

better
beginnings



for Providers
buzz

Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

JANUARY 2021



A SPECIAL NOTE FROM DAWN JEFFREY



Providers,

We survived the first month of 2021, and we are ready for the month of LOVE--LOVE FOR LITERACY!

Literacy skills are so important to a child's early brain development. So, **read, read, READ** to your kiddos. **It doesn't matter how old they are!**

Share your favorite story by **reading aloud** to the younger ones. Embrace your silly side and try **singing through the story!** These activities encourage children to use their

imaginations at a young age. Check out our [Connecting with Infants](#) curriculum to get started!

For the older kiddos, pick out a story and **put on a show!** First, **talk about the book** before getting started. Next, **read the book from beginning to end to learn the story.** Then, it's time to **PLAY!** Let the children "direct" by **assigning characters.** You don't have to leave the acting up to the kids either. **Make costumes, make props and bring out all funny voices to really capture the magic.** Don't be

afraid to have fun. Check out our [Books and Movement: A Magical Mix](#) curriculum to learn more!

You can find some of our favorite literacy curricula and resources below. Use [Bring Books to Life](#) to act out the story and learn how to teach literacy skills in the earliest stages of life with [Raising a Reader](#).



BOOKS AND MOVEMENT: A MAGICAL MIX

Bring Books to Life

Open the doors to learning and adventure with a visit to your local library. Membership is usually free and children can select from hundreds of books.

Families bring books to life when they:
TALK about the book before, during and after reading
READ the story with funny voices or gestures
PLAY by acting out the story or making something together

Stone Soup

by **Marcia Brown**

Book and Cooking
Suggest to your child that you make soup together. Discuss the steps to make the soup and ask your child questions. What vegetables went into the soup in the book? Ask your child to point out the vegetables in the book. You can point to their names. Do you like their vegetables? Have you eaten one of these? No one would really eat a stone. What vegetable sort of books like a stone? Should you eat a potato?

Acting and Cooking
Make a shopping list together. Children enjoy imitating adults. Your child may want to make his own list. Go to the store together. Let your child help select the vegetables and prepare the soup. As you work, talk about story. Were the travelers good people or cheaters? Making lists, organizing and following the steps of cooking remind your child of the story and help his memory develop. He also learns math concepts. And, you had a special time together!

The Runaway Bunny

by **Margaret Wise Brown**

Tell the Story Together
Children often want to read the same book over and over. Ask your child questions as you read along. Or ask her to tell you the story using the pictures as a guide. Or make up your own story using the book as a guide. For instance: You're not a bunny! What kind of animal are you? Are you a fish? Are you a bird? A flower? Are you a child? (fill in the blank.)

Act Out the Story
Pretend your child's stuffed animals are having the conversation in the book. No business! No problems. Use the story to ask silly questions of the stuffed animals or other toys in the room. It might go something like: You're not a bunny! What kind of animal are you? Are you a fish? Are you a bird? A flower? Are you a child? (fill in the blank.)

What is learned from all of this reading and play?
Your child feels that he is important to you. You shared a book and had a conversation. You did something together!

Visit our Family Resource Library for more activities that help develop literacy.

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THEY CHOSE DELIVERED OUR BEST

See the next page for more great books and learning activities.

Click here to visit our Resource Library. You'll find activities and tips to help you prepare your child for life.

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BRING BOOKS TO LIFE

CONNECTING WITH INFANTS

Raising a Reader

Baby's First Year

At a Glance

Birth to 4 months
Newborns can't see well. High-contrast books help vision develop.

At 4 to 5 months
Babies can grasp objects now. Give her cloth and soft vinyl books she can hold without hurting herself.

At 6 to 9 months
Baby may become more interested in the story than chewing the book.

At 8 to 9 months
Baby can turn the pages of books. Provide colorful board books as your baby becomes more active.

At 12 months
Baby can turn the pages and name familiar objects.

Talk and Sing to Your Baby.
Your baby is comforted by the sound of your voice. Hold her as you sing and say rhymes. Echo her "coo" and baby sounds. Make eye contact to let her know you are talking to her.

Read to Your Baby.
To share a book with your infant, cuddle up and hold the book about a foot from your baby's face. Hold it still for her to look at while you talk about the picture. Let her reactions guide you. When she has had enough she will let you know.

Baby's First Books.
First books don't need a story. Point to pictures and ask, "What's that?" Make up a story or repeat the name of the object again and again in a sing-songy voice. Babies' eyes are not fully developed at birth. They can't see details. They can't really see color until about 5 months of age. High-contrast book images send strong signals to babies' brains. These signals help the visual part of her brain develop. "Tactile" books provide lots of different textures for Baby to touch. They give you a chance to introduce new words like "starry," "smooth," "soft" and "rough." By 4 to 5 months of age, Baby is able to hold objects. She will enjoy cloth and soft vinyl books. Books go straight to the mouth just like every other object. It's ok. It's natural.

Bubble Back!
By 7 or 8 months your baby will make sounds such as "ba ba," "da da" and "ma ma." Echo the sounds back. Take turns making the sounds. Add new sounds. Now you're talking! Sounds are the basis of speech and language. Language is the foundation of literacy.

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EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST

Click here to visit our Resource Library. You'll find activities and tips to help you prepare your child for life.

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RAISING A READER

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FIND MORE LITERACY RESOURCES HERE

THANK YOU PROVIDERS!

We had several providers help us make our anniversary celebration extra magical by submitting countdown videos.

Check out this special message from CAPCA Headstart Southside.



STAY TUNED! Over the next year, we will be featuring all of our provider countdown videos in our Provider Buzz Newsletters.

SEE MORE PROVIDER COUNTDOWN VIDEOS HERE.

BETTER BEGINNINGS STAR APPROVALS

Better Beginnings is focused on making quality child care more accessible to families of young children across Arkansas. More high quality access means more kids are better prepared for kindergarten.

The following program is now a **2-star Better Beginnings provider**:

- **BRINKLEY** - Burks Daycare and Learning Academy

If you are a Better Beginnings provider and are interested in moving up in star ranking, click [here](#).

DID YOU KNOW...?

Quality child care matters.



85 percent of a child's intellect, personality and social skills are **developed by age 5.**

WHAT IS BETTER BEGINNINGS?

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND OUT

OR, check us out on **social media.**

