

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1.00 REGULATORY AUTHORITY

1.01 These regulations are enacted pursuant to ~~Acts 820 and 1268 of 1993, Ark. Code Ann. §6-45-103 (Supp. 1993) and revised by Act 1132 of 1997~~ Arkansas Code Ann. §20-78-201-226 as amended.

1.02 These regulations shall be known as the Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education regulations governing ~~the Arkansas Child Care Approval System~~ Better Beginnings, Arkansas' Quality Rating Improvement System.

2.00 PURPOSE

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

2.02 This system is intended ~~to extend Approval to certify quality~~ status to child care facilities ~~which that~~ meet quality guidelines Better Beginnings requirements as set forth in these regulations.

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

~~a(A)-~~ Under Act 820 of 1993, corporations ~~which that~~ build and equip ~~a~~ an approved-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(B)-~~ Under Act 820 of 1993, a business ~~which 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.

~~e(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 of the Internal Revenue Code will be available to qualified taxpayers who incur child care expenses at ~~approved~~ child care facilities certified at Better Beginnings level 2 or Better Beginnings level 3.

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3.0 DEFINITIONS/ACRONYMS

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 (the Division)
- DHS: Department of Human Services
- 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
- ~~3.02~~ NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children
- ~~3.03~~ NAFCC: National Association for Family Child Care
- PAS: Program Administration Scale
- SACERS: School-Age Environment Rating Scale
- TAPP: Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways
- YPQA: Youth Program Quality Assessment

~~3.04 AEDC: Arkansas Economic Development Commission~~

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4.0 APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

~~4.01 All child care facilities as defined under Ark. Code Ann. §20-78-202, exclusive of foster homes, group homes and custodial institutions, are eligible for Approval status.~~

~~4.02 All child care facilities, excluding those named in section 4.01 above, operating under a regular child care license as issued by the Division are eligible. Programs operating under a non-compliance provisional child care license at the time of application will not be considered for Approval status, however, 1st year provisional initial license will be accepted.~~

Comment [M1]: Moved to become section 5.0

5.0 AGENCY RESPONSIBILITY

~~5.01- The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (the Division), will coordinate and administer the Arkansas Child Care Approval System Better Beginnings.~~

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~~5.02- The Division Director Better Beginnings Coordinator will have final approval of all applications for certification as reviewed and recommended by the Better Beginnings staff.~~

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~~for Approval status which will be reviewed and recommended by the Division's Approval System Coordinator. This list will be submitted on a monthly basis for review and action.~~

~~5.03- Each December the Division will be responsible for providing verification to the Department of Finance & Administration each December of of the child care facilities qualifying for Approval status that qualified for certification at level 2 and level 3 in the preceding in the current calendar year.~~

~~5.04- Each December the Division will be responsible for providing verification to the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) each December of of the child care facilities that qualify for Approval status certification in the preceding current calendar year.~~

~~5.05- The Division will verify licensed status of all applicants as well as status with other DHS programs of all applicants.~~

~~5.06- The Division will provide technical assistance through consultants to any facilities desiring to achieve Approval status certification through consultants under contract to the Division.~~

~~5.07- Grants from the Division may be awarded to facilities moving toward Approval status dependent upon a thorough assessment of current facility deficiencies. Facility enhancement/improvement grants are awarded on a competitive basis and are not guaranteed to any provider, regardless of approved or non-approved status.~~

~~5.08- Approval status will be renewed annually. An on-site inspection and verification of regular licensed status will be required for renewed Approval. Previously approved facilities which are on non-compliance provisional licensing status at time of renewal will not be considered for re-evaluation~~

~~until the provisional status is removed.~~4.07 The Division will be responsible for the process of recertifying facilities (See Section 7.0 Application, 8.0 Application Process, and 9.0 Maintaining Certification).

~~54.08- The Division, in conjunction with AEDC, will provide technical assistance to corporations to plan, develop and implement a quality child care center.~~Facilities will be notified of their certification status. The certification notice will denote the level certification achieved.

5.0 ELIGIBILITY

5.01 All 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 license, or registration as issued by the Division are eligible. Entities with multiple sites, each holding a separate license number, must apply for certification for each site.

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.

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 Applicants and certified facilities must make their facility accessible for program reviews and environmental assessments. Such assessments may be unannounced.

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

6.0 COMPONENT AREAS, REQUIREMENTS, AND LEVELS

6.01 There are five (5) component areas in Better Beginnings: Administration, Administrator/Staff Qualifications /Professional Development, Learning Environment, Environmental Assessment, and Child Health and Development. There are requirements to be met in each component area in each of three (3) levels. The components, requirements and levels are as follows:

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ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – CENTER-BASED REQUIREMENTS

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

<u>COMPONENTS</u>	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2
Administration	1.A.1 Administrator attends “PAS Basics” training.	2.A.1 A program review is completed by a certified PAS assessor. 2.A.2 Administrator completes the Strengthening Families Webinar.	3.A.1 The facility scores an average of 4.00 or higher on PAS items 1-21 (items 5 and 6 scored, but not included in average). 3.A.2 Administrator completes Strengthening Families online self-assessment for 3 or more Strategies. 3.A.3 Facility develops a Strengthening Families action plan and implements at least 1 action step.
Administrator/ Staff Qualifications/ Professional Development	<u>Qualifications</u> 1.B.1 Administrator and teaching staff are members of the TAPP Registry and/or the ADE Registry. 1.B.2 Administrator meets requirements for TAPP Intermediate 1 or higher, including 21 clock hours of training in program planning/management and/or leadership. 1.B.3 All staff meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 1 or higher. <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>Qualifications</u> 2.B.1 Administrator and teaching staff maintain membership in the TAPP Registry and/or ADE Registry. 2.B.2 Administrator meets requirements for TAPP Intermediate 1 or higher, including 30 clock hours of training in program planning/management and/or leadership. 2.B.3 All staff meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of teaching staff meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 2 or higher. <u>Professional Development</u> 2.B.4 All administrators and teaching staff participate annually in 20 clock hours of approved professional development; for administrators, at least 3 clock hours must be in program planning/management and/or leadership. 2.B.5 At least 50% of teaching staff complete “Framework Basics” training.*	<u>Qualifications</u> 3.B.1 Administrator meets requirements for TAPP Intermediate 1 or higher, including 45 clock hours of training in program planning/management and/or leadership. 3.B.2 All staff meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of teaching staff meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 3 or higher. <u>Professional Development</u> 3.B.3 All administrators and teaching staff participate annually in 25 clock hours of approved professional development; for administrators, at least 4 clock hours must be in program planning/management and/or leadership.

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2
		2.B.6 All administrative staff and 50% of teaching staff complete an ERS training.* 2.B.7 Administrator and kitchen manager (if applicable) participate annually in at least 2 clock hours of training on nutrition for children.	
Learning Environment	1.C.1 A developmentally appropriate daily program schedule is posted in each classroom/program area. 1.C.2 Staff develop and implement written daily plans for each group.	2.C.1 All classrooms/program spaces have a minimum of two (2) clearly defined interest centers. 2.C.2 Written daily plans for each group include all areas of development. 2.C.3 Staff plan and implement daily developmentally appropriate physical activities for all children.	3.C.1 All classrooms/program spaces have a minimum of three (3) clearly defined interest centers. 3.C.2 Staff maintain a portfolio for each child. 3.C.3 Facility develops a current written curriculum plan and daily plans that include learning goals for children
Environmental Assessment	1.D.1 Facility completes a self-evaluation using the environment rating scales.	2.D.1 Facility scores an average of 3.00 or higher on the ERS for each classroom reviewed.*	3.D.1 Facility scores an average of 4.00 or higher on the ERS for each classroom reviewed.*
Child Health & Development	1.E.1 Facility documents distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured children. 1.E.2 Facility shares with families information on child development and on children's health. 1.E.3 Any medical and educational care plans involving a child are written and on file, and implementation is documented.	2.E.1 Facility shares with families information regarding medical homes for children. 2.E.2 Facility shares with families information regarding stages of development for children.	3.E.1 Facility shares with families information on nutrition and physical activity for children.

* Facilities serving children kindergarten age and older may use YPQA tool in 2.D.1 and 3.D.1 and must meet a score of 3.0 or higher in 2.D.1. and 3.75 or higher in 3.D.1. If YPQA is used, staff should attend YPQA training in 2.B.6. Staff working with school-age children should complete "Developmental Assets Basics" training in 2.B.5.

ADE: Arkansas Department of Education

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>

ERS: Environment Rating Scale(s) **YPQA:** Youth Program Quality Assessment **PAS:** Program Administration Scale

medical home: primary source of comprehensive health care

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

TAPP (Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways): professional development system Registry, <http://professionalregistry.astate.edu>

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

ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – FAMILY CHILD CARE 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. <i>Registered programs must meet licensing ratios.</i>	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 & 2. <i>Program must be licensed.</i>
Administration	<p>1.A.1 Primary caregiver attends “BAS Basics” training.</p>	<p>2.A.1 A program review is completed by a certified BAS assessor.</p> <p>2.A.2 Primary caregiver views Strengthening Families Webinar.</p>	<p>3.A.1 Facility scores an average of 4.00 or higher on BAS items 2-10 (item 2 is scored, but not included in average).</p> <p>3.A.2 Primary caregiver completes Strengthening Families online self-assessment for 3 or more strategies.</p> <p>3.A.3 Primary caregiver develops a Strengthening Families action plan and implements at least 1 action step.</p>
Provider/ Staff Qualifications/ Professional Development	<p><u>Qualifications</u></p> <p>1.B.1 Primary and secondary caregivers are members of the TAPP Registry and/or ADE Registry.</p> <p>1.B.2 Primary caregiver meets requirements for TAPP Foundation 2 or higher.</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>1.B.3 Primary caregiver completes an ERS training.</p> <p>1.B.4 Primary caregiver completes training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children.</p>	<p><u>Qualifications</u></p> <p>2.B.1 All caregivers maintain membership in the TAPP Registry and/or ADE Registry.</p> <p>2.B.2 Primary caregiver meets requirements for TAPP Foundation 3 or higher.</p> <p>2.B.3 At least 50% of secondary caregivers meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 1 or higher.</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>2.B.4 Primary caregiver participates annually in 20 clock hours of approved professional development.</p> <p>2.B.5 Primary caregiver completes “Framework Basics” training.</p> <p>2.B.6 Primary caregiver participates annually in at least 2 clock hours of training on nutrition for children</p>	<p><u>Qualifications</u></p> <p>3.B.1 Primary caregiver meets requirements for TAPP Foundation 3 or higher and has an additional 15 clock hours.</p> <p>3.B.2 All secondary caregivers meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of secondary caregivers are at TAPP Foundation 2 or higher.</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>3.B.3 Primary caregiver participates annually in 25 clock hours of approved professional development.</p>
Learning Environment	<p>1.C.1 A developmentally appropriate daily program schedule is posted in each program area.</p> <p>1.C.2 Caregivers develop and implement written daily plans for each group.</p>	<p>2.C.1 Program spaces have a minimum of two (2) clearly defined interest centers.</p> <p>2.C.2 Written daily plans for each group include all areas of development.</p> <p>2.C.3 Caregivers plan and implement daily developmentally appropriate physical activities for all children.</p>	<p>3.C.1 Program spaces have a minimum of three (3) clearly defined interest centers.</p> <p>3.C.2 Caregivers maintain a portfolio for each child.</p> <p>3.C.3 Facility develops a current written curriculum plan and daily plans that include learning goals for children.</p>

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1. <i>Registered programs must meet licensing ratios.</i>	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Levels 1 & 2. <i>Program must be licensed.</i>
Environmental Assessment	1.D.1 Facility completes a self-evaluation using the FCCERS.	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.
Child Health & Development	1.E.1 Facility documents distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured children. 1.E.2 Facility shares with families information on child development and on children's health. 1.E.3 Any medical and educational care plans involving a child are written and on file, and implementation is documented	2.E.1 Facility shares with families information regarding medical homes for children. 2.E.2 Facility shares with families information regarding stages of development for children.	3.E.1 Facility shares with families information on nutrition and physical activity for children.

ADE: Arkansas Department of Education

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

BAS: *Business Administration Scale*

ERS: *Environment Rating Scale(s)*

FCCERS: *Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale*

medical home: primary source of comprehensive health care

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

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

TAPP (Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways): professional development system Registry, <http://professionalregistry.astate.edu>

ARKANSAS BETTER BEGINNINGS – SCHOOL-AGE CENTER STANDARDS

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
Administration	<p>1.A.1 Administrator attends “PAS Basics” training.</p>	<p>2.A.1 A program review is completed by a certified PAS assessor.</p> <p>2.A.2 Administrator completes Strengthening Families Webinar.</p>	<p>3.A.1 Facility scores an average of 4.00 or higher on PAS items 1-21 (items 5 and 6 scored, but not included in average; items 10 and 11 not scored).</p> <p>3.A.2 Administrator completes Strengthening Families online self-assessment for 3 or more Strategies.</p> <p>3.A.3 Facility develops a Strengthening Families action plan and implements at least 1 action step.</p>
Administrator/ Staff Qualifications/ Professional Development	<p><u>Qualifications</u></p> <p>1.B.1 Administrator and teaching staff are members of the TAPP Registry and/or ADE Registry.</p> <p>1.B.2 Administrator meets requirements for TAPP Intermediate 1 or higher, including 21 clock hours of training in program planning/management and/or leadership.</p> <p>1.B.3 All staff meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 1 or higher.</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>1.B.4 Administrator completes an ERS or YPQA Training.</p> <p>1.B.5 Administrator completes training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children/youth.</p>	<p><u>Qualifications</u></p> <p>2.B.1 Administrator and teaching staff maintain membership in the TAPP Registry and/or ADE Registry.</p> <p>2.B.2 Administrator meets requirements for TAPP Intermediate 1 or higher, including 30 clock hours of training in program planning/management and/or leadership.</p> <p>2.B.3 All staff meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of teaching staff meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 2 or higher.</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>2.B.4 All administrators and teaching staff participate annually in 20 clock hours of approved professional development; for administrators, at least 3 clock hours must be in program planning/management and/or leadership.</p> <p>2.B.5 At least 50% of teaching staff complete “Developmental Assets Basics” training.</p> <p>2.B.6 All administrative staff and 50% of teaching staff complete an ERS or YPQA training.</p>	<p><u>Qualifications</u></p> <p>3.B.1 Administrator meets requirements for TAPP Intermediate 1 or higher, including 45 clock hours of training in program planning/management and/or leadership.</p> <p>3.B.2 All staff meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 1 or higher and at least 50% of teaching staff meet requirements for TAPP Foundation 3 or higher.</p> <p><u>Professional Development</u></p> <p>3.B.3 All administrators and teaching staff participate annually in 25 clock hours of approved professional development; for administrators, at least 4 clock hours must be in program planning/management and/or leadership.</p>

COMPONENTS	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2 Must meet all requirements for Level 1	LEVEL 3 Must meet all requirements for Level 1 and Level 2
		2.B.7 Administrator and kitchen manager (if applicable) participate annually in at least 2 clock hours of training on nutrition for children/youth.	
Learning Environment	1.C.1 A developmentally appropriate daily program schedule is posted in each classroom/program area. 1.C.2 Staff develop and implement written daily plans for each group.	2.C.1 All classrooms/program spaces have a minimum of two (2) clearly defined interest centers if not utilizing single-use spaces.* 2.C.2 Written daily plans for each group include the Developmental Assets concepts. 2.C.3 Staff plan and implement daily developmentally appropriate physical activities for all children/youth.	3.C.1 All classrooms/program spaces have a minimum of three (3) clearly defined interest centers if not utilizing single-use spaces.* 3.C.2 Staff maintain a portfolio for each child/youth. 3.C.3 Facility develops a current written curriculum plan and daily plans that include links to ADE K-12 frameworks.
Environmental Assessment	1.D.1 Facility completes a self-evaluation using the SACERS or YPQA.	2.D.1 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.	3.D.1 Facility scores an average of 4.00 or higher on the SACERS or scores 3.75 or higher on the YPQA for each classroom/program space reviewed.
Child/Youth Health & Development	1.E.1 Facility documents distribution of ARKids First information to families of uninsured children/youth. 1.E.2 Facility shares with families information on child/youth development and on children's/youth health. 1.E.3 Any medical and educational care plans involving a child/youth are written and on file, and implementation is documented.	2.E.1 Facility shares with families information regarding medical homes for children/youth. 2.E.2 Facility shares with families information regarding child/youth development.	3.E.1 Facility shares with families information on nutrition and physical activity for children/youth.

* Single use spaces are exempt from this requirement as long as other program spaces are available to allow for other interest center activities.

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>

ERS: Environment Rating Scale(s) **PAS:** Program Administration Scale

medical home: primary source of comprehensive health care

SACERS: School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale

staff: employees who work directly with children/youth and those involved with planning and implementing services for children/youth

TAPP (Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways): professional development system Registry, <http://professionalregistry.astate.edu>

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

YPQA: Youth Program Quality Assessment

67.0 APPLICATION PROCEDURES

~~67.01- To apply for Better Beginnings certification the following shall Applications will be submitted to the Division for review. Application-Division approved forms will be provided.~~

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~~6.02 Child care centers which can verify accreditation through the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs, a division of NAEYC, will be considered approved for the purposes of these regulations. NAEYC certification is good for the five (5) year certification period. Verification of accreditation status must be provided to the Division each year upon renewal in order to maintain approval status.~~

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~~6.03 Family day care homes which can verify accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) will be considered approved for the purposes of these regulations. NAFCC certification is good for the five (5) year certification period. Verification of accreditation status must be provided to the Division each year upon renewal in order to maintain approved status.~~

Comment [M2]: Moved to section 5.0 Eligibility

~~6.04-7.02~~ The application will consist of:

- ~~A. Information page~~
- ~~B. Statement of Assurances/Certification of Information~~
- ~~C. Narrative Description of Program~~
 - ~~1. Site description, including schematic diagrams of indoor/outdoor space~~
 - ~~2. Staff qualifications~~
 - ~~3. Staffing patterns (staff/child ratios, group size)~~
 - ~~4. Educational program design/curriculum, daily schedule~~
 - ~~5. Policies/procedures obtained through a Parent Handbook~~
 - ~~6. Staff development plan~~
 - ~~7. Parent involvement~~
 - ~~8. Community involvement/collaboration~~

~~D. Proof of age appropriate immunization for all children participating in the program.~~

~~6.05 Applications will be reviewed for compliance with licensing and Approval standards.~~

(A) Better Beginnings Application Form

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

(C) Documentation that

1) facility staff or caregivers are members in the Traveling Arkansas Professional Pathways Registry (TAPP) or the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Registry, and

2) TAPP and/or ADE Registry transcript verifying requirements for both Qualifications and Professional Development are met, and

3) any additional documentation for trainings required but not reflected on the transcripts.

(D) Developmentally appropriate daily program schedule for each age group served.

(E) Evidence that daily schedules are posted in each classroom/program space.

(F) Sample of current written daily plans for each age group served. Plans must be for two consecutive weeks for each group.

(G) Program self-evaluation using an approved 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.

(H) Evidence that ARKIDS First information is distributed to families of uninsured children.

(I) Evidence that child/youth development information has been shared with families.

(J) Evidence that health information has been shared with families.

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(K) Program policy and procedures for obtaining and implementing children's medical and educational care plans.

7.03 Child Care centers that are accredited through National Association of Education of Young Children (NAEYC) 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 determine level of Better Beginnings certification.

7.04 Electronic submissions of application and documentation are acceptable and encouraged.

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78.0 ASSESSMENT APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

-8.01 The Better Beginnings Application Form is used to verify the program's eligibility.

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

8.03 When submitted documentation does not meet the requirement, 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 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 first assessment.

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

7.01 Upon favorable review of the application, a program coordinator of the Division will notify the applicant of completion of the initial review and schedule an appointment to do an on-site program assessment.

7.02 The on-site program assessment will consist of the following:

~~A. Verification of data provided in the initial application~~

~~B. Observation using these nationally validated tools:~~

~~1. Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale—Revised, by Clifford/Harms/Cryer~~

~~2. Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale—Revised, by Clifford/Harms/Cryer~~

~~3. School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale, by Harms/Jacobs/White~~

~~4. Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale—Revised, by Clifford/Harms/Cryer~~

~~7.03 On-site observations will consist of not less than one full program day in the facility.~~

~~7.04 All program areas (infant/toddler, pre-school, and school-age) will be observed and assessed.~~

~~7.05 Applicants must have an overall average score of 4.5 or above the Environment Rating Scales in all of the appropriate assessment instrument(s).~~

~~7.06 Upon completion of both initial application review and on-site assessment, the applicant will be notified in writing within thirty (30) days of the site visit of the outcome of the reviews.~~

~~7.07 Applicants who are denied Approval status will be provided written justification for denial.~~

~~7.08 Unannounced visits may be conducted throughout the year to verify continued compliance of licensing and Approval standards. An unfavorable review may result in a full scale re-assessment which could lead to termination of Approval status.~~

Comment [M3]: Move to 9.0

9.0 MAINTAINING CERTIFICATION

9.01 Certification is valid for 36 months unless facility becomes otherwise ineligible for certification according to section 5.0 Eligibility or 10.0 Adverse Action.

9.02 Facilities certified as Better Beginnings programs must re-submit all application documents, as outlined in 7.00 Application, thirty-three (33) months after date of last certificate. Failure to submit required documentation may jeopardize certification status. Certification will be granted according to achievement of requirements (see section 8.0 Application Review).

9.03 Facilities requesting to be reviewed for a higher level of certification must wait at least six (6) months after last certification date. A full application must be submitted according to section 7.0 Application and will be processed according to 8.0 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 8.0 Application Review.

9.04 Certified facilities that change location must submit a new application for Better Beginnings certification according to section 7.0 Application and will be processed according to 8.0 Application Review Process. The facility may retain any current certification level until the application review process is completed.

9.05 Certified facilities that change ownership must submit a new application for Better Beginnings certification according to section 7.0. Application and will be processed according to 8.0 Application Review Process.

9.06 Unannounced visits, review, 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 status.

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10.0 ADVERSE ACTION

10.01 Adverse actions include denial, suspension, reduction, or removal of certified status. Adverse actions may result from:

(A) Ineligibility to participate according to section 5.0 Eligibility.

(B) Application documentation which is incomplete or does not meet the intent of requirements according to sections 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0.

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

(D) Falsification of any document or submission of false information.

10.02 Facilities that have their Better Beginnings certification denied, suspended, or removed are eligible to re-apply after 12 months unless otherwise notified.

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811.0 APPEALGRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

811.01- ~~Applicants who~~Facilities that are denied ~~Approval certification~~ status; are found to be ineligible for a particular level; have had their certification status reduced or removed; or have a dispute concerning published requirements. ~~may ask to show cause why the decision should be reversed request an appeal.~~ A written correspondence request for appeal shall be submitted to the ~~Director of the Division~~Better Beginnings Coordinator within thirty (30) days of the ~~notice of action~~ notification of denial asking that the ~~Approval certification~~ status decision be reviewed.

811.02- Upon ~~written communication receipt of the request for appeal, the Better Beginnings Coordinator from the denied applicant, the Director of the Division will institute an~~conduct an internal review to insure that the appropriate processes ~~was~~ were followed and to determine the validity of the ~~staff~~ decision. The ~~Director of the Division~~Better Beginnings Coordinator will review the findings with the Division Director and will transmit the findings of the internal review to the ~~applicant facility~~ within 30 days of the ~~receipt of the~~ request to appeal.

811.03- If the outcome of the internal review is unsatisfactory to the ~~facility~~applicant, the ~~applicant facility has ten (10) days in which to may ask for further review by the Better Beginnings Appeal Review Committee.~~Division and ask that a show cause hearing be scheduled before the Division. The ~~Director committee~~ will schedule a show cause hearing and notify the ~~applicant 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.

8.04- ~~If the results of the show cause hearing are unsatisfactory to the applicant, the applicant may appeal the decision of the Division to the Director Department of Human Services. The grievance policy of the Department of Human Services will be the standard for further appeal.~~

9.0 REVOCATION OF APPROVAL STATUS

9.01- ~~Revocation of Approval status will occur in the following circumstances:
A. Substantiation of complaints received by the Division office and failure to correct deficiencies within a reasonable period of time.~~

~~B. Final revocation/suspension of the child care license by the Division.~~

~~9.02 Upon receipt of complaints by the Division office, program staff will conduct an on-site full assessment to determine if complaints are valid and violations of Approval regulations have occurred.~~

~~9.03 Revocation of Approval status will affect certification for tax credit purposes only in the calendar year in which revocation is instituted.~~

~~9.04 All previously stated grievance procedures will be available to facilities which are subject to Approval revocation.~~

Comment [M5]: MOVED TO 10.0

10.0 APPROVAL PROGRAM STANDARDS

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~~10.01 Approved programs shall meet current staff/child ratios as defined by Child Care Licensing Rules and Regulations. Programs are encouraged to reduce staff/child ratios below minimum licensing standards where feasible to provide more individualized care.~~

~~10.02 Documented instances of non-compliance with child care staff/ child ratios within the 6 months prior to application will result in denial of the approval application.~~

~~Compliance with these ratios will be verified through child care licensing.~~

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11.00 STAFF QUALIFICATIONS/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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~~11.01 Directors/managers of childcare centers shall have one of the following levels of higher education, training and/or experience:~~

~~A CDA Credential and three (3) years of experience;~~

~~OR~~

~~An Associate Degree or Bachelor's Degree in early childhood or elementary education, home economics/family living, child development/or special education;~~

~~OR~~

~~A combination of higher education/training/work experiences may be considered in lieu of the above listed requirements upon written submission of a written request for special consideration, if the review of the facility operation establishes compliance with the quality program standards.~~

~~11.02 All inexperienced newly hired staff shall begin an employee orientation course within six (6) months of employment. The program may enroll the new employee in the Child Care Orientation Course (CCOT) or may request to use an established in-house employee orientation course to meet this requirement.~~

~~11.03 All persons working within a child care facility directly with children shall obtain a minimum of fifteen (15) hours of continuing training annually in a topic area relating directly to early childhood education. Approved training may be accessed through workshops, conferences, and in-house staff development. If in-house staff development activities are counted in this requirement, the content and implementation of the training will be reviewed.~~

~~11.04 Each facility shall demonstrate a long range staff development plan which includes specific training components, evaluation of staff development needs and individual training plans (ITP) for each staff member. Programs are encouraged to access grant resources through the Division to assist staff in meeting CDA credentialing standards.~~

12.00 PARENTAL/COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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~~12.01 Each program shall include a plan for parent community involvement which includes at a minimum: parent meetings, parent conferences, and a method of involving the parent(s) in the child's educational experiences.~~

~~12.02 The program has an "open door" policy for parents which encourages visiting at any time.~~

~~12.03 The program has a parent handbook.~~

~~13.00 PROGRAM/EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS~~

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~~13.01 A developmentally appropriate "learning environment" shall be available to all children in the child care setting.~~

~~13.02 The program shall have a written over-all curriculum plan which includes goals and objectives related to the following:~~

~~* Creative expression~~

~~* Positive self-esteem~~

~~* Social skills~~

~~* Cognitive skills~~

~~* Communication skills~~

~~* Health/safety habits~~

~~* Physical development~~

~~* Cultural diversity~~

~~13.03 Staff shall plan and implement daily activities based on the overall curriculum goals for the age group enrolled as well as the specific needs of individual children.~~

~~13.04 The curriculum is supported by developmentally appropriate materials that encourage hands-on manipulation of real objects.~~

~~13.05 Programs shall implement and maintain individual child portfolios.~~