



Literacy



Math



Science

Provider Buzz | May 2025



better beginnings

EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST



**A NOTE FROM
KELLI HILBURN**

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR

Happy Provider Appreciation Day! I know it's early, but I'm excited to celebrate you and all you do for Arkansas's children and families. Your commitment to high-quality care is outstanding and on full display in the star approvals at the end of this newsletter. Better Beginnings is proud to work with you and to continue expanding access to high-quality early care and education across the state.


The quality of your care is most evident in the positive way you interact with children. The resources included in this month's *Buzz* can help you on your continued journey to high-quality care:

- [Literacy](#) activities that encourage conversations and help create learning opportunities
- This month's [provider call](#)
- My takeaways from last month's [InterAct CLASS Summit](#)

As you keep reading, you'll also find details about [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#) to share with your client-families so they can build a library at home for FREE.

You are the workforce behind the workforce. Everything you do helps Arkansas communities and families thrive. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to reaching for the stars.

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 

Hear from your colleagues why they chose to become a Better Beginnings provider. Then, check out our [Provider Tools](#) to see how you can join them.



LEARNING RESOURCES

PLAY,
LEARN,
EXPLORE

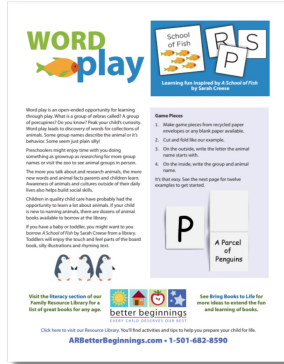




9 Ways to Boost Baby Language Development

Children are born learning. Check out this resource for ways you can help the babies in your care develop language faster.

[View Resource](#)

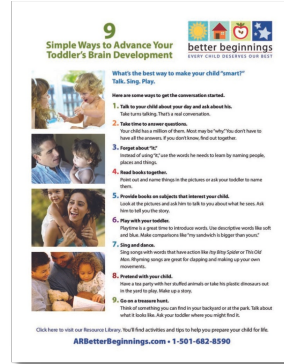


Word Play

This is an excellent guide for child-led learning.

Answering their questions and helping them “research” what they’re interested in helps expand their vocabulary. Check out this resource to learn more.

[View Resource](#)



9 Ways to Advance Toddler Brain Development

Talking and reading to children are the best ways to increase their knowledge and help their brains grow! Learn more from this resource.

[View Resource](#)



LEARNING IS FUN!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES



[Dolly Parton's Imagination Library](#)

Children ages birth to five in Arkansas are eligible to

receive a free book each month from Dolly Parton's Imagination Library! Share this resource with your client-families so they can sign up today.

[Learn More](#)



InterAct CLASS Summit Takeaways

Kelli Hilburn attended the [2025 InterAct CLASS Summit](#) in April. Below are her top three takeaways:

- Relationships enable you to do the job of teaching.
- When the flower doesn't bloom, you fix the environment, not the flower.
- Meaningful interactions and shared language are important.

Want more? Check out Better Beginnings' [social media](#) for pictures and other insights.



Monthly Provider Call

Tuesday, May 6, Zoom @ Noon

Zoom with Office of Early Childhood (OEC) representatives to get the latest industry news and updates. All calls are recorded and available to watch on

[Learn More](#)

Early Childhood Town Halls

The Office of Early Childhood is heading back out on the road this spring for another round of town halls. Join your colleagues and Local Leads from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. and hear the latest news about early childhood education in Arkansas.

- May 7 – Mtn. Home | Vada Sheid Community Development Center – ASUMH Campus, 1600 S College St.
- May 14 – Hamburg | First Baptist Church Hamburg – ROC Building, 203 E Parker St.
- May 21 – Forrest City | East Arkansas Community College – Arkansas Workforce Center, 1700 New Castle Rd.



BETTER BEGINNINGS

STAR APPROVALS

QUALITY CARE!

Congratulations on reaching your next star level! Share your achievement with your community and client-families using our [Star Kit](#).



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

- Norfolk Head Start Center, Norfolk



The following program is now **5-star** Better Beginnings provider:

- The Sunny Patch, Harrison



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

- AEL Magnet Cove, Malvern
- The After School Program at Prairie Grove Pre K, Prairie Grove



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

- Building A Better World Child Development Center, Little Rock
- The After School Program at Farmington Pre K, Farmington



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

- Blair Child Care, Alma
- Little Learners Daycare, West Memphis
- Right at School at Cato Elementary, Sherwood
- Right at School at Clinton Elementary, Sherwood
- Right at School at Sherwood Elementary, Sherwood
- St. John Catholic School Pre-K, Russellville
- West Fork Schools Pre-K, West Fork

ONE-STAR PROVIDERS

The following program is now a **1-star** Better Beginnings provider:

- Li'l Pugs and Kisses, Fayetteville

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](#)





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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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