

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

Jacob Oliva Secretary

October 14, 2024

Stacy Smith Deputy Commissioner Ms. Rebecca Miller-Rice Rules Administrator Bureau of Legislative Research One Capitol Mall, Fifth Floor Little Rock, AR 72201

State Board of Education

For Legislative Council review: Division Of Elementary And Secondary Re: **Education Office of Early Childhood Rule Better Beginnings Tiered Quality**

Dr. Sarah Moore Stuttgart Chair

Rating and Improvement System

Kathy Rollins Springdale Vice-Chair

Dear Ms. Miller-Rice:

Adrienne Woods Rogers

Attached is a copy of proposed new Division and Elementary and Secondary Education Office of Early Childhood Rule Better Beginnings Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. This filing also contains the Legislative Council questionnaire, financial impact statement, markup version of the rules, post-public comment summary, and public comments with division responses. The Division respectfully requests that these proposed rules amendments be placed on the ALC Administrative Rules Subcommittee agenda.

On April 22, 2024, the Governor's Office approved the attached administrative rule for public

comment release. On May 9, 2024, the State Board of Education approved the rule for public

Randy Henderson

Blytheville

Lisa Hunter White Hall

Jeff Wood Little Rock

Ken Bragg Sheridan

comment release. The first public comment period ran from May 10, 2024, through June 10, 2024. The first public comment hearing was held May 31, 2024, at the Arch Ford Building, Four Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR, 72201. Following the first public comment, substantive changes were made. The second public comment period ran from September 1, 2024, through October 1, 2024. The second public comment hearing was held September 10, 2024, at the Arch Ford Building, Four Capitol Mall, Little Rock, AR, 72201. Following the second public comment, changes were made to correct non-substantive erroneous internal citations which were. On October 10, 2024, the State Board gave final approval for this rule.

Leigh Keener Little Rock

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to call me at (501) 682-4202.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Daniel Shults Interim Chief Legal Counsel Arkansas Department of Education

FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS COMPLETELY.

DEP	PARTMENT
	ARD/COMMISSION
PER	SON COMPLETING THIS STATEMENT
TEL	EPHONE NO. EMAIL
emai	omply with Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e), please complete the Financial Impact Statement and l it with the questionnaire, summary, markup and clean copy of the rule, and other documents. se attach additional pages, if necessary.
TITI	LE OF THIS RULE
1.	Does this proposed, amended, or repealed rule have a financial impact? Yes No
2.	Is the rule based on the best reasonably obtainable scientific, technical, economic, or other evidence and information available concerning the need for, consequences of, and alternatives to the rule? Yes No
3.	In consideration of the alternatives to this rule, was this rule determined by the agency to be the least costly rule considered? Yes No
	If no, please explain:
	(a) how the additional benefits of the more costly rule justify its additional cost;
	(b) the reason for adoption of the more costly rule;
	(c) whether the reason for adoption of the more costly rule is based on the interests of public health, safety, or welfare, and if so, how; and
	(d) whether the reason for adoption of the more costly rule is within the scope of the agency's statutory authority, and if so, how.
4.	If the purpose of this rule is to implement a <i>federal</i> rule or regulation, please state the following

(a) What is the cost to implement the federal rule or regulation?

General Revenue	General Revenue
Federal Funds	Federal Funds
Cash Funds	Cash Funds
Special Revenue	Special Revenue
Other (Identify)	Other (Identify)
Total	Total
(b) What is the additional cost of the sta	te rule?
Current Fiscal Year	Next Fiscal Year
General Revenue	General Revenue
Federal Funds	Federal Funds
Cash Funds	Cash Funds
Special Revenue	Special Revenue
Other (Identify)	Other (Identify)
Total	Total
	year to any private individual, private entity, or private ed, or repealed rule? Please identify those subject to the Next Fiscal Year \$
business subject to the proposed, amend rule, and explain how they are affected. Current Fiscal Year \$ What is the total estimated cost by fiscal	year to any private individual, private entity, or private ed, or repealed rule? Please identify those subject to the
business subject to the proposed, amend rule, and explain how they are affected. Current Fiscal Year \$	year to any private individual, private entity, or private ed, or repealed rule? Please identify those subject to the Next Fiscal Year \$

7. With respect to the agency's answers to Questions #5 and #6 above, is there a new or increased cost or obligation of at least one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000) per year to a private individual, private entity, private business, state government, county government, municipal government, or to two (2) or more of those entities combined?

Yes No

If yes, the agency is required by Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e)(4) to file written findings at the time of filing the financial impact statement. The written findings shall be filed simultaneously with the financial impact statement and shall include, without limitation, the following:

- (1) a statement of the rule's basis and purpose;
- (2) the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule, including a statement of whether a rule is required by statute;
- (3) a description of the factual evidence that:
 - (a) justifies the agency's need for the proposed rule; and
 - (b) describes how the benefits of the rule meet the relevant statutory objectives and justify the rule's costs:
- (4) a list of less costly alternatives to the proposed rule and the reasons why the alternatives do not adequately address the problem to be solved by the proposed rule;
- (5) a list of alternatives to the proposed rule that were suggested as a result of public comment and the reasons why the alternatives do not adequately address the problem to be solved by the proposed rule;
- (6) a statement of whether existing rules have created or contributed to the problem the agency seeks to address with the proposed rule and, if existing rules have created or contributed to the problem, an explanation of why amendment or repeal of the rule creating or contributing to the problem is not a sufficient response; and
- (7) an agency plan for review of the rule no less than every ten (10) years to determine whether, based upon the evidence, there remains a need for the rule including, without limitation, whether:
 - (a) the rule is achieving the statutory objectives;
 - (b) the benefits of the rule continue to justify its costs; and
 - (c) the rule can be amended or repealed to reduce costs while continuing to achieve the statutory objectives.



Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Transforming Arkansas to lead the nation in student-focused education

Jacob Oliva Secretary October 14, 2024

Stacy SmithDeputy
Commissioner

Proposed Rules Governing the Better Beginnings Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

State Board of Education

<u>Purpose</u>

Dr. Sarah Moore
Stuttgart
Chair

The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education ("Division") Office of Early Childhood (OEC) is seeking Governor's Office review and approval of the proposed amendments to the DESE OEC Rules Governing the Better Beginnings Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Kathy Rollins
Springdale
Vice-Chair

Background

Steve Sutton *Marion*

Pursuant to Ark. Code § 20-78-201 et seq, the Division shall adopt the necessary rules to implement these code sections. Act 237 of 2023 moved the Office of Early Childhood from the Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education to the Arkansas Department of Education. This amendment changes the rule language to reflect that change.

Adrienne Woods
Rogers

Key Points

Randy Henderson
Blytheville

• The rules are amended to state the regulatory authority as the Arkansas Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood instead of the Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education.

Lisa Hunter White Hall

• The rules are amended to delete the rules history and update definitions.

Jeff Wood
Little Rock

Discussion

Ken Bragg Sheridan

This draft amendment is an update primarily driven by Act 237 of 2023, which moved the Office of Early Childhood from the Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education to the Arkansas Department of Education.

Leigh Keener
Little Rock

Post-Public Comment Changes

No substantive changes were made following the second public comment period. Minor changes were made to correct technical errors in drafting or to provide procedural clarity.

Better Beginnings

Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System



Provider RULE BOOK

Arkansas Department of Human Services

Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
 https://arbetterbeginnings.com/
 Better Beginnings
 P.O. Box 1437, Slot S-150 Little Rock, AR 72203-1437
 501-682-8590

BetterBeginnings@dhs.arkansas.gov

Revised: 01/01/2023

Table of Contents

ACKNOW	/LEDGEMENT AND HISTORY	3
BETTER E	BEGINNINGS OVERVIEW	4
RULES A	ND REGULATIONS	5
1.00	REGULATORY AUTHORITY	5
2.00	PURPOSE	5
3.00	ACRONYMS	6
4.00	AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY	6
5.00	ELIGIBILITY	7
6.00	COMPONENT AREAS, REQUIREMENTS, AND LEVELS	용
	ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – CENTER BASED REQUIREMENTS	9
	ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – FAMILY CHILD CARE	12
	REQUIREMENTS	
	ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – SCHOOL-AGE REQUIREMENTS	15
7.00	APPLICATION	18
8.00	APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS	18
9.00	MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION	19
10.00	ADVERSE ACTION	20
11.00	APPEAL PROCEDURE	20

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND HISTORY

In 1993, the legislature passed a bill enabling the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (the "Division" or "DCCECE") to create a system by which licensed childcare and early childhood education entities could be certified as "quality." A goal of this system was to help the families of Arkansas to understand that providers, achieving this certification, consistently provided an early care and education environment above the minimum licensing requirements. The larger goal was to encourage and achieve better lifelong outcomes for children, by helping to assure that their time in childcare and early childhood education is nurturing, enriching, and meaningful.

In 2004, the state of Arkansas was awarded a State Maternal and Child Health Care grant which created the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (AECCS). Over almost five (5) years, committees, which involved more than two hundred (200) childcare and early childhood related professionals met, researched, and created an improved approach to "quality." The result was a tiered quality rating and improvement system for our state called "Better Beginnings," implemented in 2010. Since this time, the state has dedicated much time and many resources to finding ways to meet the needs of the children, and to assist programs in overcoming obstacles to participation.

"Better Beginnings," Arkansas' revised tiered quality rating and improvement system is available to every licensed and registered childcare provider in Arkansas. The system is designed to help programs improve their day-to-day environment for children, and to establish proven administrative practices. Tools and trainings are readily available for providers as they move along the path from Better Beginnings levels one through six (1-6).

Better Beginnings is available to every licensed and registered childcare provider in Arkansas. Whether you are a family home, an out-of-school time program, or a childcare center, your participation is imperative for the future of Arkansas. We are grateful to all who have worked to create Better Beginnings and make it what it is today. Every Child Deserves Our Best!

Better Beginnings Overview

Better Beginnings is a tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS) which is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. Program types include center based care, family child care, and out of school time programs.

Better Beginnings is a "building block" approach, which means that programs must meet all requirements at one level before moving to the next. Licensing, or Minimum Licensing. Requirements (MLR), is the foundation on which Better Beginnings is built. The requirements at level one (1) of Better Beginnings align with MLR and help the director or primary caregiver begin the journey towards quality improvement. At level two (2), the staff becomes more involved in the process. Levels three (3) and above set even higher requirements for all components.

Resources are available and have been specifically designed to help providers understand and meet each requirement. The resources will help providers become more knowledgeable and effective for Better Beginnings in the lives of children.

1.0 RULES AND REGULATIONS

1.0 REGULATORY AUTHORITY

- 1.1 These regulations are enacted pursuant to Arkansas Code Ann. §20-78-201-226 as amended.
- 1.2 These regulations shall be known as the Arkansas Department of Human Services-Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education regulations governing Better Beginnings, Arkansas's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

2.0 PURPOSE

- 2.1 It is the purpose of these regulations to set the general guidelines for the operation of Better Beginnings.
- 2.2 Providers who choose to receive Child Care Development Block Grant Funding (CCDBGF) must be a Better Beginnings participant at the level determined by the Division. This system is intended to certify quality status to childcare facilities that meet Better Beginnings requirements as set forth in these regulations.
- 2.3 Designation of certified status for any childcare facility will qualify taxpayers for the following:
 - A. Under Act 820 of 1993, corporations that build and equip a certified childcare center will be exempt from the state compensating tax levied by Ark. Code Ann. §26 53 101 et. seq (1987). Construction materials and furnishings purchased for use in the initial construction and equipping of a childcare center, for the exclusive purpose of providing childcare to the corporation's employees, will be subject to this exemption.
 - B. Under Act 820 of 1993, a business that qualifies for the exemption from the Gross-Receipts Tax under Ark. Code Ann. §26-52-401(29), shall be allowed an income tax credit of three and nine-tenths percent (3.9%) of the annual salary of employees employed exclusively in providing child care services.
 - C. Under Act 1268 of 1993, enhanced income tax credits in the amount of twenty percent (20%) of the federal childcare credit as allowed under Section 21 of the Internal Revenue Code will be available to qualified taxpayers who incur child care expenses at childcare facilities that are certified at Better Beginnings level two (2) or above.

3.00 ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

3.01

5.01	
ADE	Arkansas Department of Education
ABC	Arkansas Better Chance
AEDC	Arkansas Economic Development Commission
BAS	Business Administration Scale
CARE	Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities: Child and Youth Services
	Standards
CDA	Child Development Associate Credential
DCCECE	Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
DHS	Department of Human Services
Director	The person who meets MLR as director and is on site a minimum of 50% of the
	operational day.
ECERS	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
ERS	Environment Rating Scale
FCCERS	Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale
ITERS	Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale
MLR	Minimum Licensing Requirements
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NAFCC	National Association for Family Child Care
PAS	Program Administration Scale
PDR	Professional Development Registry
PQA	Program Quality Assessment
SACERS	School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale
TQRIS	Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System
YPQI	Youth Program Quality Intervention

4.0 AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

- **4.1** The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) will coordinate and administer Better Beginnings.
- 4.2 The Division is authorized to make temporary revisions to these rules as deemed necessary during a Governor declared public health emergency or natural disaster impacting the State of Arkansas. These revisions will be posted on the Better Beginnings website.

- 4.3 The Better Beginnings Program Administrator or designee will have final approval of applications for certification as reviewed and recommended by the Better Beginnings staff.
- 4.4 By December 31 of each year, the Division will be responsible for providing verification to the Department of Finance & Administration of the childcare facilities that were qualified for certification at level two (2) and above, in the current calendar year.
- 4.5 Each December, the Division will be responsible for providing verification to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) of the childcare facilities that qualified for Better Beginnings certification in the current calendar year.
- **4.6** The Division or Division consultants will provide technical assistance to any facilities desiring to achieve certification.
- 4.7 The Division will be responsible for the process of recertifying facilities (See Section 7.00 Application, 8.00 Application Review Process, and 9.00 Maintaining Certification).
- **4.8** Facilities will be notified of their certification status. The certification notice will denote the level of certification achieved.

5.0 ELIGIBILITY

- All licensed, registered, and church operated exempt childcare facilities, as defined under Ark. Code Ann. §20-78-202, exclusive of foster homes, group homes, and custodial institutions, are eligible to apply for certified status.
- 5.2 All childcare facilities, except those excluded in section 5.01 above, operating under a New Provisional or Regular license, registration, or church operated exemption as issued by the Division are eligible to apply. Entities with multiple sites, each holding a separate license number must apply for certification for each site individually.
- 5.3 All facilities must be in good standing with the Department of Human Services. A facility in "good standing" is not currently debarred, defunded, excluded, or under adverse action with licensing or other DHS programs.
- **5.4** Applicants and certified facilities must make their facility accessible at all times during the regular program hours for program reviews and environmental assessments. Such assessments may be unannounced.

- Any of the following situations (including but not limited to conditions below) may result in an application being denied, a reduction in level, or removal of Better Beginnings status:
 - A. Ineligibility to participate according to section 5.00 Eligibility;
 - B. Application documentation which is incomplete or does not meet the intent of the requirements according to sections 6.00, 7.00, 8.00, or 9.00;
 - C. Failure to continue to meet the requirements for the component areas for the level which the facility is assigned:
 - D. Numerous or serious deficiencies cited by licensing;
 - E. Substantiation of complaints received by the Division;
 - F. Being placed on Adverse Action by any program in DHS;
 - G. Changes in the license status of the facility; or
 - H. Falsification of any document or submission of false information to any DHS Division.
- 5.6 Facilities that have been denied certification or have had certification removed by reason of ineligibility, according to any rules of this section, may be eligible to re-apply in twelve (12) months unless otherwise notified by the Division Director.

6.0 COMPONENT AREAS, REQUIREMENTS, AND LEVELS

- 6.1 There are four (4) component areas in Better Beginnings:
 - Administration
 - Staff Qualifications and Professional Development
 - Learning Environment/Environment Assessment
 - Child Health and Development

There are requirements to be met in each component area in each of the levels. The components, requirements, and levels are on the following pages.

ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE CENTER REQUIREMENTS

All facilities must be in good standing with the Department of Human Services.

### Must meet all ### Must meet all #### Must meet all ##################################	COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	FNEL-2	E-TE-NET-3	LEVEL 4	FAEL 5	FVEL 6
Level 1 and Level 2 Level 3 Level 4 Le			Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all
Level 1			requirements for	requirements for	requirements for	requirements for	requirements for
### Secretaring ### Secretarin			Level 1	Level 1 and Level 2	Levels 1 - 3	Levels 1 - 4	Levels 1 - 5
Hiemse in New How a public routing the way How completed by a control but states. LAZ The facility may certified PLAS assessor. LAZ The facility may be a program certified PLAS assessor. LAZ The facility may certified PLAS assessor. LAZ The director shall be certified PLAS assessor. Completed by a reliable certified	A. Administration	1.A.1 The facility has a	2.A.1 The facility shall	3.A.1 The facility shall	4.A.1 The facility shall	5.A.1 The facility	6.A.1 The facility shall
Hereinianal or Regular completed by a certified by a cellible completed by a cellible completed by a cellible completed by a cellible completed by a cellible strengthening families accessor. 1.4.2. The facility may bave a program review completed by a cellible strengthening families accessor. 2.4.2. The director shall severage by a cellible completed by a cellible strengthening families action plan severage. 3.7.5 or higher. 2.4.2. The director shall director shall accessor. School-age programs certified by a cellible completed by a cellible strengthening families action plan accessor. School-age programs certified by a cellible strengthening families action plan accessor. School-age programs certified by a cellible strengthening families action plan and implement at least one completed by a cellible strengthening families action plan and implement at least one certified by a cellible strengthening families action plan and implement at least one certified by a cellible strengthening families action plan and implement at least one cellible strengthening families action plan and implement at least fifty percent stratus. 2.8.4. The facility has a theat fifty percent stratus. 2.8.4. The facility has a theat fifty percent stratus. 2.8.4. The facility has a theat fifty percent stratus. 2.8.4. The facility has a theat fifty percent stratus. 2.8.4. The facility has a theat fifty percent stratus. 2.8.4. The facility has a theat fifty percent stratus.		license in New	have a PAS review	score an average of	score an average of	shall score an	score an average of
status. School-age programs and 5 are secred but have a perograms of school-age programs are not included in the world-stall have a perogram review completed by a reliable school-age programs compl		Provisional or Regular	completed by a	4.00 or higher on PAS	4.00 or higher on PAS.	average of 5.00 or	6.00 or higher on PAS.
1.A.2.The facility may have a programs training back and back a programs review completed by a reliable selected by a reliable selected by a reliable certified PAS assessor. and 5 are scored but a very defected in the PQA form B score of completed by a reliable certified PAS assessor. and of the programs are not included in the PQA form B score of certified PAS assessor. and of the programs are not included in the PQA form B score of certified PAS assessor. ppp chall have a average). ppp chall have a series of the director shall average be a reliable and the average average. ppp chall have a series of the ppp chall have and implement at the ppp chall have a series of the ppp chall have a series of the pp chall have a series		status.	certified PAS assessor.	items 1-21 (items 5	School-age programs	higher on PAS.	School-age programs
the facility may using YPQ1 shall have a pregram review and implement at least on the latest of the special programs are appropriated by a reliable completed by a reliable special programs assessor. School age programs completed by a reliable special programs assessor. School age programs assessor. A.A.2 The director shall assessor. School age programs assessor. A.A.2 The director shall assessor. School age programs assessor. School age programs assessor. A.A.3 The director shall assessor. School age programs assessor. A.A.3 The director shall assessor. School age programs assessor. A.A.3 The director shall assessor. School age programs assessor. A.A.3 The director shall assessor. School age programs assessor. A.A.3 The director shall assessor. School age programs assessor. A.A.3 The director shall assessor. A.A.3 The director assessor. School age programs assessor. A.A.3 The director assessor. A.A.3 The director assessor. School age programs assessor. A.A.4 The director and assessor. A.A.4 The director assessor. A.A.4 The director and assessor. A.A.4 The director assessor. A.A.5 The director as			School-age programs	and 6 are scored but	using YPQI shall have a	School-age	using YPQI shall have a
have a program review completed by a refliable complete by a refliable complete by a reliable skeep regrams complete a seessor. School-age programs assessor. School-age programs aservice programs assessor. School-age programs assessor. School-		1.A.2 The facility may	using YPQI shall have a	are not included in the	PQA Form B score of	programs using	PQA Form B score of
completed by a secsion. School-age programs school-age programs using VPQL shall have a seesoon. School-age programs using VPQL shall have a seesoon. School-age programs using VPQL shall have a school-age programs using VPQL may have a school-age programs using VPQL may have a school-age programs using VPQL may be very completed by a reliable strengthening Families assessor. PDR. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon. Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon of two (2). Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon of two (2). Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon of two (2). Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon of two (2). Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon of two (2). Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon of two (2). Strengthening listed on the samiles online soft a seesoon of two (2). Strengthening listed on the samiles only listed on the samiles on the sa		have a program review	PQA Form B review	average).	4.00 or higher.	YPQI shall have a	4.75 or higher.
ecrtified PAS assessor. School age programs School age programs using YPQI shall have a sessor. School age programs using YPQI may have a sessor. QAA form B score of using YPQI may have a complete a complete a sessor. AA2 The director shall a 3.75 or higher. Strengthening Families and the strengthening Families action step for a total assessor. Strengthening Families and the strategies. Strengthening Families on the strategies. Strengthening Families and the strategies. Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least fifty percent step. Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least fifty percent state. Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least fifty percent state. Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least fifty percent state. Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least fifty percent state. Strengthening Families action plan at least fifty percent state. Strengthening Families action plan at least fifty percent state. Strengthening Families action plan at least fifty percent state. Strengthening Families action plan at least fifty percent state. Strengthening Families action plan at least fifty percent state. Strengthening Families action plan at least fifty percent state.		completed by a	completed by a reliable	School-age programs		PQA Form B score	
School age programs using YPQI may have a Q.A.2. The director shall PQA Form B review completed by a reliable strengthening Families assessor. PDR. Strengthening Families strengthening Families online self-assessment for three (3) or more Strategies. 2.A.2. The facility shall develop a Strengthening Families online self-assessment for three (3) or more Strategies. 2.A.2. The facility shall develop a Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least one (1) action step. 1.B.1. The facility has a at least fifty percent from Browisional or Regular shall complete a step. 2.B.1. All directors and step. step. status. shall complete a status. shall complete a step. status. shall complete a status. shall complete a step. status. shall complete a status. shall complete a status. shall complete a status.		certified PAS assessor.	assessor.	using YPQI shall have a	4.A.2 The director shall	of 4.25 or higher.	
using YPQL may have a 2.A.2.The director shall a.75 or higher. Completed by a reliable strengthening Families assessor. Strengthening listed on the special families online self-assessment for three (3) or more Strategies. 2.A.2.The director the straining listed on the strengthening Families online self-assessment for three (3) or more Strategies. 2.A.3.The facility shall develop a Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least one (1) action step. 2.B.1.All directors and license in New (50%) of teaching staff status.		School age programs		PQA Form B score of	implement at least one		
PQA Form B rewiew completed by a reliable Strengthening Families assessor. PDR. Strengthening Families shall complete the Strengthening Families online self- assessment for three (3) or more Strategies. 3.A.3. The facility shall develop a Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least one (1) action step. 3.B.1. The facility has a at least fifty percent step. T.B.1. The facility has a at least fifty percent step. Status. 4.B.1. The facility has a at least fifty percent step.		using YPQI may have a	2.A.2 The director shall	3.75 or higher.	(1) additional		
completed by a reliable strengthening Families shall complete the straining listed on the Strengthening Families online selfaces. Strengthening Families selfaces. Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least one (1) action step. Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least one (1) action step. Status. Status. Strengthening Families selfaces. Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least one (1) action step. Status. Status.		PQA Form B review	complete a		Strengthening Families		
### status. #### status. ##### status. #### status. ### status. #### status. ### status. #### st		completed by a reliable	Strengthening Families	3.A.2 The director	action step for a total		
Strengthening Families online self- assessment for three (3) or more Strategies. 3.A.3. The facility shall develop a Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least one (1) action step. 4.B.1. The facility has a least fifty percent step. 5.B.1. All directors and it least one (1) action step. 5.B.1. All directors and step.		assessor.	training listed on the	shall complete the	of two (2).		
4.B.1 The facility has a least fifty percent iteense in New at least fifty percent provisional or Regular status.			PDR.	Strengthening	•		
4.B.1 The facility has a least fifty percent license in New at least fifty percent provisional or Regular status.				Familiac online calf.			
4.B.1 The facility has a least fifty percent license in New at least fifty percent provisional or Regular status.				Taring Commission			
4.B.1 The facility has a least fifty percent license in New at least fifty percent at least fifty percent status.				assessment tor three			
4.B.1 The facility has a least fifty percent license in New at least fifty percent Provisional or Regular (50%) of teaching staff status.				(3) or more Strategies.			
4.B.1 The facility has a least fifty percent iteense in New at least fifty percent Provisional or Regular (50%) of teaching staff status.				3.A.3 The facility shall			
4.B.1 The facility has a least fifty percent license in New at least fifty percent Provisional or Regular (50%) of teaching staff status.				develop a			
4.8.1 The facility has a least fifty percent license in New at least fifty percent Provisional or Regular (50%) of teaching staff status.				Strengthening			
4.B.1 The facility has a least fifty percent itense in New at least fifty percent Provisional or Regular (50%) of teaching staff status.				Families action plan			
4.B.1 The facility has a least fifty percent iteense in New at least fifty percent Provisional or Regular (50%) of teaching staff status.				and implement at			
4.8.1 The facility has a license in New at least fifty percent Provisional or Regular (50%) of teaching staff status.				least one (1) action			
1.B.1. The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.				step.			
license in New Provisional or Regular status.	аĞ	1.B.1 The facility has a	2.B.1 All directors and				
Provisional or Regular	Staff Qualifications	license in New	at least fifty percent				
status	and Professional	Provisional or Regular	(50%) of teaching staff				
.0000	Development.	status.	shall complete "Early				

		Learning Standards- (ELS) Basics Training." The director and school-age staff shall complete "Developmental Assets Training." Training." 2.B.2 All directors and fifty percent (50%) of teaching staff shall complete an ERS training. If the facility is using YPQI, all directors and school-age staff shall complete an ERS training. If the facility is using YPQI, all directors and school-age staff shall complete YPQI training.				
		kitchen manager (if applicable) shall participate in at least two (2) clock hours of training on nutrition for children annually. 2.B.4 The director shall complete training on developmentally appropriate physical				
j	1.C.1 The facility has a	2.C.1 The facility shall	3.C.1 The facility shall	4.C.1 Staff to child-	5.C.1 Staff to child	6.C.1 Staff to child-
Learning Environment	license in New	score an average of	score an average of	ratios shall be	ratios shall be	ratios shall be
/ Environment	Provisional or Regular	3.00 or higher on the	4.00 or higher on the	maintained as follows:	maintained as	maintained as follows:
Assessment	status.	ERS review. School age	ERS. School age-	Birth-18 months 1:4	follows:	Birth-18 months 1:4
		programs using PQA	programs using PQA	18-36 months 1:7	Birth-18 months 1:4	18-36 months 1:6
	1.C.2 The facility may	shall score a 3.00 or	shall score 3.75 or	2 ½ - 3 years 1:11	18-36 months 1:6	2 1/2 - 3 years 1:10
	nave an ERS review.	nigner on the PUA:	nigner on the PUM.	4 years 1:12	2 % - 3 Years 1:10	4 years 1:10

	School age programs		3.C.2 The staff shall	5 years and up 1:18	4 years 1:10	5 years and up 1:15
	using YPQI may have a		maintain a portfolio		5 years and up 1:18	
	PQA review.		for each child.	4.C.2 The facility shall		6.C.2 The facility shall
				score an average of	5.C.2 The facility	score an average of
				5.00 or higher on the	shall score an	6.00 or higher on the
				ERS. School age	average of 5.50 or	ERS. School age
				programs using PQA	higher on the ERS.	programs using the
				shall score 4.00 or	School age	PQA shall score 4.50
				higher on the PQA.	programs using the	or higher on the PQA.
					PQA shall score 4.25	
					or higher on the	
					PQA:	
ф	.1 The facility has a	2.D.1 The facility shall	3.D.1 The facility shall	4.D.1 The facility shall	5.D.1 The facility	6.D.1 The facility shall
Child Health and	cense in New	document distribution	share information on	use a Division-	shall use a Division-	use a Division-
Development	rovisional or Regular	of ARKids First	nutrition and physical	approved tool to	approved tool to	approved tool to
	tatus.	information to families	activity for children	complete a self-	complete a self-	complete a self-
		of uninsured children.	with families.	assessment in child	assessment in child	assessment in child
				nutrition, physical	nutrition, physical	nutrition, physical
		2.D.2 The facility shall	3.D.2 The facility shall	activity, farm to ECE,	activity, farm to	activity, farm to ECE,
		share information on	use a Division-	oral health,	ECE, oral health,	oral health,
		child development,	approved tool to	breastfeeding & infant	breastfeeding and	breastfeeding and
		stages of development,	complete a (1)	feeding, outdoor play &	infant feeding,	infant feeding,
		and children's health	physical activity self-	learning, or screen time	outdoor play and	outdoor play and
		with families.	assessment and create	and create and	learning, OR screen	learning, OR screen
			and implement one	implement two action	time and create and	time and create and
		2.D.3 All children, birth	action plan in the	plans in that module	implement two (2)	implement two (2)
		to kindergarten, shall	physical activity		action plans in that	action plans in that
		have an annual	module.	4.D.2 The facility shall	module.	module.
		developmental		use the Division –		
		screening.	3.D.3 The facility shall	approved tool to	5.D.2 The facility	6.D.2 The facility shall
			use the Division –	complete a second self-	shall use the	use the Division –
		2.D.4 The facility shall	approved tool to	assessment in child	Division – approved	approved tool to
		use a Division-	complete a second	nutrition, physical	tool to complete a	complete a second
		approved tool to	self-assessment in the	activity, farm to ECE,	second self-	self-assessment in
		complete a child	physical activity	oral health,	assessment in child	child nutrition,
		nutrition self-	module to assess	breastfeeding & infant	nutrition, physical	physical activity, farm
		assessment and create	progress.	feeding, outdoor play &	activity, farm to	to ECE, oral health,
		and implement one (1)			ECE, oral health,	breastfeeding & infant

	action plan in the child	learning, OR screen	breastfeeding &	feeding, outdoor play
	nutrition module.	time to assess progress.	infant feeding,	& learning, OR screen
			outdoor play &	time to assess
	2.D.5 The facility shall		learning, OR screen	progress.
	use a Division-		time to assess	
	approved tool to		progress.	
	complete a second self-			
	assessment in the child			
	nutrition model to			
	assess progress.			

ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS — LICENSED AND REGISTERED HOME REQUIREMENTS

All facilities must be in good standing with the Department of Human Services.

COMPONENTS	LEVEL-1	FNEL 2	E-TB-N-BT	LEVEL 4	FAEL 5	9 TENET 0
		Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all-	Must meet all	Must meet all
		requirements for	requirements for	requirements for	requirements for	requirements for
		Level 1	Level 1 and Level 2	Levels 1 - 3	Levels 1 - 4	Levels 1 - 5
₹	1.A.1 The facility has a	2.A.1. A program review	3.A.1 The facility shall	4.A.1 The facility shall	5.A.1 The facility	6.A.1 The facility
Administration	license in New	shall be completed by a	score an average of	score an average of	shall score an	shall score an
	Provisional or Regular	certified BAS assessor.	4.00 or higher on BAS	4.00 or higher on BAS.	average of 5.00 or	average of 6.00 or
	status.		items 2-10 (item 2 is-)	higher on BAS.	higher on BAS.
		2.A.2 The primary	scored but is not	A A 2 The primary		
	1.A.2 The facility may	earegiver shall-	included in the	carogiver chall.		
	have a program	complete a	average).	implement at least one		
	review completed by a	Strengthening Families		(1) additional		
	certified BAS assessor.	training listed on the	3.A.2 The primary	(+) additionar Strongthoning Eamiliae		
		PDR.	caregiver shall	action plan for a total of		
			complete the	two (2)		
			Strengthening	./~\.		
			Families online self-			
			assessment for three			
			(3) or more strategies.			
			3.A.3 The primary			
			caregiver shall			
			develop a			
			Strengthening			

			Families action plan and implement at least one (1) actionstep.			
B. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development	Leense in New Provisional or Regular Status.	2.8.1 The primary caregiver shall complete "Early Learning Standards Basies" training. 2.8.2 The primary caregiver shall complete an ERS training. 2.8.3 The primary caregiver shall participate in at least two (2) clock hours of training on nutrition for children, annually. 2.8.4 The primary caregiver shall complete training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children.				
j	1.C.1 The facility has a	2.C.1 The facility shall	3.C.1 The facility shall	4.C.1 The facility shall	5.C.1 The facility	6.C.1 The facility shall
Learning Environment	license in New	score an average of	score an average of	score an average of 5.00	shall score an	score an average of
/Environment Assessment	Provisional or Regular status.	3.00 or higher on the FCERS.	4.00 or higher on the FCCERS.	or higher on the FCCERS.	average of 5.50 or higher on the FCCERS.	6.00 or higher on the FCCERS.
	1.C.2 The facility may have a FCCERS review.		3.C.2 Caregivers shall maintain a portfolio for each child.			
ď	1.D.1 The facility has a license in New	2.D.1 The primary caregiver shall	3.D.1 The primary caregiver shall share	4.D.1 The primary caregiver shall use a	5.D.1 The primary-caregiver shall use a	6.D.1 The primary caregiver shall use a

Child Health and	Provisional or Regular	document distribution	information on	Division-approved tool	Division-approved	Division approved tool
Development	status.	of ARKids First	nutrition and physical	to complete a self-	tool to complete a	to complete a self-
		information to families	activity for children	assessment in child	self-assessment in	assessment in child
		of uninsured children.	with families.	nutrition, physical	child nutrition,	nutrition, physical
				activity, farm to ECE,	physical activity,	activity, farm to ECE,
		2.D.2 The primary	3.D.2 The primary	oral health,	farm to ECE, oral	oral health,
		caregiver shall share	caregiver shall use a	breastfeeding and infant	health,	breastfeeding and
		information regarding	Division approved tool	feeding, outdoor play	breastfeeding and	infant feeding,
		child development,	to complete a physical	and learning, OR screen	infant feeding,	outdoor play and
		stages of development,	activity self-	time and create and	outdoor play and	learning, OR screen
		and children's health	assessment and create	implement two action	learning, OR screen	time and create and
		with families.	and implement one	plans in that module.	time and create and	implement two (2)
			action plan in the		implement two (2)	action plans in that
		2.D.3. All children birth	physical activity	4.D.2 The primary	action plans in that	module.
		to kindergarten shall	module.	caregiver shall use the	module.	
		have an annual		Division-approved tool		6.D.2 The primary
		developmental	3.D.3 The primary	to complete a second	5.D.2 The primary	caregiver shall use the
		screening.	caregiver shall use the	self-assessment in child	caregiver shall use	Division approved tool
			Division -approved	nutrition, physical	the Division-	to complete a second
		2.D.4 The primary	tool to complete a	activity, farm to ECE,	approved tool to	self assessment in
		caregiver shall use a	second self-	oral health,	complete a second	child nutrition,
		Division-approved tool	assessment in the	breastfeeding and infant	self-assessment in	physical activity, farm
		to complete a child	physical activity	feeding, outdoor play	child nutrition,	to ECE, oral health,
		nutrition self-	module to assess	and learning, OR screen	physical activity,	breastfeeding and
		assessment and create	progress.	time to assess progress.	farm to ECE, oral	infant feeding,
		and implement one (1)			health,	outdoor play and
		action plan in the child			breastfeeding and	learning, OR screen
		nutrition module.			infant feeding,	time to assess
					outdoor play and	progress.
		2.D.5 The primary			learning, OR screen	
		caregiver shall use a			time to assess	
		Division-approved tool			progress.	
		to complete a second				
		self-assessment in the				
		child nutrition module				
		to assess progress.				

ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS OUT OF SCHOOL TIME REQUIREMENTS

All facilities must be in good standing with the Department of Human Services.

COMPONENTS	LEVEL-1	LEVEL 2	FVEL 3	LEVEL 4	TEVEL 5	9 TENET 9
		Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all
		requirements for	requirements for	requirements for	requirements for	requirements for
		Level 1	Level 1 and Level 2	Levels 1 - 3	Levels 1 - 4	Levels 1 - 5
₹	1.A.1 The facility	2.A.1 The facility shall	3.A.1 The facility shall	4.A.1 The facility shall	5.A.1 The facility	6.A.1 The facility
Administration	has a license in	have a PAS review	score an average of	score an average of	shall score an	shall score an average
	New Provisional or	completed by a	4.00 or higher on PAS	4.00 or higher on PAS.	average of 5.00 or	of 6.00 or higher on
	Regular status.	eertified assessor. If	items 1-21 (items 5	If using YPQI, PAS is not	higher on PAS.	PAS.
		using YPQI, PAS is not	and 6 are scored but	required; however, a	If using YPQI, PAS is	If using YPQI, PAS is
	1.A.2 The facility	required; however, a	are not included in the	PQA Form B score of	not required;	not required PAS is
	may have a PAS	PQA Form B review	average.).	4.00 or higher is	however, a PQA	not required;
	review completed	shall be completed by	If using YPQI, PAS is	required.	Form B score of 4.25	however, a PQA Form
	by a certified	a reliable assessor.	not required;		or higher is required.	B score of 4.75 or
	assessor or a PQA		however, a PQA Form	4.A.2 The director shall		higher is required.
	form B review	2.A.2 The director	B score of 3.75 or	implement at least one		
	completed by a	shall complete a	higher is required.	(1) additional		
	reliable assessor.	Strengthening		Strengthening Families		
		Families training,	3.A.2 The director	action plan for a total		
		listed on the PDR.	shall complete the	of two (2).		
			Strongthoning			
			Sacrifications Eamilies online self-			
			110000000000000000000000000000000000000			
			assessment for three			
			(3) or more Strategies.			
			- - - - - - - - - -			
			5.A.5-THE LACHILY SHAH			
			develop a			
			Strengthening			
			Families action plan			
			and implement at			
			least one (1) action			
d	1 R 1 The facility	2 R 1 All directors and				
10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 1		1 to 0 to				
otal gualifications and	Has a Heemse III	driedst inty percent				
Professional Development	New Provisional of	(50%) of teaching staff				
	Kegular status.	snall complete intro				

		to the 40- Developmental Assets" training. 2.8.2 All directors and, and fifty percent (50%) of the teaching- staff shall complete an ERS or YPQ1 training. 2.8.3 The director and kitchen manager (if applicable) shall- participate in training on nutrition for school age children/youth, annually. 2.8.4 The director- shall complete. training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children/youth.				
C. Learning Environment / Environment Assessment	1.C1 The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status. 1.C2 The facility may have a SACERS or a PQA review completed by a reliable assessor.	2.C.1. The facility shall score an average of 3.00 or higher on the SACERS or 3.00 or higher on the PQA.	3.C.1. Facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on the SACERS or 3.75 or higher on the PQA. 3.C.2. Staff shall maintain a portfolio for each participant.	4.C.1. The facility shall score an average of 5.00 or higher on the SACERS or 4.00 or higher on the PQA.	5.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 5.50 or higher on the SACERS or 4.25 or higher on the PQA.	6.C.1. The staff/participant ratio shall be 1:15. 6.C.2. The facility shall score an average of 6.00 or higher on the SACERS or 4:50 or higher on the higher on the PQA.
di	1.D.1 The facility has a license in	2.D.1 The facility shall document the	3.D.1 The facility shall share information on			

Child/Youth Health and	New Provisional or	distribution of ARKids	nutrition and physical		
Development	Regular status.	First information to	activity for school age		
		families of uninsured	children with families.		
		participants.			
		2.D.2 The facility shall			
		share with families			
		information regarding			
		child or youth			
		development, stages			
		of development, and			
		children's health			

7.0 APPLICATION

7.1 The application will consist of the following items:

A. An application indicating the level of Better Beginnings that the individual is applying for. This can be submitted via the provider portal. If the provider portal is not operable, applications may be submitted electronically through email at BetterBeginnings@dhs.arkansas.gov.

B. Supporting documentation for all items listed in Section 6, regarding the facility type and level for which the facility is applying.

- 7.2 Eligible programs that are accredited through state or national accreditation systems are eligible for full or partial reciprocation and given certification at levels that are determined by the Division. The following are some examples of approved accreditation systems:
 - Arkansas Better Chance (ABC)
 - Association Montessori International
 - The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities: Child and Youth Services Standards (CARF)
 - Early Head Start
 - Head Start
 - National Afterschool Association (NAA)
 - National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
 - National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)

Other accreditation systems may be considered upon review and approval by the Better Beginnings Program Administrator.

Facilities with such accreditations shall apply for participation in Better Beginnings via the provider-portal and submit verification of the accreditation. If the provider portal is not operable, applications-may be submitted electronically through email at BetterBeginnings@dhs.arkansas.gov. Additional documentation of Better Beginnings requirements or reviews may be required to determine the level of Better Beginnings certification.

8.0 APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

- **8.1** Applications will be denied if they lack the required supporting documentation.
- **8.2** The Division will review the supporting documentation to determine if each item submitted meets the intent of the associated requirement.
- 8.3 When the documentation submitted does not meet the requirements, or evidence is not included, the facility may not be eligible for that level. Facilities will be considered for a lower level.

- **8.4** Applicants will be certified at the highest level for which all requirements are met as determined by review of all documentation and assessments.
- 8.5 Applicants who purchase an existing facility that is certified at level two (2) or above, and has active voucher participants enrolled, may be given a temporary Better Beginnings level to enable them to temporarily bill for the voucher participants that are enrolled. The new owner will have ninety (90) days to achieve their own Better Beginnings level. The new owner will be certified at the level for which they qualify. If they do not qualify within ninety (90) days, they will be removed from participation.

9.0 MAINTAINING CERTIFICATON

- 9.1 Certification for level two (2) and above is valid for thirty-six (36) months unless the facility becomes otherwise ineligible for certification according to section 5.00 Eligibility or 10.00 Adverse Action. Certification for level one (1) facilities will remain valid, as long as the license is in new provisional or regular status.
- 9.2 Facilities, certified as Better Beginnings level two (2) and above programs, must re-submit all-application documents, as outlined in section 7.00, thirty-five (35) months after the date of the last-certification. Level one (1) facilities are not required to reapply. Failure to submit required documentation may result in loss of certification status. Certification will be granted upon completion of all requirements (see section 8.00).
- **9.3** Facilities who do not meet requirements for their current level or higher at recertification will be given the option of accepting the highest level for which they qualify or being placed on a 90-day-corrective action agreement. All requirements must be met for the current or higher level by the end of the corrective action agreement. If the requirements are not met, the facility will be certified at the highest level for which they qualify.
- 9.4 A certified facility which becomes the subject of an investigation may retain current certification until the investigation is concluded. The outcome of the investigation may be considered in determining continuation of certification or a corrective action agreement at any level.
- 9.5 Facilities requesting to be reviewed for a higher level of certification must submit a new application for the higher level. A full application must be submitted according to section 7.00 and will be processed according to section 8.00. Facilities meeting higher level requirements will be newly certified at the appropriate level. Facilities not meeting higher level requirements will be assigned the level of certification achieved.
- 9.6 Certified facilities that change location must submit a new application for Better Beginnings certification according to section 7.00 and will be processed according to section 8.00. The facility may

retain the current certification level, until the application review process is completed. This process shall be completed within ninety (90) days of the relocation. If the facility does not qualify within ninety (90) days, they will be removed from participation.

- 9.7 Unannounced visits, reviews, or random checks may be conducted at any time to verify continued compliance with certification requirements. An unfavorable review may result in a full scale reassessment, which could change the Better Beginnings status.
- 9.8 It is recommended that each facility implements a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process with a self-assessment to assist them in maintaining quality practices during the growth years when ERS and PAS reviews are not done. Technical assistance is available upon request.

10.0 ADVERSE ACTION

- **10.1** Adverse actions include denial, suspension, reduction in level, or removal of certified status. Adverse actions may include but are not limited to:
 - A. Ineligibility to participate according to section 5.00 Eligibility;
 - B. Application documentation which is incomplete or does not meet the intent of requirements according to sections 6.00, 7.00, 8.00, and 9.00;
 - C. Failure to continue to meet the requirements for the component areas for the level which the facility is assigned;
 - D. Numerous or serious deficiencies cited by licensing;
 - E. Substantiation of complaints received by the Division;
 - F. Being placed on Adverse Action by any program in DCCECE;
 - G. Changes in the license status of the facility; or
 - H. Falsification of any document or submission of false information to any DHS Division.
- **10.2** Facilities that have their Better Beginnings certification denied, suspended, or removed are eligible to re apply after twelve (12) months unless otherwise authorized by the Division Director.

11.0 APPEAL PROCEDURE

- 11.1 Facilities that are denied certification status, are found to be ineligible for a particular level or have had their certification status reduced or removed; may request an appeal. A written request for appeal shall be submitted to the Better Beginnings Program Administrator within ten (10) days of the notice of action, asking that certification status decision be reviewed.
- 11.2 Upon receipt of the request for appeal, the Better Beginnings Program Administrator will-conduct an internal review to ensure that the appropriate processes were followed and to determine the validity of the decision. The Better Beginnings Program Administrator will review the findings with the Division Director and will transmit the findings of the internal review to the facility within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the request to appeal.

- 11.3 If the outcome of the internal review is unsatisfactory to the facility, the facility has ten (10) days in which to ask for further review by the Better Beginnings Appeal Review Committee. The committee will schedule a hearing and notify the facility in writing of the date and time of the hearing. The committee members are appointed by the chair of the Early Childhood Commission. A decision of the Better Beginnings Appeal Review Committee is the final DHS administrative decision.
- 11.4 In the event that there are appeals made to multiple units in DCCECE, regarding the action that resulted in the Better Beginnings action being appealed, the Better Beginnings appeal will not be heard until the outcome of the other appeals has been determined. If the action is overturned, then the Better Beginnings appeal will be scheduled. If the action is upheld, the decision is final and there will be no Better Beginnings appeal hearing.

Better Beginnings Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System



Provider RULE BOOK

Arkansas Department of Education

Division of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of Early Childhood

https://arbetterbeginnings.com/
OEC.BetterBeginnings@ade.arkansas.gov

Title 20. Public Health and Welfare

<u>Chapter XLV. Office of Early Childhood, Department of Education</u> Subchapter A. Generally

Part 1001. Better Beginnings Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System

<u>Codification Notes.</u> This part as promulgated prior to codification into the Code of Arkansas Rules of 2024 provided as follows:

"Better Beginnings Overview

Better Beginnings is a tiered quality rating and improvement system (TQRIS) which is a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early care and education programs. Program types include center-based care, family childcare, and out-of-school time programs.

Better Beginnings is a "building block" approach, which means that programs must meet all requirements at one level before moving to the next. Licensing, or Minimum Licensing Requirements (MLR), is the foundation on which Better Beginnings is built. The requirements at level one (1) of Better Beginnings align with MLR and help the director or primary caregiver begin the journey towards quality improvement. At level two (2), the staff becomes more involved in the process. Levels three (3) and above set even higher requirements for all components.

Resources are available and have been specifically designed to help providers understand and meet each requirement. The resources will help providers become more knowledgeable and effective for Better Beginnings in the lives of children."

"1.00 REGULATORY AUTHORITY

- 1.01 These rules are enacted pursuant to Arkansas Code Ann. § 20-78-201 et seq. as amended.
- 1.02 These rules shall be known as the Arkansas Department of Education, Office of Early Childhood rules governing Better Beginnings, Arkansas's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System."

20 CAR § 1001-101. Purpose.

- (a) It is the purpose of this part to set the general guidelines for the operation of Better Beginnings.
- (b)(1) Providers who choose to receive funding from the Child Care and Development Fund Block Grant must be a Better Beginnings participant at the level determined by the Office of Early Childhood.
- (2) This system is intended to certify quality status to childcare facilities that meet Better Beginnings requirements as set forth in this part.
- (c) Designation of certified status for any childcare facility will qualify taxpayers for the following:
- (1)(A) Under Acts 1993, No. 820, corporations that build and equip a certified childcare center will be exempt from the state compensating tax levied by the Arkansas Compensating Tax Act of 1949, Arkansas Code § 26-53-101 et seq.

- (B) Construction materials and furnishings purchased for use in the initial construction and equipping of a childcare center for the exclusive purpose of providing childcare to the corporation's employees will be subject to this exemption;
- (2) Under Acts 1993, No. 820, a business that qualifies for the exemption from the gross receipts tax under Arkansas Code § 26-52-401(29) shall be allowed an income tax credit of three and nine-tenths percent (3.9%) of the annual salary of employees employed exclusively in providing childcare services; and
- (3) Under Acts 1993, No. 1268, enhanced income tax credits in the amount of twenty percent (20%) of the federal childcare credit as allowed under Section 21 of the Internal Revenue Code will be available to qualified taxpayers who incur childcare expenses at childcare facilities that are certified at Better Beginnings level two (2) or above.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 20-78-206.

Codification Notes. Section 21 of the Internal Revenue Code is codified at 26 U.S.C. § 21.

20 CAR § 1001-102. Definitions.

As used in this part:

- (a) The Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care (BAS) is the first valid and reliable instrument for measuring and improving the overall quality of business and professional practices in family child care settings in 10 areas: Qualifications and Professional Development, Income and Benefits, Work Environment, Fiscal Management, Recordkeeping, Risk Management, Provider-Family Communication, Family Support and Engagement, marketing and Community Relations, and Provider as Employer.
- (b)Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) means a plan of action that not only outlines goals and action steps but includes time frames and persons responsible for specific actions.
- (c) Director means the person who meets MLR as director and is on-site a minimum of fifty percent (50%) of the operational day.
- (d) Environment Rating Scale (ERS) The term used to describe the tools used to measure elements of classroom quality. These include the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale, Infant-Toddler Rating Scale, Family Child Care Rating Scale and School-Age Care Rating Scale.
- (e) Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS) means a rating scale designed to assess family child care programs conducted in a provider's home.
- (f) Minimum Licensing Requirements (MLR) means the minimum health and safety requirements to legally operate.
- (g) Office of Early Childhood (OEC) means the state agency responsible to ensure children and families have access to high-quality child care through licensing, training, and funding
- (h) Program Administration Scale (PAS) means a program used to gather information that measures the quality of administrative, management, and leadership practices of an early childhood program. The PAS helps a program dig deeper into the following aspects of program administration:
 - (1) Human Resources Development;
 - (2) Personnel Cost and Allocation;
 - (3) Center Operations;
 - (4) Child Assessment;

- (5) Fiscal Management;
- (6) Program Planning and Evaluation;
- (7) Family Partnerships;
- (8) Marketing and Public Relations;
- (9) Technology; and
- (10) Staff Qualifications.
- (i) Professional Development Registry (PDR) means an online registry where early childhood educators can register for professional development opportunities and obtain resources to enhance their knowledge and skills.
- (j) Program Quality Assessment (PQA) means a system to evaluate the quality children's programs and identify staff training needs.
- (k) School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale (SACERS) means a rating scale designed to assess before and after school groups.
- (1) Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) means a systemic approach to assess, improve, and communicate the level of quality in early and school-age care and education programs.
- (m) Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI) means a shared learning experience with peers moving together through a cycle of continuous quality improvement throughout the year.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 20-78-206.

20 CAR § 1001-103. Agency responsibility. (a) The Office of Early Childhood will coordinate and administer Better Beginnings. (b)(1) The office is authorized to make temporary revisions to this part as deemed necessary during a Governor-declared public health emergency or natural disaster impacting the State of Arkansas. (2) These revisions will be posted on the Better Beginnings website. (c) The Better Beginnings Program Administrator or designee will have final approval of applications for certification as reviewed and recommended by the Better Beginnings staff. (d) By December 31 of each year, the office will be responsible for providing verification to the Department of Finance and Administration of the childcare facilities that were qualified for certification at level two (2) and above in the current calendar year. (e) Each December, the office will be responsible for providing verification to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission of the childcare facilities that qualified for Better Beginnings certification in the current calendar year. (f) The office or office consultants will provide technical assistance to any facilities desiring to achieve certification. (g)(1) The office will be responsible for the process of recertifying facilities. (2) See: (A) 20 CAR § 1001-106, application; (B) 20 CAR § 1001-107, application review process; and (C) 20 CAR § 1001-108, maintaining certification. (h)(1) Facilities will be notified of their certification status.

(2) The certification notice will denote the level of certification achieved.

20 CAR § 1001-104. Eligibility.
(a) All licensed, registered, and church-operated exempt childcare facilities, as defined
under Arkansas Code § 20-78-202, exclusive of foster homes, group homes, and custodial
institutions, are eligible to apply for certified status.
(b)(1) All childcare facilities, except those excluded in subsection (a) of this section,
operating under a new provisional or regular license, registration, or church-operated exemption
as issued by the Office of Early Childhood, are eligible to apply.
(2) Entities with multiple sites, each holding a separate license number, must
apply for certification for each site individually.
(c)(1) All facilities must be in good standing with the Department of Education.
(2) A facility in good standing is not currently debarred, defunded, excluded, or
under adverse action with licensing or other department programs.
(d)(1) Applicants and certified facilities must make their facilities accessible at all times
during the regular program hours for program reviews and environmental assessments.
(2) Such assessments may be unannounced.
(e) Any of the following situations, including but not limited to conditions below, may
result in an application being denied, a reduction in level, or removal of Better Beginnings status:
(1) Ineligibility to participate according to this section;
(2) Application documentation that is incomplete or does not meet the intent of
the requirements according to 20 CAR §§ 1001-105 – 1001-108;
(3) Failure to continue to meet the requirements for the component areas for the
level that the facility is assigned;
(4) Numerous or serious deficiencies cited by licensing;
(5) Substantiation of complaints received by the office;
(6) Being placed in Adverse Action:
(7) Changes in the license status of the facility; or
(8) Falsification of any document or submission of false information to any
department division.
(f) Facilities that have been denied certification or have had certification removed by
reason of ineligibility according to any provisions of this section may be eligible to reapply in
twelve (12) months unless otherwise notified by the Office of Early Childhood Director.
Authority. Arkansas Code § 20-78-206.
Authority. Airalisas Code § 20-10-200.
20 CAP \$ 1001 105 Component areas requirements and levels

(a) There are four (4) component areas in Better Beginnings: (1) Administration;

- (2) Staff Qualifications and Professional Development;
 - (3) Learning Environment/Environment Assessment; and
 - (4) Child Health and Development.
- (b)(1) There are requirements to be met in each component area in each of the levels.
 - (2) The components, requirements, and levels are on the following pages.

ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS CHILDCARE CENTER REQUIREMENTS

All facilities must be in good standing with the Department of Education.

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
		Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all
		requirements for	<u>requirements for</u>	<u>requirements for</u>	requirements for	<u>requirements for</u>
		Level 1	Level 1 and	Levels $1-3$	Levels $1-4$	<u>Levels 1 - 5</u>
			Level 2			
<u>A.</u>	1.A.1 The	2.A.1 The	3.A.1 The	4.A.1 The	5.A.1 The	6.A.1 The
Administration	facility has a	facility shall	<u>facility shall</u>	facility shall	facility shall	facility shall
	<u>license in New</u>	have a PAS	score an average	score an average	score an average	score an average
	<u>Provisional or</u>	<u>review</u>	of 4.00 or higher	of 4.00 or higher	of 5.00 or higher	of 6.00 or higher
	Regular status.	completed by a	on PAS items 1-	on PAS. School-	on PAS. School-	on PAS. School-
		certified PAS	21 (items 5 and	age programs	age programs	age programs
	1.A.2 The	assessor.	6 are scored but	using YPQI	using YPQI	using YPQI
	facility may	School-age	are not included	shall have a	shall have a	shall have a
	have a program	programs using	in the average).	PQA Form B	PQA Form B	PQA Form B
	<u>review</u>	YPQI shall have	School-age	score of 4.00 or	score of 4.25 or	score of 4.75 or
	completed by a	a PQA Form B	programs using	<u>higher.</u>	<u>higher.</u>	<u>higher.</u>
	certified PAS	review	YPQI shall have			
	assessor. School	completed by a	a PQA Form B	4.A.2 The		
	age programs	reliable assessor.	score of 3.75 or	director shall		
	using YPQI		<u>higher.</u>	implement at		
	may have a	2.A.2 The		least one (1)		
	PQA Form B	director shall	3.A.2 The	<u>additional</u>		
	<u>review</u>	complete a	director shall	Strengthening		
	completed by a	Strengthening	complete the	Families action		
	<u>reliable</u>	<u>Families</u>	Strengthening	step for a total		
	assessor.	training listed on	Families online	of two (2).		
		the PDR.	self-assessment			
			for three (3) or			
			more Strategies.			

			3.A.3 The facility shall		
			develop a Strengthening		
			Families action plan and		
			implement at least one (1)		
B. Staff	1.B.1 The	2.B.1 All	action step.		
Qualifications and	facility has a license in New	directors and at least fifty			
Professional Development	Provisional or Regular status.	percent (50%) of teaching staff			
Development	Regular status.	shall complete			
		"Early Learning Standards (ELS)			
		Basics Training." The			
		director and school-age staff			
		shall complete			
		"Developmental Assets			
		Training."			
		2.B.2 All directors and			
		fifty percent			
		(50%) of teaching staff			
		shall complete			

		an ERS training; if the facility is using YPQI, all directors and school-age staff shall complete YPQI training. 2.B.3 The director and kitchen manager (if applicable) shall participate in at least two (2) clock hours of training on nutrition for children annually. 2.B.4 The director shall complete training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for				
<u>C.</u> Learning	1.C.1 The facility has a	activities for children. 2.C.1 The facility shall	3.C.1 The facility shall	4.C.1 Staff to child ratios shall	5.C.1 Staff to child ratios shall	6.C.1 Staff to child ratios shall
Environment /	license in New	score an average of 3.00 or higher	score an average of 4.00 or higher	be maintained as follows:	be maintained as follows:	be maintained as follows:

Environment	Provisional or	on the ERS	on the ERS.	Birth-18 months	Birth-18 months	Birth-18 months
Assessment	Regular status.	review. School	School age	1:4	1:4	1:4
		age programs	programs using	18-36 months	18-36 months	18-36 months
	1.C.2 The	using PQA shall	PQA shall score	1:7	1:6	1:6
	facility may	score a 3.00 or	3.75 or higher	$\frac{1}{2}$ - 3 years	$\frac{2\sqrt{2}}{2}$ - 3 years	$\frac{\overline{2}}{2}$ - 3 years
	have an ERS	higher on the	on the PQA.	1:11	1:10	1:10
	review. School	PQA.		4 years 1:12	4 years 1:10	4 years 1:10
	age programs		3.C.2 The staff	5 years and up	5 years and up	5 years and up
	using YPQI		shall maintain a	1:20	1:20	<u>1:20</u>
	may have a		portfolio for			
	PQA review.		each child.	4.C.2 The	5.C.2 The	<u>6.C.2 The</u>
				facility shall	facility shall	facility shall
				score an average	score an average	score an average
				of 5.00 or higher	of 5.50 or higher	of 6.00 or higher
				on ERS.	on the ERS.	on ERS.
				School age	School age	School age
				programs using	programs using	programs using
				PQA shall score	the PQA shall	the PQA shall
				4.00 or higher	<u>score 4.25 or</u>	<u>score 4.50 or</u>
				on the PQA.	higher on the	higher on the
					PQA.	PQA.
D. Child Health	<u>1.D.1 The</u>	2.D.1 The	3.D.1 The	4.D.1 The	<u>5.D.1 The</u>	<u>6.D.1 The</u>
<u>and</u>	facility has a	facility shall	facility shall	facility shall use	facility shall use	facility shall use
<u>Development</u>	<u>license in New</u>	document	share	an OEC-	an OEC-	an OEC-
	<u>Provisional or</u>	distribution of	information on	approved tool to	approved tool to	approved tool to
	Regular status.	ARKids First	nutrition and	complete a self-	complete a self-	complete a self-
		information to	physical activity	assessment in	assessment in	assessment in
		<u>families of</u>	for children with	child nutrition,	child nutrition,	child nutrition,
		uninsured	<u>families.</u>	physical	<u>physical</u>	<u>physical</u>
		<u>children.</u>	3 D 3 F	activity, farm to	activity, farm to	activity, farm to
		2 D 2 T	3.D.2 The	ECE, oral	ECE, oral	ECE, oral
		2.D.2 The	facility shall use	health,	health,	health,
		facility shall	an OEC-	breastfeeding &	breastfeeding	breastfeeding

share	approved tool to	infant feeding,	and infant	and infant
information on	complete a (1)	outdoor play &	feeding, outdoor	feeding, outdoor
<u>child</u>	physical activity	<u>learning</u> , or	play and	play and
development,	self-assessment	screen time and	learning, OR	learning, OR
stages of	and create and	create and	screen time and	screen time and
development,	implement one	implement two	create and	create and
stages of	action plan in	action plans in	implement two	implement two
development,	the physical	that module.	(2) action plans	(2) action plans
and children's	activity module.		in that module.	in that module.
health with		4.D.2 The		
families.	3.D.3 The	facility shall use	5.D.2 The	6.D.2 The
	facility shall use	the OEC-	facility shall use	facility shall use
2.D.3 All	the OEC-	approved tool to	the OEC-	the OEC-
children, birth to	approved tool to	complete a	approved tool to	approved tool to
kindergarten,	complete a	second self-	complete a	complete a
shall have an	second self-	assessment in	second self-	second self-
<u>annual</u>	assessment in	child nutrition,	assessment in	assessment in
developmental	the physical	<u>physical</u>	child nutrition,	child nutrition,
screening.	activity module	activity, farm to	physical	physical
	to assess	ECE, oral	activity, farm to	activity, farm to
2.D.4 The	progress.	<u>health,</u>	ECE, oral	ECE, oral
facility shall use		breastfeeding &	health,	<u>health</u> ,
an OEC-		infant feeding,	breastfeeding &	breastfeeding &
approved tool to		outdoor play &	infant feeding,	infant feeding,
complete a child		learning, OR	outdoor play &	outdoor play &
nutrition self-		screen time to	learning, OR	learning, OR
assessment and		assess progress.	screen time to	screen time to
create and			assess progress.	assess progress.
implement one				
(1) action plan				
in the child				
<u>nutrition</u>				
module.				

2.D.5 The facility shall use an OEC- approved tool to complete a second self- assessment in the child nutrition model	5	
to assess progress.		

ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – LICENSED AND REGISTERED HOME REQUIREMENTS

All facilities must be in good standing with the Department of Education.

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	<u>LEVEL 4</u>	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
		Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all
		requirements for	requirements for	requirements for	requirements for	requirements for
		Level 1	Level 1 and	Levels $1-3$	Levels $1-4$	Levels 1 - 5
			Level 2			
<u>A.</u>	1.A.1 The	2.A.1 A	3.A.1 The	4.A.1 The	5.A.1 The	6.A.1 The
Administration	facility has a	program review	facility shall	facility shall	facility shall	facility shall
	license in New	shall be	score an average	score an average	score an average	score an average
	Provisional or	completed by a	of 4.00 or higher	of 4.00 or higher	of 5.00 or higher	of 6.00 or higher
	Regular status.	certified BAS	on BAS items 2-	on BAS.	on BAS.	on BAS.
		assessor.	10 (item 2 is			
	1.A.2 The		scored but is not	4.A.2 The		
	facility may	2.A.2 The	included in the	primary		
	have a program	primary	average).	caregiver shall		
	review	caregiver shall		implement at		
	completed by a	complete a	3.A.2 The	least one (1)		
	certified BAS	Strengthening	primary	additional		
	assessor.	Families	caregiver shall	Strengthening		
	assessor.	training listed on	complete the	Families action		
		the PDR.	Strengthening	plan for a total		
		the TDR.	Families online	of two (2).		
			self-assessment	01 two (2).		
			for three (3) or			
			more strategies.			
			2 4 2 754 -			
			3.A.3 The			
			<u>primary</u>			
			caregiver shall			
			<u>develop a</u>			

		Т	Г		Г
			Strengthening		
			Families action		
			plan and		
			implement at		
			least one (1)		
			action step.		
B. Staff	1.B.1 The	2.B.1 The	action step.		
Qualifications	facility has a	<u>primary</u>			
and	license in New	caregiver shall			
Professional	Provisional or	complete "Early			
Development	Regular status.	<u>Learning</u>			
		<u>Standards</u>			
		Basics" training.			
		_			
		2.B.2 The			
		primary			
		caregiver shall			
		complete an			
		ERS training.			
		2.B.3 The			
		<u>primary</u>			
		caregiver shall			
		participate in at			
		least two (2)			
		clock hours of			
		training on			
		nutrition for			
		children,			
		annually.			
		<u>2.B.4 The</u>			
		<u>primary</u>			

		caregiver shall				
		<u>complete</u>				
		training on				
		developmentally				
		<u>appropriate</u>				
		<u>physical</u>				
		activities for				
		<u>children.</u>				
<u>C.</u>	1.C.1 The	2.C.1 The	3.C.1 The	4.C.1 The	5.C.1 The	6.C.1 The
Learning	facility has a	facility shall	facility shall	facility shall	facility shall	facility shall
Environment /	license in New	score an average	score an average	score an average	score an average	score an average
Environment	Provisional or	of 3.00 or higher	of 4.00 or higher	of 5.00 or higher	of 5.50 or higher	of 6.00 or higher
Assessment	Regular status.	on the FCCERS.	on the FCCERS.	on the FCCERS.	on the FCCERS.	on the FCCERS.
	1.C.2 The		3.C.2			
	facility may		Caregivers shall			
	have a FCCERS		maintain a			
	review.		portfolio for			
	<u>10 / 10 / / .</u>		each child.			
D. Child Health	1.D.1 The	2.D.1 The	3.D.1 The	4.D.1 The	5.D.1 The	6.D.1 The
and	facility has a	primary	primary	primary	primary	primary
Development and	license in New	caregiver shall	caregiver shall	caregiver shall	caregiver shall	caregiver shall
Development	Provisional or	document	share	use an OEC-	use an OEC-	use an OEC-
	Regular status.	distribution of	information on	approved tool to	approved tool to	approved tool to
	regular status.	ARKids First	nutrition and	complete a self-	complete a self-	complete a self-
		information to	physical activity	assessment in	assessment in	assessment in
		families of	for children with	child nutrition,	child nutrition,	child nutrition,
		uninsured	families.		physical	
		children.	rannines.	physical activity, farm to	activity, farm to	physical activity, farm to
		<u>cinidicii.</u>	2 D 2 The	ECE, oral	ECE, oral	ECE, oral
		2 D 2 The	3.D.2 The			1 .
		2.D.2 The	primary	health,	health,	health,
		primary	caregiver shall	breastfeeding	breastfeeding	breastfeeding
		caregiver shall	use an OEC-	and infant	and infant	and infant

	T _	T	T	1	I a
	<u>share</u>	approved tool to	feeding, outdoor	feeding, outdoor	<u>feeding</u> , outdoor
	<u>information</u>	complete a	play and	play and	play and
	regarding child	physical activity	<u>learning</u> , OR	learning, OR	<u>learning</u> , OR
	development,	self-assessment	screen time and	screen time and	screen time and
	stages of	and create and	create and	create and	create and
	development,	implement one	implement two	implement two	implement two
	and children's	action plan in	(2) action plans	(2) action plans	(2) action plans
	health with	the physical	in that module.	in that module.	in that module.
	families.	activity module.			
			4.D.2 The	5.D.2 The	6.D.2 The
	2.D.3 All	3.D.3 The	primary	primary	primary
	children birth to	primary	caregiver shall	caregiver shall	caregiver shall
	<u>kindergarten</u>	caregiver shall	use the OEC-	use the OEC-	use the OEC-
	shall have an	use the OEC-	approved tool to	approved tool to	approved tool to
	<u>annual</u>	approved tool to	complete a	complete a	complete a
	developmental	complete a	second self-	second self-	second self-
	screening.	second self-	assessment in	assessment in	assessment in
		assessment in	child nutrition,	child nutrition,	child nutrition,
	2.D.4 The	the physical	physical	physical	physical
	primary	activity module	activity, farm to	activity, farm to	activity, farm to
	caregiver shall	to assess	ECE, oral	ECE, oral	ECE, oral
	use an OEC-	progress.	health,	health,	health,
	approved tool to		breastfeeding	breastfeeding	breastfeeding
	complete a child		and infant	and infant	and infant
	nutrition self-		feeding, outdoor	feeding, outdoor	feeding, outdoor
	assessment and		play and	play and	play and
	create and		learning, OR	learning, OR	learning, OR
	implement one		screen time to	screen time to	screen time to
	(1) action plan		assess progress.	assess progress.	assess progress.
	in the child				
	nutrition				
	module.				
1	1	ı	1	1	ı

	2.D.5 The primary caregiver shall use an OEC-approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in the child	

<u>ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME REQUIREMENTS</u>

All facilities must be in good standing with the Department of Education.

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 6
		Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all	Must meet all
		requirements for	requirements for	requirements for	requirements for	<u>requirements for</u>
		Level 1	Level 1 and	Levels $1-3$	Levels $1-4$	<u>Levels 1 - 5</u>
			<u>Level 2</u>			
<u>A.</u>	1.A.1 The	2.A.1 The	3.A.1 The	4.A.1 The	5.A.1 The	6.A.1 The
Administration	facility has a	facility shall	facility shall	facility shall	facility shall	facility shall
	license in New	have a PAS	score an average	score an average	score an average	score an average
	Provisional or	<u>review</u>	of 4.00 or higher	of 4.00 or higher	of 5.00 or higher	of 6.00 or higher
	Regular status.	completed by a	on PAS items 1-	on PAS. If using	on PAS. If using	on PAS. If using
		certified	21 (items 5 and	YPQI, PAS is	YPQI, PAS is	YPQI, PAS is
	1.A.2 The	assessor. If	6 are scored but	not required;	not required;	not required;
	facility may	using YPQI,	are not included	however, a PQA	however, a PQA	however, a PQA
	have a PAS	PAS is not	in the average.).	Form B score of	Form B score of	Form B score of
	review	required;	If using YPQI,	4.00 or higher is	4.25 or higher is	4.75 or higher is
	completed by a	however, a PQA	PAS is not	required.	required.	required.
	certified	Form B review	required;			
	assessor or a	shall be	however, a PQA	4.A.2 The		
	PQA form B	completed by a	Form B score of	director shall		
	<u>review</u>	reliable assessor.	3.75 or higher is	implement at		
	completed by a		required.	least one (1)		
	<u>reliable</u>	2.A.2 The	_	additional		
	assessor.	director shall	3.A.2 The	Strengthening		
		complete a	director shall	Families action		
		Strengthening	complete the	plan for a total		
		<u>Families</u>	Strengthening	of two (2).		
		training, listed	Families online			
		on the PDR.	self-assessment			

			for three (3) or		
			more Strategies.		
			3.A.3 The		
			facility shall		
			develop a		
			Strengthening		
			Families action plan and		
			implement at		
			least one (1)		
			action step.		
B. Staff	1.B.1 The	2.B.1 All			
Qualifications and	facility has a license in New	directors and at least fifty			
Professional	Provisional or	percent (50%) of			
Development	Regular status.	teaching staff			
		shall complete			
		"intro to the 40			
		<u>Developmental</u>			
		Assets" training.			
		2.B.2 All			
		directors and,			
		and fifty percent			
		(50%) of the			
		teaching staff			
		shall complete an ERS or YPQI			
		training.			
		2.B.3 The			
		director and			

		Iritahan managari				
		kitchen manager				
		(if applicable)				
		shall participate				
		in training on				
		nutrition for				
		school age				
		children/youth,				
		annually.				
		2.B.4 The	`			
		director shall				
		complete				
		training on				
		developmentally				
		appropriate				
		physical				
		activities for				
		children/youth.				
C.	1.C.1 The	2.C.1 The	3.C.1 Facility	4.C.1 The	5.C.1 The	6.C.1 The
<u>Learning</u>	facility has a	facility shall	shall score an	facility shall	facility shall	staff/participant
Environment /	license in New	score an average	average of 4.00	score an average	score an average	ratio shall be
Environment	Provisional or	of 3.00 or higher	or higher on the	of 5.00 or higher	of 5.50 or higher	1:20.
Assessment	Regular status.	on the SACERS	SACERS or	on the SACERS	on the SACERS	
		or 3.00 or higher	3.75 or higher	or 4.00 or higher	or 4.25 or higher	6.C.2 The
	1.C.2 The	on the PQA.	on the PQA.	on the PQA.	on the PQA.	facility shall
	facility may					score an average
	have a SACERS		3.C.2 Staff shall			of 6.00 or higher
	or a PQA		maintain a			on the SACERS
	review		portfolio for			or 4.50 or higher
	completed by a		each participant.			on the PQA.
	reliable					 _
	assessor.					

D. Child/Youth	1.D.1 The	2.D.1 The	3.D.1 The
Health	facility has a	facility shall	facility shall
<u>and</u>	<u>license in New</u>	document the	<u>share</u>
Development	<u>Provisional</u>	distribution of	information on
	Regular status.	ARKids First	nutrition and
		information to	physical activity
		<u>families of</u>	for school age
		uninsured	children with
		participants.	<u>families.</u>
		2 D 2 The	
		2.D.2 The	
		facility shall share families	
		information	
		regarding child	
		or youth	
		development,	
		stages of	
		development,	
		stages of	
		development,	
		and children's	
		<u>health.</u>	

Authority. Arkansas Code § 20-78-206.

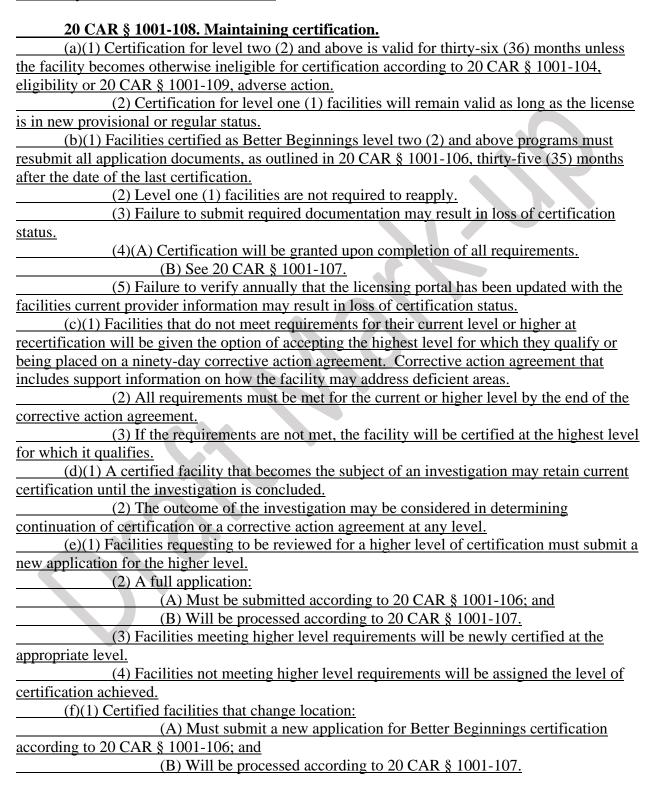
20 CAR § 1001-106. Application.
(a) The application will consist of the following items:
(1)(A) An application indicating the level of Better Beginnings that the individual
is applying for.
(B) This can be submitted via the provider portal.
(C) If the provider portal is not operable, applications may be submitted
electronically through email at OEC.BetterBeginnings@ade.arkansas.gov; and
(2) Supporting documentation for all items listed in 20 CAR § 1001-105
regarding the facility type and level for which the facility is applying.
(b)(1) Eligible programs that are accredited through state or national accreditation
systems are:
(A) Eligible for full or partial reciprocation; and
(B) Given certification at levels that are determined by the Office of Early
Childhood.
(3)(A) Facilities with such accreditations shall:
(i) Apply for participation in Better Beginnings via the provider
portal; and
(ii) Submit verification of the accreditation.
(B) If the provider portal is not operable, applications may be submitted
electronically through email at OEC.BetterBeginnings@ade.arkansas.gov.
(C) Additional documentation of Better Beginnings requirements or
reviews may be required to determine the level of Better Beginnings certification.
Authority. Arkansas Code § 20-78-206.
20 CAR § 1001-107. Application review process.
(a) Applications will be denied if they lack the required supporting documentation.
(b) The Office of Early Childhood will review the supporting documentation to determine
whether each item submitted meets the intent of the associated requirement.
(c)(1) When the documentation submitted does not meet the requirements or evidence is
not included, the facility may not be eligible for that level.
(2) Facilities will be considered for a lower level.
(d) Applicants will be certified at the highest level for which all requirements are met as
determined by review of all documentation and assessments.
(e)(1) Applicants who purchase an existing facility that is certified at level two (2) or
above and has active voucher participants enrolled may be given a temporary Better Beginnings
level to enable them to temporarily bill for the voucher participants that are enrolled.
(2) The new owner will have ninety (90) days to achieve their own Better
Beginnings level.
(3) The new owner will be certified at the level for which they qualify.
(4) If they do not qualify within ninety (90) days, they will be removed from
participation.

(f)New facilities that are opting into accepting childcare assistance must qualify for at least a provisional level II eligibility which consist of:

(A) Completed and Approved Provisional Eligibility Application; and

(B) Meet Better Beginnings Level 2 within (90 days).

Authority. Arkansas Code § 20-78-206.



(2) The facility may retain the current certification level until the application
review process is completed.
(3) This process shall be completed within ninety (90) days of the relocation.
(4) If the facility does not qualify within ninety (90) days, it will be removed from
participation.
(g)(1) Unannounced visits, reviews, or random checks may be conducted at any time to
verify continued compliance with certification requirements.
(2) An unfavorable review may result in a full-scale reassessment, which could
change the Better Beginnings status.
(h)(1) It is recommended that each facility implement a continuous quality improvement
process with a self-assessment to assist it in maintaining quality practices during the non-
assessment years when ERS and PAS reviews are not done.
(2) Technical assistance is available upon request.
Authority. Arkansas Code § 20-78-206.
20 CAR § 1001-109. Adverse action.
(a)(1) Adverse actions include denial, suspension, reduction in level, or removal of
<u>certified status.</u>
(2) Adverse actions may include but are not limited to:
(A) Ineligibility to participate according to 20 CAR § 1001-104,
eligibility;
(B) Application documentation that is incomplete or does not meet the
intent of requirements according to 20 CAR §§ 1001-105 – 1001-108;
(C) Failure to continue to meet the requirements for the component areas
for the level that the facility is assigned;
(D) Numerous or serious deficiencies cited by licensing;
(E) Substantiation of complaints received by the Office of Early
Childhood;
(F) Being placed on Adverse Action;
(G) Changes in the license status of the facility; or
(H) Falsification of any document or submission of false information to
any Department of Education division. (b) Equilities that have their Potter Paginnings cartification denied syspended or
(b) Facilities that have their Better Beginnings certification denied, suspended, or removed are eligible to reapply after twelve (12) months unless otherwise authorized by the
Office of Early Childhood Director.
Office of Early Childhood Director.
Authority. Arkansas Code § 20-78-206.
Authority. Arkansas Code § 20-76-200.
20 CAR § 1001-110. Appeal procedure.
(a)(1) Facilities that are denied certification status, are found to be ineligible for a
particular level, or have had their certification status reduced or removed may request an appeal.
(2) A written request for appeal shall be submitted to the Better Beginnings
Program Administrator within ten (10) days of the notice of action asking that the certification
status decision be reviewed.

(b)(1) Upon receipt of the request for appeal, the Better Beginnings Program Administrator will conduct an internal review to: (A) Ensure that the appropriate processes were followed; and (B) Determine the validity of the decision. (2) The Better Beginnings Program Administrator will review the findings with the Commissioner of Education or designee and will transmit the findings of the internal review to the facility within thirty (30) days of the receipt of the request to appeal. (c)(1) If the outcome of the internal review is unsatisfactory to the facility, the facility has ten (10) days in which to ask for further review by the Better Beginnings Appeal Review Committee. (2) The Better Beginnings Appeal Review Committee will schedule a hearing and notify the facility in writing of the date and time of the hearing. (3) The Better Beginnings Appeal Review Committee members are appointed by the Chair of the Arkansas Early Childhood Commission. (4) A decision of the Better Beginnings Appeal Review Committee is the final Department of Education administrative decision. (d)(1) In the event that there are appeals made to multiple units in the Office of Early Childhood regarding the action that resulted in the Better Beginnings action being appealed, the Better Beginnings appeal will not be heard until the outcome of the other appeals has been determined. (2) If the action is overturned, then the Better Beginnings appeal will be scheduled. (3) If the action is upheld, the decision is final and there will be no Better Beginnings appeal hearing.

Authority. Arkansas Code § 20-78-206.

DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION OEC RULES GOVERNING BETTER BEGINNINGS TIERED QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM

PUBLIC COMMENTS

·
<u>Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable)</u> : Lucas Harder, Arkansas School Board Association, May 29, 2024
Comments: Submitted Electronically
In 2.D.2, the phrase "stages of development" appears twice back to back.
<u>Division Response:</u> Changes were made to correct erroneous nonsubstantive changes consistent with the comments. No additional changes were made.
<u>Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable)</u> : Donna Kirkwood, Program Coordinator, Childhood Services, ASU, May 24, 2024
Comments: Submitted Electronically
Hey there,
I see that the BB rules have been updated to reflect DOE, OEC, etc.
Since they are open to public comment, I'd like to suggest that the following updates if possible
Pages 6, 9, and 17-Update to the terms used to describe YPQI assessments. PQA is similar to ERS, OQA (formerly Form B) is similar to PAS/BAS.
Page 3-The PAS Subscales have been updated as well.
I highlighted the areas where these edits would be and included comments with each one.
Thanks for considering these changes if possible. Wishing you well, Donna Kirkwood
<u>Division Response:</u> Comment Considered; no changes made. Division declines to make the suggested policy changes.

<u>Commenter Name and Organization (if applicable)</u>: Lucas Harder, Arkansas School Board Association, September 20, 2024

Comments: Submitted Electronically

Better Beginnings:

20 CAR § 1001-107(f): Is the (1) here actually necessary as there is not currently an (2) to follow?

(a): This sentence should end with a semicolon and a "and".

20 CAR § 1001-110(b)(2): "Commissioner of Education", should be changed to "Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education".

<u>Division Response:</u> Changes were made to correct erroneous nonsubstantive changes consistent with the comments. No additional changes were made.