



July 31, 2018

CONGRATULATIONS | [Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional of the Year](#)

The [Arkansas Department of Human Services' Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education \(DCCECE\)](#) announced **Julie Barber** as the *Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional of the Year* (pictured to right). As the recipient of this year's award, Barber will serve as an Early Childhood Ambassador for the year. Her duties will include serving on DCCECE committees and representing early childhood educators in the media.



Barber is an early childhood special education teacher at Helping Hand Learning Center in North Little Rock and an International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Educations Standards' *Certified Autism Specialist*. Outside of the classroom, Barber is active in several organizations, including: Arkansas Early Childhood Association, Southern Early Childhood Association, Autism Speaks, Special Olympics Young Athletes, Alpha Sigma Alpha and March of Dimes.

"Julie Barber embodies the purpose of the Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional of the Year award," said Paige Cox, program and professional development administrator, DCCECE. "The award honors individuals who provide high quality education and care to our state's youngest children and their families."

To get a jump on nominating an outstanding professional for 2018, visit ARBetterBeginnings.com.

POLL | [We Want to Know...](#)

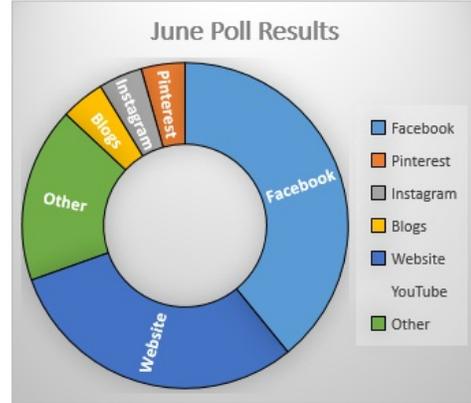
Last month, we asked **which digital media platform you prefer for learning about early childhood development**. Check out the results and see how they match up with your activity online.

We'll continue these surveys every month, so please take the time to click the link below and fill

it out! It takes less than one minute.

This month, we want to know:

[How likely are you to use early childhood teaching tools and resources in Spanish?](#)



DEVELOPMENT | Back to School

Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist for Parents

Arkansas's Definition of School Readiness: School ready children have the social and academic knowledge, skills and behaviors for school success and lifelong learning. School readiness occurs when families, schools and communities support and serve ALL children, so they are successful in school and in life. This list of indicators identifies skills, knowledge and behaviors that will help your child be prepared for that special day -- going to kindergarten. The checklist is NOT a test. It is a tool that you can use to help your child make the transition to kindergarten.

SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Separates from caregiver to another trusted adult
- Shares, takes turns and plays cooperatively with other children
- Expresses basic emotions such as happy, sad, mad or scared
- Responds sympathetically to others' distress with words and actions
- Recognizes similarities and differences in self and others (for example, boy or girl, hair and skin color)

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Is curious, interested and willing to try new things
- Completes a task such as working a puzzle
- Adapts to new situations
- Focuses and pays attention during an activity such as story time
- Engages in memory games such as "Who's Missing" and simple memory matching card games

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT & HEALTH

- Uses number- and letter-like forms and/or drawings to represent ideas or feelings
- Walks, runs, hops, leaps and slides
- Steers a tricycle, balances on beam or sandbox edge
- Catches a ball with both hands
- Throws or throws balls
- Kicks moving ball while naming
- Pours liquids without spilling and builds with Legos® or blocks
- Uses a 3-point finger grip on pencil, crayon or paintbrush
- Makes a variety of lines and shapes such as O, J, □ and Δ
- Uses scissors correctly to cut simple shapes and pictures
- Buttons, zips, laces and buckles
- Names a variety of foods and begins to classify food items as either fruits or vegetables

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

- Is aware of safe behavior and follows basic safety rules and routines
- Takes responsibility for personal self-care routines such as hand washing, brushing teeth, dressing and toileting
- Can express own health needs such as, "I'm hungry," "My head hurts," and "I'm tired"
- Understands an increasing number and variety of words for objects, for actions, and to describe things
- Comprehends who, what, why and where questions
- Performs up to three-step directions
- Uses four- to six-word sentences
- Tells increasingly detailed stories or ideas
- Communicates clearly enough to be understood by most people
- Takes turns in conversation with others
- Responds to the English language
- Speaks and expresses self in English

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If you have a child 3 to 5 years old, **now** is the best time to start thinking about kindergarten, especially for this fall. With a little help from our [Kindergarten Readiness Checklist](#), parents and guardians can help their child's educational development before they head to school.

Updated in 2017, the [Kindergarten Readiness Checklist](#) is separated into nine focus areas:

- Social & Emotional Development
- Cognitive Development
- Physical Development & Health
- Language Development
- Literacy
- Mathematical Thinking
- Science & Technology
- Social Studies
- Creativity & Aesthetics

The checklist, also [available en Español](#), makes it easy for you to gauge your child's development and determine if they are ready for Kindergarten.

To learn more ways to boost your child's development, visit our [Family Resource Library. En Español.](#)

PROVIDERS | Shining Bright with New Tool Kits

Our new [Better Beginnings 3-Star Provider Tool Kit](#) is on the move! If you are a 3-star provider and have received your tool kit, share your pictures on the [Better Beginnings Facebook page](#) and use #3StarToolKit to let us know how you're using it. The new tool kit is designed to strengthen relationships with the families your facility serves.

If you are a 3-star provider and haven't received yours, don't worry. The tool kits are being delivered to the more than 680 3-star facilities in groups sorted alphabetically.

As a “thank you” to the facilities providing the highest level of quality care and learning to Arkansas’s children, the tool kits include:

- 3 English language posters
- 3 Spanish language posters
- 1 blank label sheet for personalizing your poster
- The complete English and Spanish language Family Resource Libraries

To learn more about being a Better Beginnings provider and earning three stars, visit our [section for providers](#).

EARLY LEARNING | [Learning Through Play Every Day](#)

Let the calendar serve as inspiration to show your child new experiences and teach at the same time. Pair these observances below with resources from our [Family Resource Library](#) and [Biblioteca de recursos en español](#), and you’ll discover a host of fun ways to celebrate upcoming holidays while weaving in a little math, discovery, safety and outdoor learning all at the same time.

AUGUST
[Family Fun Month](#)
[Get Ready for Kindergarten Month](#)
[National Back to School Month](#)

August 1: [Respect for Parents Day](#)
August 5: [National Sisters Day](#)
August 16: [National Tell a Joke Day](#)



To learn more about Better Beginnings and the resources available, [visit our website](#).

Stay in Touch with Better Beginnings



Better Beginnings is Arkansas’s quality rating improvement system for child care, early education and school-age programs that have gone above and beyond the state minimum requirements. Better Beginnings is administered by the Arkansas Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.

