Provider Buzz | February 2025





## A NOTE FROM KELLI HILBURN

#### **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**

Creativity is a wonderful part of childhood. Producing art and hearing stories cultivates a child's natural curiosity while helping them take their first steps toward reading and writing. As people who work with young children, you have countless opportunities to foster creativity and curiosity for those in your care by bringing them play-based learning experiences with simple tools like books and crayons.

Looking for ideas? Check out the <u>literacy</u> resources included in this edition of the *Buzz*! As you keep reading, you'll also find <u>tools</u> to <u>reach the next star level</u>, a <u>guide</u> to child care licensing, this month's provider <u>call</u>, professional development opportunities, and the latest star approvals.

What happens in a young child's life before age five sets the foundation for the rest of their growth. By nurturing their curiosity today, you can encourage the children in your care to be lifelong learners.

Until next time,

Keei Hilburn

Kelli Hilburn BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD







Why is kindergarten readiness important? Lori Bridges from the Arkansas Department of Education Office of Early Childhood explains in the most recent episode of the Better Beginnings vlog series. Click on the video below to watch! Don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube channel so you don't miss the next episode.



# LEARNING RESOURCES



PLAY, LEARN, XPLORE





#### **Making Their Mark**

Before children write, they scribble and need to be able to hold a pencil. You can help children develop the fine motor skills they need to write with the activities in this resource. Also available in **Español**.



#### **Word Play**

Help children increase their vocabulary by talking about animals! Through reading fun books or answering their questions, you pique a child's curiosity and grow their knowledge. See how you can make learning fun with this resource.



#### **View Resource**

Make Reading For	
	with books. All these experiences are the re are some simple ways you and your child
can enjoy books together:	
With Infants:	With Toddiers and Preschoolers:
<ul> <li>Help them touch books and turn the pages. Are there things to book on the pages? Talk about what you see.</li> <li>Bring books everywhere, tires usual books in your car.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Ash your shild to point to pictures or to name things on the pages. Make it into a game, Describe something it the sixture and see if your shift can find it.</li> </ul>
purse and choller and pull them out on the bux, while woiting at a doctor's office or when standing in a line.	<ul> <li>Have him tell the story. Let him tell his own version or leave out words to well known stories so he can fill them in</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Read and play with books every day. Mais it a fun and special time. Read the same story before raps or bedtime. Nov don't have to finish the story. Stop when your halfs loss interest.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Share new words. Use the pictures in your child's books to help-explain a new word. Ask a question to make sure she understands.</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Point to interesting pictures as you need. Describe them, Explain what you see, Play peek aloon with the pictures by covering and uncovering them with your hand.</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Talk about the story. It's questions about what happened before. What is happening new and what migh happens on the new page. Which had did be shown? Whi is he doing with the hat? Where will be put it next?" Paus frequently is let out child talk.</li> </ul>
What kinds of books are best? • Picture books with simple objects or faces	What kinds of books are best?
Board or cluth books with pages that turn easily and unself tear	<ul> <li>Books on topics of interest to your child, like animals, dimessure or ballerings</li> </ul>
<ul> <li>Books with soft, rough or bumpy textures to touch and feel</li> </ul>	<ul> <li>Nursery rhymes or simple stories about everyday activities</li> </ul>
	<ul> <li>Stories with only one or two sentences per page and lots of pictures</li> </ul>
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in part official role as a delify first hackes, here increasing estimational materials are not for more information, stat as arises at <b>estimations/arring.est</b>	(The barry to which our Bernstein Library You'll find actuation and
for non-information, citit at antice of perceitanting ang	Click have to visit our Resource Library. You'll find activities and tips to help you prepare your child for life.
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An use schendure, with an active at annexistentianing at the scheme sche	Cick have to site to an immune through You'll be definition on the total presentation and the life.

#### **Make Reading Fun**

Children take their first steps toward literacy before they talk. Everyday experiences like playing with books and being read to are building blocks to strong literacy skills. Find simple ways to enjoy books with the children in your care by checking out this resource.

View Resource





LEARNING IS FUN!



Provider Tools

Ready to reach for that next star level? Find everything you need on our website to continue your journey to higher quality.

#### Learn More



#### **Guide to Child Care Licensing**

The Office of Early Childhood (OEC) has created a guide to help you identify and understand the critical areas of compliance with Minimum Licensing Requirements. Find it today on the OEC website.

Learn More



#### **Monthly Provider Call**

Tuesday, February 4, Zoom

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



#### **Conscious Discipline Trainings**

Our friends at A-State Childhood Services are hosting two Conscious Discipline trainings, starting this month. Find more details and registration links below:

#### Infant/Toddler Conscious Discipline Training

February, March, April | Fayetteville

Register Here

**Pre-K Conscious Discipline Training** February, March, April | Jonesboro

**Register Here** 



Congratulations on reaching that next star level! Share your achievement with your client-families and community using our <u>Star Kit</u>. Find it on our website today.



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

• After School Program at Lisa Fayetteville, Fayetteville

- Bayyari Elementary Pre-K, Springdale
- Bernice Young Elementary Pre-K, Springdale
- Discovery STEAM Program @ Thaden School, Bentonville
- Discovery STEAM Program Willowbrook/Brightfield Elementary, Bentonville
- Discovery STEAM @ Evening Star, Bentonville
- The After School Program at George Elementary, Springdale
- The After School Program at Harp Elementary, Springdale
- The After School Program at Lisa Academy, Springdale
- The After School Program at Monitor Elementary, Springdale
- The After School Program at Prairie Grove, Prairie Grove
- Westwood Elementary Pre-K, Springdale



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

- Discovery STEAM Program @ Centerton Gamble Elementary, Centerton
- Discovery STEAM Program @ Vaughn Elementary, Bentonville
- Discovery STEAM @ Evening Star, Bentonville
- Explorers Academy, Little Rock
- Hampton ABC, Hampton
- Lots of Love Inc DCFH, Pine Bluff
- Penny Lane Child Care Center, Rogers
- The After School Program at Bayyari Elementary, Springdale



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

- ABC Learning Academy, Pine Bluff
- Apple Tree Academy, Springdale
- Cornerstone Academy Northwest Arkansas, Siloam Springs
- Gigi's Place, Carlisle
- Home Away From Home Child Care, Jonesboro
- Janna's Little Angels, Little Rock
- Second Blessings In Home Daycare, Conway
- Stepping Stones of Jonesboro, Jonesboro



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

- Bright Beginnings Preschool, Berryville
- Connect AFC, Benton
- Giggles & Grins Preschool, Harrison
- Madilynn's Scholar Academy, Manila
- Midland Preschool, Floral
- The After School Program at Folsom Elementary, Farmington
- The After School Program at Prairie Grove, Prairie Grove

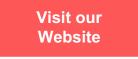
### Level Up Resource

Looking to increase your star level? Check out our Provider Tools to get started!

Visit our Website



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.







## 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.



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