



Literacy



Math



Science

Provider Buzz | March 2025



better beginnings

EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST



**A NOTE FROM
KELLI HILBURN**

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

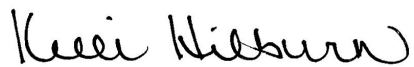
I'm continually blown away by the dedication and passion you have in your work with children and your drive in [reaching for the stars](#) to improve the quality of your care. You show up every day and bring play-based learning experiences to your classroom to get the children in your classroom ready for kindergarten and life. Your work also supports the families of Arkansas and is key to thriving communities. Better Beginnings is proud to be

your partner.

To that end, we have exciting things to share in this month's edition of the *Buzz*. First, you'll find three [math](#) resources with fun activities that can help children learn important math skills to get kindergarten-ready. You'll also find information about the [Arkansas Career Pathways Institute](#), this year's Arkansas Children's Week theme, and the latest round of star approvals.

As Arkansas's workforce behind the workforce, you are invaluable to our communities and families. I hope you find joy in your work and know that what you do is greatly appreciated.

Until next time,



Kelli Hilburn
BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



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



**VIDEO
CORNER**

WATCH NOW 

Enhancing quality leads to better outcomes for children and families. One way you can continually improve is to reach for the next star level! Watch this video to hear from some of your fellow providers why continuous quality improvement is important. Then, head to the [Provider Tools](#) section on the Better Beginnings website to get started.



Not just where's the financial aspect to it, where's the bonus aspect to it?

LEARNING RESOURCES



PLAY,
LEARN,
EXPLORE



Sorting Sacks and Similar Stuff



Sorting shapes and colors helps children learn to organize by "name" and "color." Organizing by color helps to learn to identify colors. When kids understand how objects in their own world relate to each other, they can learn to identify colors and shapes.

Sorting can be a fun activity to do together. Use sacks, baskets or bins with colorful paper to indicate how to sort items. Put the blue toys in the sack with the blue circle. Using the words helps your child learn why they are sorting.

When you have sorting activities, your child learns:

- colors, numbers and shapes
- new words while you sort toys and talk about them
- hand-eye coordination
- fine motor skills

problem solving when deciding which container to use

As you play, ask your child: How many toys do you have? How many do you have in the sack? How many do you have left?

Learn more about the Department of Public Health's **better beginnings** program. Click here to visit our Resource Library. You'll find activities and tips to help you prepare your child for life.

ARBetterBeginnings.com • 1-901-682-8590

MAKE MATH

Help your toddler learn math with these fun hands-on activities.



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Paper Playground for Learning Fun

Math - Creative Thinking - New Words



Using your imagination, you can turn your child's play into a learning experience. You can create your own paper playground. You can use cardboard boxes, paper, and other materials to create a fun and educational play area.

These activities are not about learning. They are about playing. They are about having fun. They are about learning through play.

Get details on how to make your own paper playground on the next page.

Learn more about the Department of Public Health's **better beginnings** program. Click here to visit our Resource Library. You'll find activities and tips to help you prepare your child for life.

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Sorting Sacks & Similar Stuff

Sorting activities help children learn colors and shapes while developing fine motor and problem-solving skills. See how you can bring these activities into your classroom with this resource. Available in [Español](#).

[View Resource](#)

Make it Math

Help children learn numbers and develop their fine motor skills with the play-based activities in this resource. With this knowledge, they can start kindergarten with confidence. Available in [Español](#).

[View Resource](#)

Paper Playground

Children learn through play. On days when being outside isn't possible, build an indoor playground! Check out this resource for instructions to turn your classroom into a haven of fun. Available in [Español](#).

[View Resource](#)



LEARNING IS FUN!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



LAST CALL for Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional Nominations

Nominate a colleague to be named the next Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional! This award honors an early care and education provider whose dedication to the children and families in Arkansas is unparalleled. Find the application on the Better Beginnings website today.

[Learn More](#)



School Readiness Assistance Wait List

Due to increased participation and high demand for the School Readiness Assistance (SRA) program, a waitlist has been implemented for eligible families who apply after February 15, 2025. This does NOT affect families currently participating in the program if redetermination documentation is received on time. Learn more about this announcement on the Arkansas Department of Education website.

[Learn More](#)



Arkansas Pathways Initiative

Eligible parents of children under 21 years old looking to further their job training or education can find support from the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative (CPI). Participants receive monetary assistance for tuition and other expenses incurred when pursuing higher education. Eighty-one percent of those who complete the program find employment within six months. Learn more about eligibility requirements and services available on the CPI website.

[Learn More](#)





[Visit our Website](#)

Arkansas Children's Week

April 5-11, 2025

Our friends at A-State Childhood Services have announced the theme for Arkansas Children's Week 2025 – Fall in Love with Reading! Watch their [social media](#) for training dates to learn how you can share books and stories with children of all ages. Before you go, share with them how *you* fell in love with reading through the link below!

[Register Here](#)

Blue at the Zoo

Thursday, April 3, Little Rock

In honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month, you're invited to the "Blue at the Zoo" event at the Little Rock Zoo on Thursday, April 3 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. This free event is hosted by the Arkansas Division of Children and Family Services and focuses on strengthening families and preventing child abuse. As a participant, you'll have the opportunity to set up a table and share information about the services you provide with all who attend. If your organization would like to participate, RSVP to Brenda.Suarez@dhs.arkansas.gov by Friday, March 14.



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 program is now **6-star** Better Beginnings provider:

- Tuckerman ABC Preschool, Tuckerman



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

- 1st Presbyterian Child Care Center
- Character Kids, Bentonville



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

- ARCHILD INC, Little Rock
- Childcare Network #205, Little Rock
- Childcare Network #301, Conway
- Excellence Learning Academy, Jacksonville
- Janna's Little Angels #2, Little Rock
- Jumpstart Learning Center, Hope
- Loyd's Little Land @ The Pre-School Inc, Rogers
- Miracle Kids Success Academy of Paragould, Paragould
- The Stay & Play, Horatio



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

- Kozy Korner Childcare, Marked Tree
- Nu Beginnings, Little Rock



The following programs are now **1-star** Better Beginnings providers:

- Kingdom Castle Academy, El Dorado
- LITTLE SAINTS CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER, Searcy

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



**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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