



Literacy



Math



Science

Provider Buzz | February 2025



better beginnings

EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST



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 [literacy](#) resources included in this edition of the *Buzz!* As you keep reading, you'll also find [tools](#) to [reach the next star level](#), a [guide](#) to child care licensing, this month's provider [call](#), 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,

Kelli Hilburn

Kelli Hilburn
BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



WATCH NOW 

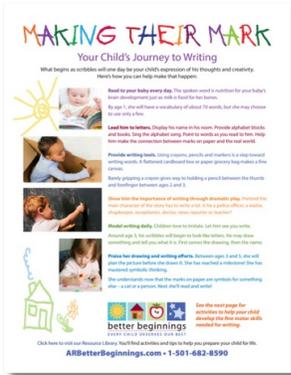
Why is kindergarten readiness important? Lori Bridges from the Arkansas Department of Education [Office of Early Childhood](#) explains in the most recent episode of the Better Beginnings vlog series. Click on the video below to watch! Don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube channel so you don't miss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



A large yellow banner with a white circular inset on the left. The inset shows a young child with curly hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt and denim overalls, sitting at a table and reading a book. Below the inset, a small orange circle contains the text "PLAY, LEARN, EXPLORE". To the right of the inset, the words "LEARNING RESOURCES" are written in large, bold, white capital letters. At the bottom of the banner, there are two smaller circular images: the left one shows two children playing with colorful blocks, and the right one shows a child playing with a colorful toy.

PLAY,
LEARN,
EXPLORE

LEARNING RESOURCES



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](#).

[View Resource](#)



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 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!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



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](#)



BETTER BEGINNINGS
STAR APPROVALS

QUALITY CARE!

Congratulations on reaching that next star level! Share your achievement with your client-families and community using our [Star Kit](#). 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](#)



WHAT IS BETTER BEGINNINGS?

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.

[Visit our
Website](#)





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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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