



Literacy



Math



Science

Provider Buzz | December 2024



better beginnings

EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST



**A NOTE FROM
KELLI HILBURN**

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

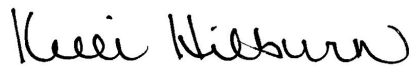
As 2024 comes to a close, I can't help but reflect on all you accomplished this year for the children, families, and communities of Arkansas. Your dedication in **reaching for the stars** and providing high-quality early care and education is inspiring. Better Beginnings is proud to be your partner and to share your achievements. Let's work together into the new

year to see that success continue.

To help you build on all that you've accomplished, we're highlighting a number of resources and news from the [Office of Early Childhood](#) (OEC) in this month's *Buzz*. You'll also find play-based [math](#) activities you can do in your classroom, information about this month's provider [call](#), and a [resource](#) that can aid you and your client-families in any last-minute holiday shopping. Then, check out the latest star approvals and see how you can make the list.

You've accomplished much in 2024, and we can't wait to see what great things you'll do in 2025.

Until next time,



Kelli Hilburn
BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



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



VIDEO
CORNER

WATCH NOW 🍿

Have you seen our latest Vlog? Catch episode 2 of our new vlog series, featuring Kelli Hilburn and Jennifer Douglas Assistant Director at OEC talking about the [Local Leads](#) program. Watch it now by clicking on the video below, and stay tuned for episode 3 dropping in January 2025. Subscribe to our YouTube [channel](#) so you don't miss it!

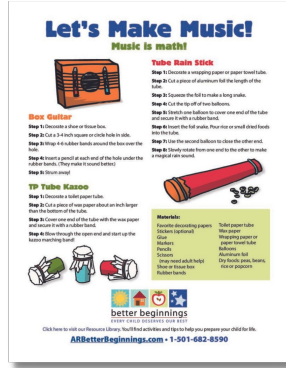


A large yellow banner with a white circular inset on the left. Inside the circle is a young child with curly hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt and denim overalls, sitting at a table and reading a book. Below the child, the text "PLAY, LEARN, EXPLORE" is written in white. To the right of the circle, the words "LEARNING RESOURCES" are written in large, bold, white capital letters. Below the banner, there are two smaller circular insets. The first shows two children sitting at a table, one with their hand raised. The second shows two children sitting at a table, one with colorful toys.

PLAY,
LEARN,
EXPLORE

LEARNING RESOURCES





3 Paths to Math

Check out this resource to see how you can help the children in your classroom find their way to math by building structures or reading books!

[View Resource](#)

Let's Make Music

Creating musical instruments is a fun, inexpensive way to help children learn important math concepts through play. Check out this resource for more details.

[View Resource](#)

Simon Says Roll

Being able to count is a key indicator of kindergarten readiness. Through play-based activities, like the one described in this resource, the children in your care can build their knowledge while having fun.

[View Resource](#)



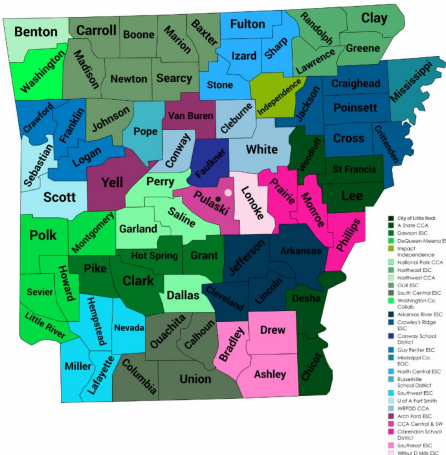
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LEARNING IS FUN!



What's the best toy to get a child? A simple one that helps cultivate their imagination and creativity. Check out this resource for a list of guidelines that can lead you to the right toy. Don't forget to share this with your client-families!

Learn More



Local Leads Cohort #3

The final Local Leads have been announced! Find the full list on the OEC website. If your facility is in Pulaski, Yell, Van Buren, Lonoke, Prairie, Monroe, Phillips, Bradley, Drew, Ashley, or Columbia counties, expect to hear from your Local Lead organization soon. Learn more about the Local Leads program by watching our latest vlog [episode](#) linked above in the Video Corner.

Learn More

Coordinated Funding Request

Informed by child count data and community needs, Local Leads will be responsible for completing a **Coordinated Funding Request (CFR)** in **February 2025** to request funding/seat allocations for their communities. The Local Lead will coordinate with sites and agencies to complete the CFR.

CFR will include requests for 2025-2026:

- Infant/Toddler Contracted Seats
- Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Seats
- Federal Pre-K Seats
- ABC Home Visiting: PAT and HIPPY
- Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership (EHS-CCP)

More guidance is on the way. Additional details and resources will be provided for Local Leads at the upcoming meeting on Tuesday, December 10.



Provider Call

Tuesday, December 3, Noon

Zoom with representatives from OEC to hear the latest news and updates from the early care and education field. Find the link and schedule on the Better Beginnings website.

[Visit our Website](#)

NEW Arkansas Infant-Toddler Certificate Pilot

February 2025

Are you looking for ways to enhance your teaching practice as you work with infants and toddlers? As part of the OEC's Preschool Development Grant, our friends at A-State Childhood Services is seeking infant and toddler educators to help pilot the new Arkansas Infant-Toddler Certificate. The certificate includes professional learning experiences and individual on-site coaching to expand and strengthen your skills in four competency areas that support adult-child interactions. The pilot begins in February 2025 and will continue through the summer. Fill out the [Infant Toddler Certificate Interest Form](#) and someone will contact you with more information and to answer your questions.

[Complete the Form](#)



BETTER BEGINNINGS
**STAR
APPROVALS**

QUALITY
CARE!



Help us congratulate your colleagues on hitting that next star level! Do you want to join this list? Visit the [Provider Tools](#) page to get started.



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

- Hot Springs Child Care II - Hot Springs, AR



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

- Cabot Public Schools Pre-K, Cabot
- Foreman Preschool, Foreman
- Hot Springs Child Care Center, Hot Springs
- Lincoln Elementary School Pre-K, Lincoln



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

- Kings and Queens of Destiny Developmental Center, Edmondson
- Little Bitty City Enrichment Center, Texarkana
- McRae Elementary School, Searcy
- Nashville Preschool, Nashville
- Old Farmington Head Start, Fayetteville
- The ASP Early Childhood Academy, Lowell
- Van Buren 2, Van Buren
- Ward Central Pre-K, Ward



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

- Lovely Sunshine Learning Center LR LCC, Little Rock
- Little Blessings Preschool and Child Care Inc, Greenwood
- Little Martians Learning Center, Centerton
- Little Stars Learning Center, Stuttgart



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

- Beautiful Beginnings Daycare and Learning Center Co, Forrest City
- Dance Life Preschool of Arts, North Little Rock
- Kids Unlimited Learning Academy of Fayetteville, Fayetteville
- Mrs. Wendi's Little Tots, Bentonville
- Pam's Homecare Childcare, Texarkana
- Right at School at Sylvan Hills Elementary, Sherwood
- UAMS Child Development Center, Little Rock
- University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences DBA KidsFirst Pine Bluff, Pine Bluff



The following program is now a **1-star** Better Beginnings provider:

- The Nature Academy - Hensley

Level Up Resource

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

Visit our Website



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's tiered quality rating and improvement system for child care, early education, and school-aged programs that have gone above and beyond the state minimum requirements. Better Beginnings is administered by the Arkansas Department of Education Office of Early Childhood.



Better Beginnings | OEC Attn: Better Beginnings PO Box 1437, Slot S150 | Little Rock, AR 72203-1437 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!