



December 2021

## A NOTE FROM BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR KELLI HILBURN



It's wintertime so let's talk about winter safety. It's tempting to keep children indoors when it's cold outside. However, they need fresh air and outdoor play year-round.

Here's how you can keep them safe when playing in cold temperatures:

- Dress children in layers
- Hats and gloves are a must
- Make sure children are drinking plenty of water
- Keep clothes dry

Find these tips and ways to have outdoor fun this winter using the [Activities for a Wonderful Winter](#) resource on the Better Beginnings website.

I want to close out 2021 with a thank you for all the hard work you have done this year. You are the workforce behind Arkansas's workforce. Your work has not gone unnoticed.

If you haven't applied for an ARPA grant, do so today! This is funding you deserve and there's plenty to go around. Get those applications in so you can get the additional funding and continue to make a difference in the lives of Arkansas families.

We are beginning 2022 with **science**! Keeping reading for science resources. Also, the deadline to nominate the next Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional is fast approaching. Don't wait to nominate someone.

Happy New Year!

**Kelli Hilburn**

BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

DIVISION OF CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

# ARPA FUNDING AVAILABLE



## DCCECE Accepting Applications

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) is accepting applications for grants funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). All licensed child care providers are eligible for a grant, no matter their Better Beginnings status.

There is enough funding available for all providers in Arkansas so apply today for these much deserved funds!

The funding can be used in a variety of ways including:

- Improvements to your centers
- Staff bonuses
- Operational costs

### American Rescue Plan Proposal

Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

#### STABILIZATION - 266M\*

\*90% of funding must go to existing facilities and up to 10% can be used for new programs.

#### Subgrant Payments - \$258M\*\*

\*\*Facility must have been open on or before March 11, 2021 to qualify.

##### Quality Improvement

Funding to assist facilities in obtaining a higher level of quality. Eligible subgrant amounts were determined based on a cost analysis of the amount necessary to move up one level in quality.

##### Operational

Funding to assist facilities in paying operational expenses incurred during the pandemic.

##### Child Care Expansion of Existing Business

Funding to address out of school time and infant/toddler early childhood education gaps across the state of Arkansas. Existing facilities will be awarded a subgrant amount based on the type and amount of increased capacity. Funding will cover minor renovations of existing classrooms, classroom start-up, or partnerships with local businesses to support essential workers by expanding or opening an on-site campus.

#### Supply Building - \$25M

Funding contracted out through public/private partnerships to create new child care centers across Arkansas for the essential workforce including care for non-traditional hours.

#### SUPPLEMENTAL DISCRETIONARY - 178M

##### Essential Worker Child Care - \$130M

Funding to continue assisting Arkansas's Essential Workforce in paying for child care services. Essential Worker Child Care will be extended through September 2024 or until funding has been exhausted.

##### TEACH Scholarship Program - \$40M

Funding to cover scholarships for early childhood teachers to obtain a degree or credential in the field. Funding will be disseminated out by the Arkansas Early Childhood Association using the national TEACH model.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE - \$11M\*\*\*

\*\*\*Administrative budget is \$3M from Stabilization and \$8M from Supplemental Discretionary Funds

#### Personnel - \$4M

Funding to cover 22 personnel to assist with the implementation of Stabilization and Supplemental Discretionary Funds.

#### IT Upgrades and Other - \$7M

Funding to cover IT upgrades for internally and externally facing systems.



Apply for as many grants as you want through the online portal. A link to the portal was sent to the email on file with Licensing.

Find more information on the DCCECE [website](#).

Contact Thomas Sheppard at [Thomas.Sheppard@dhs.arkansas.gov](mailto:Thomas.Sheppard@dhs.arkansas.gov) with any questions you have.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



## BehaviorHelp is Here to Help

DHS Division of Child Care and Early Education  
**BehaviorHelp**

BehaviorHelp is a holistic approach to meet the needs of children who experience challenging behaviors with collaborating partners from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE), the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and Arkansas State University Childhood Services.

*"My consultant was great. She gave me and my teacher a lot of hope and strategies ... she helped us get through some very challenging times." - Child Care Director*

**Benefits**

- ✓ Supports healthy, child, social and emotional development
- ✓ Provides tools, skills, and ongoing support for child care providers and families
- ✓ Reduces suspensions and expulsions of young children
- ✓ Creates consistency of care for the child



**How to Get Help**

Submit a request at [www.behaviorhelponline.org](http://www.behaviorhelponline.org). A BehaviorHelp team member at DCCECE will call to learn more about your needs and assign a technical assistance provider or early childhood mental health consultant to assist you.

**What can I expect?**

A BehaviorHelp team member will visit your program to help you develop and implement a plan to support the child and reduce challenging behaviors in the classroom.

**Why work to reduce suspensions and expulsions?**

When children are suspended or expelled, nobody benefits. Parents miss work and providers lose income. Suspensions and expulsions increase children's risk for long-term problems such as school failure, school dropout, substance abuse, and involvement with the juvenile justice system.



**BehaviorHelp Works!**

- ✓ Since launching in 2016, the BehaviorHelp team has responded to more than 1,800 requests.
- ✓ More than 4 out of 5 teachers report they would recommend BehaviorHelp.
- ✓ Teachers report a significant improvement in the frequency and severity of behavior concerns.
- ✓ Expulsion is prevented in 97% of cases.

*"It wasn't about a magic 'fix it.' That was hard at first, but I am much more happy with the skills I learned along the way." - Teacher*



Some behaviors in children require a different approach. **BehaviorHelp** consultants work with you to find the approach that will support the child to resolve any challenging behaviors they experience.

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE), the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, and Arkansas State University Childhood Services partner in this program to bring you a plan to support the child and reduce challenging behavior.

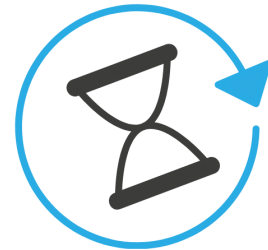
Consultants will gladly help you address any challenging behavior. All you have to do is ask. Request assistance through the BehaviorHelp [website](#).

# NOMINATIONS OPEN



## Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional Nominations Due January 2022

**Time is running out** to nominate the next Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional! Nominations are due **January 21, 2022**. If you know an early childhood professional who deserves this award, get the nomination packet soon.



To qualify, nominees must:

- Meet minimum licensing requirements for child care staff
- Be employed by a licensed provider in good standing
- Have taught an early childhood classroom for at least three years
- Plan to remain in early childhood for the 2022-2023 fiscal year
- Be willing and able to serve as an early childhood ambassador

The winning professional will serve on committees, represent early childhood educators in the media as needed and be featured on media and social media outlets.

The nomination packet can be found on the Better Beginnings [website](#).

[Click here for the nomination packet.](#)

# PANDEMIC GUIDELINES



You can always find the most updated **Pandemic Guidelines** from Arkansas DHS on our website.

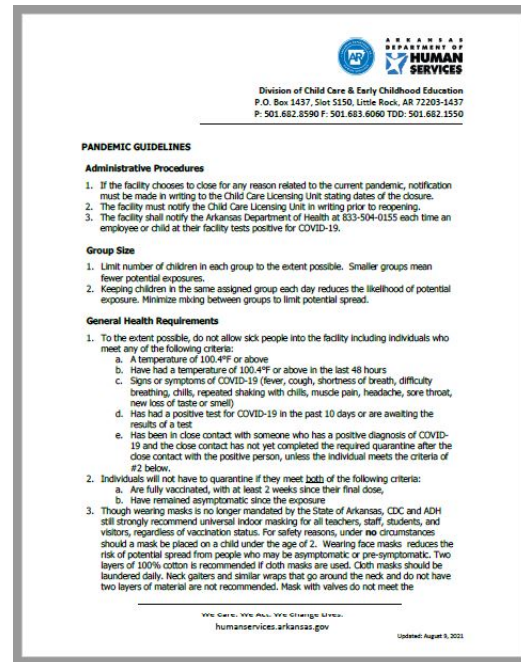
Find the [Trending tab](#) and then click the [COVID Advice and Resources for Families](#) button.

Or, [click here](#) to download the PDF or screenshot the document and save to your phone for quick access!

As COVID-19 circumstances change daily, Arkansas DHS and the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education will **monitor and adjust these guidelines as needed.**

Remember to report positive COVID-19 cases among your staff or the children in your care to the COVID Call Center. The center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The number is **833-504-0155**. The call center is closed during Arkansas State holidays.

Reporting these cases will help ensure the safety of your staff and client-families.



**ARKANSAS DHS PANDEMIC GUIDELINES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**

# 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 programs are now **3-star** Better Beginnings providers:

- Little Sprouts Learning Center, Little Rock
- Pediatrics Plus Development Preschool, Arkadelphia
- Pediatrics Plus Development Preschool, North Little Rock

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

- Home Away From Home, Ashdown
- Noah's Ark Daycare, Ashdown
- Teach Play to Learn, Little Rock
- Pumpkin Patch Pre-K, Siloam Springs

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

**REMINDER:** Programs getting funding through the voucher program must be a 2-star provider by **June 30, 2022**.

**LEARN MORE ABOUT MOVING UP IN STAR RATINGS**



# SCIENCE RESOURCES



Help your client-families continue the learning at home by sharing these science [resources](#) from our [Family Resource Library](#).

**STATES OF MATTER**

Matter is anything that has weight and takes up space. States of matter is a term that refers to the physical form of something, generally, such as liquid, solid or gas.

Scientists and mathematicians, Sir Isaac Newton, discovered the laws of motion. Newton is considered one of the most influential scientists of all time.

Cornstarch goesop, backpack, ketchup and other are all "non-Newtonian" fluids. They do not follow Newton's laws of how most fluids act. These fluids act like solids or liquids depending on the pressure you apply or how you move it around.

Cornstarch goesop is sometimes called Oobleck. Oobleck gets its name from the Dr. Seuss book *Bartholomew and the Oobleck*. Check it out!

This activity is not recommended for children under three years of age. Parents, please supervise all experiments with young children.

**Cornstarch goesop does it a powder and can be vacuumed from carpet or brushed from clothing.**

**better beginnings**  
EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR HELP  
Click here to visit our Resource Library. You'll find activities and tips to help you prepare your child for life.  
[ARBetterBeginnings.com • 1-501-682-8590](#)

**5 Great Activities for a Wonderful Winter**

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EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR HELP

Children need to play outside every day, even in winter. Going outside is a good way for children to work their muscles and burn off energy. Getting fresh air is healthy for children. Being inside a closed building too long can lead to spreading germs.

Even though we don't get snow often in Arkansas, there are still activities you can do outside for fun.

- 1. Go on a scavenger hunt.**  
A walk to your neighborhood or local park will activate your child's brain and body. Prepare for your hunt by doing one of these:
  - Make a list of things to look for. Use leaves of a certain color or shapes.
  - For little ones, draw pictures or tape out cut out magazine pictures to a sheet of paper. Write the names next to it.
 Collect your finds and use them at home for an art project.
- 2. Make bird feeders**  
You can make a bird feeder by applying hot mixed glue (which is almost anything)
  - To the string to a piece and spread the mixture into the branches of the pinecone.
  - Thread a string through the skin of an empty orange half and fill it with the mixture.
  - Cook a rice bag with the mixture and hang it with a ribbon or piece of string.
 Hang your feeders high in a shrub or from a tree branch.
- 3. Fun with ice**  
Kids made from ice have lots of possibilities! Let Mother Nature freeze your creativity today.
  - Fill plastic containers with water and let it freeze. Freeze the ice blocks to build an ice fort.
  - Ice toy cubes make a fun ice long for small plastic animals and characters.
  - Fill balloons with water and a drop of food coloring and let freeze overnight. Remove the balloons and create a giant decoration or just roll them around the yard.
- 4. Science with ice**  
Fill empty milk cartons with water and freeze overnight. Remove the cartons. Let your child spend the top of the ice block with water left. Tosses will melt in the ice. Dry food coloring into the tunnels for added fun. Repeat process at will.
- 5. Play games**  
Remember the Winter Olympics?

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**Inspire Discovery**

Experiment and observe. Experiment some more. This is how children make discoveries. Here are 10 ways to set your child on the road to discovering science.

1. Acknowledge your baby's accomplishment when she shakes her rattle. She just learned she can affect her world.
2. Put a rubber duck in baby's bathtub. What else will float?
3. When your baby drops his rattle up to the floor pick it up. Gravity is so interesting.
4. Race toy cars on a ramp or incline. Which is faster? The big car or the little car?
5. Put containers of various sizes in the bath tub sandbox for filling, pouring and building. When are formed and formed.
6. Let your child dig a hole for a plant outside. Point out the changes in soil color and texture. Is there water in the bottom of the hole?
7. Stomp a puddle or make a mud pie. Science can be messy. Experiments are fun.
8. Look at a rock under a magnifying glass. Does it look like the surface of a planet?
9. Look at pictures of places with different climates than your home. What would it feel like to be there?
10. Let your child water the garden. He knows he has an impact on the world when he helps things grow.

**What is your child learning?**

- Develops awareness of himself in relation to the rest of the world
- Develops observation skills
- Develops curiosity, problem solving and decision-making skills
- Has an opportunity to extend his vocabulary
- Learns to form and test ideas
- Learns to draw conclusions
- Develops understanding of units of measure
- Understands gravity and mass

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States of Matter

Activities for a Wonderful Winter

Inspire Discovery

# WHAT IS BETTER BEGINNINGS?



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND OUT

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.



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