



Literacy



Math



Science



**better beginnings**  
EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST



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

You did it! You've almost completed another school year! I'm so proud of you and your passion for the children and families of Arkansas. Thank you doesn't begin to cover how much your dedication is appreciated. I hope you find time to practice self-care this month and over the summer for your physical, mental, and emotional health. You have earned it!

After some well-deserved rest and relaxation, let's keep the learning going with the math activities found in this month's newsletter. These fun, play-based activities teach children important math concepts that lay a solid foundation for future educational success. We also have information on star levels four, five, and six, and the winner of this year's Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional!

I encourage you to keep reading for the star approvals at the end of this newsletter. It's a long list, with many of your colleagues already beginning their journey to **reach** the highest star level. It's exciting to see and I hope more of you will join them.

The work you do is amazing. I'm so proud to partner alongside each and every one of you to bring high-quality child care to Arkansas. Keep up the good work!

Until next time,

*Kelli Hilburn*

**Kelli Hilburn**  
BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR  
DIVISION OF CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



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





## WANT TO BE FEATURED ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA?

[LEARN MORE](#)

Send us photos of your children's artwork for a chance to be featured on our social media channels for International Children's Day. Please do not submit photos that have coloring sheets or children. You can submit your photos to us by texting them to (501) 258-0495. Submit your photos by **May 19th!**



The 2023 Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professionals are **Shalynn Lane** and **Shenitta Shephard!** Congratulations on being recognized by your colleagues for your passion and dedication to the children and families of Arkansas.

Shalynn Lane (middle) is the owner of Mrs. Sha's Preschool in Ash Flat, where she has served her community for more than 20 years. In that time, she has touched over 500 families and 900 children through her family child care home. Kelli Hilburn (left) and Lisa Busch (right) from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education presented her with her award during Arkansas Children's Week in April.



Shenitta Shephard is the education coordinator at UAMS Head Start in Little Rock, where she works with children ages birth to five. She began her career at the program as a volunteer, at which point she learned she wanted to be part of something great. Kelli Hilburn (left) and Paige Cox (right) from the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education presented her with her award during Arkansas Children's Week in April.

Learn more about these providers and the award on the Arkansas DHS website.

[Learn More](#)



[WATCH NOW](#)

Math isn't just adding and subtracting and counting. It's shapes, too. Grab some play dough and use the [Make it Math](#) resource as your guide to bring all of these concepts to life. Watch the video below for more.

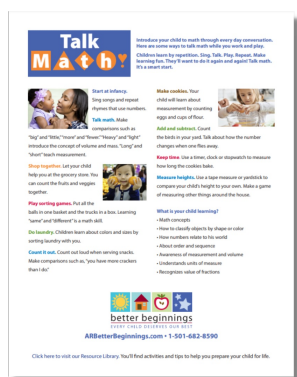


**MAKE IT  
MATH**



**PLAY,  
LEARN,  
EXPLORE**

# LEARNING RESOURCES



**Talk Math**

Children learn best through repetition. So, bring math to them by repeatedly singing, talking, and playing. Check out this resource for ideas.

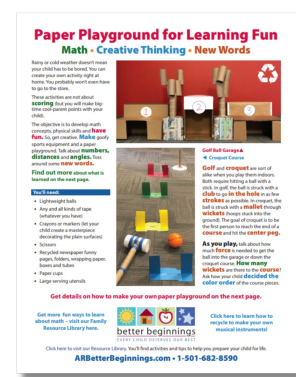
[View Resource](#)



**Make it Math**

Use recycled cardboard from food or shipping boxes, crayons, and play dough to give meaning to math. Use this resource as a guide for creating shapes and numbers and talking to children about them.

[View Resource](#)



**Paper Playground**

This resource is full of ways to use common household items to build something fun, like a golf course. While building and playing, children will develop math concepts and physical skills while having fun.

[View Resource](#)



LEARNING IS FUN!

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



## Star Level Information

Have you heard? We have new star levels! Find the details for reaching these new levels on our website.

[Check it out!](#)



## AR Resource Connections

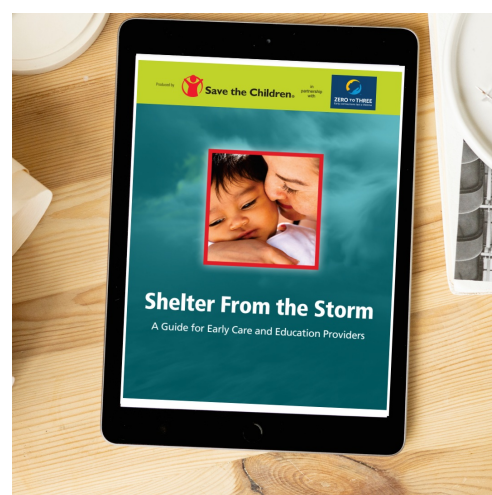
AR Resource Connections is a one-stop location for early childhood, designed to save providers time, reduce costs, and improve quality! Providers can access over 2,500 resources that include handbooks, policies, and practical tools to help with budgeting, best practices, human resources, emergency preparedness, and more.

[Access the Resources](#)

## Disaster Response for Early Childhood Educators

Zero to Three and Save the Children created a resource to help guide early childhood educators guide young children through the emotions following a disaster. Find it today on the Zero to Three website.

[View the Guide](#)



## Arkansas Children's Week Dinner

The Hot Springs Early Childhood Association hosted a dinner with providers to celebrate Arkansas Children's Week. Ann Patterson (pictured) from Teaming for Early Childhood Inclusion spoke at the event.



# UPCOMING EVENTS

## Provider Call

Don't miss your chance to "Zoom" with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. Join the informational provider call on Tuesday, May 9.

[Learn More](#)



Better Beginnings is focused on making **quality child care 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:

- Bentonville Head Start, Bentonville
- Creative Kids Child Care, Jacksonville
- Dawson Co-op/ Poyen ABC, Poyen
- Dawson Co-op/Benton ABC, Benton
- Dawson Education Cooperative & Lake Hamilton School District ABC, Percy
- Harrisburg Play School - Infant and Toddler Center, Harrisburg
- Lisa Wood DCFH, Prairie Grove
- Magness Creek Elementary, Cabot
- Magnet Cove Head Start, Malvern
- Rivercrest Pre-K, Wilson
- Second Presbyterian Preschool, Little Rock
- Shannon Hills Headstart, Alexander
- UCA Child Study Center, Conway
- Westside Pre-School, Cabot



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

- Batesville Early East Head Start, Batesville
- Beard Elementary Preschool, Fort Smith
- Carnall Elementary Preschool, Fort Smith
- Clinton ABC for School Success Program, Clinton

- Drew Central ABC Pre-Kindergarten, Monticello
- Dumas Preschool, Dumas
- Malvern/ Dawson Co-op ABC, Malvern
- Morrilton Primary ABC, Morrilton
- Mrs. Krystal's Preschool, Highland
- O.U.R Bergman, Harrison
- Oak Grove Elementary School, North Little Rock
- Omaha Preschool, Omaha
- Open Arms Learning Center, Mountain Home
- Ouachita Child Enrichment ABC, Camden
- Partee Preschool, Brinkley
- Wynne Community Enlightenment Academy II, Wynne



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

- Adventure Club at Thomas Jefferson Elementary, Bentonville
- Ashdown ABC Preschool, Ashdown
- Blytheville Preschool Center, Blytheville
- Bryant Pre-School Bryant Elem, Bryant
- Building Bridges at BHS, Bentonville
- Building Bridges Pre-K, Bentonville
- Cabot Public Schools Pre-K, Cabot
- CAPCA Head Start - Conway Center, Conway
- Centerpoint Arkansas Better Chance, Amity
- Cleveland County School District, Kingsland
- Crossett Pre-K, Crossett
- Danville ARVAC Head Start, Danville
- Dawson Co-op/ Magnet Cove ABC, Malvern
- Dawson Co-op/Benton Harmony Grove ABC, Benton
- Dawson Cooperative & Kirby School District, Kirby
- Dawson/ Main Street Visual and Performing Arts ABC, Hot Springs
- Euper Lane Elementary Preschool, Fort Smith
- Ferncliff Camp and Conference Center Summer Program, Little Rock
- Foreman Preschool, Foreman
- Greene County Tech Preschool, Paragould
- Hampton Head Start Center, Hampton
- Jonesboro Public School Pre-K Program, Jonesboro
- Kensett Elementary ABC Preschool, Kensett
- Lakeside Early Intervention, Hot Springs
- Magazine Opportunities Program, Magazine
- Mountain Springs Elementary Pre K, Cabot
- Mountainburg Pre-K Program, Mountainburg
- Mt Ida Preschool, Mount Ida
- Nettleton Pre K Fox Meadow, Jonesboro
- Oakwood Preschool, Pine Bluff
- Orr Elementary Preschool, Fort Smith
- Our Kids at Yellville, Yellville
- Park Elementary Preschool, Fort Smith
- Play School Day Care Center Harrisburg, Harrisburg
- Prairie Grove Elementary Pre-K, Prairie Grove
- Pre-K Baker Elementary School, Little Rock
- Rogers Activity Center, Rogers
- Rogers Public Schools Pre-K Center, Rogers
- Save the Children Head Start Patterson, Patterson
- Smackover Preschool, Norphlet
- Southwest Arkansas Community Development Corporation, Magnolia
- Stephanie Grandy's Daycare, Bearden
- Sulphur Rock Head Start, Sulphur Rock
- Sunnymede Elementary Preschool, Fort Smith



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

- Jim D. Rollins Elementary Pre-K, Springdale
- Ms. Carrie's Day School, Little Rock
- Treehouse Children's Learning Center, North Little Rock

## TWO STAR PROVIDERS

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

- Dardanelle Head Start, Dardanelle
- Paragould Tiny Blessings of Arkansas, Paragould
- Kare-A-Lot Learning Academy, Little Rock
- Christ the King Pre-Kindergarten, Little Rock
- Imagination Station Learning Center, Pocahontas
- Mountain Home Public School, Mountain Home
- Youth Institute of College Station, College Station
- Roberts Elementary Care Program, Little Rock
- Pulaski Heights Elementary Care Program, Little Rock
- Care Otter Creek Elementary, Little Rock
- McDermott Care, Little Rock

## ONE STAR PROVIDERS

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

- North Hills Children's House, Van Buren
- Lilypad Preschool Academy Inc., Pine Bluff
- Little Sunshine's Playhouse, Rogers
- Jack and Jill Childcare, Fort Smith

### Level Up Resource

Looking to increase your star level? Check out our [Provider Tools](#) to get started!

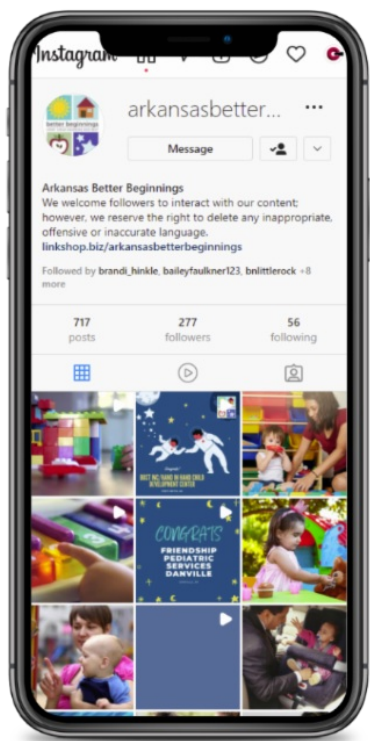
[Visit our Website](#)

## WHAT IS BETTER BEGINNINGS?

**Better Beginnings means better opportunities.** Investing in quality child care 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 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 Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.



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