

Submitting a Better Beginnings Application in the ELS Portal (OST)

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

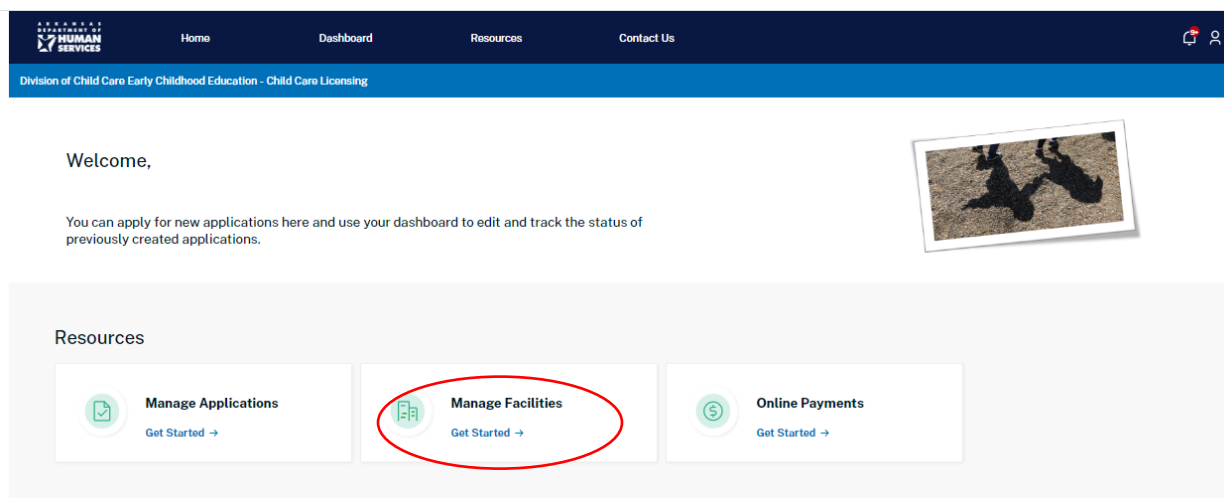
Know the level for which you qualify and have the required documentation ready to upload.

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**.



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 Phone: 501-320-6161 Email: BetterBeginnings@dhs.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.

The screenshot shows the 'List of Facilities' page. 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'. A 'Back to Dashboard' link is present. The main section is titled 'List of Facilities' and includes a 'Sort By' dropdown menu. A table lists two facilities:

Facility No.	Facility Name	Facility Type	Facility Status	Action
12345	Pretty Good Preschool 1	Child Care Center	New Provisional	View
23456	Pretty Good Preschool 2	Child Care Center	Regular	View

Facility Information

Select **Better Beginnings**.

The screenshot shows the 'Facility Information' page for facility 1234567. The top navigation bar is the same as the previous page. Below it is a sub-header 'Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing'. A 'Back to Facilities' link is present. The main content area shows facility details: Facility Number 1234567, Facility Type Child Care Center, and Facility Status Regular. A sidebar on the left lists various information sections, with 'Better Beginnings' circled in red. The main content area displays the 'Facility Information' section, which includes Facility Name (Pretty Good Preschool 1), Facility Type (Child Care Center), Provider Type (Center Based), and Proposed Open Date (10/08/2021).

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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**.

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of the Arkansas Department of Human Services portal. The main header is dark blue with the department's logo and name. Below it is a blue bar with the text 'Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing'. The navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Dashboard', 'Resources', and 'Contact Us'. On the right, there are icons for a notification bell and a user profile. Below the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail: '< Back to Dashboard' followed by 'My Applications' and 'Start New Application'. The 'Start New Application' link is circled in red. Below the breadcrumb trail is a table with the following columns: 'Application No.', 'Application Type', 'Facility Name', 'Facility Type', 'Submitted Date', 'Application Status', and 'Actions'. The table is currently empty, with the text 'Applications to be displayed here.' centered below the column headers.

Instructions

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

If your program qualifies for *reciprocaton*, select **Reciprocaton**, then click [here](#) to go to the section of this document for reciprocated programs.

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

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

The screenshot shows the 'Start New Application' form. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the department's logo and name. Below it is a blue bar with the text 'Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing'. The navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Dashboard', 'Resources', and 'Contact Us'. On the right, there are icons for a notification bell and a user profile. Below the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail: '< Back to Dashboard' followed by 'My Applications' and 'Start New Application'. The 'Start New Application' link is circled in red. Below the breadcrumb trail is a table with the following columns: 'Application No.', 'Application Type', 'Facility Name', 'Facility Type', 'Submitted Date', 'Application Status', and 'Actions'. The table is currently empty, with the text 'Applications to be displayed here.' centered below the column headers. Below the table, there is a section titled 'Instructions' with the following text: 'Provide the information necessary for the application.', 'You may save the application prior to completion and return at a later time to complete, withdraw, and/or submit.', 'Applicants will be required to upload all required documents, as determined by the type of application, prior to submitting the application.', and 'Applicants will be required to answer all questions as "Yes" on the "CHILD CARE CENTER APPLICATION CHECKLIST" Prior to uploading the required documents related to the application.' Below the instructions, there is a section titled 'Child Care Center-Based Application Prerequisites' with the following options: 'New Better Beginnings Application', 'Application for Higher Level' (selected), 'Application for Recertification', and 'Reciprocaton'. Below the prerequisites, there is a section titled 'Select one of the following Options' with a dropdown menu showing 'Level 3'. To the right of the dropdown menu is a blue button labeled 'Start New Application'.

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Application Checklist

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

Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing

< Back to Applications

New Application:
Better Beginnings

Application Checklist

Application Details

Operations

Participation & Accreditation

Documentation

Review

Sign & Submit

Application Checklist

CENTER-BASED APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Level 3 - ALL REQUIREMENTS FOR LEVELS 1 AND 2 MUST BE MET AT TIME OF APPLICATION (except PAS & ERS reviews). Schedules, Daily Plans, Self-Evaluation(s), Medical & Educational Care Plans & Strengthening Families information must be included with application.

*3.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on PAS items 1-21 (items 5 and 6 are scored but are not included in the average). School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B score of 3.75 or higher.
☒ Yes ☐ No

*3.A.2 The director shall complete the Strengthening Families online self-assessment for three (3) or more Strategies.
☒ Yes ☐ No

*3.A.3 The facility shall develop a Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least one (1) action step.
☒ Yes ☐ No

*3.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on the ERS. School age programs using PQA shall score 3.75 or higher on the PQA.
☒ Yes ☐ No

*3.C.2 The staff shall maintain a portfolio for each child.
☒ Yes ☐ No

*3.D.1 The facility shall share information on nutrition and physical activity for children with families.
☒ Yes ☐ No

*3.D.2 The facility shall use a Division-approved tool to complete a (1) physical activity self-assessment and create and implement one action plan in the physical activity module.
☒ Yes ☐ No

*3.D.3 The facility shall use the Division -approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in the physical activity module to assess progress.
☒ Yes ☐ No

Comments

Save Previous **Continue**

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 “yes”.

Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing

< Back to Applications

New Application:
Better Beginnings

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Comments

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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

Application Details

Application Checklist

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

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

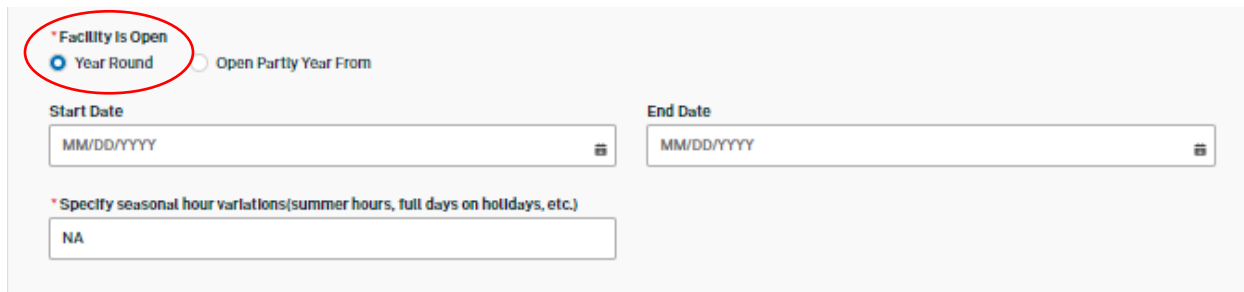
End Date
MM/DD/YYYY

***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.

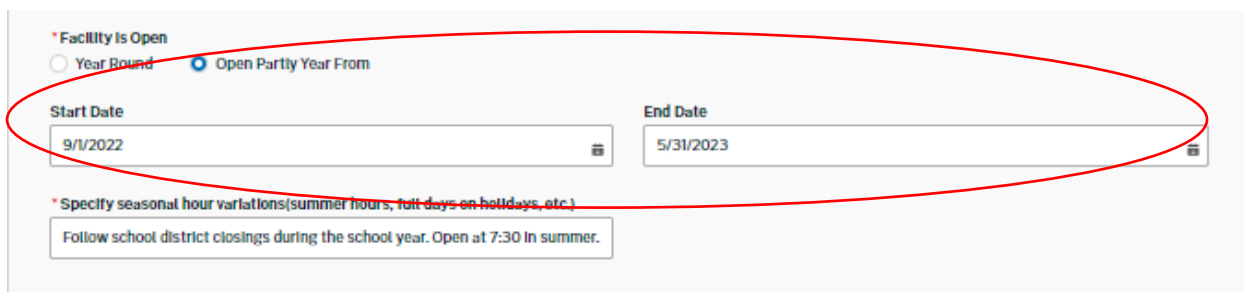


* Facility Is Open
☒ Year Round ☐ Open Partial Year From

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.

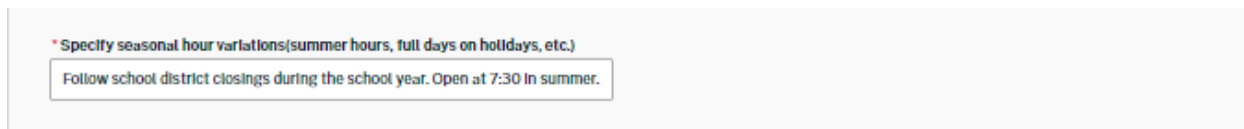


* Facility Is Open
☐ Year Round ☒ Open Partial Year From

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**.

The screenshot shows the 'Operations' form within the 'Better Beginnings' application. The left sidebar contains a checklist with 'Operations' selected. The main form area is titled 'Operations' and contains three sections: 'Infant & Toddler (Birth to 36 Months)', 'Preschool (3-5 years old)', and 'School Age (K-12 years old)'. Each section has four input fields: 'No. of Classrooms', 'No. of Children served', 'No. of Full-Time Staff', and 'No. of Part-Time Staff'. The 'Total' section at the bottom also has these four fields. The 'Continue' button at the bottom right is circled in red.

Section	No. of Classrooms	No. of Children served	No. of Full-Time Staff	No. of Part-Time Staff
Infant & Toddler (Birth to 36 Months)	5	0	0	0
Preschool (3-5 years old)	2	0	0	0
School Age (K-12 years old)	0	0	0	0
Total	7	0	0	0

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**.

The screenshot shows the 'Accreditation and Facility Participations' form. The left sidebar has 'Participation & Accreditation' selected. The main form area is divided into two sections: 'Accreditation' and 'Facility Participations'. The 'Accreditation' section has checkboxes for NAEYC, MONTESSORI, ABC, NAFCC, CARF, and COA. The 'Facility Participations' section has checkboxes for Special Nutrition, CHMS, Early Head Start, Voucher (checked), Head Start, and DDTCs. The 'Continue' button at the bottom right is circled in red.

Section	Options
Accreditation	<input type="checkbox"/> NAEYC, <input type="checkbox"/> MONTESSORI, <input type="checkbox"/> ABC, <input type="checkbox"/> NAFCC, <input type="checkbox"/> CARF, <input type="checkbox"/> COA
Facility Participations	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Nutrition, <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Voucher, <input type="checkbox"/> CHMS, <input type="checkbox"/> Head Start, <input type="checkbox"/> Early Head Start, <input type="checkbox"/> DDTCs

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Documentation

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

Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing

< Back to Applications

New Application:
Better Beginnings

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

Documentation

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:

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

+ Add Attachments

Save Previous Continue

Select **Upload File**.

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Documents Uploaded:

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

+ Add Attachments

Save Previous Continue

Upload Document

Upload Files Or Drop Files

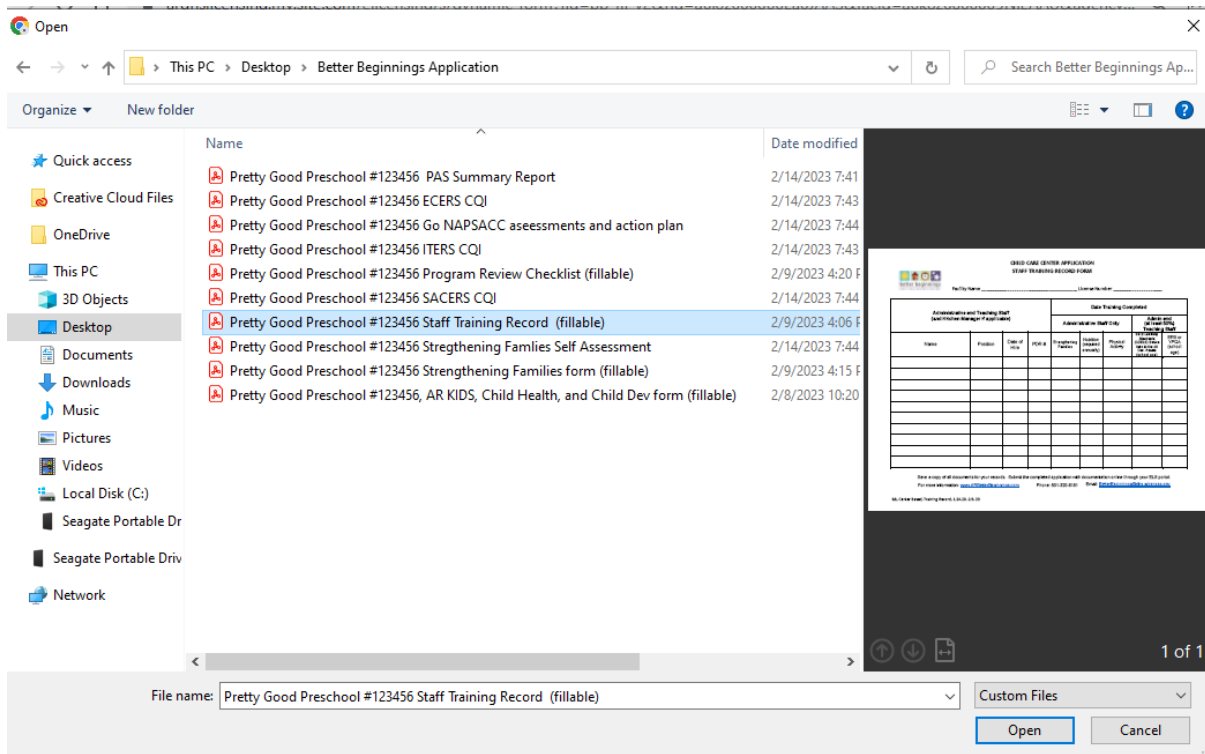
Accepted file Types (PDF, DOCX, PNG, JPEG, DOC, XLSX)

*Document Type
Select an Option

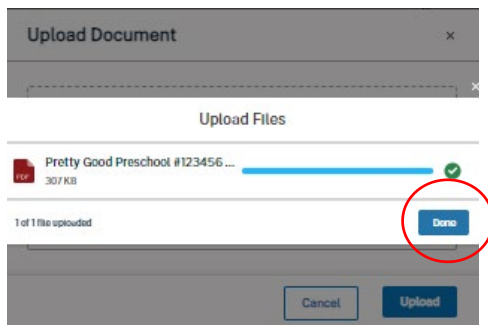
Cancel Upload

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

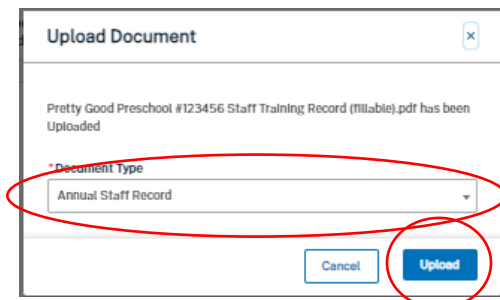
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When prompted, select **Done**.



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



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Repeat this step until all required forms are uploaded.

Most Out-of-School Time programs are required to submit the documentation listed below.

Out-of-School Time programs participating in YPQI	Out-of-School Time programs not participating in YPQI
Staff training Record form AR KIDS, Child Health, and Child Dev form Strengthening Families form Strengthening Families self-assessment (level 3-6 only) Program Review Checklist YPQI assessment reports including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OQA Summary Report • School-Age Program Quality Assessment (SAPQA) • Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) • Summer Learning Quality Assessment (SLPQA) • Social Emotional Learning Program Quality Assessment (SELPQA) 	Staff training Record form AR KIDS, Child Health, and Child Dev form Strengthening Families form Strengthening Families self-assessment (level 3-6 only) Program Review Checklist PAS Summary Report SACERS CQI Report

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 displays the 'Documentation' step of the Better Beginnings application process. On the left, a sidebar lists various application stages, with 'Documentation' currently selected. The main content area provides instructions on required documents and shows a table of three uploaded files: 'Pretty Good Preschool #123456 Staff Training Record (fillable).pdf', 'Pretty Good Preschool #123456, AR KIDS.pdf', and 'Pretty Good Preschool #123456 Strengthening Families form (fillable).pdf'. At the bottom right, the 'Continue' button is highlighted with a red circle.

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 Phone: 501-320-6161 Email: BetterBeginnings@dhs.arkansas.gov

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 is a sidebar with a list of steps: Application Checklist, Application Details, Operations, Participation & Accreditation, Documentation, Review (highlighted with a blue bar and a right-pointing arrow), and Sign & Submit. The main area is titled 'Review' and contains a list of the same steps. Each step has an 'Edit Details' link with a dropdown arrow. The 'Review' step's 'Edit Details' link is circled in red. At the bottom right 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 sidebar on the left has 'Sign & Submit' highlighted with a blue bar. The main area contains a declaration text, a list of terms, and 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 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**.

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 Phone: 501-320-6161 Email: BetterBeginnings@dhs.arkansas.gov

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.

Reciprocity Requirements

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

The screenshot shows the 'New Application: Better Beginnings' form. On the left is a sidebar with navigation links: Application Details, Operations, Participation & Accreditation (selected), Documentation, Review, and Sign & Submit. The main content area has two sections: 'Accreditation' and 'Facility Participations'. Both sections have 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.' The 'Accreditation' section lists checkboxes for NAEYC, ABC, CARF, MONTESSORI, NAFCC (checked), and COA. The 'Facility Participations' section lists checkboxes for Special Nutrition, CHMS, Early Head Start, Voucher (checked), Head Start, and DDTCS. At the bottom right are 'Save', 'Previous', and 'Continue' buttons. A red asterisk indicates mandatory fields.

Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing

< Back to Applications

New Application:
Better Beginnings

Application Details

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Accreditation *Mandatory field

If any of the items in this section are checked, the proof of accreditation document is required to be uploaded in the Documentation tab.

☐ NAEYC ☐ MONTESSORI

☐ ABC ☒ NAFCC

☐ CARF ☐ COA

Facility Participations *Mandatory field

☐ Special Nutrition ☒ Voucher

☐ CHMS ☐ Head Start

☐ Early Head Start ☐ DDTCS

Save Previous Continue

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Arkansas School Districts

Non-ABC, HS, or EHS facilities owned by an Arkansas school district or Educational Cooperative receive full reciprocation based on the most recent ERS average.

- Upload most recent ERS CQI reports

National Afterschool Association (NAA)

Reciprocation at Level 6

- Submit application
- Upload proof of accreditation with dates

American Camping Association (ACA)

Full Reciprocation at Level 4

- Submit application
- Upload proof of accreditation (with dates)

Partial Reciprocation for Levels 5 and 6

- SACERS or YPQI assessments and ratios required
- Upload proof of accreditation (with dates)
- Upload SACERS or YPQI assessment reports

The screenshot shows the 'Documentation' section of the 'Better Beginnings' application portal. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'Home' and 'Dashboard' links, and a green success message: 'Success Document Uploaded Successfully'. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'Division of Child Care Early Childhood Education - Child Care Licensing'. The main content area has a left sidebar with a 'Back to Applications' link and a list of application steps: 'Application Details', 'Operations', 'Participation & Accreditation', 'Documentation' (highlighted), 'Review', and 'Sign & Submit'. The 'Documentation' section is titled 'Documentation' and includes a note: 'All items checked in the Accreditation section require documentation for facilities applying for a Better Beginnings level 2-6 under reciprocation. Please select the document type and upload the relevant document below.' Below this note is a table titled 'Documents Uploaded:' with columns 'Document File Name' and 'Document File Type'. The table lists three documents: 'Pretty Good Preschool #123456 ITERS CQI.pdf' (Accreditation - ABC), 'Pretty Good Preschool #123456 SACERS CQI.pdf' (Accreditation - ABC), and 'Pretty Good Preschool #123456 ECERS CQI.pdf' (Other). Each row has edit and delete icons. An 'Add Attachments' button is located to the right of the table. At the bottom right, there are 'Save', 'Previous', and 'Continue' buttons.

Document File Name	Document File Type
Pretty Good Preschool #123456 ITERS CQI.pdf	Accreditation - ABC
Pretty Good Preschool #123456 SACERS CQI.pdf	Accreditation - ABC
Pretty Good Preschool #123456 ECERS CQI.pdf	Other

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 Phone: 501-320-6161 Email: BetterBeginnings@dhs.arkansas.gov