



ARKANSAS
DEPARTMENT OF
**HUMAN
SERVICES**

Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education
P.O. Box 1437, Slot S140, Little Rock, AR 72203-1437
P: 501.682.8590 F: 501.683.6060 TDD: 501.682.1550

August 19, 2022

Blake Gilliam, Legislative Analyst
Senate Interim Children and Youth Committee and the
House Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs Committee
Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research
Bureau of Legislative Research
#1 Capitol, 5th Floor
Little Rock, AR 72201

Re: Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System

Dear Mr. Blake Gilliam:

Please arrange for the rule to be reviewed by the Children & Youth Committee. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Mac Golden, Office of Rules Promulgation at 501-320-6383 by emailing Mac.E.Golden@dhs.arkansas.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tonya Williams by Thomas Supper".

Tonya Williams
Director

TW:th

Attachments

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FILING PROPOSED RULES AND REGULATIONS
WITH THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

DEPARTMENT/AGENCY Department of Human Services
DIVISION Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
DIVISION DIRECTOR Tonya Williams
CONTACT PERSON Mac Golden
ADDRESS P. O. Box 1437, Slot S295 Little Rock, AR 72203-1437
PHONE NO. (501) 320.6383 FAX NO. (501) 404.4619 E-MAIL Mac.E.Golden@dhs.arkansas.gov
NAME OF PRESENTER AT COMMITTEE MEETING Tonya Williams
PRESENTER E-MAIL Tonya.L.Williams@dhs.arkansas.gov

INSTRUCTIONS

- A. Please make copies of this form for future use.
- B. Please answer each question **completely** using layman terms. You may use additional sheets, if necessary.
- C. If you have a method of indexing your rules, please give the proposed citation after “Short Title of this Rule” below.
- D. Submit two (2) copies of this questionnaire and financial impact statement attached to the front of two (2) copies of the proposed rule and required documents. Mail or deliver to:

**Rebecca Miller-Rice
Administrative Rules Review Section
Arkansas Legislative Council
Bureau of Legislative Research
One Capitol Mall, 5th Floor
Little Rock, AR 72201**

1. What is the short title of this rule? Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System

2. What is the subject of the proposed rule? See Attached.

3. Is this rule required to comply with a federal statute, rule, or regulation? Yes No
If yes, please provide the federal rule, regulation, and/or statute citation. _____

4. Was this rule filed under the emergency provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act?
Yes No
If yes, what is the effective date of the emergency rule? _____

When does the emergency rule expire? _____

Will this emergency rule be promulgated under the permanent provisions of the Administrative Procedure Act?
Yes No

5. Is this a new rule? Yes No
If yes, please provide a brief summary explaining the regulation. _____

Does this repeal an existing rule? Yes No
If yes, a copy of the repealed rule is to be included with your completed questionnaire. If it is being replaced with a new rule, please provide a summary of the rule giving an explanation of what the rule does. _____

Is this an amendment to an existing rule? Yes No
If yes, please attach a mark-up showing the changes in the existing rule and a summary of the substantive changes. **Note: The summary should explain what the amendment does, and the mark-up copy should be clearly labeled "mark-up."**

See attached.

6. Cite the state law that grants the authority for this proposed rule? If codified, please give the Arkansas Code citation. Arkansas Code §§ 20-78-206 and 25-10-129.

7. What is the purpose of this proposed rule? Why is it necessary? See Attached.

8. Please provide the address where this rule is publicly accessible in electronic form via the Internet as required by Arkansas Code § 25-19-108(b).

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/do-business-with-dhs/proposed-rules/>

9. Will a public hearing be held on this proposed rule? Yes No
If yes, please complete the following:

Date: September 13, 2022

Time: 10:00am CST

Place: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88081520577>

10. When does the public comment period expire for permanent promulgation? (Must provide a date.)

September 19, 2022

11. What is the proposed effective date of this proposed rule? (Must provide a date.)

January 1, 2023

12. Please provide a copy of the notice required under Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(a), and proof of the publication of said notice. See Attached.

13. Please provide proof of filing the rule with the Secretary of State as required pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e). See Attached.

14. Please give the names of persons, groups, or organizations that you expect to comment on these rules? Please provide their position (for or against) if known. Arkansas Child Care providers and parents, unknown.

FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT

PLEASE ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS COMPLETELY

DEPARTMENT Department of Human Services

DIVISION Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

PERSON COMPLETING THIS STATEMENT Laura Webb

TELEPHONE (501) 320.8933 **FAX** (501) 682.4897 **EMAIL:** laura.webb@dhs.arkansas.gov

To comply with Ark. Code Ann. § 25-15-204(e), please complete the following Financial Impact Statement and file two copies with the questionnaire and proposed rules.

SHORT TITLE OF THIS RULE Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System

- 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 an agency is proposing a more costly rule, please state the following:

(a) How the additional benefits of the more costly rule justify its additional cost;
This will raise the quality of early care and education in Arkansas.

(b) The reason for adoption of the more costly rule;
To give parents options for higher quality care for their children in Arkansas, as well as to recognize providers for the quality of the care they are providing.

(c) Whether the more costly rule is based on the interests of public health, safety, or welfare, and if so, please explain; and;
It will enable parents to enroll their children in higher quality early care and education programs, which is in the best interest of the children's health, safety, and welfare.

(d) Whether the reason is within the scope of the agency's statutory authority; and if so, please explain.
This is within the scope of Arkansas Code §§ 20-78-206 and 25-10-129.

4. If the purpose of this rule is to implement a federal rule or regulation, please state the following:

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

<u>Current Fiscal Year</u>		<u>Next Fiscal Year</u>	
General Revenue	<u>\$0.00</u>	General Revenue	<u>\$0.00</u>
Federal Funds	<u>\$0.00</u>	Federal Funds	<u>\$0.00</u>
Cash Funds	<u>\$0.00</u>	Cash Funds	<u>\$0.00</u>
Special Revenue	<u>\$0.00</u>	Special Revenue	<u>\$0.00</u>

Other (Identify) \$0.00
 Total \$0.00

Other (Identify) \$0.00
 Total \$0.00

(b) What is the additional cost of the state rule?

Current Fiscal Year

Next Fiscal Year

General Revenue \$0.00
 Federal Funds \$3,856,010
 Cash Funds \$0.00
 Special Revenue \$0.00
 Other (Identify) \$0.00
 Total \$3,856,010

General Revenue \$0.00
 Federal Funds \$1,151,000
 Cash Funds \$0.00
 Special Revenue \$0.00
 Other (Identify) \$0.00
 Total \$1,151,000

5. What is the total estimated cost by fiscal year to any private individual, entity and business subject to the proposed, amended, or repealed rule? Identify the entity(ies) subject to the proposed rule and explain how they are affected.

Current Fiscal Year

Next Fiscal Year

\$ _____

\$ _____

6. What is the total estimated cost by fiscal year to state, county, and municipal government to implement this rule? Is this the cost of the program or grant? Please explain how the government is affected.

Current Fiscal Year

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.

NOTICE OF RULE MAKING

The Director of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education of the Department of Human Services announces for a public comment period of thirty (30) calendar days a notice of rulemaking for the following proposed rule under one or more of the following chapters, subchapters, or sections of the Arkansas Code: §§20-78-206 and 25-10-129.

Effective January 1, 2023:


The Director of the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education amends the Better Beginnings Quality Rating and Improvement System. The amendment updates the name of the manual to the Better Beginnings Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. The change adds levels four (4) through six (6) to the current tiered quality rating and improvement system. The new levels build upon the already existing levels, one (1) through three (3), and participation is optional for providers. Additional revisions clarify the application and recertification process, and adverse actions. Finally, the manual is reorganized and reformatted.

The proposed rule is available for review at the Department of Human Services (DHS) Office of Rules Promulgation, 2nd floor Donaghey Plaza South Building, 7th and Main Streets, P. O. Box 1437, Slot S295, Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1437. You may also access and download the proposed rule at <https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/do-business-with-dhs/proposed-rules/>. Public comments must be submitted in writing at the above address or at the following email address: ORP@dhs.arkansas.gov. All public comments must be received by DHS no later than **September 19, 2022**. Please note that public comments submitted in response to this notice are considered public documents. A public comment, including the commenter's name and any personal information contained within the public comment, will be made publicly available and may be seen by various people.

A public hearing by remote access only through a Zoom webinar will be held on September 13, 2022, at 10:00 a.m. and public comments may be submitted at the hearing. Individuals can access this public hearing at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88081520577>. The webinar ID is 880 8152 0577. If you would like the electronic link, "one-tap" mobile information, listening only dial-in phone numbers, or international phone numbers, please contact ORP at ORP@dhs.arkansas.gov.

If you need this material in a different format, such as large print, contact the Office of Rules Promulgation at 501-534-4138.

The Arkansas Department of Human Services is in compliance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act and is operated, managed and delivers services without regard to religion, disability, political affiliation, veteran status, age, race, color or national origin. **4502028114**


Tonya Williams, Director
Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

Toni Roy

From: legalads@arkansasonline.com
Sent: Friday, August 19, 2022 8:20 AM
To: Toni Roy
Subject: Re: Full Ad Run - Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

LOL... yes. Sorry for the confusion. Already been a long day!

Sun 8/21, Mon 8/22, and TUES 8/23.

Thank you.

Gregg Sterne, Legal Advertising
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
legalads@arkansasonline.com

From: "Toni Roy" <Toni.Roy@dhs.arkansas.gov>
To: legalads@arkansasonline.com
Sent: Friday, August 19, 2022 7:48:01 AM
Subject: RE: Full Ad Run - Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System

Just to confirm, Sun 8/21, Mon 8/22, and Tues 8/23?

Thanks,
Toni Roy

From: legalads@arkansasonline.com <legalads@arkansasonline.com>
Sent: Friday, August 19, 2022 7:46 AM
To: Toni Roy <Toni.Roy@dhs.arkansas.gov>
Subject: Re: Full Ad Run - Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System

[EXTERNAL SENDER]

Will run Sun 8/21, Mon 8/22, and Sun 8/23.

Thank you.

Gregg Sterne, Legal Advertising
Arkansas Democrat-Gazette
legalads@arkansasonline.com

From: "Toni Roy" <Toni.Roy@dhs.arkansas.gov>
To: "Legal Ads" <legalads@arkansasonline.com>
Cc: "Thomas Herndon" <Thomas.Herndon@dhs.arkansas.gov>, "Mac Golden" <Mac.E.Golden@dhs.arkansas.gov>, "Kelli Hilburn" <Kelli.Hilburn@dhs.arkansas.gov>, "Lakeya Gipson" <Lakeya.Gipson@dhs.arkansas.gov>, "Debbie Lee" <Debbie.Lee.DO@dhs.arkansas.gov>

Sent: Thursday, August 18, 2022 10:38:48 AM

Subject: Full Ad Run - Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System

Please run the attached public notice:

Sunday, August 21, 2022;

Monday, August 22, 2022; and

Tuesday, August 23, 2022.

I am aware that distribution will be provided to all counties on Sundays and limited distribution on other days. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Please invoice to: **AR Dept. of Human Services**
DCFS, ATTN: Margie Hadley
P.O. Box 1437, Slot S-140
Little Rock, AR 72203
(501) 320.8956

Thank you,



TONI ROY

[Office of Rules Promulgation](#)

Program Administrator

P: 501.320.6164

F: 501.404.4619

700 Main Street

P.O. Box 1437, Slot S295

Little Rock, AR 72203-1437

Toni.Roy@dhs.arkansas.gov

humanservices.arkansas.gov



This email may contain sensitive or confidential information.

CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: The information contained in this email message and any attachment(s) is the property of the State of Arkansas and may be protected by state and federal laws governing the disclosure of private information. It is intended solely for the use of the entity to which this email is addressed. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that reading, copying, or distributing this transmission is **STRICTLY PROHIBITED**. The sender has not waived any applicable

Toni Roy

From: Toni Roy
Sent: Friday, August 19, 2022 7:53 AM
To: register@sos.arkansas.gov
Cc: Thomas Herndon; Simone Blagg (DHS); Mac Golden; Kelli Hilburn; Lakeya Gipson; Debbie Lee
Subject: DHS/DCCECE - Proposed Filing - Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System
Attachments: SoS - Proposed Rule - Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System.pdf

Tracking:	Recipient	Read
	register@sos.arkansas.gov	
	Thomas Herndon	
	Simone Blagg (DHS)	Read: 8/19/2022 7:56 AM
	Mac Golden	
	Kelli Hilburn	Read: 8/19/2022 7:57 AM
	Lakeya Gipson	
	Debbie Lee	

This ad will run in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette on the following dates:

Sunday, August 21, 2022;
Monday, August 22, 2022; and
Tuesday, August 23, 2022.

The public comment period will end on September 19, 2022.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,



TONI ROY

[Office of Rules Promulgation](#)

Program Administrator

P: 501.320.6164

F: 501.404.4619

700 Main Street

P.O. Box 1437, Slot S295

Little Rock, AR 72203-1437

Toni.Roy@dhs.arkansas.gov

humanservices.arkansas.gov

Statement of Necessity and Rule Summary Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System

Statement of Necessity:

Better Beginnings requirements have not changed since they were implemented in 2010. These changes are necessary to encourage advancement in the quality of early care and education in the State of Arkansas by adding three (3) additional levels to the current tiered quality rating and improvement system. This will give families additional information and options when selecting an early care and education provider for their child. It will also provide an opportunity for providers to be recognized for the high quality of care that they are providing. The change is also necessary to clarify rules for the application and recertification process as well as adverse action. The amendment updates the name of the manual to the Better Beginnings Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

Summary:

The change adds levels four (4) through six (6) to the current tiered quality rating and improvement system. The new levels build upon the already existing levels, one (1) through three (3), and are optional for providers to participate in. Providers currently participating would have the option of maintaining their current level or applying for a higher level. Participation at the higher levels will give them a new rating available for parents and the public to see, enabling them to choose higher quality care for their child.

In addition, the rule change updates, clarifies, and provides additional details regarding the application and recertification process, and adverse actions. Also, the rule organization and formatting is updated.

Better Beginnings

Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System



better beginnings

EVERY CHILD DESERVES OUR BEST

Provider RULE BOOK

Arkansas Department of Human Services
Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

<https://arbetterbeginnings.com/>

~~Licensing and Accreditation Unit~~

Better Beginnings
P.O. Box 1437, Slot S-150
Little Rock, AR 72203-1437
501-682-8590

BetterBeginnings@dhs.arkansas.gov

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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 ~~child-care~~childcare and early childhood education entities could be certified as “quality.” ~~A~~One 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. ~~A more broad~~The larger goal was to encourage and achieve better life longlifelong outcomes for children, by helping to assure that their time in ~~child-care~~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) child-care 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 1993 over 25% of our child care and early childhood education providers have participated in the system and provided feedback to the state. During~~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.

~~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 years, committees, which involved more than two hundred child care and early childhood related professionals met, researched and created an improved approach to “quality.” The result is a revised quality system for our state called “Better Beginnings.”~~

“Better Beginnings,” Arkansas’ revised tiered quality rating and improvement system is available to every licensed and registered ~~child-care~~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 ~~minimum licensing to~~ Better Beginnings levels 1 (one) through ,2 and 3 6 (six (1-6).

Better Beginnings is available to every licensed and registered child-care provider in Arkansas. Thank you for your interest in Better Beginnings, — whether you are a family home, an out-of-school time programa youth development program, or a part or full timechild-care center ~~for children,~~ — your participation is imperative for the future of Arkansas. We are grateful to all

~~those~~ who have ~~so ardently~~ worked to create Better Beginnings and make it what it is today. ÷
Every Child Deserves Our Best!

MarkUp

FOREWORD

This booklet provides:

- An overview of Better Beginnings
- The rule book containing the Better Beginnings Rules

Better Beginnings is administered by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Licensing and Accreditation Unit. Questions and or further information are available by contacting:

Better Beginnings Coordinator
P.O. Box 1437, Slot S 150
Little Rock, AR 72203-1437
(501) 682-8590

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 ~~center-based~~ care, family child care, and school age ~~out-of-school time~~ care programs. ~~(also called “stand alone” programs when they do not also serve children under age 5).~~

~~In Arkansas, the improvement system,~~ 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 1 ~~(one (1))~~ of Better Beginnings align with MLR and help ~~help~~ the administrator-director or primary caregiver start ~~begin~~ the process ~~for~~ journey towards quality improvement. At level 2 ~~(two (2))~~, the staff becomes more involved in the process. Levels 3 ~~(three (3))~~ and above ~~sets~~ even higher requirements for all components.

~~Many~~ Resources are available and have been specifically designed to help providers understand how to ~~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

1.00 REGULATORY AUTHORITY

1.01 These regulations are enacted pursuant to Arkansas Code Ann. §20-78-201-226 as amended.

1.02 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.

2.00 PURPOSE

2.01 It is the purpose of these regulations to set the general guidelines for the operation of Better Beginnings, ~~Arkansas' Quality Rating Improvement System.~~

2.02 ~~Participation in the Better Beginnings Quality Rating Improvement System is voluntary. 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 child-care facilities that meet Better Beginnings requirements as set forth in these regulations.

2.03 Designation of certified status for any child-care facility will qualify taxpayers for the following:

A. Under Act 820 of 1993, corporations that build and equip a certified child-care 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 child-care center, for the exclusive purpose of providing child-care 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%)~~ three and nine-tenths percent (3.9%) of the annual salary of employees employed exclusively in providing child care services.

B.

- C. Under Act 1268 of 1993, enhanced income tax credits in the amount of twenty percent (20%) of the federal child-care credit as allowed under Section 21 (twenty-one) of the Internal Revenue Code will be available to qualified taxpayers who incur child-care expenses at child-care facilities that are certified at Better Beginnings level 2 (two (2) or above.
- ~~C. Under Act 1268 of 1993, enhanced income tax credits in the amount of twenty percent (20%) of the federal child-care credit as allowed under Section 21 (twenty-one) of the Internal Revenue Code will be available to qualified taxpayers who incur child-care expenses at child-care facilities certified at Better Beginnings level 2 (two) or above. Better Beginnings level 3.~~

3.00 ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

3.01

ADE	Arkansas Department of Education
ABC	Arkansas Better Chance
AEDC	Arkansas Economic Development Commission
BAS	Business Administration Scale
CARF	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
<u>Director</u>	<u>The person who meets MLR as director and is on site a minimum of 50% of the operational day.</u>
ECERS-R	Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale
ERS	Environment Rating Scale
FCCERS-R	Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale
ITERS-R	Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale
<u>MLR</u>	<u>Minimum Licensing Requirements</u>
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
NAFCC	National Association for Family Child Care
PAS	Program Administration Scale
<u>PDR</u>	<u>Professional Development Registry</u>
<u>PQA</u>	<u>Program Quality Assessment</u>
SACERS	School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale
PDR <u>TQRIS</u>	Professional Development Registry <u>Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</u>
<u>YPQA</u>	<u>Youth Program Quality Assessment</u>
<u>YPQI</u>	<u>Youth Program Quality Intervention</u>

4.00 AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

4.01 The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (~~the Division~~ DCCECE) will coordinate and administer Better Beginnings.

4.02 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.

4.024.03 The Better Beginnings ~~Coordinator~~ Program Administrator or designee will have final approval of applications for certification as reviewed and recommended by the Better Beginnings staff.

4.034.04 By December 31st of each year, the Division will be responsible for providing verification to the Department of Finance & Administration of the child-care facilities that were qualified for certification at level ~~2~~ two (2) and ~~level 3~~ above, in the current calendar year.

4.044.05 Each December, the Division will be responsible for providing verification to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) of the child-care facilities that qualified for Better Beginnings certification in the current calendar year.

4.054.06 ~~The Division will verify license status of all applicants, as well as status with other DHS programs.~~

4.064.06 The Division ~~or Division consultants~~ will provide technical assistance ~~through consultants~~ to any facilities desiring to achieve certification.

4.074.07 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).

4.084.08 Facilities will be notified of their certification status. The certification notice will denote the level of certification achieved.

5.00 ELIGIBILITY

5.01 All licensed, registered, and church operated exempt child-care 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.

5.02 All child-care facilities, except those excluded in section 5.01 above, operating under a ~~regular child care license, new provisional~~New Provisional or Regular license, ~~or 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.

5.03 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 licensing action~~adverse action with licensing or other DHS programs.

~~5.04 — 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.~~

~~5.05~~5.04 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.

~~5.06~~5.05 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.-

5.06 Facilities that have been denied certification or have had certification removed by reason of ineligibility, according to any rules of this section, ~~may will~~ be eligible to re-apply in twelve (12) months unless otherwise notified by the Division Director.

6.00 COMPONENT AREAS, REQUIREMENTS, AND LEVELS

6.01 There are ~~five-four~~ (54) component areas in Better Beginnings:

- Administration, ~~Administrator~~
- Staff Qualifications and ~~Professional Development~~,
- Learning Environment, ~~Environmental Assessment~~, ~~and~~
- Child Health and Development.

There are requirements to be met in each component area in each of the ~~three (3)~~ levels. The components, requirements, and levels are on the following ~~seven (7)~~ pages.

MARKUP

ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS CHILD CARE CENTER ~~BASED~~-REQUIREMENTS

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

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 5
A. Administration	<p>1.A.1 Administrator attends “PAS Basics” training.</p> <p>The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p> <p>1.A.2 The facility may have a program review completed by a certified PAS assessor. School age programs using YPQI may have a PQA Form B review completed by a reliable assessor.</p>	<p>2.A.1 A program review is completed by a certified PAS assessor. The facility shall have a PAS review completed by a certified PAS assessor. School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B review completed by a reliable every assessor. Every three years.</p> <p>2.A.2 Administrator-The director shall reviews the Strengthening Families website, webinar receives training in the Strengthening Families Initiative complete a Strengthening Families training listed on the PDR.</p>	<p>3.A.1 The facility shall scores an average of 4.00 or higher on PAS items 1-21 (items 5 and 6 are scored, but are not included in the average). School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B score of 3.75 or higher.</p> <p>3.A.2 Administrator-The director shall completes the Strengthening Families online self-assessment for three (3) or more Strategies.</p> <p>3.A.3 The facility shall develops a Strengthening Families action plan and implements at least one (1) action step.</p>	<p>4.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on PAS. School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B score of 4.00 or higher.</p> <p>4.A.2 The director shall implement at least one (1) additional Strengthening Families action step for a total of two (2).</p>	<p>5.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 5.00 or higher on PAS. School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B score of 4.25 or higher.</p>	<p>6.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 6.00 or higher on PAS. School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B score of 4.75 or higher.</p>
Administrator / B. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development /	<p><u>Qualifications (Education and Experience)</u></p> <p>1.B.1 The facility has a license in New</p>	<p>2.B.1 All directors and at least fifty percent (50%) of teaching staff shall complete “Early Learning Standards (ELS) Basics Training.” The director</p>	<p><u>Qualifications (Education and Experience)</u></p> <p>3.B.1 Administrator-The director shall meets</p>			

<p>Professional Development</p>	<p><u>Provisional or Regular status.</u></p> <p>1.B.1 Administrator and teaching staff are members of the PDR Registry and/or the ADE Registry.</p> <p>1.B.2 Administrator meets requirements for PDR Foundation 3 or higher, including 24 clock hours of training in program planning / management / and/or leadership.</p> <p>1.B.3 Within the first year of employment all staff meet requirements for PDR Foundation 1 or higher.</p>	<p>and school-age staff shall complete <u>“Developmental Assets Training.”</u></p> <p>2.B.2 All directors and fifty percent (50%) of teaching staff shall complete an ERS training; if the facility is using YPQI, A all directors and school-age staff shall complete YPQIA training.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2.B.4 The director shall complete training on <u>developmentally appropriate physical activities for children. Qualifications (Education and Experience)</u></p> <p>2.B.1 Administrator and teaching staff maintain membership in the PDR Registry and/or ADE registry. <u>The director shall have a minimum of 20 cumulative clock</u></p>	<p>requirements for PDR Intermediate 1 or higher, including have a <u>minimum of 4530 cumulative clock hours of training in the PDR in the areas of program planning, / management and/or leadership.</u></p> <p>3.B.2 Within the first year of employment all staff will meet requirements for PDR Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of teaching staff meet requirements for PDR Foundation 3 or higher.</p>			
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		<p><u>hours of training in the PDR in the areas of program planning, management or leadership.</u></p> <p>2.B.2 Administrator meets requirements for PDR Intermediate 1 or higher, including 30 clock hours of training in program planning/management and/or leadership.</p> <p>2.B.3 Within the first year of employment all staff meet requirements for PDR Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of teaching staff meet requirements for PDR foundation 2 or higher.</p>				
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COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1—3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1—4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1—5
Administrator/ Staff Qualifications/ Professional Development	<u>Professional Development</u> 1.B.4 Administrator completes an ERS training. 1.B.5 Administrator completes training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children.	<u>Professional Development</u> 2.B.24 All administrators and teaching staff shall participate annually in 20 clock hours of approved professional development annually; for administrator, at least 3 clock hours must be in program planning/management and/or leadership. 2.B.15 All directors and At least 50% of teaching staff shall complete “Early Learning Standards (ELS) Basics trainingTraining.” The director and ; School age staff should shall complete “Developmental Assets Training.” 2.B.26 All administrative directors staff and 50% of teaching staff shall complete an ERS	<u>Professional Development</u> 2.B.23 All administrators and directors and teaching staff shall participate annually in 25 clock hours of approved professional development annually; for administrators, at least 4 clock hours must be in program planning/management and/or leadership.			

		<p>training; if the facility is using YPQA school age staff shallouid complete YPQA training.</p> <p><u>2.B.37</u> Administrator <u>The director and kitchen manager (if applicable) shall participate annually in at least 2 clock hours of training on nutrition for children annually.</u></p> <p><u>2.B.4</u> The director shall <u>complete training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children.</u></p>				
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COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 <u>Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 3</u>	LEVEL 5 <u>Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 4</u>	LEVEL 6 <u>Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 5</u>
<p>C. Learning Environment / Environment Assessment</p>	<p><u>1.C.1</u> The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p> <p><u>1.C.1.A</u> developmentally appropriate daily program schedule is posted in each classroom/program area.</p> <p><u>1.C.2</u> Staff develop and implement written daily plans for each group.</p> <p><u>1.C.2</u> The facility may have an ERS review. School age programs using YPQI</p>	<p>2.C.1 All classrooms shall/program spaces have a minimum of two (2) clearly defined interest centers.</p> <p>2.C.2 Written daily plans for each group shall include all areas of development as defined in the Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 Months.</p> <p>2.C.3 Staff shall plan and implement daily developmentally appropriate physical activities for all children.</p> <p><u>2.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of 3.00 or higher on the ERS review. School age programs using PQA shall score a 3.00 or higher on the PQA.</p>	<p>3.C.1 All classrooms/program spaces shall have a minimum of three (3) clearly defined interest centers.</p> <p>3.C.2 Staff maintain a portfolio for each child.</p> <p>3.C.3 Facility The staff shall develop develops a current written curriculum plan and daily plans that include learning goals for children.</p> <p><u>3.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on the ERS. School age</p>	<p><u>4.C.1</u> Staff to child ratios shall be maintained as follows: Birth–18 months 1:4 18-36 months 1:7 2 ½ - 3 years 1:11 4 years 1:12 5 years and up 1:18</p> <p><u>4.C.2</u> The facility shall score an average of 5.00 or higher on the ERS. School age programs using PQA shall score 4.00 or higher on the PQA.</p>	<p><u>5.C.1</u> Staff to child ratios shall be maintained as follows: Birth–18 months 1:4 18-36 months 1:6 2 ½ - 3 years 1:10 4 years 1:10 5 years and up 1:18</p> <p><u>5.C.2</u> The facility shall score an average of 5.50 or higher on the ERS. School age programs using the PQA shall score 4.25 or higher on the PQA.</p>	<p><u>6.C.1</u> Staff to child ratios shall be maintained as follows: Birth–18 months 1:4 18-36 months 1:6 2 ½ - 3 years 1:10 4 years 1:10 5 years and up 1:15</p> <p><u>6.C.2</u> The facility shall score an average of 6.00 or higher on the ERS. School age programs using the PQA reviewed with shall score 4.50 or higher on the PQA.</p>

	may have a PQA review.		programs using PQA shall score 3.75 or higher on the PQA. <u>3.C.2</u> The staff shall maintain a portfolio for each child.			
<u>D.</u> Environmental Assessment	<u>1.D.1</u> Facility completes a self-evaluation using applicable approved environment rating tools (ERS or YPQA).	<u>2.D.1</u> Facility scores an average of 3.00 or higher on the ERS for each classroom reviewed; classrooms reviewed with YPQA must score an average of 3.00 or higher.	<u>3.D.1</u> Facility scores an average of 4.00 or higher on the ERS for each classroom reviewed; classrooms reviewed with YPQA must score an average of 3.75 or higher.			
<u>D.</u> Child Health and Development	<u>1.D.1</u> The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status. <u>1.E.1</u> Facility documents distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured children. <u>1.E.2</u> Facility shares with families information on child development and on children’s health. <u>1.E.3</u> Any medical and educational	<u>2.E.1</u> Facility facility shall shares with families information regarding medical homes for children. <u>2.E.2</u> Facility shares with families information regarding stages of development for children. <u>2.D.1</u> The facility shall document distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured children. <u>2.D.2</u> The facility shall share information on child development, stages of development, and children’s health with families. <u>2.D.3</u> All children, birth to kindergarten, shall have an annual developmental screening.	<u>3.E.D.1</u> The facility shall share information on nutrition and physical activity for children with families. Facility shares with families information on nutrition and physical activity for children. <u>3.D.2</u> The facility shall -use a Division-approved tool to -complete a (1) physical activity self-assessment and create and implement one action plan in the physical activity module.-	<u>4.D.1</u> The facility shall -use a Division-approved tool to -complete a self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding & infant feeding, outdoor play & learning, or screen time and create and implement two action plans in that module. -(2) - = <u>4.D.2</u> The facility shall use the Division – approved	<u>5.D.1</u> The facility -shall -use a Division-approved tool to -complete a self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding and& infant feeding, outdoor play and learning, OR screen time and create and implement two (2) action plans in that module.- = <u>5.D.2</u> The facility shall use the Division – approved	<u>6.D.1</u> The facility -shall -use a Division-approved tool to -complete a self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding and infant feeding, outdoor play and learning, OR screen time and create and implement two (2) action plans in that module.and,(2) - = <u>6.D.2</u> The facility shall use the Division – approved

	<p>care plans involving a child are written and on file, and implementation is documented while maintaining confidentiality.</p>	<p>2.D.4 The facility shall use a <u>Division-approved tool to complete a child nutrition self-assessment and create and implement one (1) action plan in the child nutrition module.</u></p> <p>=</p> <p>2.D.5 The facility shall <u>use a Division-approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in the child nutrition model to assess progress.</u></p>	<p>3.D.3 The facility shall use the <u>Division - approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in the physical activity module to assess progress.</u></p>	<p><u>tool to complete a second self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding & infant feeding, outdoor play & learning, OR screen time to assess progress.</u></p>	<p><u>tool to complete a second self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding & infant feeding, outdoor play & learning, OR screen time to assess progress.</u></p>	<p><u>tool to complete a second self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding & infant feeding, outdoor play & learning, OR screen time to assess progress.</u></p>
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ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – ~~FAMILY-LICENSED AND REGISTERED CHILD-CARE-HOME~~ REQUIREMENTS

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

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 5
A. Administration	<p>1.A.1 The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p> <p>1.A.1 Primary caregiver attends “BAS Basics” training.</p> <p>1.A.2 The facility may have a program review completed by a certified BAS assessor.</p>	<p>2.A.1 A program review is shall be completed by a certified BAS assessor.</p> <p>2.A.2 The Pprimary caregiver shall reviews the Strengthening Families website, webinar receives training in the Strengthening Families Initiative complete a Strengthening Families training listed on the PDR.</p>	<p>3.A.1 The Ffacility shall scores an average of 4.00 or higher on BAS items 2-10 (item 2 is scored, but is not included in the average).</p> <p>3.A.2 The Pprimary caregiver shall completes the Strengthening Families online self-assessment for three (3) or more strategies.</p> <p>3.A.3 The Pprimary caregiver shall develops a Strengthening Families action plan and implements at least one (1) action step.</p>	<p>4.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on BAS.</p> <p>4.A.2 The primary caregiver shall implement at least one (1) additional Strengthening Families action plan for a total of two (2).</p>	<p>5.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 5.00 or higher on BAS.</p>	<p>6.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 6.00 or higher on BAS.</p>
Administrator / B. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development	<p>Qualifications (Education and Experience)</p> <p>1.B.1 Primary and secondary caregivers</p>	<p>2.B.1 The primary caregiver shall complete “Early Learning Standards Basics” training.</p>	<p>Qualifications (Education and Experience)</p> <p>3.B.1 Primary caregiver meets requirements for</p>			

	<p>are members of the PDR Registry and/or ADE Registry</p> <p>1.B.2 Primary caregiver meets requirements for PDR Foundation 2 or higher.</p> <p>1.B.1 The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p>	<p><u>Qualifications (Education and Experience)</u></p> <p>2.B.1 All Caregivers maintain membership in the PDR Registry and/or ADE Registry.</p> <p>2.B.2 Primary caregiver meets requirements for PDR Foundation 3 or higher.</p> <p>2.B.3 Within the first year of employment at least 50% of secondary caregivers meet requirements for PDR Foundation 1 or higher.</p> <p>2.B.2 The primary caregiver shall complete an ERS training.</p> <p>2.B.3 The primary caregiver shall participate in at least two (2) clock hours of training on nutrition for children, annually.</p> <p>2.B.4 The primary caregiver shall complete training on developmentally</p>	<p>PDR Foundation 3 or higher and has an additional 15 clock hours.</p> <p>3.B.2 Within the first year of employment all secondary caregivers meet requirements for PDR Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of secondary caregivers are at PDR Foundation 2 or higher.</p>			
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		appropriate physical activities for children.				
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COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 5
<p>C. <u>Learning Environment / Environment Assessment Administrator / Staff Qualifications and Professional Development</u></p>	<p><u>1.C.1</u> The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p> <p><u>1.C.2</u> The facility may have a FCCERS review.</p> <p><u>1.B.3</u> Primary caregiver completes an ERS training.</p> <p><u>1.B.4</u> Primary caregiver completes training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children.</p>	<p><u>2.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of 3.00 or higher on the FCCERS. <u>Professional Development</u></p> <p><u>2.B.24</u> The Primary caregiver and all secondary caregivers shall participate annually in 20 clock hours of approved professional development annually.</p> <p><u>2.B.15</u> The Primary caregiver shall complete “Early Learning Standards Basics” training.</p> <p><u>2.B.2</u> The primary caregiver shall complete an ERS training.</p> <p><u>2.B.63</u> The Primary caregiver shall participate annually in at least 2 clock hours of training on</p>	<p><u>3.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</p> <p><u>3.C.2</u> Caregivers shall maintain a portfolio for each child.</p> <p><u>3.B.3</u> The Primary caregiver and all secondary caregivers shall participate annually in 25 clock hours of approved professional development.</p>	<p><u>4.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of 5.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</p>	<p><u>5.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of 5.50 or higher on the FCCERS.</p>	<p><u>6.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of 6.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</p>

		<p>nutrition for children <u>annually.</u></p> <p><u>2.B.4</u> The primary caregiver shall complete training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children.</p>				
<p><u>G.</u> <u>Learning Environment/</u> <u>Environment Assessment</u></p>	<p><u>1.C.1.A</u> developmentally appropriate daily program schedule is posted in each program area.</p> <p><u>1.C.2</u> Caregivers develop and implement written daily plans for each group.</p> <p><u>1.C.1</u> The facility has a license in <u>New Provisional or Regular status.</u></p> <p><u>1.C.2</u> The facility may have a <u>FCCERS review.</u></p>	<p><u>2.C.1</u> All Pprogram spaces shall have a minimum of two (2) clearly defined interest centers.</p> <p><u>2.C.2</u> Written daily plans for each group shall include all areas of development as defined in the Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months.</p> <p><u>2.C.3</u> The Ccaregivers shall plan and implement daily developmentally appropriate physical activities for all children.</p> <p><u>2.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of <u>3.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</u></p>	<p><u>3.C.1</u> All Pprogram spaces shall have a minimum of three (3) clearly defined interest centers.</p> <p><u>3.C.2</u> Caregivers maintain a portfolio for each child.</p> <p><u>3.C.3</u> Facility <u>The primary caregiver shall develops a current written curriculum plan and daily plans that include learning goals for children.</u></p> <p><u>3.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of <u>4.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</u></p> <p><u>3.C.2</u> Caregivers shall maintain a portfolio for each child.</p>	<p><u>4.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of <u>5.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</u></p>	<p><u>5.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of <u>5.50 or higher on the FCCERS.</u></p>	<p><u>6.C.1</u> The facility shall score an average of <u>6.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</u></p>

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COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 – 3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 – 4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 – 5
D. Environmental Assessment	1.D.1 Facility completes a self-evaluation using the FCCERS. 1.	2.D.1 Facility scores an average of 3.00 or higher on the FCCERS.	3.D.1 Facility scores an average of 4.00 or higher on the FCCERS.			
D. Child Health and Development	<p>1.E.1 Facility documents distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured children.</p> <p>1.E.2 Facility shares with families information on child development and on children’s health.</p> <p>1.E.3 Any medical and educational care plans involving a child are written and on file, and implementation is documented while</p>	<p>2.ED.1 The primary caregiver shall document distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured children.</p> <p>2.E.2 The primary caregiver shall Facility shares with families information regarding medical homes for children with families.</p> <p>2.ED.2 The primary caregiver shall Facility shares with families information regarding child development, stages of development, and children’s health for children with families.</p> <p>2.D.3 All children birth to kindergarten shall have an annual developmental screening.</p> <p>2.D.4 The primary caregiver shall use a Division-approved tool to complete a child nutrition self-assessment and</p>	<p>3.ED.1 The primary caregiver shall Facility shares with families information on nutrition and physical activity for children with families.</p> <p>3.D.2 The primary caregiver shall -use a Division-approved tool to complete a (1) physical activity self-assessment and create and implement one action plan in the physical activity module. 1.</p> <p>3.D.3 The primary caregiver shall use the Division - approved tool to</p>	<p>4.D.1 The primary caregiver shall -use a Division-approved tool to -complete a self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding and infant feeding, outdoor play and learning, OR screen time and create and implement two (2) action plans in that module. (2) —</p> <p>=</p> <p>4.D.2 The primary caregiver shall use the Division- approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in child nutrition,</p>	<p>5.D.1 The primary caregiver -shall -use a Division-approved tool to -complete a self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding and infant feeding, outdoor play and learning, OR screen time and create and implement two (2) action plans in that module.—</p> <p>5.D.2 The primary caregiver shall use the Division-approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE,</p>	<p>6.D.1 The primary caregiver -shall -use a Division-approved tool to -complete a self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding and infant feeding, outdoor play and learning, OR screen time, and create and implement two (2) action plans in that module.—</p> <p>=</p> <p>6.D.2 The primary caregiver shall use the Division-approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE,</p>

	<p>maintaining confidentiality.</p> <p><u>1.D.1</u> The facility has a license in <u>New Provisional or Regular status.</u></p>	<p><u>create -and -implement -one (1) -action plan in the child nutrition module.-</u></p> <p>:-</p> <p><u>2.D.5</u> The primary caregiver shall -use a Division-approved tool to -complete a second self-assessment in the child nutrition module to assess progress.</p>	<p><u>complete a second self-assessment in the physical activity module to assess progress.</u></p>	<p><u>physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding and infant feeding, outdoor play and learning, OR screen time to assess progress.</u></p>	<p><u>oral health, breastfeeding and infant feeding, outdoor play and learning, OR screen time to assess progress.</u></p>	<p><u>oral health, breastfeeding and infant feeding, outdoor play and learning, OR screen time to assess progress.</u></p>
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ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS - SCHOOL-AGE/OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME REQUIREMENTS

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

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 5
<p>A. Administration</p>	<p>1.A.1 Administrator attends "PAS Basics" training. The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p> <p><u>1.A.2 The facility may have a PAS review completed by a certified assessor or a PQA form B review completed by a reliable assessor.</u></p>	<p>2.A.1 A program review is completed by a certified PAS assessor. The facility shall have a PAS review completed by a certified assessor. If using YPQI, PAS is not required; however, a PQA Form B review shall be completed by a reliable assessor.</p> <p><u>2.A.2 The Administrator/director shall reviews the Strengthening Families website, webinar receives training in the Strengthening Families Initiative complete a Strengthening Families training, listed on the PDR.</u></p>	<p>3.A.1 The Facility shall scores an average of four 4.00-00 or higher on PAS items 1-21 (items 5 and 6 are scored, but scored but are not included in the average.); items 10 and 11 not scored). If using YPQI, PAS is not required; however, a PQA Form B score of three and seventy five tenths (3.75) or higher is required.</p> <p>3.1.A.2 Administrator The director shall completes the Strengthening Families online self-assessment for <u>three</u> (3) or more Strategies.</p> <p><u>3.A.3 The Facility shall develops a Strengthening Families action plan and implements at least <u>one</u> (1) action step.</u></p>	<p><u>4.A.1 The facility shall score an average of four 4.00-00 or higher on PAS. If using YPQI, PAS is not required; however, a PQA Form B score of four 4.00-00 or higher is required.</u></p> <p><u>4.A.2 The director shall implement at least one (1) additional Strengthening Families action plan for a total of two (2).</u></p>	<p><u>5.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 5.00-00 or higher on PAS. If using YPQI, PAS is not required; however, a PQA Form B score of <u>4.25</u> or higher is required.</u></p>	<p><u>6.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 6.00-00 or higher on PAS. If using YPQI, PAS is not required; however, a PQA Form B score of <u>4.75</u> or higher is required.</u></p>

<p>Administrator / B. Staff Qualifications and/ Professional Development</p>	<p><i>Qualifications (Education and Experience)</i> 1.B.1 Administrator and teaching staff are members of the PDR Registry and/or ADE Registry. 1.B.2 Administrator meets requirements for PDR Foundation 3 or higher, including 21 clock hours of training in program planning/management and/or leadership. 1.B.3 Within the first year of employment all staff meet requirements for PDR Foundation 1 or higher. 1.B.1 The facility has a license in <u>New Provisional or Regular status.</u></p>	<p>2.B.1 All directors and at least fifty percent (50%) of teaching staff shall complete <u>“Developmental Assets Basics/Intro to the 40 Developmental Assets”</u> training. 2.B.2 All directors and, and fifty percent (50%) of the teaching staff shall complete an ERS or YPQIA training. 2.B.3 The director and kitchen manager (if applicable) shall participate in at least <u>two (2) clock hours of training on nutrition for school age children/youth, annually.</u> 2.B.4 The director shall complete training on <u>developmentally appropriate physical activities for children/youth.</u> <i>Qualifications (Education and Experience)</i> 2.B.1 Administrator and teaching staff maintain membership in the PDR Registry and/or ADE Registry</p>	<p><i>Qualifications (Education and Experience)</i> 3.B.1 Administrator meets requirements for PDR Intermediate 1 or higher, including 45 clock hours of training in program planning/management and/or leadership. 3.B.2 Within the first year of employment all staff meet requirements for PDR Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of teaching staff meet requirements for PDR Foundation 3 or higher.</p>			
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Arkansas Better Beginnings—Center—Based Requirements page 2

		<p>2.B.2 Administrator meets requirements for PDR Intermediate 1 or higher, including 30 clock hours of training in program planning/management and/or leadership.</p> <p>2.B.3 Within the first year of employment all staff meet requirements for PDR Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of teaching staff meet requirements for PDR Foundation 2 or higher.</p>				
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Arkansas Better Beginnings—School-Age Requirements page 2

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1–3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1–4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1–5
Administrator/ Staff Qualifications and/ Professional Development	<p>Professional Development</p> <p>1.B.4 Administrator completes an ERS or YPQA Training.</p> <p>1.B.5 Administrator completes training on developmentally appropriate physical</p>	<p>Professional Development</p> <p>2.B.24 All administrators directors and teaching staff shall participate annually in 20 clock hours of approved professional development annually; for administrators, at least 3 clock hours must</p>	<p>Professional Development</p> <p>3.B.3 All administrators directors and teaching staff shall participate annually in 25 clock hours of approved professional development; for administrators, at least 4 clock hours must be in</p>			

	<p>activities for children/youth.</p>	<p>be in program planning/management and/or leadership.</p> <p>2.B.15 All directors and At least 50% of teaching staff shall complete “Developmental Assets Basics” training.</p> <p>2.B.26 All administrative directors, staff and 50% of the teaching staff shall complete an ERS or YPQA training.</p> <p>2.B.37 The Administrator director and kitchen manager (if applicable) shall participate annually in at least 2 clock hours of training on nutrition for children/youth/school age children annually.</p> <p>2.B.4 The director shall complete training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children.</p>	<p>program planning/management and/or leadership.</p>			
<p>C. Learning Environment / Environment Assessment</p>	<p>1.C.1 A developmentally appropriate daily program schedule is posted in each classroom/program area.</p>	<p>2.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 3.00-00 or higher on the SACERS or an average of 3.00-00 or higher on the YPQA.</p>	<p>3.C.1 Facility shall score an average of 4.00-00 or higher on the SACERS or an average of 3.75 or higher on the YPQA.</p>	<p>4.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 5.00-00 or higher on the SACERS or 4.00-00</p>	<p>5.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 5.500 or higher on the SACERS or 4.25 or higher on the PQA.</p>	<p>6.C.1 The staff/participant ratio shall be 1:15.</p> <p>6.C.2 The facility shall score an average of</p>

Arkansas Better Beginnings – Center – Based Requirements page 2

	<p>1.C.2 Staff develop and implement written daily plans for each group.</p> <p><u>1.C.1</u> The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p> <p><u>1.C.2</u> The facility may have a SACERS or a PQA review completed by a reliable assessor.</p>	<p>2.C.1 All classrooms/program spaces have a minimum of two (2) clearly defined interest centers if not utilizing single-use spaces. <i>Single use spaces are exempt from this requirement as long as other program spaces are available to allow for other interest center activities.</i></p>	<p><u>3.C.2</u> Staff shall maintain a portfolio for each participant.</p> <p>3.C.1 All classrooms/program spaces have a minimum of three (3) clearly defined interest centers if not utilizing single-use spaces. <i>Single use spaces are exempt from this requirement as long as other program spaces are available to allow for other interest center activities.</i></p>	<p>or higher on the PQA.</p>	<p>6.00:00 or higher on the SACERS or 4.500 or higher on the PQA.</p>
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Arkansas Better Beginnings – School-Age/Out-of-School Time Requirements page 23

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	<u>LEVEL 4</u>	<u>LEVEL 5</u>	<u>LEVEL 6</u>
<u>Learning Environment/ Environment Assessment</u>		<p>Must meet all requirements for Level 1</p>	<p>Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2</p>	<p><u>Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 3</u></p>	<p><u>Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 4</u></p>	<p><u>Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 5</u></p>
		<p>2.C.2 There shall be Written daily plans for each group that include the Developmental Assets concepts.</p> <p>2.C.3 Staff shall plan and implement daily developmentally appropriate physical activities for all children/youth <u>participants.</u></p>	<p>3.C.2 Staff maintain a portfolio for each child/youth.</p> <p>3.C.3 The Ffacility shall develops a current written curriculum plan and daily plans that <u>are consistent with</u></p>			

		<p><u>2.D.1</u> The facility shall score an average of 3.00 or higher on the SACERS or an average of 3.00 or higher on the YPQA.</p>	<p><u>3.C.1</u> Facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on the SACERS or an average of 3.75 or higher on the YPQA. Developmental Assets. include links to ADE K-12 frameworks.</p> <p><u>3.C.2</u> Staff shall maintain a portfolio for each participant.</p>			
<p><u>D.</u> Environmental Assessment</p>	<p><u>1.D.1</u> Facility completes a self-evaluation using an applicable approved environment rating tool (SACERS or YPQA).</p>	<p><u>2.D.1</u> Facility scores an average of 3.00 or higher on the SACERS or scores 3.00 or higher on the YPQA for each classroom/program space reviewed.</p>	<p><u>3.D.1</u> Facility scores an average of 4.00 or higher on the SACERS or scores 3 or higher on the YPQA for each classroom/program space reviewed.</p>			
<p><u>D.</u> Child/Youth Health and Development</p>	<p><u>1.E.1</u> Facility documents distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured children/youth.</p> <p><u>1.E.2</u> Facility shares with families information on child/youth development and on children's/youth health.</p>	<p><u>2.D.1</u> The facility shall document the distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured participants.</p> <p><u>2.E.1</u> The facility shall shares with families information regarding medical homes for children/youth with families.</p> <p><u>2.ED.2</u> The facility shall shares with families with families information regarding child/ or youth development, stages of</p>	<p><u>3.ED.1</u> The facility shall shares with families information on nutrition and physical activity for children/youth school age children with families.</p> <p>-(1) Ltwo ()</p>	<p>-(2)</p>	<p>-(2)</p>	<p>-(2)</p>

	<p><u>1.E.3</u> Any medical and educational care plans involving a child/youth are written and on file, and implementation is documented while maintaining confidentiality.</p> <p><u>1.D.1</u> The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p>	<p>development, and children's health.</p> <p><u>—(1)</u></p>				
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ACRONYMS, TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

ADE: Arkansas Department of Education

ADE K-12 Frameworks: <http://arkansased.org/parents/refrigerator-curriculum.html>

Administrator: person on-site who is responsible for day-to-day operation of the program

ARKids First: Arkansas health insurance for eligible children up to 18 years old; <http://www.arkidsfirst.com>

BAS: Business Administration Scale

Better Beginnings: Arkansas' Quality Rating Improvement System

ERS: Environment Rating Scale(s)

FCCERS: Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale

Good standing: is not currently debarred, defunded, excluded, or under adverse licensing action

Medical home: primary source of comprehensive health care

PAS: Program Administration Scale

Primary caregiver: person in charge of the family child care program

SACERS: School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale

Secondary caregiver: an employee in a family child care program who is supervised by the primary caregiver

Staff: employees who work directly with children/youth, and those involved in the planning or implementing of services for children/youth

PDR: Arkansas' Professional Registry professional development system

PDR Foundation 1: Practitioner is registered in the PDR Registry. Practitioner has completed 15 clock hours of PDR registered early childhood education or after school education training which includes an orientation course.

PDR Foundation 2: Practitioner is registered in the PDR Registry. Practitioner has completed 30 clock hours of PDR registered early childhood education or after school education training.

PDR Foundation 3: Practitioner is registered in the PDR Registry. Practitioner has completed 45 clock hours of PDR registered early childhood education or after school education training or three semester hours of early childhood education or after school care education at an institution of higher education. An administrator's education and experience may be considered to meet the intent of this requirement.

PDR Intermediate 1: Practitioner has completed a CDA credential or 135 clock hours of PDR registered early childhood education or after school education at an institution of higher education or nine semester hours of early childhood education or after school education at an institution of higher education. An administrator's education and experience may be considered to meet the intent of this requirement.

PDR Intermediate 2: Practitioner has completed 18 semester hours of early childhood education or after school education at an institution of higher education. An administrator's education and experience may be considered to meet the intent of this requirement.

PDR Intermediate 3: Practitioner has completed an associate degree which includes 25 semester hours of early childhood education or after school education at an institution of higher education. An administrator's education and experience may be considered to meet the intent of this requirement.

Teaching staff: employees who are regularly scheduled to work directly with children/youth.

YPQA: Youth Program Quality Assessment; this tool has two options the YPQA (generally suited for 4th-grade—12th-grade children) or the Younger Youth Program Quality Assessment (generally suited for kindergarten—6th-grade children).

7.00 APPLICATION

~~7.01—To apply for Better Beginnings certification the following shall be submitted to the Division for review. Division approved forms will be provided.~~

~~7.02~~ 7.01 The application will consist of the following items:

~~A. Better Beginnings Application FormAn 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 Ssection 6, (six) regarding for the facility type and level for which the facility is applying.~~

~~A. B. Better Beginnings Application Checklist. This document allows the facility to self select the requirements for which documentation is being provided.~~

~~B. C. Annual Staff Record Form and documentation as necessary to validate staff meeting qualifications and professional development requirements (See 6.0) including:~~

- ~~1. Verification that facility staff or caregivers are members in the Professional Development Registry (PDR) or the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Registry; and~~
- ~~2. PDR and/or ADE Registry transcript verifying requirements for both qualifications and professional development are met. An administrator’s director’s education and experience may be considered to meet the intent of qualification requirements; and~~
- ~~3. College hours obtained in pursuit of a degree in Early Childhood or a related degree can may count as approved professional development hours; and~~
- ~~4. CPR and First Aid training can may count for up to four (4) hours of approved professional development annuallyonce every two years; and~~
- ~~5. Any additional documentation for completion of required trainings required but that is not reflected on the transcripts.~~

~~C. Developmentally appropriate daily program schedule for each age group served.~~

~~D. Evidence that daily schedules are posted in each classroom/program space.~~

~~E. Sample of current written daily plans for each age group served. Plans must be for two consecutive weeks for each group.~~

~~F. Facility self evaluation using an approved rating tool (ex. ITERS-R, ECERS-R, SACERS, FCCERS-R, YPQA) for each age group served. Self-evaluation documentation consists of completed score sheets from the approved tools, or other self-assessment checklists associated with and compiled from the approved tools.~~

~~G. Evidence that ARKIDS First information is distributed to families of uninsured children.~~

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- ~~H. Evidence that child/youth development information has been shared with families.~~
- ~~I. Evidence that health information has been shared with families.~~
- ~~— Program policy and procedures for obtaining and implementing children’s medical and educational care plans.~~
- ~~J. Current ERS or YPQA scores, if applicable for the level which the facility is applying.~~
- ~~J. K. Current PAS/BAS scores, if applicable for the level which the facility is applying.~~

7.037.02 Child Care centers that are accredited through National Association of Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Afterschool Association (NAA), or the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities: Child and Youth Services Standards (CARF), and Family Child Care homes that are accredited through the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) will be considered certified. Facilities with such accreditations will submit a Better Beginnings Application Form and verification of the national accreditation. Additional documentation of Better Beginnings requirements, or reviews may be required to determine the level of Better Beginnings certification. Eligible programs that are accredited through state or national accreditation systems are eligible for full or partial reciprocity 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.

7.04 Electronic submissions of the application are acceptable and encouraged.

8.00 APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

8.01- ~~The Better Beginnings Application Form is used to verify the program’s eligibility. Applications will be denied without if they lack the required supporting documentation will be denied.~~

8.02 ~~The Division will review the The Application Checklist and submitted supporting~~ documentation ~~are reviewed~~ to determine if each item submitted meets the intent of the associated requirement.

8.03 When ~~the submitted~~ 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.

~~8.04—When submitted documentation meets the intent of each associated requirement for level 2 or 3, the facility is notified that Assessors will be assigned to conduct the Environmental Assessment (ex: ERS, YPQA) and the Program Review. The Program review consists of the PAS/BAS assessment and verification of compliance with the other requirements.~~

~~8.05—Facilities which meet all requirements of a level, except an assessment score (ex.: PAS/BAS or ERS/YPQA), may request a re-assessment. The request must include evidence of technical assistance or training. Re-assessments will be conducted no sooner than three (3) months after the first assessment.~~

~~8.06~~8.04 Applicants will be certified at the highest level ~~for~~in which all requirements are met as determined by review of all documentation and assessments.

~~8.05 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.~~

9.00 MAINTAINING CERTIFICATON

9.01 Certification ~~for level two (2) and above~~ is valid for ~~thirty-six (36) months, unless 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.~~

9.02 Facilities, certified as Better Beginnings ~~level two (2) and above~~ programs, must re-submit all application documents, as outlined in ~~section 7.00-Application, thirty five three (35 (thirty-five (35)3.)~~ months after the date of the last certification. ~~Level one (1) facilities are not required to reapply.~~ Failure to submit required documentation may ~~jeopardize result in loss of~~ certification status. Certification will be granted ~~according to achievement of requirements upon completion of all~~ ~~requirements~~ (see section 8.00-~~Application Review~~).

9.03 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.

9.04 –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.

9.039.05 Facilities requesting to be reviewed for a higher level of certification must ~~wait at least six (6) months after the last certification date~~ submit a new application for the higher level. A full application must be submitted according to section 7.00 ~~Application~~ and will be processed according to section 8.00 Application Review Process. 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 ~~according to section 8.00 Application Review Process~~.

9.049.06 Certified facilities that change location must submit a new application for Better Beginnings certification according to section 7.00 ~~Application~~ and will be processed according to section 8.00 Application Review Process. The facility may retain ~~the~~ any 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.

~~9.05 — Certified facilities that change ownership must submit a new application for Better Beginnings certification according to section 7.00 Application and will be processed according to 8.00 Application Review Process.~~

9.067 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 ~~certified~~ the Better Beginnings status.

9.08 –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.

10.00 ADVERSE ACTION

10.01 Adverse actions include denial, suspension, reduction in level, or removal of certified status. Adverse actions may ~~result from~~ include but are not limited to:

A. Ineligibility to participate according to section 5.00 Eligibility;

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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;

EG. Substantiation of complaints received by the Division office and/or failure to correct deficiencies within a reasonable period of time;

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.

10.02 -Facilities that have their Better Beginnings certification denied, suspended, or removed are eligible to re-apply after twelve (12) months unless otherwise authorized notified by the Division Director.

11.00 APPEAL PROCEDURE

11.01 Facilities that are denied certification status, are found to be ineligible for a particular level, or have had their certification status reduced or removed; ~~or have a dispute concerning published requirements,~~ may request an appeal. A written request for appeal shall be submitted to the Better Beginnings ~~Coordinator~~ Program Administrator within ~~thirty ten (3010)~~ thirty (30) days of the notice of action, asking that certification status decision be reviewed.

11.02 Upon receipt of the request for appeal, the Better Beginnings ~~Coordinator~~ Program Administrator will conduct an internal review to ~~ensure~~ insure that the appropriate processes were followed and to determine the validity of the decision. The Better Beginnings ~~Coordinator~~ 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.

11.03 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.

11.04 -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.

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Better Beginnings

Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System



Provider RULE BOOK

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Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
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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

1.00 REGULATORY AUTHORITY

1.01 These regulations are enacted pursuant to Arkansas Code Ann. §20-78-201-226 as amended.

1.02 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.

2.00 PURPOSE

2.01 It is the purpose of these regulations to set the general guidelines for the operation of Better Beginnings.

2.02 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.

2.03 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

ADE	Arkansas Department of Education
ABC	Arkansas Better Chance
AEDC	Arkansas Economic Development Commission
BAS	Business Administration Scale
CARF	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

4.00 AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

4.01 The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE) will coordinate and administer Better Beginnings.

4.02 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.

4.03 The Better Beginnings Program Administrator or designee will have final approval of applications for certification as reviewed and recommended by the Better Beginnings staff.

4.04 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.

4.05 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.

4.06

4.06 The Division or Division consultants will provide technical assistance to any facilities desiring to achieve certification.

4.07 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).

4.08 Facilities will be notified of their certification status. The certification notice will denote the level of certification achieved.

5.00 ELIGIBILITY

5.01 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.

5.02 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.

5.03 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.

5.04 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.

5.05 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.

5.06 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.

6.00 COMPONENT AREAS, REQUIREMENTS, AND LEVELS

6.01 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.

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 5
A. Administration	<p>1.A.1 The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p> <p>1.A.2 The facility may have a program review completed by a certified PAS assessor. School age programs using YPQI may have a PQA Form B review completed by a reliable assessor.</p>	<p>2.A.1 The facility shall have a PAS review completed by a certified PAS assessor. School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B review completed by a reliable assessor.</p> <p>2.A.2 The director shall complete a Strengthening Families training listed on the PDR.</p>	<p>3.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on PAS items 1-21 (items 5 and 6 are scored but are not included in the average). School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B score of 3.75 or higher.</p> <p>3.A.2 The director shall complete the Strengthening Families online self-assessment for three (3) or more Strategies.</p> <p>3.A.3 The facility shall develop a Strengthening Families action plan and implement at least one (1) action step.</p>	<p>4.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on PAS. School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B score of 4.00 or higher.</p> <p>4.A.2 The director shall implement at least one (1) additional Strengthening Families action step for a total of two (2).</p>	<p>5.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 5.00 or higher on PAS. School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B score of 4.25 or higher.</p>	<p>6.A.1 The facility shall score an average of 6.00 or higher on PAS. School-age programs using YPQI shall have a PQA Form B score of 4.75 or higher.</p>
B. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development	<p>1.B.1 The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p>	<p>2.B.1 All directors and at least fifty percent (50%) of teaching staff shall complete "Early Learning Standards (ELS) Basics Training." The director and school-age staff shall complete</p>				

		<p>“Developmental Assets Training.”</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>2.B.4 The director shall complete training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children.</p>				
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Proposed

Arkansas Better Beginnings – Child Care Center Requirements page 3

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 5
<p>C. Learning Environment / Environment Assessment</p>	<p>1.C.1 The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p> <p>1.C.2 The facility may have an ERS review. School age programs using YPQI may have a PQA review.</p>	<p>2.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 3.00 or higher on the ERS review. School age programs using PQA shall score a 3.00 or higher on the PQA.</p>	<p>3.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on the ERS. School age programs using PQA shall score 3.75 or higher on the PQA.</p> <p>3.C.2 The staff shall maintain a portfolio for each child.</p>	<p>4.C.1 Staff to child ratios shall be maintained as follows: Birth–18 months 1:4 18-36 months 1:7 2 ½ - 3 years 1:11 4 years 1:12 5 years and up 1:18</p> <p>4.C.2 The facility shall score an average of 5.00 or higher on the ERS. School age programs using PQA shall score 4.00 or higher on the PQA.</p>	<p>5.C.1 Staff to child ratios shall be maintained as follows: Birth–18 months 1:4 18-36 months 1:6 2 ½ - 3 years 1:10 4 years 1:10 5 years and up 1:18</p> <p>5.C.2 The facility shall score an average of 5.50 or higher on the ERS. School age programs using the PQA shall score 4.25 or higher on the PQA.</p>	<p>6.C.1 Staff to child ratios shall be maintained as follows: Birth–18 months 1:4 18-36 months 1:6 2 ½ - 3 years 1:10 4 years 1:10 5 years and up 1:15</p> <p>6.C.2 The facility shall score an average of 6.00 or higher on the ERS. School age programs using the PQA shall score 4.50 or higher on the PQA.</p>
<p>D. Child Health and Development</p>	<p>1.D.1 The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</p>	<p>2.D.1 The facility shall document distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured children.</p> <p>2.D.2 The facility shall share information on child development, stages of development, and children’s health with families.</p> <p>2.D.3 All children, birth to kindergarten, shall have an annual developmental screening.</p>	<p>3.D.1 The facility shall share information on nutrition and physical activity for children with families.</p> <p>3.D.2 The facility shall use a Division-approved tool to complete a (1) physical activity self-assessment and create and implement one action plan in the</p>	<p>4.D.1 The facility shall use a Division-approved tool to complete a self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding & infant feeding, outdoor play & learning, or screen time and create and implement two</p>	<p>5.D.1 The facility shall use a Division-approved tool to complete a self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding and infant feeding, outdoor play and learning, OR screen time and create and implement two (2)</p>	<p>6.D.1 The facility shall use a Division-approved tool to complete a self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding and infant feeding, outdoor play and learning, OR screen time and create and implement two (2)</p>

		<p>2.D.4 The facility shall use a Division-approved tool to complete a child nutrition self-assessment and create and implement one (1) action plan in the child nutrition module.</p> <p>2.D.5 The facility shall use a Division-approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in the child nutrition model to assess progress.</p>	<p>physical activity module.</p> <p>3.D.3 The facility shall use the Division - approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in the physical activity module to assess progress.</p>	<p>action plans in that module. .</p> <p>4.D.2 The facility shall use the Division – approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding & infant feeding, outdoor play & learning, OR screen time to assess progress.</p>	<p>action plans in that module.</p> <p>5.D.2 The facility shall use the Division – approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding & infant feeding, outdoor play & learning, OR screen time to assess progress.</p>	<p>action plans in that module.</p> <p>6.D.2 The facility shall use the Division – approved tool to complete a second self-assessment in child nutrition, physical activity, farm to ECE, oral health, breastfeeding & infant feeding, outdoor play & learning, OR screen time to assess progress.</p>
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Proposed

ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – LICENSED AND REGISTERED HOME REQUIREMENTS

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

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

		<p>2.B.2 The primary caregiver shall complete an ERS training.</p> <p>2.B.3 The primary caregiver shall participate in at least two (2) clock hours of training on nutrition for children, annually.</p> <p>2.B.4 The primary caregiver shall complete training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children.</p>				
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Proposed

Arkansas Better Beginnings – Licensed and Registered Home Requirements page 2

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 5
<p>C. Learning Environment / Environment Assessment</p>	<p>1.C.1 The facility <u>has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.</u></p> <p>1.C.2 The facility may have a FCCERS review.</p>	<p>2.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 3.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</p>	<p>3.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</p> <p>3.C.2 Caregivers shall maintain a portfolio for each child.</p>	<p>4.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 5.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</p>	<p>5.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 5.50 or higher on the FCCERS.</p>	<p>6.C.1 The facility shall score an average of 6.00 or higher on the FCCERS.</p>

Proposed

Arkansas Better Beginnings – Licensed and Registered Home Requirements page 3

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

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

			implement at least one (1) action step.			
B. Staff Qualifications and Professional Development	<p>1.B.1 The facility has a <u>license in New Provisional or Regular status.</u></p>	<p>2.B.1 All directors and at least fifty percent (50%) of teaching staff shall complete “Intro to the 40 Developmental Assets” training.</p> <p>2.B.2 All directors and, and fifty percent (50%) of the teaching staff shall complete an ERS or YPQI training.</p> <p>2.B.3 The director and kitchen manager (if applicable) shall participate in training on nutrition for school age children/youth, annually.</p> <p>2.B.4 The director shall complete training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children/youth.</p>				

C. Learning Environment / Environment Assessment	<p>1.C.1 The facility has a <u>license in New Provisional or Regular status.</u></p> <p>1.C.2 The facility may have a SACERS or a PQA review completed by a reliable assessor.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>3.C.1 Facility shall score an average of 4.00 or higher on the SACERS or 3.75 or higher on the PQA.</p> <p>3.C.2 Staff shall maintain a portfolio for each participant.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>6.C.1 The staff/participant ratio shall be 1:15.</p> <p>6.C.2 The facility shall score an average of 6.00 or higher on the SACERS or 4.50 or higher on the PQA.</p>
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Arkansas Better Beginnings – Out-of-School Time Requirements page 2

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2	LEVEL 4 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 3	LEVEL 5 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 4	LEVEL 6 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 - 5
D. Child/Youth Health and Development	<u>1.D.1</u> The facility has a license in New Provisional or Regular status.	<p>2.D.1 The facility shall document the distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured participants.</p> <p>2.D.2 The facility shall share with families information regarding child or youth development, stages of development, and children’s health.</p>	3.D.1 The facility shall share information on nutrition and physical activity for school age children with families.			

Proposed

7.00 APPLICATION

7.01 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.

7.02 Eligible programs that are accredited through state or national accreditation systems are eligible for full or partial reciprocity 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.

8.00 APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

8.01 Applications will be denied if they lack the required supporting documentation.

8.02 The Division will review the supporting documentation to determine if each item submitted meets the intent of the associated requirement.

8.03 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.

8.04 Applicants will be certified at the highest level for which all requirements are met as determined by review of all documentation and assessments.

8.05 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.

9.00 MAINTAINING CERTIFICATON

9.01 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.

9.02 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).

9.03 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.

9.04 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.

9.05 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.

9.06 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.

9.07 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.

9.08 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.

10.00 ADVERSE ACTION

10.01 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.

10.02 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.**

11.00 APPEAL PROCEDURE

11.01 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.

11.02 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.

11.03 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.

11.04 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.

Proposed