



ECASB & Erie County

Collaborating For Stronger Public Schools in Erie County

March 2025



Lisa Chimera
 Deputy County Executive

I hope everyone enjoyed February break and that despite the below average temperatures, the days are finally getting longer, signaling that the winter season is almost complete. I remind everyone that this year Daylight Saving Time will happen at 2 a.m. on March 9. "Spring Forward" is also a great time to check your home's smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. I am excited to share that last month we announced the expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Erie County. You can learn more about this program below in News from Erie County. As we head into spring, we'll take a look at some health and wellness tips for students and ways to promote sustainability. I hope that everyone has a great month and wish our student athletes the best of luck for the spring sports season!

Resources:

Live Well Erie: <https://www.erie.gov/livewellerie>

Erie County Department of Social Services: <https://www.erie.gov/socialservices>

Erie County Department of Health: <https://www.erie.gov/health>

Erie County Office of Health Equity: <https://www.erie.gov/health-equity>

News from Erie County:

National Nutrition Month

During the month of March, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics invites everyone to learn about making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits. This year's National Nutrition Month theme is "Food Connects Us."

Food connects us to our cultures, our families and our friends. Sharing a meal is an opportunity to learn about its preparation, who made it, and where the ingredients were sourced. Health, memories, traditions, seasons and access can all impact our relationship with food. While these factors influence the foods we eat, the foods we eat also affect our health.

This is a great opportunity for teachers, administrators, support staff, coaches and school board members to teach students about nutrition, the science of cooking, and even how plant food grows. The Academy has suggestions for schools, including:





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- Create a "nutrition question of the day" contest sent by email or posted on a display board. Select the name of a daily prize winner from those who provided the correct answer. Award a grand prize at the end of the month drawn from all correct submissions.
- Vote for your favorite fruits and vegetables: Show various photos of produce and ask participants to pick their favorite vegetable and fruit. Post a tally board to record votes.
- Start a school vegetable garden by planting seeds indoors or in the ground.
- Explore topics on food history or the invention of different gadgets used in the kitchen.

Additional resources are available at www.eatright.org.

National Poison Prevention Week

This year National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) is March 16 through 22. Serving 54 counties, including Erie County, Upstate New York Poison Center operates a 24/7 poison helpline. Everyone, especially those working with, or caring for children, should save this number to their phone contacts: 1-800-222-1222.

Most poisonings are unintentional. Curious kids can get into, well... everything. If a poisoning is suspected, take the product to the phone, call the Poison Center and answer the call takers questions to the best of your ability. The Poison Center will tell you what to do next.

The Poison Center has prepared a great resource for teachers. "The ABCs of Poison Prevention: A Teachers Guide" provides grade-specific lesson plans and poison prevention strategies. You can find this resource at www.upstate.edu/poison/community/teachingtools.php.

Nicotine: Brain Poison for Teens

A recent campaign from the New York State Department of Health didn't sugar-coat their message: Vaping Nicotine = Bad for your health, brain, pets and planet.

There is no safe level of nicotine for teens. While vaping might seem like a safer option than smoking, it's definitely not safe. Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Institute's testing found that the amount of nicotine in vaping devices sampled from local schools can have up to 13 times the nicotine in a pack of cigarettes. The nicotine and other toxic chemicals in vapes can harm the brain and decision-making process, damage lungs, and make it harder to breathe. Bottom line: there is nothing healthy or safe about vaping.

Designed to reach teenagers and their parents or caregivers, these videos and stark messages are being shared through popular social media channels and television. Your districts can help to amplify this important safety information by sharing on your social media channels and health classes.

Parents and caregivers can learn more at www.health.ny.gov/nicotine.



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Dolly Parton's Imagination Library of Erie County

On March 4, Erie County joined Read to Succeed Buffalo to announce the expansion of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, with the county sponsoring an additional 28 zip codes. United Way of Buffalo and Erie County sponsors several other local zip codes, and the Akron program is run through the Town Library.

The Imagination Library mails one free book a month to each child (aged birth to 5 years) enrolled in the program. Children enrolled from birth receive 60 books by the time they graduate from the Imagination Library program. The final book children receive is "Look Out Kindergarten, Here I Come" by Nancy Carlson. To find out if your family is eligible, visit www.imaginationlibrary.com.

Erie County Rain Barrel & Compost Bin Sale

Erie County, in partnership with the Western New York Stormwater Coalition, is once again offering rain barrels and compost bins for sale to encourage households to reduce their environmental footprint through water conservation and reduced fertilizer use.

Organic waste comprises 30 percent of the household trash going into landfills and incinerators. Homeowners who compost not only extend the life of our landfills and reduce the cost of collecting household garbage but also recycle the nutrients in organic waste to create a valuable soil amendment for their gardens.

Households in Erie County can purchase rain barrels, compost bins and composting accessories at 50 to 75 percent off by visiting www.erie.compostersale.com. Residents in most Erie County municipalities are eligible for a special "Composter Kit" at a discounted price. The "Kit" includes the Earth Machine compost bin, a rodent screen and compost turner.

To register or learn more go to: www3.erie.gov/environment/rain-barrel-contest

Important Dates:

- 3/7 Employee Appreciation Day
- 3/8 International Women's Day
- 3/9 Daylight Savings Time
- 3/16-22 National Poison Prevention Week
- 3/17 St. Patrick's Day

Resources:

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Erie County Department of Health: www.erie.gov/health

Erie County Office of Health Equity: www.erie.gov/health-equity