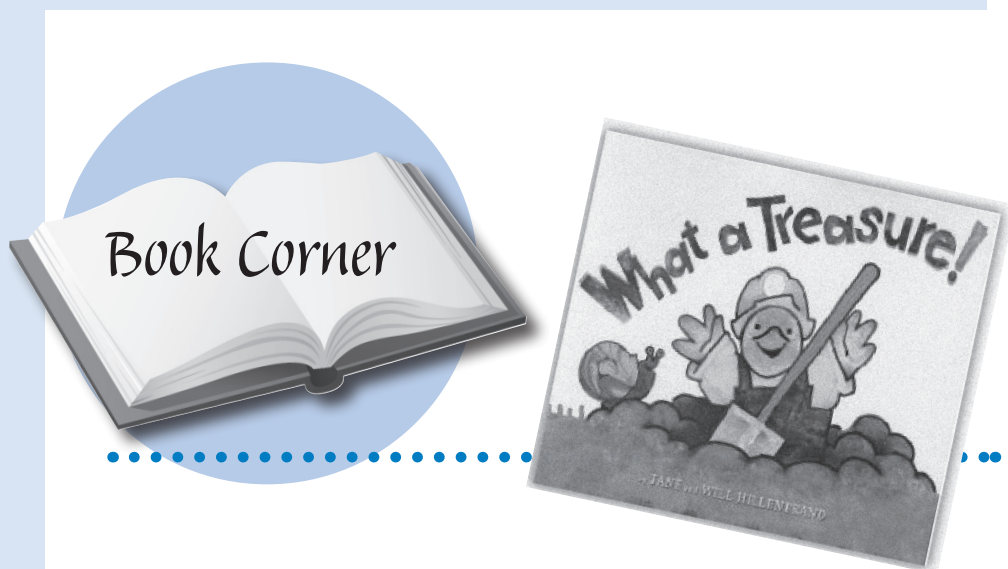
2 **Choose stories that both you and your child will enjoy.** Your child will probably like stories with rhymes, repeated refrains, pictures to identify, and other interactive details. Your enthusiasm will show if you enjoy the story, giving story time a happy energy that your child will grow to appreciate.

3 **Don't be afraid to be silly!** Give characters funny voices, be melodramatic, and change the words of a familiar story to something unexpected! You don't have to be a great actor to tell the story, but if children see you having fun with a story, they learn that stories are fun!

For more ideas and information, please visit The Pennsylvania Center for the Book at <http://www.pabook.libraries.psu.edu/familylit> and the Family Reading Partnership at <http://www.familyreading.org>

4 **Encourage your child to participate.** Let your child predict what happens next in an unfamiliar story and tell portions of the story themselves in a familiar one. Ask your child to identify the pictures in a book or to describe what they think is happening.

5 **Be a reading role model.** Let your child see you pick up a book or magazine and read for your own benefit. Show your child how reading helps you find out things, like what ingredients go into dinner and what time a favorite movie is going to be on television. Model good book handling, and give books their own special places in the house.



For the fifth consecutive year, Pennsylvania's One Book, Every Young Child program will lead the way and highlight the importance of early literacy development in preschoolers ages 3 to 6. In its inaugural year, the One Book, Every Young Child program won the coveted, national John Cotton Dana Library Public Relations Award.

The selection for this year's program is *What a Treasure!* by Jane and Will Hillenbrand. Since the book was published in 2006 children have been accompanying Mole on his dig as he discovers exciting treasures for both his animal friends and for himself. Have shovel, will dig. Such is the simplicity of young Mole's experiences in this warm look at appreciating the small, often unexpected, joys in one's life.

Jane and Will Hillenbrand create a charming story for everyone who has ever spent time digging for treasure. Young readers will especially relate to the treasures that Mole finds in his backyard.

Recipe Corner

Dig These Snacks:

Here are two themed snacks for you to enjoy.

DIRT PUDDING

Ingredients (makes 8 large cupfuls):

- 1 package instant pudding, preferably chocolate flavor
- 2 cups cold milk
- 1 8oz. container whipped topping
- 1 package chocolate cookies, crushed
- Gummy worms
- Optional additional layers:
 - Additional flavors of pudding, vanilla and butterscotch for new dirt colors, prepared the same way as the chocolate with milk and whipped topping.
 - Additional types of crushed cookies, such as vanilla wafers and graham crackers

Directions:

1. Beat milk and pudding mix until well-blended. Let sit for five minutes.
2. Fold in whipped topping and half the cookie crumbs.
3. Layer cookie crumbs and pudding mixture into clear plastic cups. Incorporate
4. Gummy worms into the layers as you go and top with additional cookie crumbs and worms.

Questions:

- Comparing the layers of pudding to the layers of dirt in the real ground; “have you seen layers like this where the hills have been cut away beside the highway?”

BIRD’S NEST

Ingredients:

- Shredded wheat cereal
- Yogurt
- Round berries such as grapes or blueberries

Directions:

1. Crumble shredded wheat into a bowl.
2. Mix in just enough yogurt so that the shredded wheat sticks together and can be molded, and mold it into a nest shape.
3. Put round fruit in the nest as eggs.



Before trying a new recipe, make sure that it meets the requirements of your child's diet. It is important to make sure the food is the right thickness and texture. Also, watch out for food allergies. If you have any doubts, call your health care professional before serving a questionable food to your child. This recipe may not be suitable for all children.



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FRENCH

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VIETNAMESE

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CHINESE

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ARABIC

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