

JUNE 2020



## A NOTE FROM BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM MANAGER DAWN JEFFREY



### Providers,

Can you believe **summer** is here?! We know 2020 has been challenging, but don't let that steal your **summertime joy!**

We want to remind you that the **Better Beginnings** community must remain committed to providing **quality care** for children and their families. We know many of you have adjusted routines and procedures to align with **Arkansas Department of Human Services child care pandemic procedures**, and we are so proud of your ability to adjust so gracefully. It's that kind of dedication that makes this

community what we are, **a safe and educational environment for Arkansas kiddos**. So, thank you for staying committed, even when things got hard.

We know the **excitement of summertime** is here, and we know most of you are focused on adjusting to a new normal; however, we can't forget about **summer safety**. Remember, heat, yucky insects and dangerous water can quickly ruin summer fun.

**Here are a few things to be mindful of over the next few**

months, keeping your center or home safe AND fun this summer.

- Remind your client families to apply and send sunscreen for outside trips and activities. It must have **UVA & UVB protection and at least 15 SPF to ensure appropriate protection.**
- A parked car will warm up 20 degrees from the outside temperature in just ten minutes. **Never leave children in a car, van or bus.**
- Remind parents to look for **ticks** after outdoor activities and trips. Encourage them to apply and/or send an **EPA-registered insect repellent.**
- Always provide **plenty of water breaks after outdoor play.**
- **Never let your children swim without an on-duty life-guard or an adult around.**

And of course, don't forget to encourage frequent **hand-washing** and practice **social distancing in the classroom**. Stay safe, stay healthy and have fun!

All the best,



**Dawn Jeffrey M.S. E.**  
Division of Early Child Care and Early Childhood Education  
Program Manager for Better Beginnings

## MY TEACHER WEARS A MASK



The child care pandemic procedures from **Arkansas Department of Human Services** require teachers and staff to wear a mask at all times. This will certainly be an adjustment for your little ones. **Remind them that this is only to protect them from germs!**



Find more *My Teacher Wears a Mask* resources [here](#). You can even find a cut-out mask activity to do with your kiddos!

## HOW TO USE YOUR STAR-KIT



Check it out! You can now find **Better Beginnings Star Kits** on our [website](#). They are full of tools you can use to let families, potential clients and your community know you are a Better Beginnings star-rated provider! **This is your chance to show your community that you are providing the highest quality of child care.**

Find Star Kits here!

## THANK YOU BETTER BEGINNINGS QUALITY COMMUNITY

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 **1-star** Better Beginnings provider:

- **BENTONVILLE** - Little Martians Learning Center

The following programs are now **2-star** Better Beginnings providers:

- **EDMONDSON** - Kings and Queens of Destiny Developmental Center
- **JONESBORO** - Home Sweet Home Learning Academy
- **WEST MEMPHIS** - Developing Leaders Daycare & Aftercare
- **PARAGOULD** - Bloom Pediatric Academy
- **TEXARKANA** - Courtney's Castle
- **NORTH LITTLE ROCK** - Alexander Turner Early Head Start


The following programs are now **3-star** Better Beginnings providers:

- **WEINER** - A-State ABC Weiner Elementary
- **WEST HELENA** - A-State ABC Central Campus

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

SHARE THESE LITERACY RESOURCES WITH YOUR CLIENT FAMILIES

**Make Reading Fun**



Children take their first steps towards literacy long before they talk. Talk, sing and tell your child stories. Allow your child to play with books. All these experiences are the building blocks for reading and writing. Here are some simple ways you and your child can enjoy books together:

**With Infants:**

- **Help them touch books and turn the pages.** Are there things to touch on the pages? Talk about what you see.
- **Bring books everywhere.** Carry small books in your car, purse and stroller and pull them out on the bus, while waiting at a doctor's office or when standing in a line.
- **Read and play with books every day.** Make it a fun and special time. Read the same story before naps or bedtime. You don't have to finish the story. Stop when your baby loses interest.
- **Point to interesting pictures as you read.** Describe them. Explain what you see. Play peek-a-boo with the pictures by covering and uncovering them with your hand.

**With Toddlers and Preschoolers:**

- **Ask your child to point to pictures or to name things on the pages.** Make it into a game. Describe something in the picture and see if your child can find it.
- **Have him tell the story.** Let him tell his own version or leave out words to see how stories can be so different!
- **Show new words.** Use the pictures in your child's books to help explain a new word. Ask a question to make sure she understands.
- **Talk about the story.** Ask questions about what happened before, what is happening now and what might happen on the next page. "Which hat did he choose? What is he doing with the hat? Whom will he put it next?" Pause frequently to let your child talk.

**What kinds of books are best?**

- **Picture books with simple objects or faces**
- **Board or cloth books with pages that turn easily and won't tear**
- **Books with soft, rough or bumpy textures to touch and feel**

Born Learning® is a publicly recognized trademark. Working parents, caregivers and communities need early learning opportunities for young children. Designed to support you in your efforts to do so, we're here to help. When learning educational materials are made available through the efforts of United Way, United Way Network, Inc. is our partner. We are grateful to you for your support of our work at [www.bornlearning.com](http://www.bornlearning.com).

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

**bornlearning™** **better beginnings** **www.ARBetterBeginnings.com** **1-800-445-3316**

**9 Simple Ways to Advance Your Toddler's Brain Development**

**better beginnings** EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST

**What's the best way to make your child "smart?" Talk. Sing. Play.**

Here are some ways to get the conversation started.

- 1. Talk to your child about your day and ask about his.** Take turns talking. That's a real conversation.
- 2. Take time to answer questions.** Your child has a million of them. Most may be "why." You don't have to have all the answers. If you don't know, find out together.
- 3. Forget about "It."** Instead of using "It" use the words he needs to learn by naming people, places and things.
- 4. Read books together.** Point out and name things in the pictures or ask your toddler to name them.
- 5. Provide books on subjects that interest your child.** Look at the pictures and ask him to talk to you about what he sees. Ask him to tell you the story.
- 6. Play with your toddler.** Playtime is a great time to introduce words. Use descriptive words like soft and blue. Make comparisons like "my sandwich is bigger than yours."
- 7. Sing and dance.** Sing songs with words that have action like *Itsy Bitsy Spider* or *This Old Man*. Rhyming songs are great for clapping and making up your own movements.
- 8. Pretend with your child.** Have a tea party with her stuffed animals or take his plastic dinosaurs out in the yard to play. Make up a story.
- 9. Go on a treasure hunt.** Think of something you can find in your backyard or at the park. Talk about what it looks like. Ask your toddler where you might find it.

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

**www.ARBetterBeginnings.com • 1-800-445-3316**

## MAKE READING FUN

Children develop **literacy skills** long before they talk. **Talk and sing through stories with your child.** Allow your child to play with books. Act out your favorite characters! All of these experiences are the building blocks for **reading and writing.** Check out our **Make Reading Fun** resource to learn some simple ways you and your child can enjoy books together.

Find more literacy resources here.

## ADVANCE YOUR TODDLER'S BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

What's the best way for your child to learn? Take turns talking to teach him conversational skills. **Answer his questions**, even when he asks "why" over and over! Let loose and play pretend with him. Go on a **treasure hunt** together! **Sing and dance** your way through your favorite story. **Playing is learning!** Learn more [here](#).

También en español.

## CHILD CARE PANDEMIC PROCEDURES TO KEEP IN MIND



Implement **social distancing** guidelines in existing routines. For example, move drop-off and pickup outside and limit group sizes to 10 people or less.



Have a **screening process** in place for those allowed to enter the facility. This includes staff, persons with legal authority, therapists, parents and legal guardians, etc.



Post **informational graphics** on hand-washing in all bathrooms. **Please follow Section 1100 regarding health and hand washing in the Minimum Licensing Requirements.**

# Learn more about **Better Beginnings!**

Visit our website.

OR, check us out on social media.



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.

