

ECASB & Erie County

Collaborating For Stronger Public Schools in Erie County

February 2024



Lisa Chimera
Deputy County Executive

In the first month of 2024 our region saw two major snow events and a wind-storm that left many without power. This is a good time to encourage families to inventory and restock emergency food and supplies. Additionally, if your district has food pantries or clothing closets, encourage schools to monitor the contents and consider what can be added before spring arrives. In this month's column you will find information and lesson ideas for classroom teachers, and important health information for children. With spring sports season right around the corner, we also highlight the benefits of participation in athletics. I hope everyone has a wonderful month and Presidents' Day Holiday!

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:

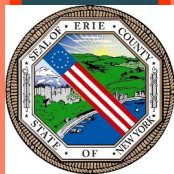
Black History Month

Following the Black Arts Movement of late 1960s and 1970s, widespread attention spurred all Americans to recognize the important role African Americans played in the development of the U.S. Since 1976, every American president has designated the month of February as a time to celebrate and recognize the achievements of Black people through history.

The Black History Month 2024 theme, "African Americans and the Arts," explores the key influence African Americans have had in the fields of visual and performing arts, literature, fashion, folklore, language, film, music, architecture, culinary and other forms of cultural expression.

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library will host several events throughout the month, including a speaker series and the fifth installment of the Annual Black Doll Exhibit. You can





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find a reading list featuring black authors and illustrators at: www.buffalolib.org/blog/black-history-month-reads.

Children's Dental Health Month

February marks Children's Dental Health Month and the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) is shining a spotlight on preventing cavities and improving children's dental health. Dental caries, or cavities, are a prevalent and completely preventable childhood condition, and can lead to mouth pain, premature tooth loss, difficulty chewing, infections and surgeries.

ECDOH, aligning with CDC guidelines, advises parents and caregivers to start dental care routines early. For babies, gently wipe their gums with a clean cloth. When their first tooth shows, start brushing with a soft, small toothbrush. Take your baby to the dentist by their first birthday to check for any early problems, and keep a regular schedule for professional cleanings and checkups throughout childhood. For older children, make sure they brush their teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.

If your child is under 6, help them use only a pea-sized amount of toothpaste and teach them to spit it out. Consider asking your child's dentist about sealants to protect their teeth. Drinking fluoridated tap water and discussing fluoride varnish or supplements with your healthcare provider is also recommended. Starting these habits early helps prevent tooth decay and keeps your child's smile healthy.

A dental hygienist from ECDOH works with Buffalo Public Schools and area charter schools to provide dental education to second graders. For more information, please call (716) 858-7277 or email wellness@erie.gov.

National Youth Sports Strategy

The benefits for youth who engage in regular physical activity are clear: they have improved bone health, weight status, cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, cardiometabolic health, and cognitive function and a reduced risk of depression.

Playing sports can provide additional benefits, including developing competence, confidence, and self-esteem; reducing risk of suicide and suicidal thoughts and tendencies; and improving life skills, such as goal setting, time management, and work ethic. Sports participation also provides youth with the opportunity to develop social and interpersonal skills, such as teamwork, leadership, and relationship building, and enables youth to benefit from the communal aspect of team sports.

With the summer Olympics right around the corner, this is a great opportunity to incorporate sport into the classroom in a grade-level appropriate capacity. Athletes provide



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great role models and life lessons for our students, from striving for success to maintaining a healthy lifestyle, we call all learn something from Team USA!

Office of Health Equity Virtual Open House

Exciting news from the Erie County Office of Health Equity, which held its virtual open house on Tuesday, Jan. 30 to share the huge strides made toward a healthier, more equitable Erie County.

From launching 13 issues of plain language Health Equity Newsletters to creating healing spaces after the 5/14 massacre, and training over 700 individuals in Mental Health First Aid, they have a strong set of accomplishments in the first two years of operation!

You can find copies of each newsletter, and more information at www.erie.gov/health/health-equity

Upcoming Dates

February 7, National Girls and Women in Sports Day

February 19, Presidents' Day