



Family Engagement

Family Involvement Activities at the Children's Learning Center at Penn College:

One important way we use our Keystone STARS merit award is to pay for **family social events** such as our Fall Welcome Back night, when we provide a pizza supper for children and parents and provide child care while parents have a brief meeting with their child's teacher to learn about our curriculum and what they can do to help their child be successful in the coming year. (photo). Other similar events in the past year have included a holiday meal (called Parent Appreciation Day), in late November or early December, a Valentine's Day tea, and a spring picnic. Providing simple, light meals makes the evening go more smoothly for busy families and really helps us to get an excellent turnout.

We encourage parents and guardians to accompany the children on **field trips** and use Merit Award dollars to pay for the extra bus space and admission costs this requires. (Photo) We also have **no-cost family involvement** activities, such as recruiting parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles to come in to read a story. We have found that specific invitations, or at least sign-up sheets with specific times, are more effective than a general invitation without particulars.

We provide for family involvement in **important program decisions** by recruiting parents to serve on screening committees when we have job openings, or to serve on ad hoc advisory committees when important policy decisions have to be made (such as whether to add an infant room to our center). We have occasionally used Merit Award dollars to hold an advisory committee meeting over lunch at the restaurant here on the Penn College campus.

Perhaps because our families are students or employees at a college, they also participate enthusiastically in "**homework**" assignments, like bringing in a family photo to add to a classroom display, or counting the number of feet in their household (grown-ups, children, cats and dogs) and reporting back with the number to add to a classroom graph.

By planning events that are different in type and that are held at different times of the day, we try to provide something for everyone.



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Children's Learning Center
at Penn College, Lycoming
County

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