

better  
beginnings



for Families  
buzz

Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

AUGUST 2021



### Parents and Families,

The end of summer is always a bummer-- especially when it's this **HOT!**

The good news is, back to school means **fall is just around the corner. Pumpkins, brisk weather and flannels...OH MY!**

As we ease back into our normal school-year routines, we want to remind you that **Better Beginnings** is keeping the **health and safety of your child and family our top priority.** We are

monitoring current COVID-19 circumstances, and our fabulous Arkansas child care providers will adjust as needed.

Please be mindful of the many changes our Arkansas child care providers have gone through since the onset of COVID-19. They are constantly adjusting and implementing new procedures in their homes and facilities--and they do this willingly as **your child's safety is of utmost importance to them.**

So, as things change and new policies are put in place, please be patient and remember that **keeping Arkansas kids safe takes teamwork!**

## WE CAN DO THIS!

All the best,

*Dawn Jeffrey*

**Dawn Jeffrey M.S.E.**

Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education  
Program Manager for Better Beginnings



**Let's Make Music!**  
Music is math!

**Tube Rain Stick**  
Step 1: Measure a length of paper or paper towel tube.  
Step 2: Cut a piece of aluminum foil the length of the tube.  
Step 3: Flatten the foil to make a long snake.  
Step 4: Cut the top off of two balloons.  
Step 5: Stretch the balloons across one end of the tube and secure it with a rubber band.  
Step 6: Repeat the foil snake. For one or two small dried foods like lentils.  
Step 7: Insert the second balloon to close the other end.  
Step 8: Shake seeds from one end to the other to make an irregular rain sound.

**Rock Drums**  
Step 1: Measure a shoe or tissue box.  
Step 2: Cut a 3-4 inch square or circle hole in side.  
Step 3: Insert a piece of rubber bands around the top over the hole.  
Step 4: Insert a piece of wood or cardboard into the hole under the rubber bands. (This makes it sound better).  
Step 5: Strum away!

**TP Tube Kazoo**  
Step 1: Measure a card paper tube.  
Step 2: Cut a piece of wax paper about an inch longer than the bottom of the card.  
Step 3: Cover one end of the tube with the wax paper and secure it with a rubber band.  
Step 4: Blow through the open end and start up the kazoo marching band!

**Materials:**  
- Rubber paper tube  
- Shaving cream  
- Maracas  
- Paper towel tube  
- Maracas  
- Aluminum foil  
- One small dried fruit  
- Shoe or tissue box  
- Rubber bands

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Sharing music with your child is a great way to practice math—and he won't even know it! Make these [DIY instruments](#) and play a memory game as you both strum and hum along. This is an easy way to practice counting and patterns!

LET'S MAKE MUSIC

**Sorting Sacks and Similar Stuff**

Sorting shapes and colors helps children learn to organize by "name" and "different." Organizing is a skill that is basic to learning math. It also helps children understand how objects in their own world relate to each other.

Sorting can be a fun activity to do together. Use sacks, baskets or boxes with colored flaps to indicate how to sort.

Your child learns about colors as you take turns putting "the blue toy in the sack with the blue circle." Using the words helps your child learn while you play.

When you share sorting activities, your child learns:

- colors, numbers and shapes
- new words while you sort toys and talk about them
- hand-eye coordination
- fine motor skills

• problem-solving when deciding which container to use

By sharing activities with your child, you show how important he or she is to you. You share a conversation. You are building your relationship.

Ask your child to sort objects into color containers. How many do you think will fit?

**Learn more about the importance of play.**

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Sorting shows him how to organize various objects. It teaches him about shapes, colors and numbers. You can even do it with simple items you probably have around the house. Check out this [sorting sack](#) resource and try it today!

SORTING SACKS

**Talk Math**

Introduce your child to math through every day conversation. Here are some ways to talk math when you cook 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 smart start.

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

**Talk math.** Make comparisons such as "big" and "little," "heavy" and "light," "more" and "less," "long" and "short" each measurement.

**Group together.** Let your child help you at the grocery store. You can count the fruits and veggies together.

**Play sorting games.** Put all the balls in one basket and the trucks in a box. Learning "same" and "different" is a math skill.

**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 sticks in your yard. Talk about how the number changes when one flies away.

**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 identify objects by shape or color
- How numbers relate to his world
- About color and sequence
- Awareness of measurement and volume
- Understands units of measure
- Recognizes value of fractions

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Let's talk about math. Literally, **TALK** about it! When you do laundry, use words like big, small, heavy and light. Let her help you measure ingredients when you make cookies. Measure heights. Learn more with this [Talk Math](#) resource!

TALK MATH

# PANDEMIC GUIDELINES



Just a quick reminder that 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 of Early Childhood Education will **monitor and adjust these guidelines as needed.**



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**PANDEMIC GUIDELINES**

**Administrative Procedures**

1. If the facility chooses to close for any reason related to the current pandemic, notification must be made in writing to the Child Care Licensing Unit stating dates of the closure.
2. The facility must notify the Child Care Licensing Unit in writing prior to reopening.
3. The facility shall notify the Arkansas Department of Health at 633-504-0155 each time an employee or child at their facility tests positive for COVID-19.

**Group Size**

1. Limit number of children in each group to the extent possible. Smaller groups mean fewer potential exposures.
2. Keeping children in the same assigned group each day reduces the likelihood of potential exposure. Minimize mixing between groups to limit potential spread.

**General Health Requirements**

1. To the extent possible, do not allow sick people into the facility including individuals who meet any of the following criteria:
  - a. A temperature of 100.4°F or above
  - b. Have had a temperature of 100.4°F or above in the last 48 hours
  - c. Signs or symptoms of COVID-19 (fever, cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell)
  - d. Has had a positive test for COVID-19 in the past 10 days or are awaiting the results of a test
  - e. Has been in close contact with someone who has a positive diagnosis of COVID-19 and the close contact has not yet completed the required quarantine after the close contact with the positive person, unless the individual meets the criteria of #2 below.
2. Individuals will not have to quarantine if they meet **both** of the following criteria:
  - a. Are fully vaccinated, with at least 2 weeks since their final dose,
  - b. Have remained asymptomatic since the exposure
3. Though wearing masks is no longer mandated by the State of Arkansas, CDC and ADH still strongly recommend universal indoor masking for all teachers, staff, students, and visitors, regardless of vaccination status. For safety reasons, under no circumstances should a mask be placed on a child under the age of 2. Wearing face masks reduces the risk of potential spread from people who may be asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. Two layers of 100% cotton is recommended if cloth masks are used. Cloth masks should be laundered daily. Neck gaiters and similar wraps that go around the neck and do not have two layers of material are not recommended. Mask with valves do not meet the

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Updated: August 9, 2021

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

# SUMMER SAFETY REMINDERS



## 1.) APPLY SUNSCREEN

Remind your client families to apply and send sunscreen for outside trips and activities. It must have **UVA & UVB protection and at least 15 SPF to ensure appropriate protection.**



## 2.) CHECK THE BACKSEAT

A parked car will warm up 20 degrees from the outside temperature in just ten minutes. **Never leave children in a car, van or bus.**

## 3.) APPLY BUG SPRAY

Remind parents to look for **ticks** after outdoor activities and trips. Encourage them to apply and/or send an **EPA-registered insect repellent.**

## 4.) STAY HYDRATED

Always provide **plenty of water breaks during and after outdoor play.**

## 5.) PRACTICE WATER SAFETY

Never let children in your care swim **without an on-duty life-guard or an adult around.**

# HELPFUL TOOLS FOR CHOOSING CHILD CARE



As we start our back-to-school routines, keep these tools handy.

**Choosing child care is very important to your child's early development!** Use the list below to make sure you find the child care that's right for your family.

**Communicating with your child care provider is also critical to your child's success in school.** Keep an open line of communication to stay involved in your child's learning.

**Choosing Child Care Checklist**  
Which is the best place for my child to be cared for while I work or go to school?

  
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Finding good care for your children is very important. You want them to be cared for in ways that will help them grow and be happy.

You probably want a place that is close to your home or work and is affordable. These are important things to consider as you start to think about child care.

The quality of the care is also very important. The questions below can help you choose the program that will provide the best care for your child. There are questions you could ask the program director and teachers. Other things you will want to observe as you visit the classroom.

As you visit facilities, score them. Put a plus sign (+) in the column next to any question where that program does well. Put a zero (0) by those items where they are just okay. Put a minus sign (-) by those items that don't seem right. You may find it hard to grade some of the answers you get to these questions.

There is no system for adding up points. This checklist just allows you to see what matters and how each program seems to do on those things.

As you ask these questions, pay attention to how the staff treats you and the children in their care. Be sure you feel good about the people who will care for your child.

We hope you find a child care program that will be a great place for your child.

For more help, visit our website. Click the "Find Child Care" button. Enter your city, county or zip code and click the boxes for your preferences. Click "Search." Scroll down to find a list of star-rated child care programs close to you.



	Site 1	Site 2	Site 3
<b>Questions to ask yourself:</b>			
Is the child care program close to my work or home?			
Do I feel comfortable there?			
<b>Questions to ask your friends:</b>			
What do people who have children there say about it?			
Would you send your child there?			
<b>Questions to ask the director or primary caregiver:</b>			
Does this child care program accept vouchers for payments?			
Can parents visit any time?			
What training does the program provide for teachers?			
What accreditation does the child care program have?			
How long do workers typically stay with the same group of children?			
How many children does each teacher take care of?			
Does someone watch the children at all times, even during naps?			
Are the teachers trained in CPR and first aid?			
Do all staff get at least 15 hours per year of child care training?			
Is this facility Better Beginnings certified?			

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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**CHOOSING CHILD CARE CHECKLIST**

**Communicate with Your Child Care Provider**

  
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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**

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

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**COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CHILD CARE PROVIDER**

# 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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