



Literacy



Math



Science



A NOTE FROM KELLI HILBURN

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

We're entering the hottest time of the year, so let's have a quick refresher on sun safety during outdoor play. You're already doing a great job providing a safe learning environment for the children in your care. The following [sun safety](#) tips can help you keep that going and are great to share with your client-families:

1. Apply sunscreen before going outside.
2. Keep infants younger than six months in the shade and out of direct sunlight.
3. Wide-brimmed hats offer the best protection for faces and necks.
4. Keep children hydrated.
5. Enjoy outdoor time early in the morning when it's cooler.

Talking about safety is a great way to involve and partner with your client-families. Another way you can do that is by sharing the resources included in this month's edition of *The Buzz*. In addition to the [science](#) experiments families can do at home, we updated our [Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist](#) to make it more user-friendly. As you keep reading, you'll also see information about the [CLASS](#) pilot, upcoming events, and the latest round of star approvals.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the safety and well-being of the children in your care. We're proud to be your partner as you [reach for the stars](#) of quality.

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**

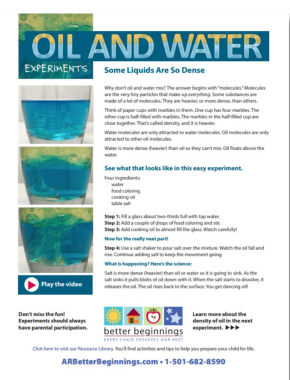
WATCH NOW

Watch the video below for steps to a science experiment with fun colors and a great teaching opportunity.



LEARNING RESOURCES

PLAY,
LEARN,
EXPLORE



Oil & Water Experiments

Don't just tell children that oil and water don't mix. Show them with the fun experiments in this resource.



Sunflower in a Jar

Are the children in your classroom asking how things grow? This is the perfect resource to provide a hands-on learning experience.



Sensory Play

Infants and toddlers explore the world through touch and taste. Use this resource as a guide to make exploration easy and safe.

[View Resource](#)

[View Resource](#)

[View Resource](#)



LEARNING IS FUN!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



UPDATED Kindergarten Readiness Indicator Checklist

We updated our Kindergarten Readiness Indicator checklist, reorganizing it so families can know what to expect and prioritize as their child enters kindergarten. Check it out today and share it with your client-families.

[Learn More](#)



CLASS Pilot

In case you missed it, the Arkansas Department of Education is piloting CLASS, a new classroom assessment tool that focuses on teacher-child interactions, as called for in the LEARNS Act. Early care and education providers in counties covered by a local lead will participate. Those providers will be invited to provide feedback on the tool and how it can work in Arkansas classrooms.

Have more questions? Check out this Frequently Asked Questions document for your answers.

[View FAQs](#)

Academic Approval

Starting this summer, all licensed early care and education facilities receiving public funds must participate in the new Academic Approval process. Upon completing this process, facilities agree to participate with their local lead organization and to receive a Better Beginnings star rating.

The required form and FAQ will be available soon.



July Office of Early Childhood Town Halls

Join Tonya Williams and other Office of Early Childhood (OEC) officials at a town hall near you! Hear about the LEARNS Act, Local Leads, and other updates from the early care and education field. See the details for the July town halls below:

- **Batesville:** Wednesday, July 17, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. | University of Arkansas Community College at Batesville Independence Hall
- **Little Rock:** Thursday, July 18, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. | Little Rock Chamber of Commerce

Monthly Provider Call August 6, 12 p.m.

Zoom with OEC officials and other providers to hear the latest updates in the early care and education field. Don't worry if you can't make it. All the calls are recorded and available to watch later.

[Learn More](#)

52nd Annual A-State Early Childhood Education Conference August 6-8 | Jonesboro

Our friends at A-State Childhood Services are hosting their annual conference, where attendees will explore the world of childhood. Dr. Anthony "Mister B" Broughton is this year's keynote speaker. We'll be there! Will you? Register today!

[Register](#)



BETTER BEGINNINGS
STAR APPROVALS

QUALITY CARE!

Better Beginnings is focused on making **quality early care and education more accessible to families of young children across Arkansas**. More high-quality access means more kids are better prepared for kindergarten. To meet this objective, Better Beginnings encourages providers to improve their facility's star ratings. Below are the most recent facilities to advance their quality standards.



The following programs are now **6-star** Better Beginnings providers:

- Head of the Class Childcare and Learning Ctr. LLC, Monticello
- Fairview Head Start/ Early Head Start Center, El Dorado
- Valley View ABC Pre School, Jonesboro



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

- Charleston First Step, Charleston
- Spradling Elementary Preschool, Fort Smith
- Star City ABC, Star City
- Tonya's Tots, Mount Vernon
- The After School Program at Elmdale Elementary, Springdale
- The After School Program at Knapp Elementary, Springdale
- The After School Program at Sonora Elementary, Springdale
- The After School Program at Westwood Elementary, Springdale



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

- The After School Program at Hellstern Middle School, Springdale
- Adkins Pre K Center, Jacksonville
- Cleveland County School District Head Start Woodlawn Center, Rison
- HomeLife Academy, Mena
- Kipp Delta Pre-K, West Helena
- The Learning Center of North Arkansas, Alpena
- Nana's Learning Center, Little Rock
- Van Cove ABC Preschool, Vandervoort



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

- ACU Arkansas Children's University, Harrison
- Dream Kids Academy, Plumerville
- Happy Hearts Learning Academy, El Dorado
- HomeLife Academy, Mena
- King's Kids Academy, Mabelvale
- Precious Memories Learning Academy, Inc., Pine Bluff
- Precious Moments Learning Center, Cabot



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

- The Learning Center of North Arkansas, Jasper Campus, Jasper
- Friendship Family Daycare, Hot Springs
- Legacy Academy, Lockesburg



There are no newly approved **1-star** Better Beginnings providers to share.

Star Level Kit

Congratulations on reaching that next star level! Share your accomplishment with your client families and community with the resources located in the [Star Level Kit](#) on the Better Beginnings website.

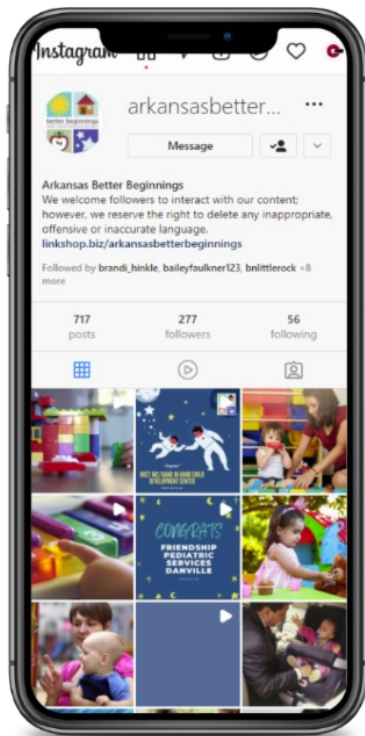
Visit our
Website

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.

Learn More



FOLLOW US FOR MORE RESOURCES



better beginnings
EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST

Better Beginnings is Arkansas' tiered quality rating and 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 Education and Office of Early Childhood.



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