



November 2019



A NOTE FROM DAWN JEFFREY:



Holiday decorations are showing up everywhere. Excitement is growing and showing on little faces! We wish you the happiest holidays ever!

Need help entertaining your young ones? There are dozens of fun activities on our website.

Do you like to make things? How about a butterfly or a musical instrument? Do you like science experiments? Wish someone had made math fun when you were little? We have just the activities and you probably have all the materials you need right at home!

Visit our free [Family Resource Library](#) for activities for learning through play, development and more. Also en [Español](#).

Try our [Winter Break Make & Do](#) resource to get started. Remember, play is for learning. Have fun!

Happy Holidays!

Dawn Jeffrey M.S. E.

Division of Early Child Care and Early Childhood Education
Program Manager for Better Beginnings

FAMILIES | PLAY IS FOR LEARNING

Better Beginnings has activities to help your child learn through play. Check out in our **Family Resource Library**. **Find resources en Español here.**

Bring Books to Life

Bring Books to Life

Open the door to learning and adventure with a visit to your local library. Membership is usually free and children can select from hundreds of books.

Stone Soup
by Marcia Brown

In this classic story, hungry travelers come to a village. They have nothing but an empty cooking pot. Find out how the clever travelers get the villagers to donate food to make "stone soup".

Booking and Cooking
Suggest to your child that you make stone soup together. Discuss the steps to make the soup and ask your child questions. What vegetables went into the soup in the book? Ask your child to point out the vegetables in the book. You can point to their names. Do you like floor vegetables? Have you eaten one of these? No one would really eat a stone. What vegetable sort of looks like a stone? Would you rather eat a potato?

The Runaway Bunny
by Margaret Wise Brown

A little bunny is bored with life at home. He decides to run away. Mother Bunny has a plan to bring him home.

Tell the Story Together
Children often want to read the same book over and over. Ask your child questions as you read along. Or ask her to tell you the story using the pictures as a guide. Or make up your own story using the book as a guide. For instance: If you are a fish, then I will become a fish in the blank.

Act Out the Story
Pretend your child's stuffed animals are having the conversation in the book. No business? No problem. Use the story to ask silly questions of the room. It might go something like: You're not a bunny! What kind of animal are you? Are you a fish? Are you a bird? A flower? Are you a child?

What is learned from all of this reading and play?
Your child feels that he is important to you. You shared a book and had a conversation. You did something together.

Visit our Family Resource Library for more activities that help develop literacy.

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EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST

See the next page for more great books and learning activities.

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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Bring Books to Life

The Very Hungry Caterpillar
by Eric Carle

One day a caterpillar hatches from an egg on a leaf. He is very hungry. He eats and eats until he becomes a big caterpillar. His adventures tell the story of becoming a butterfly.

Act Out the Story
Talk about the story before you begin. How do caterpillars move? Stretch out on the floor and pretend to be a caterpillar. As you read, talk about what the little caterpillar eats. What is that? What color is that? Would you eat that?

When the caterpillar eats too much, roll around on the floor and pretend your belly hurts. Roll up in blankets to make your own cocoon. Emerge as beautiful butterfly! Stretch your wings and fly around the room!

Make a Watercolor Butterfly

You'll need:
Paper plates - Food coloring
A cup of water - Cotton balls
Cotton swabs - Markers - Scissors
Tongs - Tape - Paper towels

How it's done:

1. Pass the back of the paper plate under running water.
2. Place the plate on newspapers to catch overflow water and color.
3. Drip several drops of yellow food coloring on the smooth part of the plate. Yellow makes a good base.
4. Add a few drops of blue and green or red, but not both.
5. Use a cotton ball or piece of clean sponge soaked in water to drip water on the color spots.
6. Trim the ridged, outer edge off the dry plate. Draw a circle using an inverted bowl to make a circle for the final trim.
7. Fold in half.
8. Cut triangles at the top, bottom and side like this. Round the edges.
9. For the antennae, color cotton swabs (Q tips) with markers and tape to the back of the butterfly.

Note: Food coloring stains everything. Protect clothing and work surfaces.

Continue to drip water until the top (smooth surface) is covered. Shake or tilt the plate to help spread the color. Pour excess water into a trash can. Set the plate aside to dry.

Get book suggestions for all ages in Better with Books from our Family Resource Library.

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Books open the door to learning. See our NEW resource, **Bring Books to Life**, for tips to make reading a real experience.

Transform yourself and your child from a caterpillar to a butterfly or make a butterfly from a paper plate.

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED RESOURCE | PLAY IS LEARNING

Winter Break Make & Do

Make your child's winter break great with more than a dozen activities that make learning fun.

This one-pager won't be on the website for long, but the activities are available year-round in our free **Family Resource Library**.

Try it out



THANK YOU | BETTER BEGINNINGS QUALITY COMMUNITY

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**:

- **LITTLE ROCK** - Darnall School
- **NORTH LITTLE ROCK** - Bright Beginnings Child Care III
- **ARKADELPHIA** - Clark County Early Learning Center

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

- **JONESBORO** - AEL Geraldine Anderson Center
- **NORMAN** - Caddo Hills Preschool
- **LITTLE ROCK** - Tweety's Lil Academy

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

PROVIDERS | You Make a Difference in Children's Lives

Every caregiver in a child's life is a part of forming that child's future.

We have the tools to help you do your best.

In November, **Bring Books to Life** encouraged families to open the doors to learning and adventure with a visit to your local library. Membership is usually free and children can select from hundreds of books.

The public library is also available to child care directors and teachers.

Better Beginnings's **Story-A-Month** curriculum has guides to help teachers make the most of books that young learners will love to hear.



Better Beginnings guides combined with free book usage from the public library is a winning combination for the children in your care and for the teachers!

Find More Curriculum Resources Here

COLLABORATE | Providers and Families Connect

Providers, post these resource pages in your halls to **generate conversation between teachers and client families.**

Choose the Right TOYS

A rule of thumb: Less is more. The less a toy does, the more opportunity a child has to create and learn from it. Simple toys are easier for children to use, need less supervision and can last longer.

- 1. Safety First**
Toys should match a child's developmental level and age. Toys should be clean and have no sharp corners or small, detachable parts. They should also not contain unsafe, toxic or flammable materials.
- 2. Long-lasting**
To survive a child's repeated handling, a toy must be made of stable and solid materials.
- 3. Easy to Use**
A child must be able to work a toy by himself in order to enjoy it. Generally, simple toys are the easiest to operate.
- 4. Entertainment Value**
Ideally, a child should find a toy fun to play with now and as she grows. Look for toys that a child can play with in many ways.
- 5. Educational Value**
Play teaches a child to think, create and imagine. Choose toys that allow for pretending, role-playing, problem-solving and practicing skills.
- 6. Social Value**
Children learn important social skills, like cooperation, negotiation and compromise, by playing with other children. For older children who are more likely to share, choose toys that they can use with others. For younger children, have enough toys so that sharing is not necessary.

What are some good toys?

- For infants:** rattles, busy boxes, stacking toys, shape sorters, soft baby dolls, board books
- For toddlers:** balls, push and pull toys, stuffed animals, crayons, play dough, simple puzzles
- For preschoolers:** dolls, rubber or plastic animals, vehicles, blocks, art materials, balls
- For school age children:** board games, construction sets, doll house, roller skates, puppets, art materials

Resource: Ron Learning

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Communicate with Your Child Care Provider

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EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST

Your child care provider is your partner in preparing your child for life. Talk to your provider every day about what happened with your child. Open communication is critical to giving your child the best opportunities to prosper.

Questions to Ask About Your Child's Day

- What activities did he most enjoy?
- Did she have a nap? For how long and at what time?
- Did he try any new foods? Did he like them?
- Did you see any new activity or skills in my child?
- Is there anything I should know about her day?
- Are there any supplies I need to bring?

The more you know about your child's day, the better you and your provider can work as partners for your child.

Top 10 Tips

1. Talk face to face with your child care provider every day.
2. Tell your provider if there are family issues she should know about.
3. Tell your provider about your child's health issues or special needs.
4. Ask questions about your child's day and be a good listener.
5. Be clear about family rules, discipline, and other parenting styles.
6. Encourage your provider to tell you about your child's behavioral or emotional issues.
7. Make yourself available by providing your cell phone number and email address.
8. Let your provider know in advance if your child will be away from care for travel or illness.
9. Be sure your provider has a current pickup list for your child.
10. Take time to say thank you for your provider's work and dedication to your child.

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What is **Better Beginnings**?

Visit our website to find out.

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



We need YOUR help. Take a second to tell us if you're a...

Parent/Guardian

Select

Provider

Select

Partner

Select

Share this edition of the Buzz with your family and friends.



Better Beginnings is Arkansas's 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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