



Literacy



Math



Science

Provider Buzz | August 2024



better beginnings

EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST



A NOTE FROM KELLI HILBURN

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Children learn best through play. How you interact with the children in your care and design their learning environment plays a huge role in promoting learning. Even the simplest steps – such as reading a book or creating a cozy reading area in your classroom – can create powerful learning opportunities. These small steps will create opportunities for positive interactions and help build relationships that will impact future learning and

growth.

You're already so good at making these moments possible. Are you ready to do even more? Check out the [literacy](#) resources below! As you keep reading, you'll see the latest updates from the Office of Early Childhood, information about our [Star Kits](#), and the latest star approvals. Don't forget to come see us at the [A-State Early Childhood Education](#) conference next week!

Our literacy efforts for the children we serve greatly impact their future reading and comprehension skills. Let's make the most of every moment we have to [reach for the stars](#) and prepare Arkansas's children for their future.

Before you go, I want to inform you that the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Central Office team in Little Rock, including Better Beginnings, has moved. Our address is now **2 Capitol Mall – Box 36, 72201** in Little Rock. Our phone number is still the same, so feel free to call us if you have any questions. We're happy to help.

Until next time,



Kelli Hilburn
BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



JOIN US IN OUR GOAL TO
REACH FOR THE STARS
CLICK TO LEARN MORE



VIDEO
CORNER

WATCH NOW 

Watch the video below to learn how Better Beginnings benefits the children of Arkansas from colleagues across the state.

Putting Children First

How Better Beginnings

BENEFITS ARKANSAS CHILDREN

A large yellow banner with a circular inset on the left showing a young child with curly hair reading a book. The text "LEARNING RESOURCES" is written in large, bold, white letters on the right side of the banner. Below the main text, there are two smaller circular insets showing children playing and learning together.

**LEARNING
RESOURCES**

PLAY,
LEARN,
EXPLORE





Reaching any star level is an achievement to tell the world. Our Star Kit can help you do just that. You'll find badges, social media images, a news release, and more to help you tell your client-families and community about your new star level.

[Learn More](#)

Changes to the CCDF State Plan

The Arkansas Department of Education **announced** changes to the CCDF subsidy program, giving more families access to high-quality child care programs. These changes, which became effective on July 1, can help eligible families balance home and work life and make applying for this assistance easier. Learn more on the ADE website and share the exciting news with your client-families!

[Learn More](#)



Academic Approval

The LEARNS Act requires that each licensed early learning provider receiving public funding shall participate in the “Unified Early Childhood Care and Education System.” In order to adhere to this requirement, the Office of Early Childhood (OEC) created **academic approval** as a way to certify early learning sites are in compliance with this requirement. All early childhood sites that accept public funding are required to participate starting the 2024-2025 academic year. This includes ABC programs, publicly-funded pre-k classrooms, CCDF voucher recipients, Early Head Start/Head Start, and Medicaid (EIDT sites). Licensed early childhood sites that don't accept public funding may opt-in and receive a rating through Better Beginnings. Your licensing specialist will give you resources to certify your participation in academic approval.



Early learning sites participating in academic approval must comply with the following:

- Participation in the local early childhood lead organization and all associated activities
- Participation in Better Beginnings.

[Learn More](#)



Provider Call

August 6, 2024

Zoom with Office of Early Childhood officials on Tuesday, August 6 to learn the latest from the field of early childhood education in Arkansas. Join the call live or watch the recording later.

[Learn More](#)

A-State Early Childhood Education Conference, Jonesboro

August 6-8, 2024

We're Exploring the World of Childhood later this month with our friends at A-State Childhood Services. You can, too, at the **52nd Annual A-State Early Childhood Education Conference**. Register today to hear from early childhood experts and visit our booth.

[Register](#)

8th Annual ACEs & Resilience Summit, Benton

August 8, 2024

Learn how you can prevent and face adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) at this summit from the Arkansas Foundation of Medical Care. You'll also learn how we can improve our response to ACEs as a community. In-person and virtual registration is available.

AECA Conference, Little Rock

October 9-12, 2024

Join us at the 62nd Annual AECA Conference to understand how connections with children are powerful and can have a positive impact on those we serve. Register today to hear from keynote speakers DJ Pryor, Hilary Trudell, and Arkansas early care and education leaders.

Register

BETTER BEGINNINGS
STAR APPROVALS

QUALITY CARE!

Congratulations to these providers on reaching that next star level! Ready to join this list? Check out the Provider Tools on our website for assistance.



The following program is now a **6-star** Better Beginnings provider:

- Mainstreet Kids, Shirley



The following programs are now **5-star** Better Beginnings providers:

- Leap Forward CDC 2, North Little Rock
- George Washington Carver/ Forrest Park/ Greenville, Pine Bluff
- Emmanuel Covenant Community Development Corporation, Jacksonville



The following programs are now **4-star** Better Beginnings providers:

- Mt. Vernon Enola ABC Preschool Program, Enola
- North End Head Start, Helena
- Stepping Stone School for Exceptional Children Inc., Alma
- Brinkley Fargo Headstart, Brinkley
- Clarendon Childcare Facility, Clarendon
- Des Arc Head Start, Des Arc
- DeValls Bluff Head Start, DeValls Bluff



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

- Toodle Tots Daycare, Benton
- First Steps Child Development Center #2, North Little Rock
- Earle Love Child Study Center, Morrilton
- Tender Hearts Learning Center, Little Rock



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

- Mill Creek Preschool, Russellville
- Bright Beginnings Learning Center, El Dorado
- Toodle Tots Daycare LLC, Benton
- UAMS DBA Kids First Pocahontas, Pocahontas

- UAMS DBA Kids First Newport, Newport

ONE-STAR PROVIDERS

There are no new **1-star** Better Beginnings providers.

Level Up Resource

Looking to increase your star level? Check out our [Provider Tools](#) to get started!

[Learn More](#)

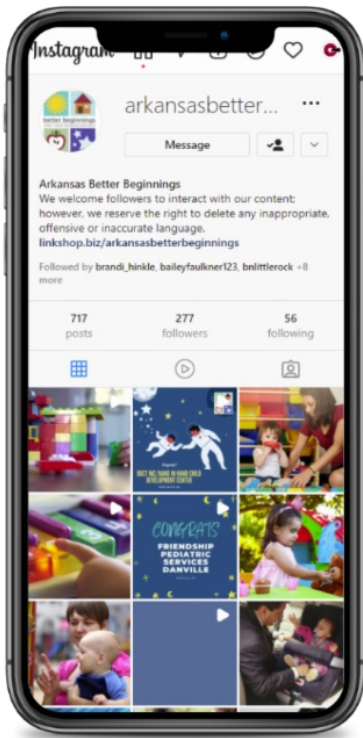


WHAT IS BETTER BEGINNINGS?

Better Beginnings means better opportunities. Investing in quality early care and education for all Arkansas children creates better opportunities for our children, families, workforce and communities.

[Visit our Website](#)





**FOLLOW US
FOR MORE
RESOURCES**



Better Beginnings is Arkansas' tiered quality rating and 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 Education and Office of Early Childhood.



Better Beginnings | OEC Attn: Better Beginnings 2 Capitol Mall, Box 36 | Little Rock, AR 72201 US

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