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December 2019



*A NOTE FROM DAWN JEFFREY:*



Happy Holidays, everyone! We just LOVE this time of the year at **Better Beginnings**. Can you believe we are just days away from 2020? It's not just a new year, but a new DECADE!

The start of a new year, brings new goals. At Better Beginnings, we're dedicated to educating you on what quality childcare is like, helping your little ones set and achieve these new goals. Need to work on your child's reading skills? Check out our **Make Reading Fun** or **Raising a Reader** under the literacy tab of our **Family Resource Library** ! Think it's too early to start talking math with your little ones? We say, no way! Learn how with our **Talk Math** resource, also found in our Family Resource Library.


Guys, I'm telling you our Family Resource Library is full of GOOD stuff. If reading and math aren't your thing, that's okay! You can find tons of

tools, in various subjects, teaching you how to teach your kiddos through PLAY. Another bonus? All sources are found **en Español.**

What are you waiting for? FUN is just around the corner! And, again, from ours to yours, Happy Holidays! We wish you and your family all the best in 2020.

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 Program Manager for Better Beginnings

### Make Reading Fun



Children take their first steps towards literacy long before they talk, sing and tell your child stories. Allow your child to play with books. All these experiences are the building blocks for reading and writing. Here are some simple ways you and your child can enjoy books together:

**With Infants:**

- Help them touch books and turn the pages. As they flip to touch on the pages, talk about what you see.
- Bring books everywhere. Keep small books in your car, home and kitchen and put them out on the table while waiting at a dinner table or when standing in a line.
- Read and play with books every day. Make a book and play with books every day. Make a book and play with books every day. Make a book and play with books every day.
- Point to interesting pictures as you read. Describe them. Explain what you see. They look closer with the book open, when you are reading.

**With Toddlers and Preschoolers:**

- Ask your child to point to pictures or to name things on the pages. Make it into a game. Describe something in the picture and see if your child can find it.
- Make them tell the story. Let them tell the story in their own words. Use the pictures in your child's books to help regular new words. Ask a question to make sure she understands.
- Ask about the story. Ask questions about what happened. What is happening now and what might happen next? Which part did she like best? What is the story about? Which part did she like best? What is the story about? Which part did she like best?

**What kinds of books are best?**

- Books on topics of interest to your child. Use animals, dinosaurs or ballerinas.
- Picture books or simple stories about everyday activities.
- Books with only one or two sentences per page and lots of pictures.

Click here to visit our Resource Library. You'll find activities and tips to help you prepare your child for life.

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 1-800-445-3316

### Raising a Reader

#### Toddlers 1-2 Years

**What to Expect**

Soft vinyl and board books are great for toddlers. Books need to be tough for toddlers to explore and to play with. A toddler may appreciate a book by:

- Putting it in his mouth, chewing and drooling on it
- Pushing it across the floor
- Sticking it in
- Shaking or throwing it
- Bringing two books together
- Flipping the pages
- Choosing a favorite book
- Reading to toys
- Showing that someone needs to read
- Reading to objects in a book when asked
- Making sounds to match the pictures
- Sometimes they call you "What's that?"

**Time and a place for books? Always, everywhere!**

Your toddler can hold a book and turn the pages. Looking at pictures on her own is good stimulation for her brain.

Let her play with books. She is most likely to enjoy reading later if she thinks of books as toys. A positive attitude about books will help when she starts school.

Where can toddlers play with books? In the car or on the bus, rolling along in the stroller or grocery cart in the high chair, on the floor or in the tub. When are books coming? At nap-time or at bedtime and quiet time before bed.

**Books open minds.**

Visit the library. Bring home books about your toddler's favorite things: trucks, dinosaurs, dolls, baby animals or machines. Use picture books to teach names, colors and numbers.

Toddlers enjoy books about children. They like to know there are others "just like me." Other children brush their teeth, take naps and go to the grocery store. Stories about children help toddlers connect the written word with real life.

**Make reading fun!**

- Use different voices for characters.
- Make sounds that go with pictures.
- Ask questions: "What is that?" "What's that?" "What color?"

Books are great conversation starters. You may find yourself understanding your toddler at first, but it is so hard!

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### Talk Math

Introduce your child to math through every day conversation. Here are some ways to talk math while you wash and play. Children learn by repetition. Sing, Talk, Play, Repeat. Make learning fun. They'll want to do it again and again! Talk math. It's a great start.

**Start at infancy.** Sing songs and repeat phrases that use numbers.

**Talk math.** Make comparisons such as "big" and "little," "more" and "less," "heavy" and "light" introduce the concepts of volume and mass. "Long" and "short" teach measurement.

**Play together.** Let your child help you at the grocery store. You can create the math and engage together.

**Play sorting games.** Put all the socks in one basket and the socks in a box. Learning to sort laundry with you.

**Do laundry.** Children learn about colors and sizes by sorting laundry with you.

**Count it out.** Count out food when serving snacks. Make comparisons such as "You have more crackers than I do."

**Make cookies.** Your child will learn about measurement by counting eggs and cups of flour.

**Add and subtract.** Count the beads in your yard. Talk about how the number changes when one fish goes.

**Keep time.** Use a timer, clock or stopwatch to measure how long the cookies bake.

**Measure heights.** Use a tape measure or yardstick to compare your child's height to your own. Make a game of measuring other things around the house.

**What is your child learning?**

- Math concepts
- How to classify objects by shape or color
- How numbers relate to the world
- About order and sequence
- Awareness of measurement and volume
- Understanding units of measure
- Recognizing value of fractions

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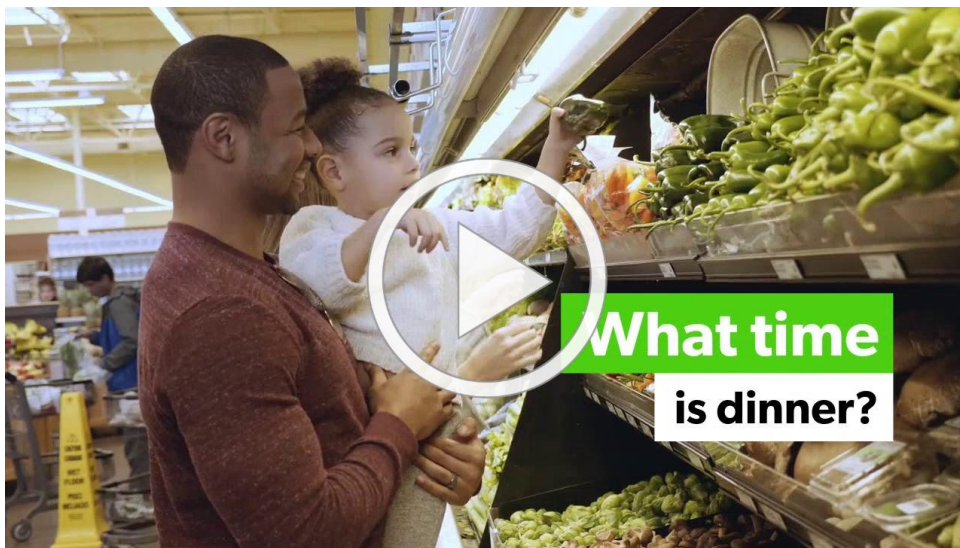
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**Make Reading Fun**

**Raising a Reader**

**Talk Math**

**FAMILIES | PLAY IS FOR LEARNING**



Simple activities like shopping help math concepts develop. See **Make It Math** for tips to change an ordinary toy into fun math learning to share.

Check our more of our video resources here!

**THANK YOU | BETTER BEGINNINGS QUALITY COMMUNITY**

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** :

- **RUSSELVILLE** - ABC Children's Academy of Russellville Site 4
- **BENTONVILLE** - Adventure Club at Evening Star
- **FRIENDSHIP** - Friendship Pediatric Services
- **LITTLE ROCK** - Button & Bows Child Care Center

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

## PROVIDERS | YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE



## Want to see your name up there?

Learn how you can move your center up to the 2 or 3-star level when you visit our [Requirements and Information](#) page under our Providers tab online.

Remember, at Better Beginnings, we are dedicated to helping you to provide quality childcare.

[Find More Provider Tools Here](#)

## COLLABORATE | PROVIDERS & FAMILIES CONNECT

Providers, post these resource pages in your halls to **generate conversation between teachers and client families.**

Play is a child's work, with benefits far beyond the obvious one: fun!

Social Benefits of Play	Emotional Benefits of Play	Intellectual Benefits of Play
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps a child form meaningful relationships</li> <li>Teaches communication, negotiation, cooperation and compromise</li> <li>Helps a child experience trust, friendship and love</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helps a child express feelings, develop empathy and cope with difficult situations</li> <li>Helps a child deal with emotions and regain a sense of control</li> <li>Helps adults understand a child's feelings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides ideas and problem-solving techniques</li> <li>Fosters curiosity, creativity and intellect</li> <li>Prepares a child for school</li> <li>Helps a child make sense of her world and function successfully in it</li> </ul>

You play a valuable role in your child's playtime. Here are some ideas for getting involved:

- Jump right in.** Playing together right from the start helps build the foundation for trusting relationships and helps him become a happy person.
- Forget the rules.** Encouraging exploration, creative play and "make believe" enhances the development of imagination.
- Think like a child.** Make up games. Play with toys and safe household objects in new ways.
- Let a child guide his play.** Allowing the child to pick the activity and decide how it's played gives him confidence.
- Take a break.** Playing alone gives a child time to process what she has been doing. Watch - if she is happy, leave her alone. If she seems bored, re-direct her activity.
- Participate enthusiastically.** Being part of your child's play encourages his imagination and self-esteem.
- Watch out for overstimulation.** Stop playing when your child has had enough - an infant will turn his head or start to fuss.

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You play a valuable role in your child's development. **Here are some ideas** for getting involved. Learning through play will provide social, emotional and intellectual benefits.

## Communicate with Your Child Care Provider

Your child care provider is your partner in preparing your child for life. Talk to your provider every day about what happened with your child. Open communication is critical to giving your child the best opportunities to prosper.

### Questions to Ask About Your Child's Day

- What activities did he most enjoy?
- Did she have a nap? For how long and at what time?
- Did he try any new foods? Did he like them?
- Did you see any new activity or skills in my child?
- Is there anything I should know about her day?
- Are there any supplies I need to bring?

The more you know about your child's day, the better you and your provider can work as partners for your child.

### Top 10 Tips

- Talk face to face with your child care provider every day.
- Tell your provider if there are family issues she should know about.
- Tell your provider about your child's health issues or special needs.
- Ask questions about your child's day and be a good listener.
- Be clear about family rules, discipline, and other parenting styles.
- Encourage your provider to tell you about your child's behavioral or emotional issues.
- Make yourself available by providing your cell phone number and email address.
- Let your provider know in advance if your child will be away from care for travel or illness.
- Be sure your provider has a current pickup list for your child.
- Take time to say thank you for your provider's work and dedication to your child.

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## What is **Better Beginnings** ?

Visit our website to find out.

OR check us out on **social media.**



Which one are you?

**Parent/Guardian**

Select

**Provider**

Select

**Partner**

Select

**Share this edition of the Buzz with your family and friends.**



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.

