



November 2021



Another holiday season is upon us. I don't know about you but I sometimes forget to take care of myself this at time of year. Well, most of the time but even more so during the holidays. My focus is usually on others and their well-being.

That's why I want to encourage you to practice self-care. It doesn't have to be anything big like a spa day. It can be something small like sitting in the quiet and breathing for five minutes. The Mayo Clinic has some great [breathing exercises](#) for reducing stress.

It doesn't matter what you do. What matters is you find some peace in the middle of the busyness of the holiday season. Taking care of yourself can help you be an even better **YOU**.

This edition of the Better Beginnings Provider Buzz includes **math** resources, information to nominate the next Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional, the latest Star Approvals and more. So, keep reading.

Happy Holidays!

**Kelli Hilburn**

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

# IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT



## ARPA Funding

The website to apply for funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) opened Wednesday, October 6. An email with a link to join the site was sent to the facility owner's email address that is listed in the licensing system. The email came from the address [noreply@notificationehelp.com](mailto:noreply@notificationehelp.com).

The email that went out says the link expires. However, that isn't the case.  
**The link inside the email does not expire.**

If you don't have an email, check your spam or junk folder and verify the correct email address is on file with Licensing.

The ARPA funding is available to all child care centers, child care family homes, and out-of-school time facilities that were open on or prior to March 11, 2021.

[Click here to learn more about ARPA.](#)

# NOMINATIONS OPEN



## Accepting Nominations for the Next Outstanding Early Childhood Professional

The application to nominate the next Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional is open! This award honors a professional who has made significant contributions to the early care and education field.

To qualify, nominees must:

- Meet minimum licensing requirements for child care staff
- Be employed by a licensed provider in good standing
- Have taught an early childhood classroom for at least three years
- Plan to remain in early childhood for the 2022-2023 fiscal year
- Be willing and able to serve as an early childhood ambassador

The nomination packet is available on the Better Beginnings [website](#).

The deadline to nominate someone is **January 21, 2022**.

[Click here for the nomination packet.](#)

# PANDEMIC GUIDELINES

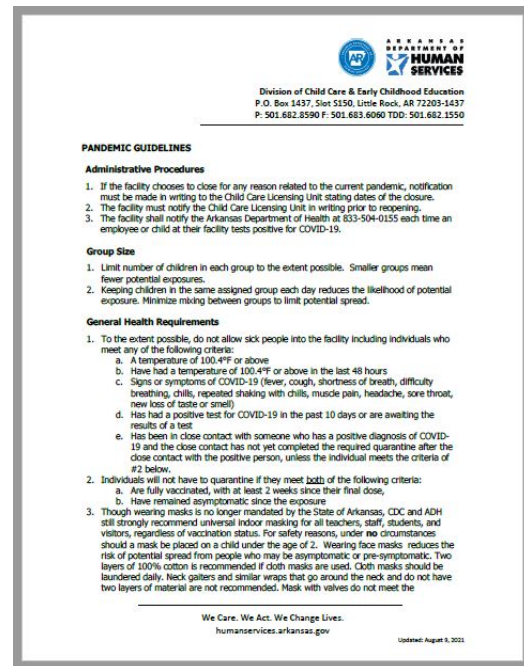


You can always find the most updated **Pandemic Guidelines** from Arkansas DHS on our website.

Find the [Trending tab](#) and then click the [COVID Advice and Resources for Families](#) button.

Or, [click here](#) to download the PDF or screenshot the document and save to your phone for quick access!

As COVID-19 circumstances change daily, Arkansas DHS and the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education will **monitor and adjust these guidelines as needed.**



Remember to report any positive COVID-19 cases among your staff or children in your care to the COVID Call Center. The center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The number is **833-504-0155**. The call center is closed during Arkansas State holidays so please make your reports before the holiday season is fully underway.

Reporting these cases will help ensure the safety of your staff and client-families.

**ARKANSAS DHS PANDEMIC GUIDELINES FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS**

# BETTER BEGINNINGS STAR APPROVALS



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.

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

- ABC Academy of Valley Springs, Harrison
- Tiny Treasures CCC, Barling

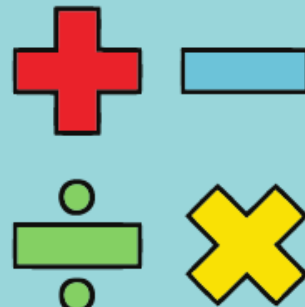
The following programs are now **2-star** Better Beginnings providers:

- Cindy's Angels, Van Buren
- Discovery Children's Center, Harrisburg
- Highland Schools, Hardy

If you are a Better Beginnings provider and are interested in moving up in star ratings, click [here](#).

**LEARN MORE ABOUT MOVING UP IN STAR RATINGS**

# MATH RESOURCES



Help your client-families continue the learning at home by sharing these math [resources](#) from our [Family Resource Library](#).

## Sorting Sacks and Similar Stuff



Sorting shapes and colors helps children learn to recognize by "name" and "different." Organizing is a skill that is basic to learning math. It also helps children understand how objects in their own world relate to each other.

Sorting can be a fun activity to do together. Use sacks, baskets or boxes with colorful shapes to indicate how to sort.

Your child learns about colors as you take turns putting "the blue toys in the sack with the blue circle." Using the words helps your child learn while you play.

When you share 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

By sharing activities with your child, you show how important he or she is to you. You share a conversation. You are building your relationship.

Learn more about the importance of play.



Get more tips and fun activities to encourage your child's math skill development.

Click here to visit our Resource Library. You'll find activities and tips to help you prepare your child for life.  
[ARBetterBeginnings.com • 1-501-682-8590](#)

## Simon Says ROLL

How to Make Your Big Die Simon Says Game



**You will need:**

- 1 empty tissue box
- clear tape
- black marker or dark crayon
- rough paper to wrap the box
- paper for numbers and action cards

**Number Cards and Action Cards**

Use whatever paper is available at home - the backs of junk mail envelopes, grocery bags and paper plates will work.

Write numbers 1 through 6 on individual pieces of paper as large as your paper will allow.

Have fun with your child as you make the action cards. Use your imagination to make up funny actions. Children might like to add drawings to these cards.

**What is learned from playing the game?**

Children practice counting as they play. Parents learn to recognize numbers and groups of objects. The die is called six. All these are important skills for kindergarten.

**What is learned from making the game pieces?**

Children learn new words such as glue. They are the die on the end and on directions. They also learn to make toys from household items.

**Extend the experience**

**For toddlers:** Talk about shapes. The Simon Says game uses the die. Talk about shapes that are.

**For preschoolers:** Measure the box. Measure other things around the house.

**For older children:** Work together to make up new action cards or game rules.



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## Play the Way to Math Skills

Many of the math skills your child needs for kindergarten develop naturally through taking and playing. Children learn best through experience. They remember best when it's fun. Try these activities to give meaning to numbers, practice writing numbers and counting.

**Use Measure**

Take pieces of newspaper or junk mail on a wall or door to a height taller than yourself. Any type of paper will do. Show your child how to use a measuring tape to a long piece of string to measure the heights of objects around the house. Measure furniture, door knobs heights, a favorite toy or the family pet. Mark the heights on your wall chart with a thick mark or stickers. Be sure to measure and compare your child and yourself.

**Number Play Tray**

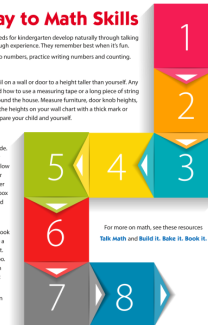
Write the numbers 1 through 10 on individual pieces of paper and set aside. Four cut or five used into a box lid or any container with a flat bottom and low sides. Pick a numbered piece of paper and ask your child to write the number in the salt with her finger. Shake the box lid to make the number disappear and do it again!

**Number Games**

**Play the Numbers:** Ask your child to look for numbers around the house. Make a game of what can you see the number first. Play the game when you go places too. Look for house numbers, numbers on license plates and gas prices on gas pump signs.

**Play Simon Says:** When you say "Simon says (say three times)", count out loud with your child as you skip.

Play hopscotch and board games.



For more on math, see these resources: [Talk Math](#) and [Build It, Bake It, Break It](#).

Click here to see the complete Family Resource Library.



Click here to see the Kindergarten Readiness Checklist.

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Sorting Stacks and  
Similar Stuff

Simon Says ROLL

Play the Way to Math  
Skills

# WHAT IS BETTER BEGINNINGS?



VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO FIND OUT

OR, check us out on **social media.**



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