









### Happy New Year!

I hope you enjoyed making sweet memories with your family over the holidays. Now that the holiday season is winding down, it's a good time to think about your child's learning journey. A great place to focus is on <u>kindergarten readiness</u>. Children who begin

kindergarten with a solid foundation are more likely to thrive as they move through school. This is where Better Beginnings can help. We have resources with play-based learning activities so you can help your child get kindergarten-ready at home. Explore the kindergarten readiness section on our <u>Family Resource Library</u> for more information.

As you keep reading, check out the <u>science</u> resources included in this month's edition of the *Buzz*. These play-based activities can help your child understand the world around them. As you keep reading, you'll also see details about a new school readiness <u>program</u>, this month's kindergarten readiness tip, information on how to nominate an early care and education provider for a special award, and ways to <u>prevent</u> illnesses this winter.

You are your child's first teacher and we're honored to be your partner as you work to help your child <u>reach for the stars</u> at home.

Until next time,

Kuli Hilburn

#### Kelli Hilburn

BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD







Share experiments designed for children with your family. A jar, a few cooking ingredients, (and you!) create an instant "wow!" And, because your child is having fun, they're learning.







### Activities for a Wonderful Winter

Outdoor play is a year-round activity. Check out this resource for safe, fun winter activities that can help keep your child active. View the resource in Español here.

**View Resource** 



# Oil & Water Experiments

It's not just a saying. Oil and water really don't mix. Show children why (hint – it's the molecules) with the activities in this resource. View the resource in Español here.

**View Resource** 



# Sticks & Stones Creativity

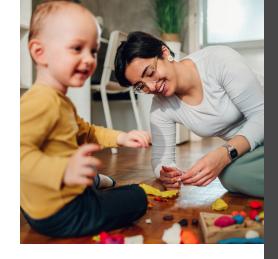
Nature is a great classroom. Explore the outdoors with your child and help them safely gather leaves, twigs, and more so they can begin to better understand the world around them. View the resource in Español here.

**View Resource** 



The Office of Early Childhood launched the new School Readiness System in December to replace Kid Care. The new system replaces outdated technology with a more user-friendly option for families to apply and receive support for child care. Check out the new site to learn more.

**Learn More** 





#### Kindergarten Readiness Tip

A child ready for kindergarten can express basic emotions, is curious, and can respond to others' distress sympathetically. You can help your child grow in these areas at home using the tips found in the Getting Ready for Kindergarten calendar.

Download it from our website today.

**View Calendar** 

### <u>Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood</u> Professional

The Office of Early Childhood is accepting nominations for this year's Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional award. If you know an early care and education provider who goes above and beyond for the children in their care, nominate them today! You have until Friday, January 31 so don't wait.



**Make A Nomination** 



### **Cooking Up Healthy Lifestyles Family Café**

Thursday, January 16, Zoom

Healthy eating habits support the whole child and create positive food experiences for them. Join our friends at Curricula Concepts over Zoom to learn more.

Register Here



### **Illness Prevention Tips**

The cold, flu, and other viruses tend to spread rapidly during the winter because everyone spends more time indoors. Below are three tips that you can implement at home to reduce the spread of illness:

- Wash hands regularly: Washing hands is the best way to prevent the spread of germs. Check out this <u>video</u> for proper handwashing techniques.
- Keep your child at home: If your child is sick, keep them at home. This will
  protect the other children they come into contact with from contracting any
  illnesses.
- Cover nose and mouth: Teach your child to cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing. It's highly recommended they sneeze or cough into a

sleeve.

With these simple steps, you can help minimize the impact those winter diseases can have on your family. Learn more from the American Academy of Pediatrics.



Better Beginnings means better opportunities. Investing in quality care and education for all Arkansas children creates better opportunities for our children, families, workforce, and communities.

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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.



Better Beginnings | OEC Attn: Better Beginnings PO Box 1437, Slot S150 | Little Rock, AR 72203-1437 US

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