



Literacy



Math



Science



**better beginnings**  
EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST



## A NOTE FROM KELLI HILBURN

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

We kicked 2024 off with a call to focus on increasing access to high-quality care. You met the challenge head-on by reaching for those star levels and pursuing professional development that will help you serve the children in your care well. I've seen your continued commitment to the children and families in this state firsthand. Your passion for providing the best care possible is inspirational. That's why I'm always excited to highlight your work, especially this month for [Provider Appreciation Day](#). You are the workforce behind the workforce.

Your work never stops and we're here to help you succeed. In this edition of *The Buzz*, we feature the [literacy](#) resource series Raising a Reader. This is a great series to share with your client-families. Keep reading beyond that to see information about T.E.A.C.H. scholarships, child development milestone [guides](#) to help in your work with children, and information about [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#).

Thank you for all you do for the children and families in our state. If there's anything the Better Beginnings team can do to help you reach the next star level, contact us today and keep [reaching for those stars!](#)

Until next time,

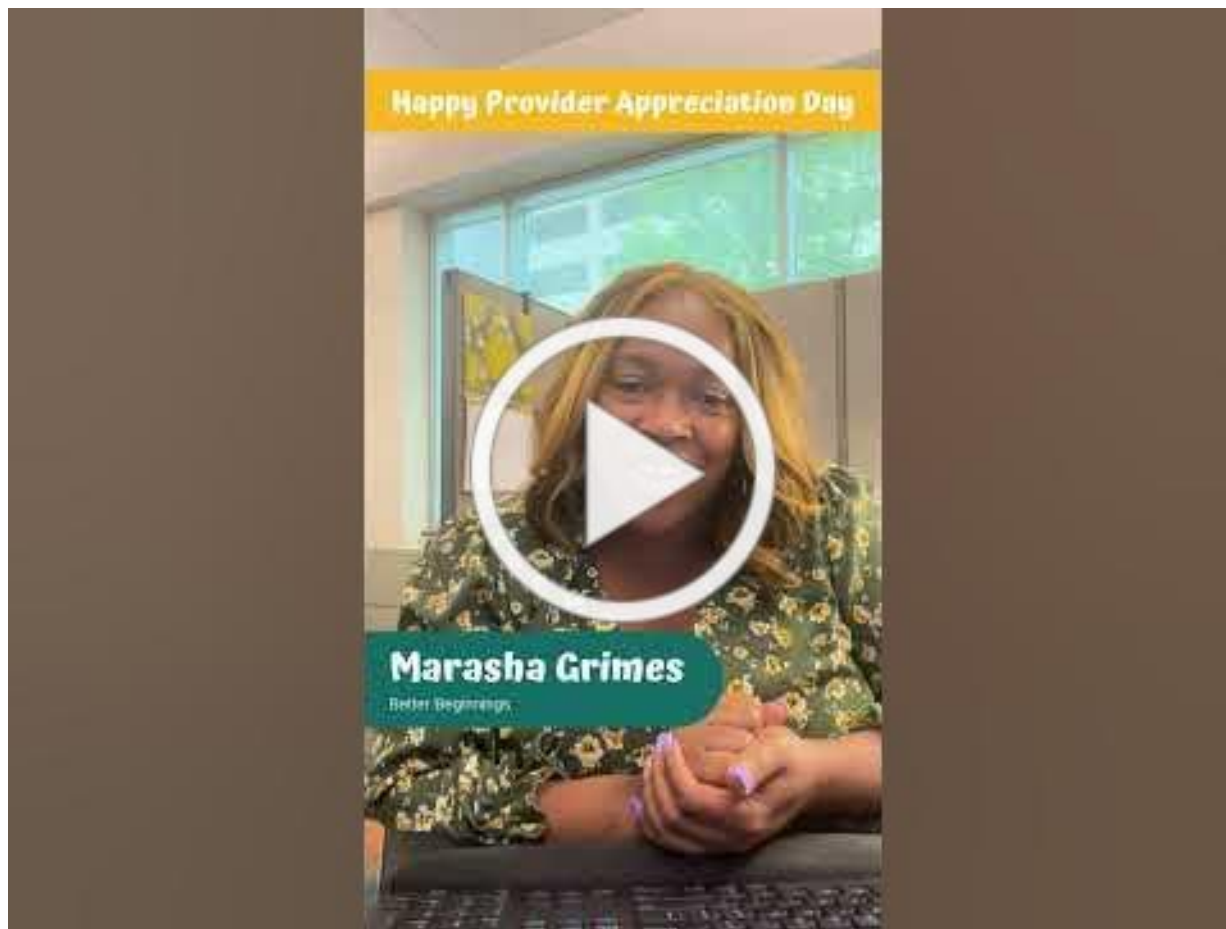
**Kelli Hilburn**  
BETTER BEGINNINGS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR  
OFFICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD



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



Better Beginnings and Office of Early Childhood staff appreciate all that you do for the children of this state. Watch the video below to see their gratitude first hand. Stay tuned to our social media on May 10th to see more of their messages!




# LEARNING RESOURCES

PLAY, LEARN, EXPLORE



## Raising a Reader: Baby's First Year

Babies will change how they interact with books as they develop. This resource provides great tips on how to use books to develop a baby's language capabilities.

[View Resource](#)



## Raising a Reader: Toddlers (1-2 Years)

Soft vinyl and board books are great for toddlers who need tough books to explore and play with. Check out this resource to see how books are great for teaching and starting conversations.



## Raising a Reader: Preschool (3-4 Years)

Reading to children daily is recommended for any age, especially at 3 and 4. Reading will help to expand a child's vocabulary and knowledge. Check out this resource for ways to help preschoolers learn new words and concepts.



LEARNING  
IS FUN!

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



### T.E.A.C.H Applications Open

T.E.A.C.H. is accepting applications for the fall 2024 semester! If you are interested in pursuing a degree or other credential in early childhood education, a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship can help reduce your financial burden. The deadline to apply is July 1, 2024.

[Learn More](#)

### Developmental Milestone Resources

Knowing the stages of development is necessary when working in early childhood. The CDC offers free resources you can use in your work with children to catch missed milestones early and ensure the children in your care get their needs met.

[Learn More](#)

### Dolly Parton's Imagination Library



Children ages birth to five in all 75 Arkansas counties are eligible to receive a free book in the mail each month. Share with your client-families so they can get their child signed up today!

[Learn More](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Provider Call**  
**May 7, 12 p.m.**

Zoom with representatives from the Office of Early Childhood for the monthly provider informational call. You'll get the latest news and information in the Arkansas early childhood education field. Find the Zoom link and past call recordings on the OEC website.

Register



Congratulations to these providers! It's exciting to see your commitment to quality on display as you [reach for the stars](#). Find everything you need to keep reaching on the Better Beginnings [website](#).



The following program is now a **6-star** Better Beginnings provider:

- Parkers Chapel ABC Preschool, El Dorado



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

- ASU ABC Wynne Odell McCallum Center, Wynne
- Barling Elementary Preschool, Barling
- Fairview Elementary Preschool, Fort Smith
- Hermitage Pre-K Center, Hermitage
- Mainstreet Kids, Shirley
- Pre-K Lawson Elementary, Little Rock



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

- ASU ABC, Hughes
- Bigelow ABC Preschool, Bigelow
- Hazen Pre-K, Hazen
- Pea Ridge Pre-K, Pea Ridge
- Perryville Pre-K, Perryville
- Woods Elementary Preschool, Fort Smith
- Yoyo's Butterfly Babies, Booneville

## THREE-STAR PROVIDERS

The following program is now a **3-star** Better Beginnings provider:

- That After School Place, Little Rock

## TWO-STAR PROVIDERS

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

- From Caterpillar to Butterflies Christian Daycare, Praire Grove
- Stephanie's Little Teacups, Brinkley

## ONE-STAR PROVIDERS

There are no new **1-star** Better Beginnings providers.

### Level Up Resource

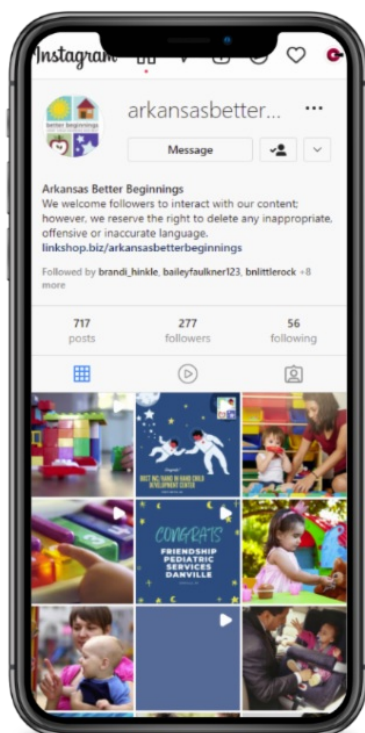
Looking to increase your star level? Check out our [Provider Tools](#) to get started!

[Learn More](#)

# 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' 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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