



Connections to the Profession

A Guide for Early Childhood Educators

Provided by:



arkansas
early childhood
association

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Welcome to the Profession!

We are glad you have chosen to help our most precious resources grow into responsible and competent human beings. You have joined a group of dedicated professionals with a common interest and passion for helping young children. Watching them learn and make achievements is one of the most heartwarming benefits. You will spend more time than anyone engaging with young children, teaching them, and influencing their behavior. Teaching one child, let alone a whole classroom of young learners is no simple task. This guide is provided to help connect you with supportive resources for success.

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Connecting with Others

Working with young children can be exhausting and emotionally draining. Whether it's a particularly challenging student or balancing work and home life (or both), stress is part of the job, and other early childhood educators are invaluable sources of support.

Places to Connect

Professional organizations

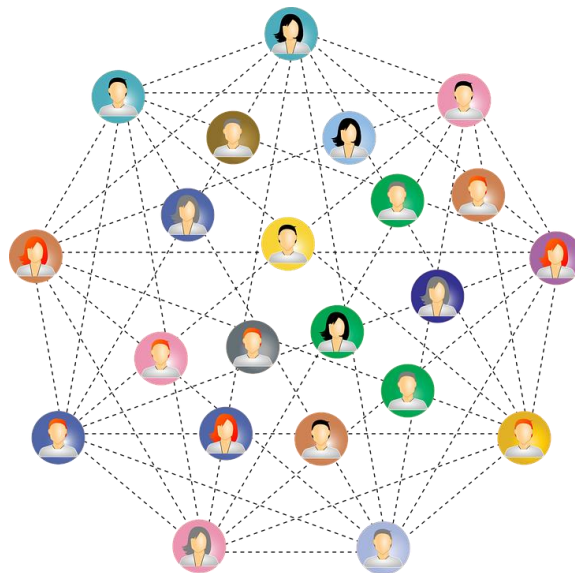
Conferences

Workshops

Networking events

Social media

We encourage you to interact with other early childhood professionals and set a goal to meet one new person every time!



Arkansas Early Childhood Association

AECA is the state of Arkansas' early childhood professional organization. AECA is a non-profit organization comprised of early childhood professionals and parents who share a common concern about the well-being of young children and their families. For more than 50 years AECA has worked for quality care and education for the children of Arkansas. In conjunction with its affiliation with the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA), a 13-state regional organization.

AECA's goal is to:

- Expand professional growth opportunities
- Produce beneficial publications
- Support public policy issues for southern children

To communicate best practices and the latest developments to its membership AECA offers:

- Annual conference
- Newsletter
- Website

As a Member of AECA, you receive:

- Information about young children.
- Access to verified training through the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System.
- CEU's for AECA training
- Reduced conference rates to AECA & SECA conferences
- Networking opportunities through local affiliations or chapters
- Full membership in the Southern Early Childhood Association
- *Dimensions of Early Childhood* - the refereed journal of the Southern Early Childhood Association that includes current articles on best practices in childcare and early childhood education policy.
- AECA Update - A quarterly publication of the Arkansas Early Childhood Association that provides you news from the local and state affiliates, training, annual conference, and opportunities available to you as a member of AECA.

<http://www.arkansasearlychildhood.org>

AECA Local Affiliates

AECA local affiliates are located across the state. Participation in local affiliate meetings and events provide opportunities for networking, professional development, and advocacy. Local affiliate membership dues are included in your AECA membership. Current affiliates are as follows:

Arkansas Family Child Care Association (AFCCA) Statewide

Early Childhood Association of Central Arkansas (ECA-CA) Little Rock area

Hot Springs Early Childhood Association (HSECA) Hot Springs area

North Central Early Childhood Association (NCECA)

Northwest Arkansas Early Childhood Association (NWAECA) Fayetteville area

River Valley Early Childhood Association (RV-ECA) Fort Smith area

White River Early Childhood Association (WR-ECA)

Affiliate contacts and more information can be found online at:

<http://www.arkansasearlychildhood.org/affiliates/>

Connecting with Professional Development



Professional development provides continued learning and support to strengthen practices on behalf of young children and their families. These opportunities lead to improvements in the knowledge, skills, practices, and dispositions of early childhood professionals. All early childhood education professionals working in licensed child care centers, child care family homes, and out-of-school time facilities are required to complete professional development annually. Professional Development may be conducted online or in-person.

Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE)

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education within the Arkansas Department of Human Services was established to enhance the coordination of child care and early childhood education programs within the state.

The Division is comprised of six sections:

- Arkansas Better Chance Program
- Child Care Licensing and Accreditation
- Compliance and Integrity Unit
- Family Support
- Special Nutrition Program
- Program and Professional Development

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/dccece>

Professional Development Registry



The PDR, formerly the TAPP Registry, is the tracking component of Arkansas' Early Childhood Education and Care Professional Development System. It was designed by the Arkansas Department of Human Services: Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE). The DCCECE is responsible with ensuring Arkansas' youngest children receive high-quality care and education so they arrive to school ready to learn.

The PDR plays a key part in promoting professional development. All early childhood professionals working in licensed centers, homes and out-of-school time facilities are required to become a member of the PDR. Online registration can be done quickly and searching for training opportunities can be done by location, date, key content area or training course number. Members are assigned a unique PDR identification number that is used to track training. Members have access to their own online training transcript, which list the trainings attended. A minimum number of training hours is required annually to maintain membership. Members are assigned a level according to the education and training received. Members can set professional career goals and use the Individual Professional Development Plan to determine which training is best suited to fit their needs. The PDR tracks trainers and verifies that they have experience training adults, working with children, and education in their related field.

The PDR offers you a way to:

- Organize your training and college coursework
- Efficiently track your ongoing professional development
- Create a pathway for future professional development
- Connect with others who care about children and families
- Find training on a statewide basis

<https://pdregistry.arkansas.gov>

Connecting with Supportive Resources

Support may include trainings, mentoring/coaching, technical assistance, parenting workshops, parental involvement, child growth and development, and developmentally appropriate practice. Agencies providing training, resources, research, and support across the state:

Arkansas State University Childhood Services <http://asuchildhoodservices.org>

Arkansas Association for Infant Mental Health <http://www.aaimh.org/>

Child Care Aware Arkansas Network

- Child Care Aware of Northwest Arkansas and River Valley
www.nwachildcare.org
- Child Care Aware of Northcentral Arkansas www.ccana.org
- Child Care Aware of Eastern Arkansas
http://asuchildhoodservices.org/#!childcare_aware_overview
- Child Care Aware of Central and Southwest Arkansas
www.childcareawarecswa.org
- Child Care Aware of West Central Arkansas www.np.edu/childcare-aware

Curricula Concepts <http://curriculaconcepts.com>

Dawson Education Service Cooperative <https://www.dawsonesc.com/o/dawson-esc/page/positive-discipline>

UAMS Family and Preventive Medicine <https://familymedicine.uams.edu/research-and-scholarly-activity/red/ecpd/>

UAMS Healthy Child Care Arkansas <http://www.healthychildcarear.org>

University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service <https://www.uaex.edu/life-skills-wellness/child-care-providers/default.aspx>

University of Arkansas Early Care and Education Projects <https://ecep.uark.edu/>

University of Arkansas at Fort Smith <https://education.uafs.edu/education/uafs-early-childhood-professional-development-trainings>

University of Arkansas Teaming for Early Childhood Inclusion
<https://uofapartners.uark.edu/projects/>

University of Arkansas Welcome the Children
<https://education.uafs.edu/education/uafs-early-childhood-professional-development-trainings>

DCCECE Behavior Help Hotline

Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education implementing a system called Behavior Help to assist you with behavioral challenges in young children. Request can be submitted online. Once you submit your request, the DCCECE Behavior Help team will contact you as quickly as possible, within 3 days.

The DCCECE has taken steps to prevent expulsion and suspension in early education and child care. Children expelled in early years are more likely to fail in school later. Research identifies two things that help prevent expulsion: teacher training and child mental health consultation. The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education actively funds to supports these on your behalf. By working together, we can have lifelong positive effects on the children we serve! Our helpful staff will connect you with support services.

Depending on your case, we will connect you with one or more of the following:

- Targeted courses: Research-based classes to address the needs of your staff and the child. Courses are registry accredited.
- Technical assistance: A qualified child care expert will visit your program. They observe the child and can help you optimize the classroom environment to make life easier for you and the child.
- Child mental health consultation: A mental health consultant will observe the child in the program and help staff and parents develop routines to settle the child. A consultant may refer the child for developmental testing or connect the family with community resources.

Other resources include training, guidance policies, and teacher checklists.

www.behaviorhelponline.org

Arkansas Better Beginnings



Better Beginnings, Arkansas's Quality Rating Improvement System, has been developed to make sure all children have the very best experience they can by identifying high quality child care and early childhood education programs.

As an early childhood professional, you have a crucial role to play in children's bright futures. The Better Beginnings initiative is a good way to start. Better Beginnings is a voluntary system administered by the Department of Human Services that sets a quality rating of the enrolled child care providers. The program also serves as a resource for parents and families looking for child care.

Better Beginnings distinguishes the quality of each Arkansas child care facility that participates by a 1, 2 and 3-star rating system.

Better Beginnings provides:

- Resource library and checklists for parents.
- Curriculum and supplements for educators and providers.

<http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com>

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance is available by request or by referral from the licensing office to all child care programs in the state. A-State Childhood Services has a contract with the Division to establish a group of early childhood professionals to offer this assistance at no charge to providers.

Types of technical assistance:

- Site visit to the facility
- Meeting with program administrators and/or policy makers

Technical assistance is available on any topic, such as those listed below:

- Arkansas Minimum Licensing Requirements
- Environment rating scales and/or the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA)
- The Better Beginnings certification process, the Program Administration Scale (PAS), and the Business Administration Scale (BAS)
- Program administration and business practices
- Health and safety, including transportation
- Developmentally appropriate practices, including the learning environment, teacher-child interactions, curriculum, and assessment
- Youth development

How to Request Technical Assistance

1. Complete a technical assistance (TA) request form.
2. Return the TA request form to A-State Childhood Services.
3. Your TA request will be assigned to a Childhood Services consultant in your area who has expertise on the topic of your request.
4. The consultant will call you to discuss your needs and will schedule an appointment to visit your facility or will arrange another method for assisting you.

<http://asuchildhoodservices.org/docs/Fillable%2012-13%20TA%20All%20Areas.pdf>

Connecting with Curriculum & Supplements

Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 Months (CDELS)

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/dccece/AR%20Early%20Learning%20Standards%202016.pdf>

Connecting with Infants is a comprehensive curriculum for infants from birth through eighteen months. The curriculum was developed through a contract with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.

<http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/providers-teachers/curriculum-supplements/infanttoddler/connecting-infants>

Adventures for Toddlers is a comprehensive curriculum for children from eighteen through thirty-six months, has been developed and revised through contracts with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. Programs using the Adventures for Toddlers curriculum can easily transition into the Adventures in Learning curriculum for children from three through five.

<http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/providers-teachers/curriculum-supplements/infanttoddler/adventures-toddlers>

Adventures in Learning is a comprehensive curriculum for children from three to five, features 40 topics of study in nine focus areas. Each topic is introduced with familiar children's books and has a strong language and literacy emphasis.

<https://arbetterbeginnings.com/providers-teachers/curriculum-supplements/preschool/adventures-learning>

B.A.M.M.M.! is a series of twelve activity guides that connect literature and movement. Each guide begins with a children's book, extends to movement activities that are suggested in the book, and expands to include related curriculum activities and ideas for enhancing the learning environment.

<http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/providers-teachers/curriculum-supplements/preschool/books-and-movement-magical-mix>

Kindergarten Readiness Program is a program developed to help teachers and caregivers in preschool to have a role in assisting children migrate to a kindergarten setting.

<https://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/dccece/programs-services/kindergarten-readiness-program>

Story-A-Month is a collection of storytelling patterns and learning activities for thirty-seven favorite children's books, plus patterns for twelve Mother Goose Rhymes and activities.

<https://arbetterbeginnings.com/providers-teachers/curriculum-supplements/preschool/story-month>

Connecting Literature and Math (CLAM) - A Component of STEM Curriculum is developed to support teachers in providing appropriate math experiences for children from three through five.

<https://arbetterbeginnings.com/providers-teachers/curriculum-supplements/preschool/connecting-literature-and-math>

Creative Adventures with Literature is a collection of curriculum guides that integrate literature and the creative arts.

<https://arbetterbeginnings.com/providers-teachers/curriculum-supplements/preschool/creative-adventures-literature>

Informational Books in the Preschool Classroom is a supplemental curriculum for children age three through five that integrates the Standards Domain: Emergent Literacy with two other Domains: Science and Technology and Social Studies.

<https://arbetterbeginnings.com/providers-teachers/curriculum-supplements/preschool/informational-books-preschool-classroom>

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood

The T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood Arkansas Initiative is a national, evidence-based strategy that creates access to higher education for teachers, directors and family child-care providers (early educators) working with young children. T.E.A.C.H. provides comprehensive scholarships to enable educators to take coursework leading to credentials and degrees by making it possible for them to afford both the time and expense of going to school. At the same time, T.E.A.C.H. will help leverage the financial resources necessary to provide capacity in higher education to helping individuals attain their educational and career goals. T.E.A.C.H. is a change agent for the early care and education (ECE) workforce and system.

The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Arkansas Initiative was developed to upgrade the level of education of teachers working with young children while making the educational process affordable, increasing wages and reducing turnover. With funds from the Arkansas Department of Human Services, the program is now in Arkansas. The program has had remarkable success. Teachers and their sponsoring centers overwhelmingly support the program in their evaluations. Teachers typically complete 4-17 credit hours per year and remain in their sponsoring centers, thus reducing turnover.

Who is eligible for a scholarship?

Any teacher who would like to attend a college to enroll in coursework in Early Childhood Education and who is employed full-time (30 hours/week minimum) in a licensed childcare center or a licensed large family childcare home is eligible to apply for a scholarship. Scholarships are awarded based on need and commitment to the Early Childhood Education field, as shown through information on the application and availability of funds.

What kind of support does the scholarship program provide?

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Arkansas pays for 90% of tuition and books, provides and \$80 travel stipend each semester, reimburses the center for \$11 per hour of release time given, provides \$450 in bonuses for teachers who complete their contract and provides counseling and administrative support for the program.

What kind of commitment are centers required to make?

Centers must agree to sponsor a scholarship teacher by contributing a portion of the cost of tuition (5%), giving teachers paid release time each week (3-6 hours a week)

and agreeing to award the teacher a \$300 bonus upon completion of the one-year scholarship contract. T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Arkansas will reimburse centers for \$11 per hour of release time.

Is there flexibility in the way in which teachers and centers can participate?

To help with their cost of the degree, teachers may also look for additional sources of scholarships and grants, including Pell Grants. If they are eligible, they may use those funds towards their portion of books/tuition and living expenses. Teachers may also choose to obtain their CDA credential while working on their Associate degree. In this case, the T.E.A.C.H. grant will cover 90% of the cost of the CDA assessment.

What kind of commitment are scholarship teachers required to make?

As scholarship recipients, teachers must attend classes and successfully complete 9-15 semester toward a certificate, diploma or associate degree in early childhood education during the contract year. Teachers are expected to contribute 5% of the cost of tuition and 10% of the cost of books each semester. At the end of the scholarship year, teachers must promise to continue to teach at their sponsoring center for another year in return for a bonus.

Can any type of center sponsor a teacher on a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship?

Profit, not-for-profit, faith-based public and Head Start programs have all sponsored scholarship teachers. Any licensed center or family childcare home in good standing wishing to make a commitment to teacher education and compensation by meeting the terms of the scholarship contract is eligible to sponsor up to two scholarship recipients.

Who funds the Early Childhood Associate Degree Scholarship Program?

The funding for T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Arkansas comes from a sub-grant with the Arkansas Department of Human Services Child Care Quality Set-aside. The source of this money is the federal Child Care and Development Fund.

For more information visit <https://arkansasearlychildhood.org/teach/>

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You may apply for membership on our website www.arkansasearlychildhood.org or via this form.

Name of Applicant _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number () _____ Email _____

Employed By _____ Job Title _____

Please check all that apply:

- Renewal (Member ID # _____) New Member Full-time Student
- CHANGE OF INFORMATION

Dues include membership in AECA, SECA (our regional parent association) and a local affiliate.

Check one:

- REGULAR MEMBER (New or renewal) - \$39.00
- STUDENT MEMBER (New or renewal) - \$25.00 (Attach copy of ID and proof of current enrollment)

Please indicate which local affiliate you would be involved with:

- Arkansas Family Child Care Association (AFCCA)
- Early Childhood Association/Central Arkansas (ECA-CA) – Little Rock area
- Hot Springs Early Childhood Association (HS-ECA)
- Northwest Arkansas Early Childhood Association (NW-AECA)
- River Valley Early Childhood Association (RV-AECA)
- White River Early Childhood Association (WR-AECA)

Questions? E-mail paul@arkansasearlychildhood.org. Make checks payable to AECA.

Mail form and payment to: Arkansas Early Childhood Association, Attn: Membership, 10201 West Markham St., Suite 318, Little Rock, AR, 72205

If paying by credit card, you may scan form and e-mail to paul@arkansasearlychildhood.org and we will contact you for credit card information. Upon receipt of this form and payment, your membership will be processed, and you will be notified how to access your membership information.