

**January 2022**

A NOTE FROM  
BETTER BEGINNINGS  
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR  
KELLI HILBURN



**Literacy** is the focus for this month's newsletter so I want to take a moment to talk about writing.

Learning to write starts at a young age with scribbling! That's right, scribbling is a child learning about the mechanics of writing. Scribbling and other activities that require them to use their hands will prepare them for the day when they can hold a pencil.

Check out the [\*\*Making Their Mark\*\*](#) resource on the Better Beginnings website for ways you can help your child develop their fine motor skills. That will get their hands ready to hold a pencil.

Big things are happening this year! Encourage other families to sign up for the Buzz so they can stay informed, too.

Thank you for being part of our community. I can't wait to see where this year takes us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelli Hilburn".

**Kelli Hilburn**

BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR  
DIVISION OF CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

# LITERACY RESOURCES



Here are great resources for **literacy** fun this month. You can find more resources on a variety of topics in our **Family Resource Library**.

**WHAT DO YOU SEE?**  
**Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?**  
By Bill Martin, Jr.  
Illustration by Eric Carle



This classic children's book is ideal for having fun while teaching your child about color and animals. The rhythmic text inspires a playful experience. Have fun!

**By age 3:**

- Sing the words to a familiar tune like Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star.
- Pantomime to talk about the animals.
- Make animal sounds before reading the animal's response to "What do you see?"

**What do YOU see?**

- Repeat the book asking questions, such as "What animal is that? That would draw the animal's name!" (When do you usually see this animal?)

Repeating the book, asking questions and playing helps your child's memory develop.

**Extend the learning and the fun:**

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, Illustration: Eric Carle is famous for his hand-cut and layered paper collage book illustrations. Help your child make his own collage or potato print work of art. **These projects are recommended for children age three or older.**

**What your child learns:**

Creating something with your child helps him know how important he is to you. Plus, the more fun you have, the easier it is for your child to learn and remember!

In the activities that follow, there are opportunities for developing concepts of literacy, math and science.

As they learn about order and quantity, it helps them develop fine motor skills and eye coordination, awareness of size, classifying and recognizing when things are the same or different.

See the next page to let the art begin!

Get more fun book activities in *Bring Books to Life* from our Family Resource Library.

**better beginnings**  
EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST

Visit our Family Resource Library for more tips to make a reader to your home.

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

**ARBetterBeginnings.com • 501-682-8590**

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What do you see?

**MAKING THEIR MARK**  
Your Child's Journey to Writing

What begins as scribbles will one day be your child's expression of his thoughts and creativity. Here's how you can help make that happen.

**Read to your baby every day.** The spoken word is nutrition for your baby's brain development just as milk is food for her bones.

By age 1, she will have a vocabulary of about 70 words, but she may choose to use only a few.

**Lead him to letters.** Display his name in his room. Provide alphabet blocks and books. Sing the alphabet song. Point to words as you read to him. Help him make the connection between marks on paper and the real world.

**Provide writing tools.** Using crayons, pencils and markers is a step toward writing words. A flattened cardboard box or paper grocery bag makes a fine canvas.

Barely gripping a crayon gives way to holding a pencil between the thumb and index finger between ages 2 and 3.

**Show him the importance of writing through dramatic play.** Pretend the main character of this story has to write a lot. Is he a police officer, a writer, a detective, a scientist, a doctor, a teacher or a teacher?

**Model writing daily.** Children love to imitate. Let him see you write.

Around age 3, his scribbles will begin to look like letters. He may draw something and tell you what it is. First comes the drawing, then the name.

**Praise her drawing and writing efforts.** Between ages 3 and 5, she will give the picture before she draws it. She has reached a milestone! She has mastered symbolic thinking.

She understands now that the marks on paper are symbols for something else – a cat or a person. Next she'll read and write!

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Making Their Mark

**WORD play**

**School of Fish**  
Learning fun inspired by A School of Fish by Sarah Crewe



Word play is an open-ended opportunity for learning through play. What is a group of animals called? A group of chickens? Do you know? Pick your child's curiosity. Word play leads to discovery of words for collections of animals. Some group names describe the animal or it's behavior. Some words just plain play!

Preschoolers might enjoy time with you doing something as growing as researching for more group names or visit the zoo to see animal groups in person.

The more you talk about and research animals, the more you learn and animals facts parents and children learn. Awareness of animals and cultures outside of their daily lives also helps build social skills.

Children in quality child care have probably had the opportunity to learn a lot about animals. If your child is new to learning animals, there are dozens of animal books available to borrow at the library.

If you have a library or bookstore, you might want to you borrow *A School of Fish* by Sarah Crewe from a library. Toddlers will enjoy the touch and feel parts of the board book, silly illustrations and rhyming text.

**Game Pieces**

1. Make game pieces from recycled paper envelopes or any blank paper available.
2. Cut and fold like our example.
3. On the outside, write the letter the animal name starts with.
4. On the inside, write the group and animal name.

It's that easy. See the next page for twelve examples to get started.

**A Parcel of Penguins**

Visit the literacy section of our Family Resource Library for a list of great books for any age.

**better beginnings**  
EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST

See *Bring Books to Life* for more ideas to extend the fun and learning of books.

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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Word play is an open-ended opportunity for learning through play. It leads to discovery of new words, some of which are just plain silly!

Word Play

# ARPA FUNDING



## How ARPA Benefits You

Child care centers in Arkansas that were licensed on or before March 11, 2021 are eligible for grants that are funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). The impact of those grants will be felt by you and your child through:

- Improved playgrounds
- More classroom materials
- Centers reaching higher star levels
- Better quality care
- And much more!

Learn more about these grants on the Division of Child and Early Childhood Education [website](#).

### American Rescue Plan Proposal

Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

#### STABILIZATION - 286M\*

\*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.



# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



## BehaviorHelp is Here to Help

**BehaviorHelp** is a program dedicated to keeping children in preschool programs from being suspended or expelled. The consultants take a holistic approach to meet the needs of children experiencing challenging behaviors.

Partners from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and Arkansas State University Childhood Services work with providers across Arkansas to reduce suspension and expulsion.

Since launching in 2016, the BehaviorHelp team has responded to over 1,800 requests. Expulsion is prevented 97% of the time.

If your child is experiencing challenging behaviors at school, make sure your provider knows about this resource. They can request assistance through the BehaviorHelp **website**.

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 (DCECE), 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 DCECE 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*



Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education  
BehaviorHelp Support System

# PANDEMIC GUIDELINES

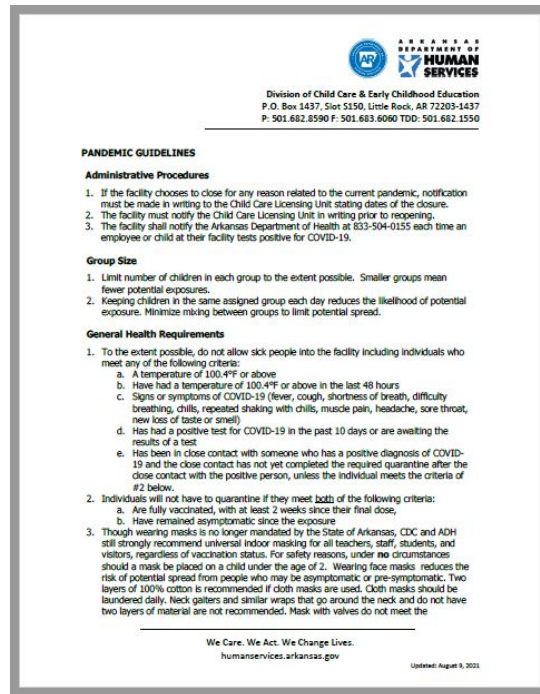


You can always find the most updated **Pandemic Guidelines** from Arkansas DHS on our website.

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.**



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

# 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.

