

## Submitting a Better Beginnings Application in the ELS Portal (CCFH)

Before you submit your application, ALL requirements including assessments must be completed and documented.

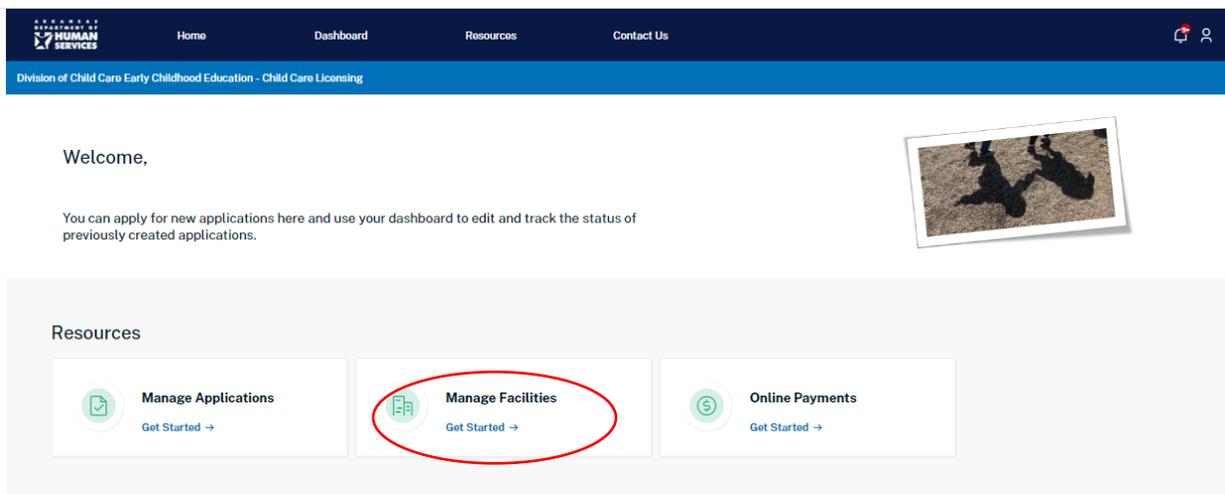
Know the level for which you qualify and have the required documentation ready to upload.

## Completing the Application

Go to the ELS portal (<https://arkdhs.force.com/elicensing/s/login/>) and log in with your user name and password.

Welcome

Select **Manage Facilities, Get Started.**



The screenshot shows the ELS Portal dashboard. At the top, there is a dark blue navigation bar with the Arkansas Department of Human Services logo on the left and links for Home, Dashboard, Resources, and Contact Us on the right. Below the navigation bar is a blue banner with the text "Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing". The main content area has a white background. On the left, it says "Welcome," followed by a paragraph: "You can apply for new applications here and use your dashboard to edit and track the status of previously created applications." To the right of this text is a small, tilted photograph of two children playing in a field. Below this is a "Resources" section with three white cards. The first card is "Manage Applications" with a "Get Started →" link. The second card is "Manage Facilities" with a "Get Started →" link; this card and its link are circled in red. The third card is "Online Payments" with a "Get Started →" link.

**Save a copy of all documents for your records.** Submit the completed application with documentation online through the ELS portal. For more information: [www.ARBetterBeginnings.com](http://www.ARBetterBeginnings.com) Phone: 501-320-6161 Email: [OEC.BetterBeginnings@ade.arkansas.gov](mailto:OEC.BetterBeginnings@ade.arkansas.gov)

## List of Facilities

Find your facility. If you have more than one facility, you will see all of them listed. Select **view** next to the appropriate facility. This will open the facility page.

Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing

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### List of Facilities

Sort By  
Select an Option

Facility No.	Facility Name	Facility Type	Facility Status	Action
12345	Pretty Good Preschool 1	Child Care Center	New Provisional	<a href="#">View</a>
23456	Pretty Good Preschool 2	Child Care Center	Regular	<a href="#">View</a>

## Facility Information

Select **Better Beginnings**.

Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing

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1234567

Facility Number	Facility Type Child Care Center	Facility Status Regular
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### Facility Information

Pretty Good Preschool 1

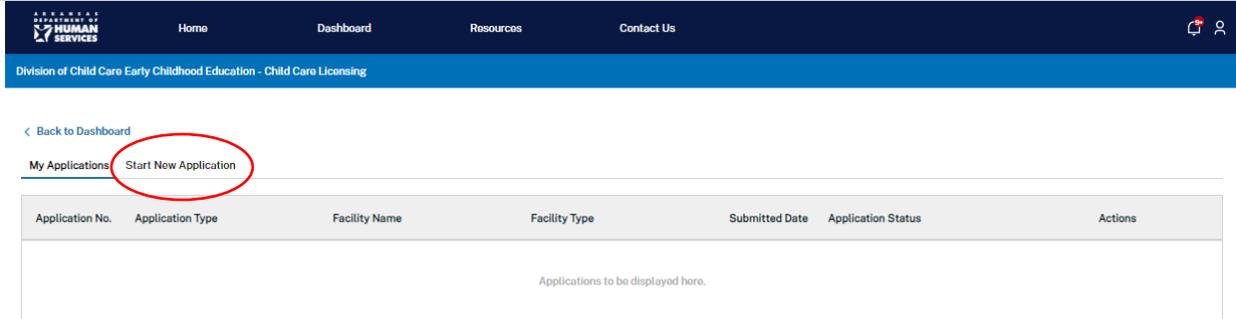
Facility Name	Facility Type Child Care Center
Provider Type Center Based	Proposed Open Date 10/08/2021

- Facility Information
- Facility Physical Address & Contact Information
- Owner Information
- Director Information
- Facility Schedule
- Service Information
- Enrollment & Operations
- Certification & Inspections
- Documentation
- Daily Rate Information
- Facility Ages Served
- [Better Beginnings](#)
- Related Links

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To start a new application, select **Start New Application**.

To continue working on a pending application, or to see submitted or withdrawn applications, select **My Applications**.



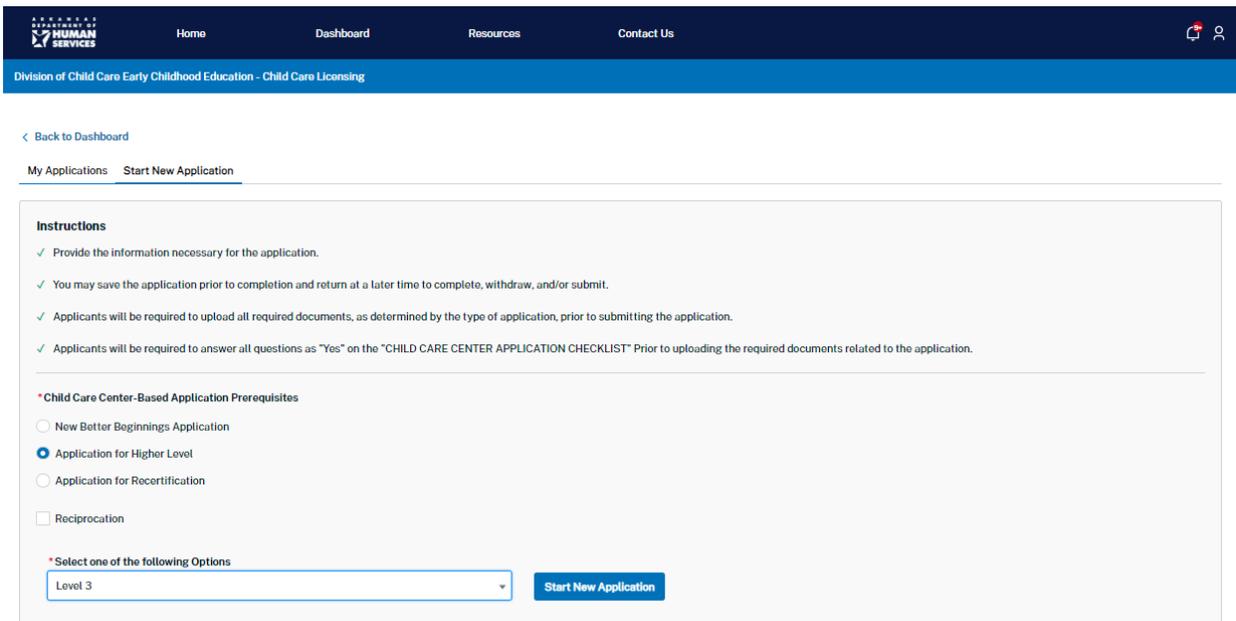
## Instructions

Select the type of application you are completing (**new, higher level, or recerification**).

If your program qualifies for *reciprocation*, select **Reciprocation**.

If your program does not qualify for *reciprocation*, skip that option. If you aren't sure, click [here](#) for more information about reciprocation.

Select the Level for which you are applying from the drop down menu and then select **Start New Application**.



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# Application Checklist

Select **yes** for all the requirements that you have met and can document. Select **continue**.

The screenshot shows the 'Application Checklist' page for a 'New Application: Better Beginnings'. The page title is 'Application Checklist' with a 'Mandatory field' indicator. The main content is the 'CENTER-BASED APPLICATION CHECKLIST' for Level 3. It lists several requirements with radio buttons for 'Yes' and 'No'. The 'Yes' option is selected for all items shown. At the bottom right, there are three buttons: 'Save', 'Previous', and 'Continue'. The 'Continue' button is circled in red.

If you select **no** for any of the requirements and then select **continue**, you will receive an error message that reads "All questions in the Checklist for Level # should be marked as 'yes'".

The screenshot shows the same 'Application Checklist' page, but with an error message at the top: "All Questions in the Checklist for Level 3 should be marked as 'Yes'". The error message is circled in red. In the checklist, the 'No' radio button is selected for item 3.D.3. The 'Continue' button at the bottom right is also circled in red.

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## Application Details

Most information on this page will auto-populate and **cannot** be changed from this page.

New Application: **Better Beginnings** Mandatory Itc

- Application Checklist
- Application Details
- Operations
- Participation & Accreditation
- Documentation
- Review
- Sign & Submit

### Application Details

**Facility Name**  
Pretty Good Preschool 1

**Facility Number**  
1234567

**Address**  
123 PG Preschool Street

**Address 2**

**City** Pretty Good Town **County** Happiness

**State** AR **Zip Code** 72111 **Phone** 501.123.1234

**Cell/Mobile** 870.123.4567 **Fax**

**Director** Mrs. Frizzle **Director Email Address** Frizzle@PGPreschool.com

**Owner** Ms. Addie **Owner Email Address** PrettyGoodAD@PGPreschool.com

**\* Facility Is Open**  
 Year Round  Open Partly Year From

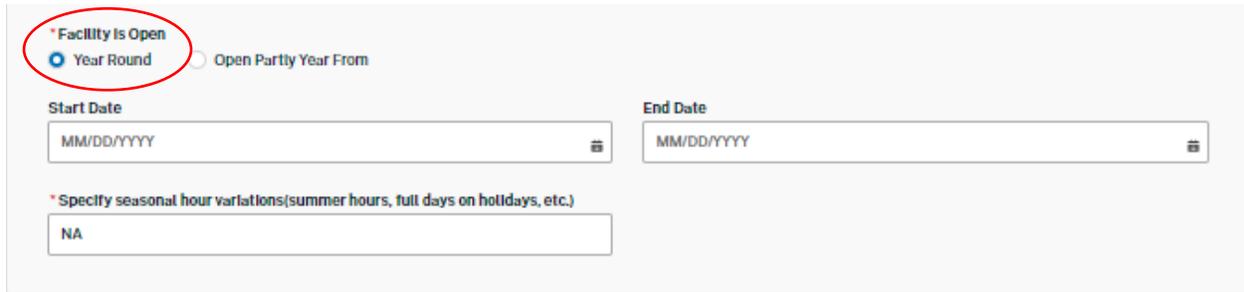
**Start Date** MM/DD/YYYY  **End Date** MM/DD/YYYY

**\* Specify seasonal hour variations (summer hours, full days on holidays, etc.)**  
NA

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Respond to the prompts under **Facility is Open**.

- If your program is open all year long, select **Year-Round**. You do not need to enter start and end dates.

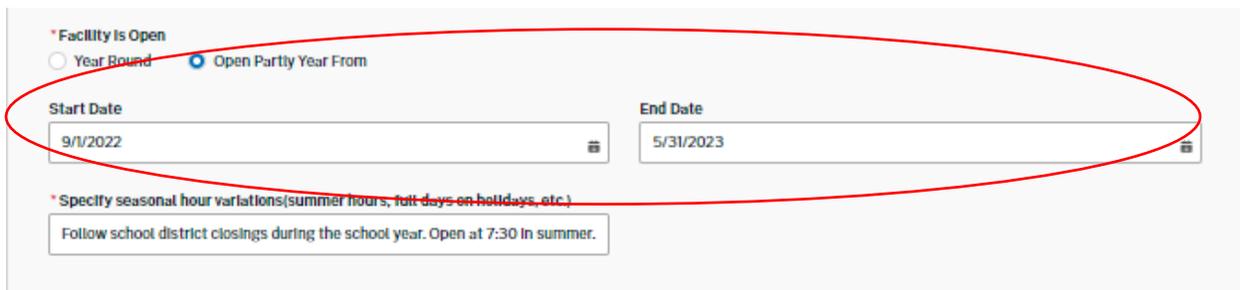


\* Facility Is Open  
 Year Round  Open Partly Year From

Start Date: MM/DD/YYYY  
End Date: MM/DD/YYYY

\* Specify seasonal hour variations(summer hours, full days on holidays, etc.)  
NA

- If your program closes for part of the year, select **Open Partial Year From** and then select the first day your program opened and the day your program will close this school year.



\* Facility Is Open  
 Year Round  Open Partly Year From

Start Date: 9/1/2022  
End Date: 5/31/2023

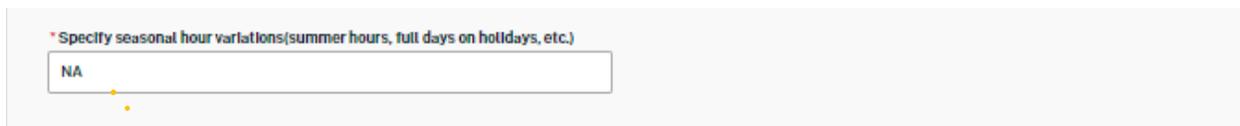
\* Specify seasonal hour variations(summer hours, full days on holidays, etc.)  
Follow school district closings during the school year. Open at 7:30 in summer.

Add information about any dates that your program hours vary during the year in the text box under **Specify seasonal hour variations (summer hours, full days on holidays, etc.)**. If your program hours do not vary during the year, type **NA** or **none**.



\* Specify seasonal hour variations(summer hours, full days on holidays, etc.)  
Follow school district closings during the school year. Open at 7:30 in summer.

or



\* Specify seasonal hour variations(summer hours, full days on holidays, etc.)  
NA

Select **Continue**.

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## Operations

The number of classrooms on this page will auto-populate, but they **may** be updated. Type the correct number of classrooms, children, full-time staff, and part-time staff in the appropriate text box. Select **Continue**.

Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing

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New Application: Better Beginnings

- Application Checklist
- Application Details
- Operations**
- Participation & Accreditation
- Documentation
- Review
- Sign & Submit

### Operations

**Infant & Toddler (Birth to 36 Months)**

No. of Classrooms	No. of Children served	No. of Full-Time Staff	No. of Part-Time Staff
5	0	0	0

**Preschool (3-5 years old)**

No. of Classrooms	No. of Children Served	No. of Full-Time Staff	No. of Part-Time Staff
2	0	0	0

**School Age (K-12 years old)**

No. of Classrooms	No. of Children Served	No. of Full-Time Staff	No. of Part-Time Staff
0	0	0	0

**Total**

No. of Classrooms	No. of Children Served	No. of Full-Time Staff	No. of Part-Time Staff
7	0	0	0

Save Previous **Continue**

## Accreditation and Participations

**Accreditation.** If your program is accredited, select the agency that accredited your program. For more information on accreditation, click [here](#).

**Participations.** This section will auto-populate and **cannot** be changed from this page. If this information is incorrect, contact your licensing specialist.

Select **Continue**.

Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing

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New Application: Better Beginnings

- Application Checklist
- Application Details
- Operations
- Participation & Accreditation**
- Documentation
- Review
- Sign & Submit

### Accreditation

NAEYC  MONTESSORI  
 ABC  NAFC  
 CARF  COA

### Facility Participations

Special Nutrition  Voucher  
 CHMS  Head Start  
 Early Head Start  DDTC

Save Previous **Continue**

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## Documentation

Upload all required documentation by selecting **+ Add Attachments**.

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New Application: Better Beginnings

- Application Checklist
- Application Details
- Operations
- Participation & Accreditation
- Documentation**
- Review
- Sign & Submit

### Documentation \*Mandatory field

The following documents are required for the application process. Please select document type and upload the relevant document below:

- Annual Staff Record
- ARKids First, Child Health and Child Development
- Strengthening Families (Required for Levels 2 thru 6)

AN APPLICATION IS NOT COMPLETE UNTIL ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED.

To apply for Better Beginnings, submit the following information. All forms listed are provided in the application packet. Refer to the Better Beginnings Rules and Regulations Book(Section 700) or the Better Beginnings Guide for additional information.

Documents Uploaded: + Add Attachments

Document File Name	Document File Type
Uploaded documents to be displayed here.	

Save Previous Continue

Select **Upload File**.

Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing

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New Application: Better Beginnings

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- Review
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Documents Uploaded: + Add Attachments

Document File Name	Document File Type
Uploaded documents to be displayed here.	

Upload Document

Upload Files Or Drop Files

Accepted file Types (PDF, DOCX, PNG, JPEG, DOC, XLSX)

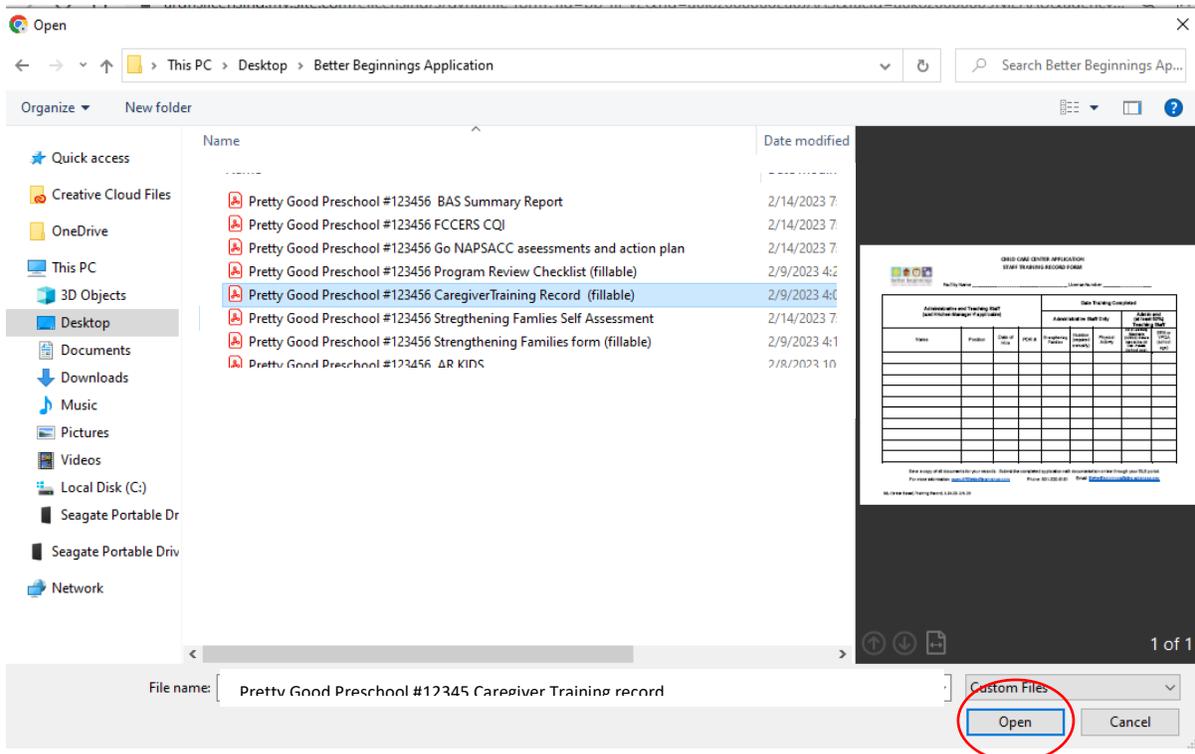
\*Document Type  
Select an Option

Cancel Upload

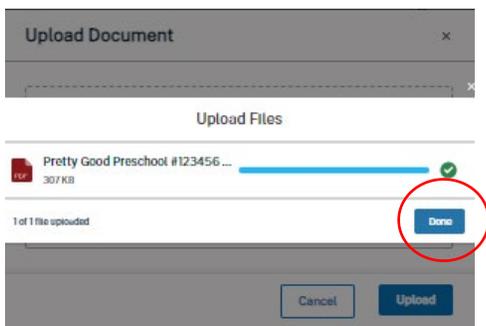
Save Previous Continue

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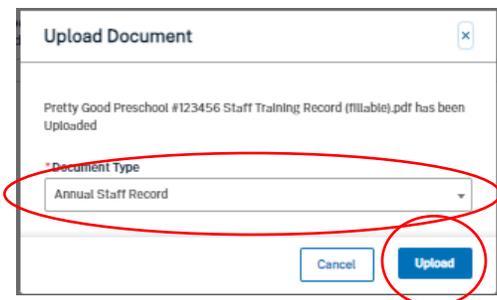
Select each document on your computer that you are uploading and select **Open**.



When prompted, select **Done**.



Select the document type you are uploading. Select **Upload**.



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Repeat this step until all required forms are uploaded.

Most family child care homes are required to submit the documentation listed below.

- BAS Summary Report
- Caregiver Training Record form
- Strengthening Families form
- Strengthening Families self-assessment (Levels 3-6 only)
- Most recent FCCERS CQI reports
- AR KIDS, Child Health, and Child Development form
- Program Review Checklist
- Go NAPSACC self-assessment, action plan, and re-assessment for required module(s)

If the document you are uploading is not an option in the **document type** drop-down list, use one of the available options or **other**. Your Better Beginnings Specialist will look at all the documents you provide to make sure that all requirements are met.

Once all required forms are uploaded, select **Continue**.

The screenshot shows a web application interface for 'Better Beginnings'. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Dashboard', 'Resources', and 'Contact Us'. The main content area is titled 'Documentation' and includes a sidebar with steps: Application Checklist, Application Details, Operations, Participation & Accreditation, Documentation (selected), Review, and Sign & Submit. The main content area contains instructions, a list of required documents, and a table of uploaded documents. The 'Continue' button is circled in red.

**Documentation** Mandatory field

The following documents are required for the application process. Please select document type and upload the relevant document below:

- Annual Staff Record
- ARKids First, Child Health and Child Development
- Strengthening Families (Required for Levels 2 thru 6)

AN APPLICATION IS NOT COMPLETE UNTIL ALL REQUIRED DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED.

To apply for Better Beginnings, submit the following information. All forms listed are provided in the application packet. Refer to the Better Beginnings Rules and Regulations Book(Section 7.00) or the Better Beginnings Guide for additional information.

Documents Uploaded: + Add Attachments

Document File Name	Document File Type	
Pretty Good Preschool #123456 Staff Training Record (fillable).pdf	Annual Staff Record	 
Pretty Good Preschool #123456, AR KIDS.pdf	ARKids First, Child Health and Child Development	 
Pretty Good Preschool #123456 Strengthening Families form (fillable).pdf	Strengthening Families (Required for Levels 2 thru 6)	 

Save Previous Continue

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## Review

Select **edit details** to review each section of the application for accuracy.

Select **Continue**.

The screenshot shows the 'Review' step of the application process. On the left, a vertical sidebar lists the application sections: Application Checklist, Application Details, Operations, Participation & Accreditation, Documentation, Review (highlighted in blue), and Sign & Submit. The main content area, titled 'Review', displays a checklist of these sections. Each section has an 'Edit Details' link with a dropdown arrow. The 'Edit Details' link for the 'Application Checklist' section is circled in red. At the bottom right, there are 'Previous' and 'Continue' buttons.

## Sign and Submit

Type your name in the text box. Make sure the date is correct.

Select **Submit**.

The screenshot shows the 'Sign & Submit' step. The left sidebar is identical to the previous step, but 'Sign & Submit' is now highlighted in blue. The main content area contains a declaration: 'On behalf of the licensed child care facility, I hereby voluntarily apply for participation and certification with Better Beginnings, Arkansas' Quality Rating Improvement System. I hereby understand and agree to the following:' followed by a bulleted list of terms and conditions. Below the declaration are two input fields: '\* Submitted By' (containing 'Pretty Good Preschool Director') and '\* Submitted Date' (containing '2/14/2023'). Both fields are circled in red. At the bottom right, there are 'Previous' and 'Submit' buttons, with the 'Submit' button also circled in red.

## Congratulations! You have submitted your application!

You can check on the status of your application by going to the Welcome page and selecting **Manage Applications**.

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## Reciprocation

Eligible programs that are accredited through state or national accreditation systems or have standards set by an agency that may be equal or exceed Better Beginnings are eligible for full or partial reciprocation and given certification at levels that are determined by the Division. The following are some examples of approved accreditation systems. Click on the agency to go find more information on specific reciprocation details and documentation requirements.

- [Arkansas Better Chance \(ABC\)](#)
- American Camping Association (ACA)
- American Montessori Society (AMS)
- COGNIA
- The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities: Child and Youth Services Standards (CARF)
- [Early Head Start](#)
- Early Intervention Day Treatment (EIDT)
- [Head Start](#)
- National Afterschool Association (NAA)
- National Accreditation Commission (NAC)
- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
- [National Association for Family Child Care \(NAFCC\)](#)
- Non-ABC, HS, or EHS facilities owned by an Arkansas school district or Educational Cooperative

Other accreditation systems may be considered upon review and approval by the Better Beginnings Program Administrator.

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## Reciprocation Requirements

Accrediting agency	Level of Reciprocation	Due at renewal date	Partial reciprocation also requires
NAA	Full reciprocation at Level 6	Application Proof of accreditation dates	NA
NAFCC	Full reciprocation at Level 6	Application Proof of accreditation dates	NA
NAEYC	Full reciprocation at Level 6	Application Proof of accreditation dates	NA
ABC*	Full reciprocation at the appropriate level for ERS score	Application Most recent ERS average	NA
Early Head Start*	Full reciprocation at the appropriate level for ITERS score	Application Most recent ITERS average	NA
Head Start*	Full reciprocation at Level 4 Full reciprocation at Level 5, and 6 with **required CLASS scores	Application Most recent CLASS report	NA
NAC	Full reciprocation at Level 4 Partial reciprocation at Level 5-6	Application Proof of accreditation dates	NA Ratios will be checked for Levels 5-6
COGNIA	Full reciprocation at Level 3 Partial reciprocation Levels 4-6	Application Proof of accreditation dates	NA Ratios will be checked for Levels 4-6
AMS	Full reciprocation at Level 3 Partial reciprocation at Level 4-6	Application Proof of accreditation dates	NA Ratios will be checked for Levels 4-6
ACA	Full reciprocation at Level 4 Partial Reciprocation at Levels 5-6	Application Proof of accreditation dates	ERS and ratios required at Levels 5-6 6
CARF	Full reciprocation at Level 3 Partial reciprocation at Levels 4-6	Application Proof of accreditation dates	All requirements (except PAS) for Levels 4-6
EIDT	Full Reciprocation at Level 2 Partial reciprocation at Levels 3-6	Application at Level 2	All requirements (except PAS) for Levels 3-6
AR school districts (non-ABC)	Partial reciprocation	Application	All requirements (except PAS) for Levels 2-6

\*Classrooms under the same license that are not ABC, EHS, or HS are required to have ERS assessments. Submit an *Intent to Apply form* to request assessments.

\*\*The following CLASS scores are required for Head Start Programs.

Level 5: Emotional Support 6, Classroom Organization 6, Instructional Support 3.

Level 6: Scores greater than those that are required for level 5.

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## Instructions for reciprocated programs

When prompted, select the type of approved accreditation your program has earned. THE ELS SYSTEM IS STILL BEING DEVELOPED. If the list does not include the approved accrediting agency, select a different one and upload the required documentation. Your Better Beginnings Specialist will look at all documentation.

Select **Continue**.

The screenshot shows a web application interface for 'Better Beginnings'. At the top is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Dashboard', 'Resources', and 'Contact Us'. Below this is a sub-header 'Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing'. The main content area has a left sidebar with a progress indicator for 'New Application: Better Beginnings', including steps like 'Application Details', 'Operations', 'Participation & Accreditation' (which is highlighted), 'Documentation', 'Review', and 'Sign & Submit'. The main form area is divided into two sections: 'Accreditation' and 'Facility Participations', both marked as 'Mandatory field'. The 'Accreditation' section contains a note: 'If any of the Items in this section are checked, the proof of accreditation document is required to be uploaded in the Documentation tab.' Below this are checkboxes for NAEYC, ABC, CARF, MONTESSORI, NAFCC (checked), and COA. The 'Facility Participations' section contains checkboxes for Special Nutrition, CHMS, Early Head Start, Voucher (checked), Head Start, and DDTCS. At the bottom right of the form are three buttons: 'Save', 'Previous', and 'Continue'. The 'Continue' button is circled in red.

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## Arkansas Better Chance (ABC), Head Start (HS), and Early Head Start (EHS)

### ABC

Full reciprocity based on most recent ERS average

- Upload the most recent FCCERS CQI report

### Head Start

Full reciprocity for Level 4

- No additional documentation required

Full Reciprocity for Levels 5 and 6 based on the most recent assessment

- Upload the most recent FCCERS CQI report and/or CLASS report

### Early Head Start

Full reciprocity based on most recent assessment

- Upload the most recent FCCERS CQI report

The screenshot shows the 'Documentation' step of an application for 'Better Beginnings'. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Dashboard', and a green success message: 'Success Document Uploaded Successfully'. The main content area has a sidebar with steps: Application Details, Operations, Participation & Accreditation, Documentation (selected), Review, and Sign & Submit. The 'Documentation' section contains instructions: 'All Items checked in the Accreditation section require documentation for facilities applying for a Better Beginnings level 2-6 under reciprocity. Please select the document type and upload the relevant document below.' Below this is a table titled 'Documents Uploaded:' with columns 'Document File Name' and 'Document File Type'. One entry is visible: 'Preschool 12345 FCCERS CQI' with type 'Accreditation NAFCC'. A '+ Add Attachments' button is in the top right of the table. At the bottom right, there are 'Save', 'Previous', and 'Continue' buttons, with 'Continue' circled in red.

Document File Name	Document File Type
Preschool 12345 FCCERS CQI	Accreditation NAFCC

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*National Association for Family Childcare (NAFCC) Accredited*

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National Association for Family Childcare (NAFCC) Accreditation  
Full reciprocity at Level 6

- Upload NAFCC accreditation certificate (with dates)

The screenshot shows a web application interface for the Arkansas Department of Human Services. The top navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Dashboard', 'Resources', and 'Contact Us'. Below this is a blue header for the 'Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing'. The main content area is titled 'Documentation' and is marked as a 'Mandatory field'. It contains a sidebar with navigation options: 'Application Details', 'Operations', 'Participation & Accreditation', 'Documentation' (selected), 'Review', and 'Sign & Submit'. The main panel has a heading 'Documentation' and a note: 'All items checked in the Accreditation section require documentation for facilities applying for a Better Beginnings level 2-6 under reciprocity. Please select the document type and upload the relevant document below.' Below this is a 'Documents Uploaded:' section with a table:

Document File Name	Document File Type
Pretty Good Preschool #123456 Accreditation Certificate.pdf	Accreditation - NAFCC

Buttons for '+ Add Attachments', 'Save', 'Previous', and 'Continue' are visible at the bottom right. The 'Continue' button is circled in red.

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