

better
beginnings



for Families
buzz

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

DECEMBER 2020



A SPECIAL NOTE FROM DAWN JEFFREY



Parents and Families,

While we don't want to wish *The Most Wonderful Time of the Year* away, we can't help but feel a little excited to be so close to a **new year**.

We're also proud. **2020 has been a year we will never forget.** We have all worked hard and we know the new year is going to bring **JOY to the World!**

As we approach the end of the year, the saying "work hard, play harder" comes to mind. **Better Beginnings** has a similar saying, but we

say **"Play hard, learn MORE!"**

It's true, for the kids at least. We've said it before and we will say it again, because we are that passionate about it. **Your child learns best through play.**

Playing leads your child to **ask questions and solve problems**. It helps him discover the world around him. **Learning through play** teaches valuable skills he will carry through life.

The best part about learning through play? Young children can play with anything and in any setting.

So, we encourage you to slow down over the next few weeks and enjoy this special time with your family. Don't be afraid to break from the routines and have a little (OR A LOT OF) fun!

Check out our **12 Days of PLAY-List** below. Try doing one of these every other day.

That should be plenty of PLAY and LEARNING to last you through the new year.

Better Beginnings wants to wish you and your family safe, happy and healthy holidays. See ya next year!

Dawn Jeffrey

Dawn Jeffrey M.S.E.

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

THE 12 DAYS OF PLAYLIST

1 SCIENCE PLAY

[Rainstorm in a Jar](#)

Save this Rainstorm in a Jar resource for a real rainy day and play as you listen to the sounds of rain ***Up on the Housetop***.



2 MATH PLAY

[Math Resources](#)

Practice counting by singing the **12 Days of Christmas**! *Note, do this at your own risk, or you might catch yourself singing about seven lords-a-leaping all the way into 2021.*

3 READING PLAY

[Bring Books to Life](#)

Check out one of our favorite literacy resources, ***Bring Books to Life***. *Frosty the Snowman* is a great story to try it with! Ask your child to bring Frosty to life, just like the children did in the holiday classic.



4 OUTSIDE PLAY

Outdoor Play Resources

Get outside and talk about the weather! Tell your child about different seasons and teach her why it snows more in the mountains than it does in Arkansas.

5 MEMORY PLAY

Simon Says ROLL

Understanding and remembering short commands is something your child should practice before entering Kindergarten. This *Simon Says ROLL* resource helps your child practice memory and math skills at the same time! Try it today!



6 MUSIC PLAY

Let's Make Music

Make your own instruments at home! Just grab some paper towel rolls, a bucket, a kazoo and even some **Jingle Bells**. We can hear your **Little Drummer Boy** already!

7 PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PLAY

Get Outside and Explore

Kids need exercise. They have endless energy, and allowing them an outlet to let some of it loose will improve their health, emotional well-being and even sleep habits! Yes, sleep. It's a favorite word around here too. So what are you waiting for? **Run, Run Rudolph! (Momma's) gotta make it to town!**



8 WINTER PLAY

5 Activities for a Wonderful Winter

We know. We aren't exactly **Walkin' in a Winter-Wonderland**, so we're not suggesting you build a snowman or go sledding. BUT, you can try making bird feeders or just pretending you're in the Winter Olympics!



9 SENSORY PLAY

Sensory Play

Sensory play can be messy, but it's so educational for your little one. Grab a plastic bin and create your own Winter Wonderland with shaving cream, rice or marshmallows. Then, watch as she discovers a new world through seeing and feeling.

10 ARTS AND CRAFTS

[Playdough Power](#)

Maybe your child loves to create masterpieces. Great! She's learning fine motor skills and using her imagination. Get creative with our Playdough Power resource today.



11 SMALL GROUP PLAY

[Paper Playground for Learning](#)

Playing together helps your child develop mentally, emotionally and socially. It encourages him to hold meaningful conversations. Remind him that ***Santa Clause is Coming to Town*** when you talk about why sharing is important. Our newest resource, *Paper Playground for Learning*, teaches how to take turns during a fun family game night.

12 SELF-LED PLAY

[Play is a Child's Work](#)

It's okay to allow your child some alone time to play. Self-led play helps him develop critical-thinking and problem-solving skills. Check out our *Play is a Child's Work* resource to learn more.



LEARN MORE ABOUT LEARNING THROUGH PLAY HERE

SAY THANK YOU TO ARKANSAS PROVIDERS

We are so proud of the work our **Arkansas providers** have done this year. They have worked hard to adjust quickly, while still providing your child the **very best quality care.**

They have kept the **safety and health of our kids the top priority.**

As we reflect on our accomplishments of 2020, one stands out the most. **In October, we celebrated 10 years of Better Beginnings. Governor Asa Hutchinson** sent us a special message, and we think it's safe to say our providers are **making the state of Arkansas proud too!**

Check out what he had to say.



TOOLS FOR THE NEW YEAR

A new year means new goals and new opportunities. **It also means your little one is growing.**

What are your goals for the year? Maybe it's time to **choose child care** for your child. Maybe you're looking for a **new child care facility**. Maybe you're just trying to get **more involved and learn a little bit more about what your child is learning at his or her child care facility.**

We have tools for that! On our website, you can find a [Choosing Child Care Checklist](#), a [Child Care Database](#) which allows you to search by quality rating and a [Play is Learning tool](#), teaching you what quality is all about!

Check them out today.



PLAY IS LEARNING PARENT TOOL

FIND A CHILD CARE FACILITY

CHOOSING CHILD CARE CHECKLIST

CHECK OUT OUR FAMILY RESOURCE LIBRARY TOO

COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

Remember, **you can always find COVID-19 resources for families and parents on our website.**

Just click the **Trending tab** on our website. From there, click on the **Trending Topics** button.



STAY UPDATED ON MORE TRENDING TOPICS HERE

WHAT IS BETTER BEGINNINGS?

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND OUT

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



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