



Literacy



Math



Science

Family Buzz | January 2025



**better beginnings**

EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST



**A NOTE FROM  
KELLI HILBURN**  
**PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR**

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 [kindergarten readiness](#). 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 [Family Resource Library](#) for more information.

As you keep reading, check out the [science](#) 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 [program](#), this month's kindergarten readiness tip, information on how to nominate an early care and education provider for a special award, and ways to [prevent](#) 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 [reach for the stars](#) at home.

Until next time,



**Kelli Hilburn**  
BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR  
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



JOIN US IN OUR GOAL TO  
**REACH FOR THE STARS**  
CLICK TO LEARN MORE



**VIDEO  
CORNER**

**WATCH NOW** 

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.



**SCIENCE FUN!**

**SCIENCE RESOURCES**

The banner is a solid green horizontal strip. On the left, a large white circle contains a photograph of a young girl with long blonde hair and pink glasses, smiling as she stretches a piece of pink slime. Below this circle is a smaller dark green circle with the text "SCIENCE FUN!" in white. To the right of the girl's circle is a small white icon of a laboratory setup with a flask, a beaker, and a test tube. Further right, the words "SCIENCE RESOURCES" are written in large, bold, white capital letters. At the bottom of the banner, there are two smaller white circles with dark green borders. The left one shows a child and an adult working with small plants in pots. The right one shows a man and a young girl sitting at a table, looking at something together.

**5 Great Activities for a Wonderful Winter**  
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BETTER BEGINNINGS

Children need plenty of play every day, even in winter. Children's play is a great way to explore their world and learn about things. Here are five fun winter activities that they can learn to enjoy.

**1. Go on a scavenger hunt.**  
A scavenger hunt is a fun way to explore the outdoors. You can make a list of things to look for in your yard or neighborhood. The things you look for can be as simple as snow or as complex as a certain bird or plant.

**2. Make bird feeders.**  
You can make a bird feeder by using a plastic bottle and some string. You can also use a pine cone and string to make a bird feeder.

**3. Fun with ice.**  
Ice is a great way to explore the outdoors. You can make ice cubes and use them to make snow globes or ice sculptures.

**4. Science with ice.**  
Ice is a great way to explore the outdoors. You can make ice cubes and use them to make snow globes or ice sculptures.

**5. Play games.**  
There are many winter games that you can play. You can make snow globes or ice sculptures.

Click here to visit our Resource Library. You'll find activities and tips to help you prepare your child for life.  
[ARBetterBeginnings.com](http://ARBetterBeginnings.com) • 1-501-682-8590

**OIL AND WATER**  
EXPERIMENTS  
better beginnings  
BETTER BEGINNINGS

**Some Liquids Are So Dense**

Why don't oil and water mix? The answer begins with "molecules." Molecules are the tiny particles that make up everything. Some molecules are made of a lot of molecules. They are heavier, or more dense, than others. That's why oil and water don't mix. The oil molecules are heavier than the water molecules. The oil molecules are made of a lot of molecules. They are heavier, or more dense, than others. That's why oil and water don't mix.

**See what that looks like in this easy experiment.**

**Ingredients:**  
- Oil  
- Water  
- Food coloring  
- Dish soap

**Step 1:** Fill a glass about two-thirds full with tap water.  
**Step 2:** Add a few drops of food coloring to the water.  
**Step 3:** Add oil to the glass. Watch the oil float on top of the water. Watch the oil float on top of the water. Watch the oil float on top of the water.

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**Sticks and Stones Creativity**  
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BETTER BEGINNINGS

There is a world of natural resources outdoors. Playing with these resources - from the woods, yard or your own backyard - helps children develop a love of nature. These children explore the beauty of nature. They become curious about it. We can't always take it to the woods. In appropriate weather, teach your children to use nature. That won't mean if you bring home a few small plants.

Sort out the different elements and talk about what they are.

- What are their names?
- What are they made of?
- Where did they come from?
- Do they grow on trees?
- Do they come from the water, a creek or forest?
- Do they need water? Light? Soil? Darkness?

Parents may have to do a little research. Just teach a lesson activity to share.

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## 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](#)



**LEARNING IS FUN!**

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



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](#)



### Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood 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](#)





# UPCOMING EVENTS

## 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](#)



## HEALTH AND SAFETY



### 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 [video](#) 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.

# WHAT IS BETTER BEGINNINGS?



**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.

Visit Our Website



**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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