



Arkansas Better Chance

Program Manual

(Revised August 2009)

Arkansas Better Chance for School Success is a high quality pre-kindergarten program funded by the Arkansas Department of Education and administered by the Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education



Table of Contents

1	Regulatory Authority
1-1	Agencies Responsible for the ABC Program
1-2	ABC Contacts
1-3	Specialist Territory Assignments
2	Purpose
3	Definitions
4	Child and Family Eligibility
4-1	Who is Eligible to Attend ABC
4-2	Documenting Eligibility for Arkansas Better Chance Program
4-3	Documenting Eligibility for Arkansas Better Chance for School Success
4-3.1	Income Eligibility Chart
4-3.2	Sliding Fee Scale/Eligibility
4-3.3	Documenting Income Exemption
4-4	Documenting Waiver of Eligibility
4-5	Documenting Dual Enrollment
4-6	Calculating Income
4-6.1	Determining Income from Paystubs
4-6.2	Determining Income from W-2 Forms
4-6.3	Determining Income from 1040 Form
4-6.4	Determining Income from 1040 Schedule C or F
5	Program/Agency Eligibility
5-1	Conditions of Eligibility
5-2	Request for Application
5-3	Review of Applications
5-4	Grant Approval
5-5	Termination of Grant
6	Funding
6-1	Sources
6-2	Match Requirements
6-3	Per Child Funding
6-4	Sliding Fee Scale
6-5	Need for Services
6-6	Financial Viability
6-7	Cost Allocation
7	Reporting
7-1	Required Reports
7-2	Documentation
7-3	Record Retention
7-4	Random Reviews
7-5	Required Audit

- 7-6 Legislative Audit
- 7-7 Fraud

8 Application / Renewal Application

9 Minimum Standards/Classroom Programs

- 9-1 Authorized Staff
- 9-2 Site Visits
- 9-3 Desk Audits and Monitoring
- 9-4 Environmental Rating Scale Assessment
- 9-5 Technical Assistance

10 Staff/Child Ratio for Classroom Programs

- 10-1 Staff-Child Ratios
- 10-2 Group Size

11 Staff Qualifications/Professional Development

- 11-1 Criminal Background Checks
- 11-2 Child Maltreatment Registry Checks
- 11-3 TB Skin Test
- 11-4 Service Requirement
- 11-5 Employment Agreement
- 11-6 Classroom Teacher-First Classroom
- 11-7 Classroom Teacher-Multiple Classrooms
- 11-8 Paraprofessionals/Teacher Assistants
- 11-9 Degree Exemptions
- 11-10 Center Directors
- 11-11 Substitutes
- 11-12 Staff Qualification Plans
- 11-13 Changes in Personnel
- 11-14 Required Clock Hours
- 11-15 Required Training
- 11-16 TAPP Registry

12 Staffing Patterns/Classroom Programs

13 Program Standards

- 13-1 Core Curriculum
- 13-2 Equipment
- 13-3 Technology
- 13-4 Enhancement Programs
- 13-5 Child Record and Portfolio
- 13-6 Meals and Snacks
- 13-7 Outdoor Activity

14 Classroom Management/Special Education

- 14-1 Challenging Behavior
- 14-2 Special Education Services/Special Needs

14-3 Toilet Training

15 Assessment and Screenings

15-1 Child Assessment

15-2 Developmental Screening

15-3 Well Child Screening

16 Parent and Community Involvement

16-1 Parent Involvement

16-2 Community Involvement

17 Transportation

18 Other Program Models

19 HIPPY

20 Parents As Teachers

21 Child Care Family Homes

22 Compliance

22-1 Types of Corrective Action

22-2 Termination and Due Process

22-3 Action by Other Units or Agencies

Appendix A – Financial Procedures

A-1 Payments

A-2 COPA

A-3 Start-up Funds

A-4 Direct Deposit

A-5 Suspension and Termination of Payments

A-6 Core Models

A-7 Salaries and Fringe Benefits

A-8 Administrative Costs

A-9 Nutrition

A-10 Curriculum and Equipment

A-11 Parent Involvement

A-12 Transportation

A-13 Professional Development

A-14 Screenings

A-15 Technology

Appendix B – COPA Information Checklists

B-1 Center Based

B-2 HIPPY/PAT

Appendix C – Reporting Deadlines

Section 1 Regulatory Authority

1-1 Agencies Responsible for the ABC Program

The Arkansas Better Chance program is funded through an appropriation in the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) Public School Fund budget. ADE contracts with the DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to administer the program. The Division is responsible for all operational duties associated with ABC. The State Board of Education is the final authority for approval of rules and grants. The Division gives regular reports and updates to the State Board of Education, as well as an annual report to the Joint Legislative Committee on Education.

1-2 ABC Contacts

Administration

Jamie Morrison	Pre-K Administrator	501-683-0975	jamie.morrison@arkansas.gov
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Financial Specialists – Oversee budgeting and finance

Kathy Miles	Financial Specialist (A-K)	501-683-4741	kathy.miles@arkansas.gov
Nancy Pearlstein	Financial Specialist (L-Z)	501-683-0977	nancy.pearlstein@arkansas.gov

Program Specialists – Oversee anything concerning the ABC Rules and Regulations

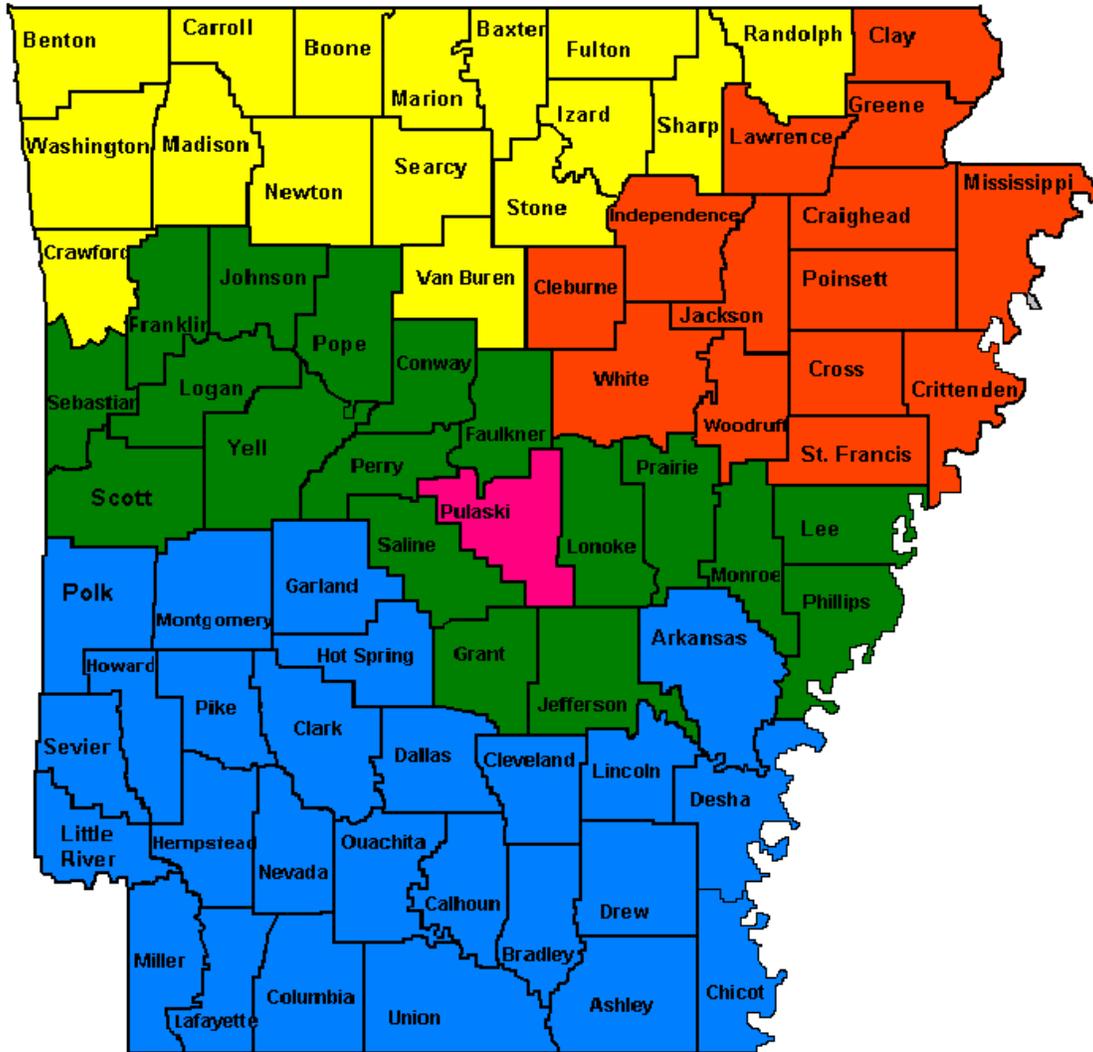
Sherrill Archer	Pulaski County	501-683-0973	sherrill.archer@arkansas.gov
Deborah Blackburn	Northeast Arkansas	501-683-4600	deborah.blackburn@arkansas.gov
Kelly Alexander	Central Arkansas	501-683-0978	kelly.alexander@arkansas.gov
Tassie McCollum	South Arkansas	501-321-2583	tassie.mccollum@arkansas.gov
John Barron	Northwest Arkansas	870-741-6107	john.barron@arkansas.gov

Data Specialists – Oversee COPA

Jennifer Spriggs	Data Supervisor	501-683-0972	jennifer.spriggs@arkansas.gov
Pamela Mellick	Northwest Arkansas	501-682-0273	pamela.mellick@arkansas.gov
Barbara Barrows	Southwest Arkansas	501-682-2314	barbara.barrows@arkansas.gov
Lorria Eubanks	Eastern Arkansas	501-683-0974	lorria.eubanks@arkansas.gov

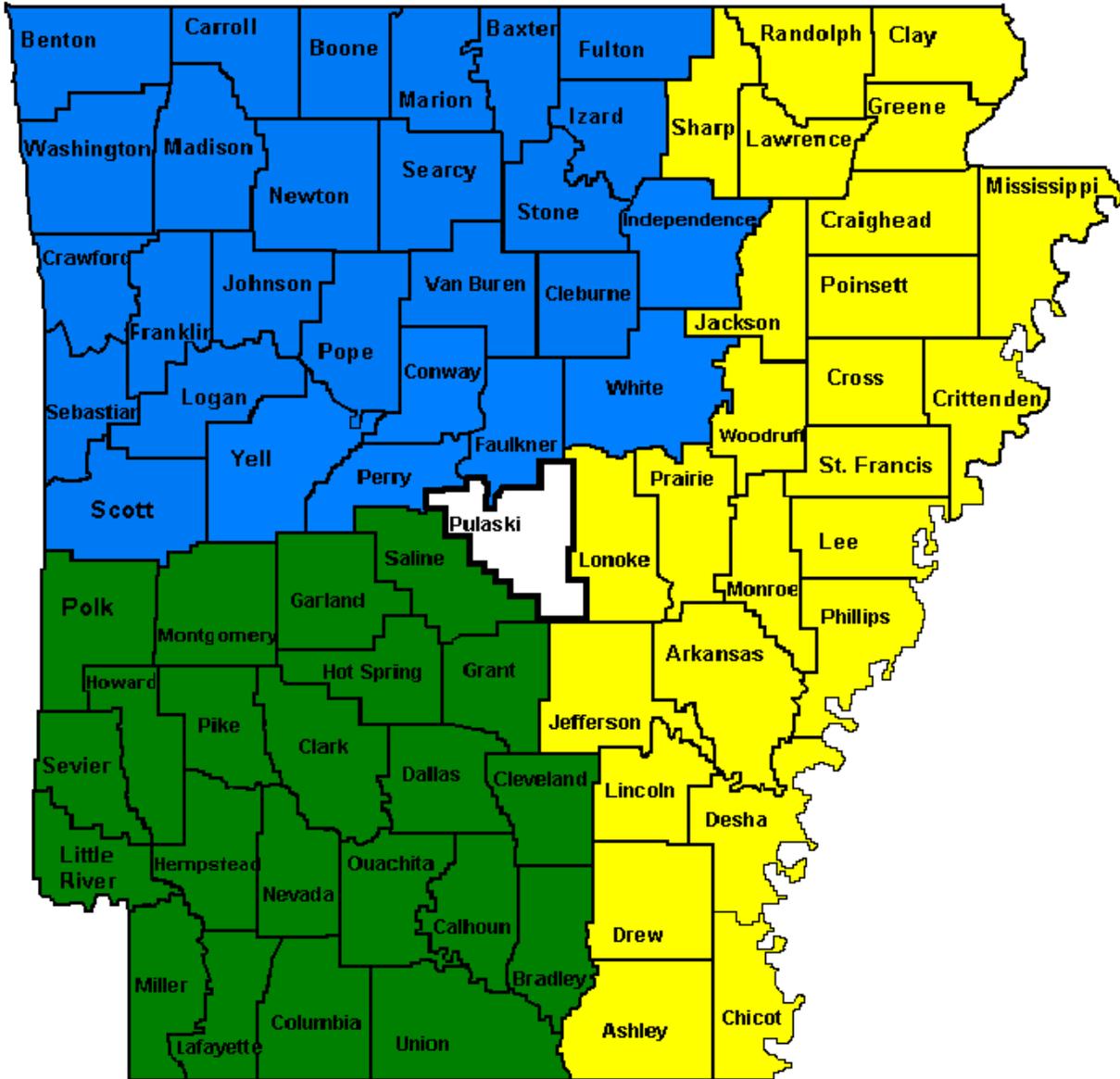
1-3 Specialist Territory Assignments

Program Specialists



ABC Program Administrator			
	Jamie Morrison	501-683-0975	Jamie.Morrison@arkansas.gov
Area	Specialist	Phone	E-mail
NE	Deborah Blackburn	501-683-4600	Deborah.Blackburn@arkansas.gov
South	Tassie McCollum	501-321-2583	Tassie.McCollum@arkansas.gov
Pulaski	Sherrill Archer	501-683-0973	Sherrill.Archer@arkansas.gov
Central	Kelly Alexander	501-683-0978	Kelly.Alexander@arkansas.gov
NW	John Barron	870-741-6107	John.Barron@arkansas.gov

Data Specialists



Area	Specialist	Phone No.	Pulaski Co. Assignment
Supervisor	Jennifer Spriggs	501-683-0972	
NW	Pamela Mellick	501-682-0273	Private Providers
SW	Barbara Barrows	501-682-2314	Little Rock School District
East	Lorria Eubanks	501-683-0974	Pulaski Co. Special School Dist. No. Little Rock School District

Section 2 Purpose

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) program was created in 1991 to offer high quality early education services to children birth to five exhibiting developmental and socioeconomic risk factors. In 2003, the Arkansas Legislature made a commitment to expand early childhood education funding by \$100 million to serve low-income three and four-year old children in areas at high risk for academic failure with high quality pre-K services. This expansion, known as Arkansas Better Chance for School Success, has become the state prekindergarten program. There are three different ABC program models: Center-based programs, Home-Visiting programs (HIPPI and PAT) and Family Child Care Homes. Providers are selected by their ability to offer a high-quality program. Targeted areas are selected using data from benchmark test scores, school improvement status, and Head Start enrollment.

The purpose of this manual is to provide clarification of the promulgated ABC Rules & Regulations of 08/02/07. Information specified in the Rules and Regulations will not be restated. Information will be provided for those regulations which require specific procedural actions to fully implement.

Section 3 Definitions

ABC -- Arkansas Better Chance

ADE -- Arkansas Department of Education

APSCN -- Arkansas Public School Computer Network

Agency -- Refers to any entity funded under the Arkansas Better Chance program.

ASTM -- American Society for Testing and Materials. An international standards organization that develops consensus technical standards for a wide range of materials, including outdoor play materials for children.

CACFP -- Child and Adult Care Food Program (Special Nutrition). A federally funded subsidy program administered by DCCECE designed to provide reimbursement to providers for meals and snacks served to children from low-income families.

CDA -- Child Development Associate credential

Classroom -- A physical space partitioned for the purpose of ABC instruction and activities. Each classroom must meet licensing requirements and state Quality Approval standards.

Compliance Plan -- A document placing an ABC program on a 60-day probationary period when the program is found to be out of compliance with any ABC rule or regulation. During the period, a program must make all necessary corrections or be subject to termination from the ABC program.

COPA -- Child Outcome, Planning and Assessment. A web-based information technology system used to capture and maintain data for all children and families enrolled in ABC.

Core Quality Components -- The six key areas of ABC, which include low staff-child ratio, well-qualified and compensated staff, professional development opportunities for staff, developmental screenings and

child assessments, proven curricula/learning processes and meaningful parent engagement activities. These components serve as the basis for ABC funding levels.

DCCECE -- Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education or "Division"

DECA -- Deveraux Early Childhood Assessment

DHS -- Arkansas Department of Human Services

ECERS-R -- Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised. A nationally recognized scale developed to measure various elements of classroom quality. ECERS-R is used to measure the environmental quality of early childhood programs.

EPSDT – Early and Periodic Screenings, Diagnosis and Treatment. A health-screening tool used by Medicaid to ensure children are receiving preventive screenings and necessary health services. Also known as well child screenings for non-Medicaid children. ABC children are required to have this screening annually.

ERS -- Environment Rating Scale. The term used to describe the tools used to measure elements of classroom quality. These include the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale and School-Age Care Environment Rating Scale.

FCCERS-R – Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale, Revised. A nationally recognized scale developed to assess programs serving children from birth through school-age in a home-based setting.

FCCH – Family Child Care Home

FPL -- Federal Poverty Level

IEP -- Individualized Education Program

IDEA -- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

INDEX -- Investigating, Discovering and Exploring, the state-approved curriculum training on Math and Science for Young Children.

In-kind services -- Support services provided at either no cost or without monetary exchange. To use in-kind services as match, the services must be provided to children in the ABC program.

ITERS-R – Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale, Revised. A nationally recognized scale designed to assess programs for children from birth to 30 months of age. It contains items to assess provision in the environment for the protections of children's health and safety; appropriate stimulation through language and activities; and warmth and supportive interaction.

HIPPY -- Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

LEA -- Local Education Agency

Multi-classroom Site -- Multiple ABC classrooms located on the same premises

NAEYC -- National Association for the Education of Young Children

PAT -- Parents as Teachers

Program Improvement Plan (PIP) – see Compliance Plan

Shall -- Mandatory standard

Should -- Standard is recommended but not mandatory

Single-Site Classroom -- One ABC classroom at a geographic location

SQP -- Staff Qualification Plan. A process by which DCCECE can approve staff not meeting minimum qualifications to work in an ABC classroom under certain restrictions.

TAPP -- Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways. The statewide professional development system specifically designed for Early Childhood professionals. Formerly Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System.

Work Sampling System (WSS) -- A web-based instrument used by ABC programs to assess a child's progress in various educational domains over the program year.

Section 4 Child and Family Eligibility

4-1 Who Is Eligible to Attend ABC?

There are two categories of eligibility under which a child may qualify: (1) Arkansas Better Chance* and (2) Arkansas Better Chance for School Success. Other than eligibility, all other requirements in the application apply equally to Arkansas Better Chance and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success. *Since 2004, all approved agencies have been funded under and must follow the eligibility guidelines of Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (income eligibility only).* Only programs operating prior to 2004 will have a certain percentage of funding for use under the original Arkansas Better Chance guidelines.

It is the responsibility of each agency to ensure that all families and children participating in ABC and ABCSS Programs meet eligibility guidelines. **Documentation of eligibility must be present in each child's record.** Failure to maintain documentation will constitute an intentional program violation of enrolling ineligible children and may result in termination from ABC participation.

Note: Three-year old children enrolled in Arkansas Better Chance during the 2008-2009 year will NOT need to be re-qualified to continue enrollment for the program in 2009-2010. However, new siblings of children transitioning to kindergarten or otherwise leaving the ABC program, will need to re-establish eligibility and provide current documentation of income eligibility.

Note: Individuals falsifying or presenting misleading documentation, for the purpose of obtaining ABC services, shall be subject to permanent exclusion from the ABC Program and prosecution for fraud.

4-2 Documenting Eligibility for Arkansas Better Chance Program (Programs operating prior to 2004)

Only programs operating an ABC program PRIOR to the 2004-2005 year have a portion of funds, which may be used to serve children under the original ABC guidelines. Qualifying programs may elect to use that specific portion of funding to serve children from birth through age 5 years. The following documentation shall be provided by the parent/guardian prior to enrollment:

- A. Official documentation that the child meets the age requirement.
 - 1. A copy of birth certificate
 - 2. Official hospital record with date of birth listed.
- B. Official documentation that the child's immunizations are current or on a "catch up schedule".
 - 1. Pediatrician Record
 - 2. Record from Immunization Registry through the Arkansas Department of Health
 - 3. Approval from Arkansas Department of Health of exemption
- C. Documentation of one of the required eligibility criteria.
 - 1) Family with gross income not exceeding 200% of Federal Poverty Level

Earned income is income resulting from working in a paid position or receiving unemployment benefits from having worked in a paid position. It does not include benefits received from other sources such as TEFRA, SSI, child support, etc. Earned income or lack of earned income must be documented for both parents if two parent household.

 - a. Paystubs documenting earned income or unemployment payments for the previous 30 days (full month of paystubs)
 - b. 2008 W-2 forms
 - c. 2008 Federal Income Tax Forms
 - d. 2008 Schedule C or Schedule F, for self-employed only
 - e. Free/Reduced Lunch Application documenting income amount, only if income is verified by district (cannot be used by private providers)
 - f. Letter from DHS caseworker showing family gross income is \leq 200% of FPL (TEA, food stamp approval, child care voucher approval)
 - g. Notarized letter signed by employer showing income
 - h. Notarized letter signed by each parent in the household verifying that parent(s) is not employed and has no earned income.
 - 2) Parents without a high school diploma
 - a. Letter from high school parent last attended stating parent did not graduate
 - b. High school transcript sent by high school
 - c. Letter from GED program that parent is in process of earning a GED
 - d. Notarized letter from parent stating that the parent did not graduate high school.

- 3) Low Birth Weight (< 5 lb, 9 oz)
 - a. Birth certificates
 - b. Letter from hospital or doctor verifying birth weight
 - c. Hospital birth card or announcement sent home with baby from hospital (only if birth weight is on the announcement)
- 4) Teen parent at child's birth (Under 18 years of age)
 - a. Birth certificate of child (if parent age is listed)
 - b. Birth certificate of mother/father and birth certificate of the child
 - c. Driver's license/picture ID card and birth certificate of the child
- 5) A family with history of substance abuse/addiction
 - a. A letter from doctor or treatment center treating family member
 - b. A letter from social worker assisting family
 - c. Law enforcement or Court Records
- 6) Be income eligible for Title I
 - a. Letter from school stating that child qualifies for free or reduced lunch in a public school ABC program
 - b. Letter from school stating that Sibling in public school qualifies for free or reduced lunch
- 7) Be eligible for services under IDEA
 - a. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
 - b. Letter of IEP conference decision
 - c. Evaluation / Programming Conference Decision Form
 - d. Letter from Educational Cooperative serving the child
- 8) A family with a history of abuse or neglect or be a victim of abuse or neglect
 - a. Documentation from DHS
 - b. Law enforcement or Court Records
- 9) Demonstrable developmental delay as identified through appropriate screening
 - a. Screening Report from an Early Childhood Special Education Program
 - b. Letter from DHS Developmental Disability Services
 - c. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
 - d. Letter of IEP conference decision
 - e. Evaluation / Programming Conference Decision Form
 - f. Letter from Educational Cooperative serving the child
 - g. Psychological Evaluation
 - h. Developmental Screening completed or verified by an Early Childhood Special Education Program

10) Limited English Proficiency

- a. Letter from social worker
- b. Letter from Bureau of Citizenship (INS)
- c. Parent's green card
- d. Letter from adult education program that parent is enrolled in adult education class
- e. Written documentation of Observation of child and/or parent during screening

4-3 Documenting Eligibility for Arkansas Better Chance for School Success

The below listed documentation shall be provided by the parent/guardian prior to enrollment:

- A. Official documentation that the child's immunizations are current or on a "catch up schedule".
 - Pediatrician Record
 - Record from Immunization Registry through the Arkansas Department of Health
 - Approval from Arkansas Department of Health of exemption
- B. A copy of birth certificate or official hospital record with date of birth listed verifying the child meets one of the following requirements:
 - The child is 3 years of age by **August 1, 2009**
 - The child is 4 years of age by **August 15, 2009** OR child attended a three-year old ABC, Head Start or quality approved pre-K for at least 100 days in 2008-2009.
- C. Documentation that the gross family income does not exceed 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

Earned income is income resulting from working in a paid position or receiving unemployment benefits from having worked in a paid position. It does not include benefits received from other sources such as TEFRA, SSI, child support, ect. Earned income or lack of earned income must be documented for both parents if two parent household. Acceptable documentation of income shall include a copy of one of the following:

 - Paystubs documenting earned income or unemployment payments for the past 30 days (full month of paystubs)
 - 2008 W-2 forms
 - 2008 Federal Income Tax Forms
 - 2008 Schedule C or Schedule F, for self-employed only
 - Free/Reduced Lunch Application showing income amount, only if income is verified by district (cannot be used by private providers)
 - Letter from DHS caseworker showing family gross income ~~is~~ \leq 200% of FPL (TEA, food stamp approval, child care voucher approval)

- Notarized letter signed by employer showing income
- Notarized letter signed by each parent in the household verifying that parent(s) is not employed and has no earned income.

4-3.1 Income Eligibility Chart

The following income chart is based on 2009 Federal Poverty Levels determined by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The income levels in this chart determine the maximum income families can earn and still be eligible for ABC, as well as other subsidy programs.

FAMILY SIZE	Head Start Eligible	Free-Red. Lunch Eligible	ABC Eligible
	100% of Federal Poverty Level	185% of Federal Poverty Level	200% of Federal Poverty Level
1	\$10,830	\$20,036	\$21,660
2	\$14,570	\$26,955	\$29,140
3	\$18,310	\$33,874	\$36,620
4	\$22,050	\$40,793	\$44,100
5	\$25,790	\$47,712	\$51,580
6	\$29,530	\$54,631	\$59,060
7	\$33,270	\$61,550	\$66,540
8	\$37,010	\$68,469	\$74,020
9	\$40,750	\$75,388	\$81,500
10	\$44,490	\$82,307	\$88,980

This chart should not be used to determine eligibility for any program other than ABC. Other income levels are provided for comparison purposes only.

4-3.2 Sliding Fee Scale Eligibility

Once programs have identified and recruited families who qualify under the 200% of FPL criteria, programs may opt to recruit families between 200-250% of FPL. Funding received from ABC/ABCSS will reflect the reduction according to the sliding fee scale. Programs may require parents to pay a portion of the ABCSS reimbursement using the sliding fee scale below.

Family Size	Monthly Income 0% to 200%	Monthly Income 200% up to 212.5%	Monthly Income 212.5 % up to 225%	Monthly Income 225 % up to 237.5%	Monthly Income 237.5 % up to 250%	250% up Annually
1	0 to \$1,805.00	\$1,805.01 \$1,917.81	\$1,917.82 \$2,030.63	\$2,030.64 \$2,143.44	\$2,143.45 \$2,256.25	\$27,075.00
2	0 to \$2,428.33	\$2,428.34 \$2,580.10	\$2,580.11 \$2,731.87	\$2,731.88 \$2,883.64	\$2,883.65 \$3,035.41	\$36,424.95
3	0 to \$3,051.67	\$3,051.68 \$3,242.40	\$3,242.41 \$3,433.13	\$3,433.14 \$3,623.86	\$3,623.87 \$3,814.59	\$45,775.05
4	0 to \$3,675.00	\$3,675.01 \$3,904.69	\$3,904.70 \$4,134.38	\$4,134.39 \$4,364.06	\$4,364.07 \$4,593.75	\$55,125.00
5	0 to \$4,298.33	\$4,298.34 \$4,566.98	\$4,566.99 \$4,835.62	\$4,835.63 \$5,104.27	\$5,104.28 \$5,372.91	\$64,474.95
6	0 to \$4,921.67	\$4,921.68 \$5,229.27	\$5,229.28 \$5,536.88	\$5,536.89 \$5,844.48	\$5,844.49 \$6,152.09	\$73,825.05
7	0 to \$5,545.00	\$5,545.01 \$5,891.56	\$5,891.57 \$6,238.13	\$6,238.14 \$6,584.69	\$6,584.70 \$6,931.25	\$83,175.00
8	0 to \$6,168.33	\$6,168.34 \$6,553.85	\$6,553.86 \$6,939.37	\$6,939.38 \$7,324.89	\$7,324.90 \$7,710.41	\$92,524.95
9	0 to \$6,791.67	\$6,791.68 \$7,216.15	\$7,216.16 \$7,640.63	\$7,640.64 \$8,065.11	\$8,065.12 \$8,489.59	\$101,875.05
10	0 to \$7,415.00	\$7,415.01 \$7,878.44	\$7,878.45 \$8,341.88	\$8,341.89 \$8,805.31	\$8,805.32 \$9,268.75	\$111,225.00
FEE %:	No Fee	20%	40%	60%	80%	Full Rate
MONTHLY CENTER/FAMILY HOME FEE (per child)		\$97.20	\$194.40	\$291.60	\$388.80	\$486.00
MONTHLY HIPPY or PAT FEE (per child)		\$35.00	\$70.00	\$105.00	\$140.00	\$175.00

4-3.3 Documenting Income Exemption

A. Age-eligible children who fall into one of the following categories are income-exempt and automatically qualify for ABCSS, if the parent/guardian supplies satisfactory documentation from the list below:

- Foster child
 - a. Court record
 - b. Documentation from DHS
- Child has incarcerated parent
 - a. Law enforcement
 - b. Court document
 - c. Documentation from Department of Corrections website
- Child is in the custody of or living with family member other than father or mother
 - a. Court record
 - b. Documentation from DHS
 - c. Notarized statement from family member that the child is living with them and neither parent is residing in the home.
- Child has immediate family member arrested for or convicted of drug-related offenses
 - a. Law enforcement
 - b. Court document
 - c. Documentation from Department of Corrections website

- d. Newspaper article
- Child has parent activated for overseas military duty
 - a. Deployment Orders
 - b. Letter from Department of Defense notifying that parent will be deployed

4-4 Documenting Waiver of Eligibility

Programs wishing to enroll a child not meeting the ABC eligibility criteria must petition the Division using an Waiver Request Form. These requests shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. Generally, a child must have multiple documented delays or the family must have an extenuating circumstance before a waiver will be considered. Due to limited resources and the large numbers of eligible children needing pre-K services, waivers will be granted only in instances of critical need and must be very well documented.

4-5 Documenting Dual Enrollment

Children enrolled in an ABCSS center or family home may also enroll in an ABCSS HIPPY or PAT program if the child is income-eligible for ABCSS AND meets at least one of the following criteria:

- 1) Parents without a high school diploma
 - a. Letter from high school parent last attended stating parent did not graduate
 - b. High school transcript sent by high school
 - c. Letter from GED program that parent is in process of earning a GED
 - d. Notarized letter from parent stating that the parent did not graduate high school.
- 2) Birth weight <5 pounds, 9 ounces
 - a. Birth certificates
 - b. Letter from hospital or doctor verifying birth weight
 - c. Hospital birth card or announcement sent home with baby from hospital (only if birth weight is on the announcement)
- 3) Parent is < 18 years of age at child's birth
 - a. Birth certificate of child (if parent age is listed)
 - b. Birth certificate of mother/father and birth certificate of the child
 - c. Driver's license/picture ID card and birth certificate of the child
- 4) Family has a history of substance abuse/addiction
 - a. A letter from doctor or treatment center treating family member
 - b. A letter from social worker assisting family
 - c. Law enforcement or Court Records
- 5) Eligible for services under IDEA
 - a. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
 - b. Letter of IEP conference decision

- c. Evaluation / Programming Conference Decision Form
 - d. Letter from Educational Cooperative serving the child
- 6) Parent has a history of abuse neglect or is a victim of abuse or neglect
- a. A letter from doctor or treatment center treating family member
 - b. A letter from social worker assisting family
 - c. Law enforcement or Court Records
 - d. Documentation from DHS
- 7) Child exhibits a demonstrable developmental delay as identified through appropriate screening
- a. Screening report from an Early Childhood Special Education Program
 - b. Letter from DHS Developmental Disability Services
 - c. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)
 - d. Letter of IEP conference decision
 - e. Evaluation / Programming Conference Decision Form
 - f. Letter from Educational Cooperative serving the child
 - g. Psychological evaluation
 - h. Developmental screening results documenting demonstrable delay
- 8) Child lives in a single parent household or has parents who are divorced
- a. Court Record
 - b. Notarized statement by parent
- 9) Child is a foster child
- a. Court Record
 - b. Documentation from DHS
- 10) Child has parents who cannot read
- a. Notarized statement by parent
 - b. Letter from adult education program that parent is enrolled in adult education class
 - c. Written documentation of observation of child and/or parent during screening
- 11) Child is homeless
- a. Notarized statement by parent
 - b. Documentation from DHS
- 12) Child or parent has limited English Proficiency
- a. Letter from social worker
 - b. Letter from Bureau of Citizenship (INS)
 - c. Parent's green card
 - d. Letter from adult education program that parent is enrolled in adult education class
 - e. Written documentation of observation of child and/or parent during screening

13) Child is in the custody of family member other than mother and father

- a. Court document
- b. DHS letter

14) Child has parent who is incarcerated

- a. Law enforcement
- b. Court document
- c. Documentation from Department of Corrections website

Programs wishing to dually enroll must qualify the family **BEFORE** child attends the program and must follow all applicable rules and regulations.

The responsibility for verifying dual enrollment falls on the program that enrolls the child second.

4-6 Calculating Income

Earned income is income resulting from working in a paid position or receiving unemployment benefits from having worked in a paid position. It does not include benefits received from other sources such as TEFRA, SSI, child support, etc. Earned income or lack of earned income must be documented for both parents if two parent household. Overtime and benefits such as housing/ BAQ should not be counted for the purpose of calculating income.

4-6.1 Determining Income From Paystubs

To calculate annual gross income from a paystub, locate the gross amount listed on the paystub submitted by the parent/guardian. (The stubs must cover the previous 30-day period prior to the date of enrollment)

ABC COMPANY 123 MAIN STREET ANYTOWN, ARKANSAS 77777									
Employee ID		Employee Name				Pay Period			
123456789		Public, John Q.				4/1/09-4/15/09			
EARNINGS				TAXES			DEDUCTIONS		
Code	Rate	Hours	Amount	Code	Withheld	Y-T-D	Code	Amount	Y-T-D
01-Reg	10.50	80.00	840.00	FICA	67.25	567.34	Med	81.23	564.44
04-OT	15.75	3.00	47.25	Fed	101.32	1020.34			
				State	44.56	378.67			
TOTALS			887.25		213.13	1966.35		81.23	564.44
Total Deductions			294.36						
Net Pay			592.89						

The gross amount should be multiplied by the number of checks received per year:

- Monthly x 12
- Twice monthly x 24
- Every 2 weeks x 26
- Weekly x 52

In this case, \$840.00 x 26 = \$21,840.

4-6.2 Determining Income From W-2 Forms

Agency should use the amount located in Box 1 (Wages, tips and compensation) for the annual income submitted by Form W-2.

4-6.3 Determining Income From 1040 Form

Agency should use the amount located on Line 37 (adjusted gross income) for the annual income amount submitted by Form 1040.

4-6.4 Determining Income From 1040 Schedule C or F

For families who are self-employed, agencies may accept Schedule C and use Line 31 (Net profit or loss) for the annual income amount. Farming families may submit Schedule F and agencies should use Line 36 (Net farm profit or loss) for annual income amount.

Section 5 Program/Agency Eligibility

ABC services are delivered by a variety of providers, including public schools, education cooperatives, Head Start agencies, non-profit agencies, faith-based agencies, private child care providers, licensed family homes, as well as university and college affiliated providers.

5-1 Conditions of Eligibility

Any early childhood agency within the boundaries of Arkansas meeting the following criteria is eligible to apply for an ABC grant:

- a. Agency site is licensed by DCCECE as a center or family child care home. Facility must be and remain in substantial compliance with licensing regulations and have no history of formal corrective action or founded complaints within 12 months of application date.
- b. Agencies applying for home-visiting services (HIPPPY or PAT) must demonstrate support of the corresponding state and national organization.
- c. Agency has no outstanding debt to DCCECE or ADE (This requirement shall be suspended if an appeal is pending.)
- d. Agency site has obtained State Quality Approval accreditation OR is eligible for such accreditation in the space to be used for the ABC program.

- e. Agency has ability to provide matching funds in accordance with mandated local to state 40:60 funding ratio.

5-2 Request for Applications

Arkansas Better Chance funding is awarded through a grant selection process. Interested agencies must complete an annual application for funding. The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education will notify all early childhood providers and school districts of the availability of the application and deadlines for submission.

5-3 Review of Applications

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education will oversee the process by which programs are selected for the Arkansas Better Chance grant. The Division recommends grant awards to the State Board of Education for final approval.

A. New and Expansion Programs

Grant awards for new and expansion programs will be made using a competitive scoring process. An expansion program is defined as one in which an existing ABC agency applies for additional slots. These applications will be read by early childhood professionals and scored using an established rubric. DCCECE staff will review sections related to licensing, quality approval and budgets. Early childhood professionals not employed by DCCECE will read and score all other programmatic elements of the application.

All applications will be anonymous and references to any agency will be concealed before any application is read and scored. Each application shall be worth 100 points. In order to be considered for funding, an agency application must score a minimum of **80** points, *although a score of 80 or above does NOT guarantee funding*. A copy of the scoring rubric will be made available after applications are scored. Part of the scoring rubric may be based on oral presentations from the applying agency. All applications scoring 80 or above will be pooled to be funded in order of legislative priority and available funds. According to Act 49 of 2003, programs from the following school district areas must receive priority consideration for ABC funding:

- a. The local elementary school is in school improvement status.
The longer a school has been in school improvement, the higher the funding priority.
- b. The local district is designated as being in academic distress.
The longer a district has had this designation, the higher the funding priority.
- c. ≥ 75% of 4th graders score below proficient on benchmark exams in preceding 2 years.
Districts in this category shall be funded in order of descending percentage of students scoring below proficient on literacy and then on mathematics benchmark.

New and expansion funding shall be awarded in the preceding order until all funding is obligated. If additional funding remains, programs from other areas shall then be considered in order of descending grant score.

B. Renewal Applications

Renewal of an existing ABC program is NOT automatic. DCCECE and ADE have sole discretion in whether an ABC program grant is renewed. Programs applying for renewal shall be reviewed for performance and compliance. Renewal applications will be scored using the following rubric:

ITEM	YES	NO
1. Are there founded complaints in past 12 months which pose immediate safety risk?	0	20
2. Is program in substantial compliance with licensing regulations?	5	0
3. Is the most current ERS score for all ABC classrooms ≥ 5.00 ?	15	0
4. Does proposed budget meet core model requirements, including salaries?	10	0
5. Is program current on all required reports and documentation?	5	0
6. Is program meeting requirements of any Program Improvement Plan?	10	0
7. Do ABC staff meet all necessary qualifications or have approved SQP in place?	5	0
8. Have all ABC staff met the minimum training requirements?	5	0
9. Are all child records complete and up-to-date?	5	0
10. Is Work Sampling data current?	5	0
11. Is program implementing required curriculum?	5	0
12. Does program have history of appropriate partnership and collaboration, especially with local Head Start programs?	10	0

Renewal applications must score at least 85 points to be considered eligible for unconditional renewal. Programs scoring below 85 may be eligible for renewal on certain conditions being met through the completion of an existing or new Program Improvement Plan. Failure to follow any conditions of renewal may result in either immediate termination from ABC program or non-renewal the following program year.

5-4 Grant Approval

Once grants have been scored and a physical site visit has been made to any proposed new or expansion location, DCCECE shall forward all recommendations for funding to the State Board of Education for approval. Approval is contingent upon a favorable vote by this Board.

Once final approval has been received by the Division, a Notice of Grant Award and Grant Agreement shall be sent to the applicant. The Grant Agreement must be signed by an authorized agency representative and returned to the Division. Agencies that do not have a valid W-9 on file must also submit that form. The Division must have all returned documents on file BEFORE an applicant may begin serving children under the ABC program.

5-5 Termination of Grant

DCCECE may terminate a grant agreement with 30 days notice for any reason allowed under law, including lack of funding to continue the program. In addition, the Division may immediately take steps to terminate a grant agreement for cause, which shall include any violation of ABC Rules and Regulations or failure or comply with comply with adverse or corrective action imposed by the Division or Program Improvement Plan as issued by ABC.

Programs falsifying or presenting misleading or falsified documents for the purpose of obtaining ABC funding shall be subject to permanent exclusion from the ABC Program and/or prosecution for fraud.

Upon deciding to terminate an agreement, DCCECE shall provide notice to a program agency via a certified letter of its intention to recommend termination of grant agreement to the State Board of Education. Termination of an ABC grant agreement is final upon a majority vote by the State Board of Education.

Should an agency's provider agreement be terminated for just cause, agency representatives may not apply for ABC funding for 12 months from the date of termination. If agency or its representative(s) is barred from participation in DHS programs through DHS Policy 1088, that agency and its representatives are also barred from participation in the ABC program.

Section 6 Funding

6-1 Sources

The ABC program is currently appropriated at \$113,775,000 annually. Of that amount, \$7.5 million comes from a transfer of funds from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The remainder of the funding is State General Revenue.

6-2 Match Requirements

There are two components to ABC funding. The State of Arkansas funds 60% of the cost of each program through a grant process. By state law, each ABC program must contribute the additional 40% of the total cost through either cash or in-kind services. The formula to determine the amount of your match is as follows:

Multiply ABC funding by 2, then divide by 3.

For example, if you are awarded \$97,200, your required match is:

Step #1. Multiply ABC by 2 → \$97,200 x 2 = \$194,400.

Step #2. Divide that product by 3. → \$194,400 / 3 = \$64,800.00.

Your program must provide \$64,800.00 –in cash or in-kind—to the program.

6-3 Per Child Funding

A center-based or family home ABC program shall receive **\$4,860** from the state for each ABC child attending 178 days. The match requirement shall be **\$3,240** for a total program cost of \$8,100 per child. Home-visiting programs shall receive **\$1,750** per ABC child participating for 178 days. The match requirement shall be **\$1,166.67** per child for a total program cost of \$2,916.67.

Programs shall receive a prorated portion of funding if they operate less than 178 days. For specific budget items, see Section 11.

6-4 Sliding Fee Scale

Programs that have recruited families earning less than 200% of FPL and still have available ABC slots may recruit families earning 200.1-250% of FPL who wish to enroll and pay a portion of the program fee. The amount of the parent fee shall be deducted from the regular state reimbursement amount.

6-5 Need for Services

Before an application is recommended for approval, there must be an established need for pre-K slots in the service area applied for. The following formula is used to determine the need in each school district:

	# of 3 and 4 year old children at 100-200% of Federal Poverty Level
+	# of 3 and 4 year old children at 0-100% of FPL not served by Head Start
-	# of 3 and 4 year old children served in Head Start
-	# of 3 and 4 year old children already served through ABC
X	70%
=	Remaining Need for Additional Pre-K Slots

While a program may submit an application for an ABC grant and have achieved the minimum score necessary for consideration, the Division shall not award additional pre-K slots in any school district area where there is no remaining need.

6-6 Financial Viability

Current legislation allows any licensed early childhood provider in the state willing to meet quality guidelines to apply for funding. However, private providers wishing to apply for ABC funding are advised to maintain multiple funding sources for their program. The ABC cost model has NO net income built in. All ABC funding is to go for salaries, training, equipment, meals and parent activities.

Given the ABC cost model and the required 40% match, private providers should seriously consider whether their current business structure will financially support an ABC classroom before applying for funding.

6-7 Cost Allocation

For providers who have children funded by a variety of sources, it is expected that these agencies will allocate only the portion used for ABC children to the ABC budget. Program agencies should use a percentage method to determine how to cost allocate administrative items such as utilities, rent/mortgage and clerical support.

Allocating a greater percentage than allowed by the number of ABC children is ground for corrective action.

Section 7 Reporting

7-1 Required Reports

Participating agencies are required to file the following reports during the year:

REPORT	DUE DATE
Mid-Year Expenditure Report	January 31
Mid-Year SQP Progress Report	January 31
Enhancement Grant Expense Report	March 31
Budget Amendments	June 1
Start-Up Funds Report	July 31
Final Expenditure Report	July 31
Final SQP Progress Report	July 31

Agencies will be advised if any report is missing or incomplete. Late or incomplete reports may result in withholding of program payments.

7-2 Documentation

When submitting financial reports no documentation is required—only report forms should be submitted. However, all expense documentation must be kept by the program and produced upon request. Expenditure reports shall be audited on both a scheduled and random basis and documentation will have to be produced at that time.

Expenses without documentation shall be considered an overpayment to the program and subject to repayment and possible further corrective action for the program.

7-3 Record Retention

Child Care Licensing requires programs to maintain enrollment and attendance records for three (3) years. Financial records should be retained for seven (7) years in accordance with IRS regulations.

7-4 Random Reviews

Program agencies shall be subject to random financial reviews of documentation for all financial and program reports. If a program is selected for a random financial review, the agency coordinator or director shall be notified by e-mail that documentation must be sent to the Division within 48 hours. If a review is to be conducted at the program site, program directors shall be given 24 hours notice that an auditor is coming.

Acceptable documentation shall include copies of cancelled checks, invoices, receipts, bank statements and printouts from accounting software. Other questions about acceptable documentation may be addressed to ABC Financial Specialists.

Agencies failing to respond to a request for records or fails to provide complete documentation shall be subject to repayment and further corrective action, including termination from ABC program.

7-5 Required Audit

Any agency operating an ABC program of at least 20 children shall furnish DHS annually an audit report covering that agency's fiscal year. Agencies already required to furnish DHS such a report by virtue of other substantial financial and/or state funding already meet this requirement. All other type agencies operating an ABC program of at least 20 children shall engage a CPA or CPA firm to perform a program audit of their ABC operation. The audit shall be performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards. The audit period shall be the agency's fiscal year during any part of which the ABC program was in operation.

Audits shall be due 120 days after the end of the agency's fiscal year and shall be submitted to the DHS Audit Section. Audits should be sent to:

DHS OQA Audit
P.O. Box 1437, Slot S-270
Little Rock, AR 72203-1437

7-6 Legislative Audit

All school districts and LEA's operating an ABC program and subject to regular annual audit by Legislative Audit are deemed to have met all of the requirements of Section 12-5.

7-7 Fraud

The ABC program is committed to the highest standards of integrity. In keeping with this objective, participating agencies and families are expected to be honest and forthcoming in all communication and business concerning the ABC program. The DCCECE Compliance Unit and/or DHS Fraud Unit shall investigate any suspected abuse of eligibility criteria and financial procedures.

Fraud is defined as the willful violation of ABC program rules, regulations or procedures for the purpose of obtaining ABC services and/or funding.

Agencies shown to have committed fraud shall be recommended for termination from the ABC program to the State Board of Education and be subject to permanent exclusion from all DHS programs (See DHS Policy 1088). Program may be required for repay ABC funding. Depending on the severity of the violation, agencies may be referred for prosecution.

Parents or guardians shown to have committed fraud for the purpose of obtaining ABC services shall immediately forfeit their participation in the ABC program for all immediate family members and may be referred for criminal prosecution. Violations of eligibility policy may require the repayment of ABC funding paid on behalf of family members.

Examples of fraud include but are not limited to:

- Falsification of any document, correspondence or data (written or electronic)
- Alteration of child or family data, including names, birthdates and Social Security Numbers
- Misrepresentation of child enrollment
- Verbal misrepresentations of any kind to an ABC representative

Section 8 Application / Renewal Application

Application procedures are provided as a part of the application packet and are disseminated during the specified period.

Section 9 Minimum Standards/Classroom Programs

9-1 Authorized Staff

In addition to DCCECE staff, the Division has multiple contracts with other entities to perform monitoring and assessment functions. Personnel employed by these entities are authorized by the Division to gather information from, as well as evaluate, programs.

Confidentiality of program information is not waived by supplying data to any authorized contractor of DCCECE. Contractors have the responsibility to maintain the security and integrity of program information.

9-2 Site Visits

ABC Program Specialists will visit program agencies during the year. During the visit, Program Specialists will review the program's ABC records for children, staff and finances to confirm compliance with requirements. Any issues that require attention or correction shall be submitted to the agency director or coordinator as a Program Improvement Plan (PIP). The PIP shall outline what steps need to be taken for the program to be in compliance and the deadline by which corrections must be made.

If programs need additional time for corrections, the agency director or coordinator shall request an extension from the Program Specialist in writing BEFORE the deadline. Programs failing to correct issues on a PIP by the established deadline shall be placed under more severe corrective action. Such situations may jeopardize future funding opportunities.

9-3 Desk Audits and Monitoring

Because of the large number of agencies participating in ABC and limited number of staff, ABC Program Specialists may monitor your ABC program through e-mail and the submission of required documents by mail. Program agencies must comply with desk monitoring in the same manner as a site visit.

9-4 Environmental Assessments (Environment Rating Scale)

Each ABC center-based site or family home shall be reviewed annually for environmental quality. The applicable Environment Rating Scale shall be utilized for this purpose.

Teachers and paraprofessionals shall receive annual training or updates on the ERS. In addition, programs shall provide each classroom with the copy of the rating scale book and All About the ECERS-R (Cryer, Riley, et al).

The following procedures are used for environmental assessments:

1. Each ABC classroom and FCCH shall achieve a minimum overall ERS score of 5.00.
2. Classrooms or homes not achieving the required score shall submit a form requesting technical assistance (TA) that will target areas for improvement. A follow-up assessment shall be made once TA has been given. Renewal of funding is only affected if particular classrooms or homes repeatedly score less than 5.00.
3. Environmental assessments shall be unannounced. Each site shall be given a 90-day window of time during which the environmental assessment may occur.
4. Site directors shall be contacted by a consultant to be given the 90-day window. The site director shall confirm by e-mail any days that children will not be in attendance or other activities that would prevent observation of a typical day. Within the exception of holiday breaks, a site director may exempt a maximum of 5 days per month from the 90-day window.
5. Environmental assessments shall not be rescheduled due to the absence of a teacher or paraprofessional on the scheduled day.
6. Due to time constraints and cost, directors may not request follow-up assessments for classrooms meeting the minimum score.

Programs having questions about how any item was scored should contact the ASU Regional Coordinator for the program area.

9-5 Technical Assistance (TA)

To help programs achieve the best possible outcomes for children, the Division provides TA on several levels:

- ABC Program Specialists, Financial Specialists and Data Specialists are available to meet one on one with programs to help resolve concerns and clarify policies.
- Licensing Specialists can answer questions regarding the licensing process or minimum licensing requirements.
- Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies are available to assist providers in program operation and families in locating appropriate care for their children.
- Consultants and Regional Coordinators from ASU Childhood Services can assist ABC programs in several areas of operation, including room arrangements, scheduling, selection of materials and equipment, etc. Programs must request assistance from ASU utilizing a TA Request Form.

Because of the volume of requests, programs should submit TA forms as early as possible. The waiting time for assistance is often prolonged due to licensing priorities and the number of programs requesting assistance.

Section 10 Staff/Child Ratio for Classroom Programs

10-1 Staff-Child Ratios

The staff to child ratio shall be maintained in accordance with the Rules Governing the Arkansas Better Chance Program, Section 10, #10.02.

If the program is mixing ABC children with non-ABC children, the ABC ratios must be met for the entire group.

10-2 Group Size

Even if the licensing capacity is greater, the group size stated in the Rules Governing the Arkansas Better Chance Program, Section 10, #10.01 cannot be exceeded at any time.

Section 11 Staff Qualifications/Professional Development

11-1 Criminal Background Checks

All ABC staff having contact with children are subject to a satisfactory criminal background check. Programs should consult Child Care Licensing Manual or Public School regulations to determine what criminal offenses may exclude someone from working with children in a child care program or public school. Fees for background checks may be paid from the program's ABC administrative budget.

11-2 Child Maltreatment Registry Check

Employees of an ABC program must also complete a Child Maltreatment Registry Check through the DHS Division of Children and Family Services. Forms are available through the Child Care Licensing Unit.

11-3 TB Skin Test

ABC employees shall obtain a health card or physician's statement showing the absence of contagious tuberculosis. This card must be renewed annually. Tests are available through most county health units for a minimum charge.

11-4 Service Requirement

Classroom positions (teachers and paraprofessionals) are based on a 190-day program (178 days of instruction plus 12 professional development days).

11-5 Employment Agreements

ABC staff are the employees of the grantee agency, not the Division or the Department of Education. The Division accepts no liability for employee-employer disputes, nor will Division staff act as mediator of such disputes. To clarify expectations, ABC agencies shall establish an annual employment agreement with all ABC employees. At a minimum, the employment agreement shall establish:

Working conditions (to include but not limited to):

- days per year employee shall work
- working hours per day
- specific job duties
- sick leave, annual leave and holiday leave policies
- professional development requirements
- credential requirements, including SQP requirements if applicable

Compensation and fringe benefits (to include but not limited to):

- rate of pay
- frequency of pay

If ABC teachers and paraprofessionals are expected to work in another part of your agency when ABC is not in session, that requirement must be included in the employee agreement.

An ABC agency shall be required to produce signed copies of employment agreements upon request.

11-6 Classroom Teacher—First Classroom

The teacher of the first classroom at an ABC site shall hold a:

Public Schools/Cooperatives: *Standard Arkansas Teacher Licensing with P-4 certification*
All others: *Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development*

11-7 Classroom Teacher—Multiple Classrooms

For multiple classroom sites, the teacher of a second and third classroom shall hold, at a minimum, an *Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development*.

11-8 Paraprofessionals/Teacher Assistants

The paraprofessional or teacher assistant must hold an *Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development* OR *Child Development Associate (CDA) credential*.

11-9 Degree Exemptions

For non-public school programs, the Division shall consider degree exemptions on a case by case basis, contingent upon the teacher having a degree and 12 hours of early childhood/child development coursework.

11-10 Center Directors

While no specific education requirements are outlined for an ABC director, it is expected that an ABC agency shall hire a director who has solid experience in early childhood education. A Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood is preferred but not required. The director should also have a successful record of accomplishment in administering early childhood programs and have attended Director's Orientation.

11-11 Substitutes

If a teacher or paraprofessional is absent, the program agency must ensure that a substitute is present in the classroom for the time of absence. A short-term (three weeks or less) substitute must meet the following minimum requirements:

- At least 21 years of age
- High school diploma or equivalent
- Experience working with children under 5 years of age
- Negative TB skin test
- Satisfactory criminal background/child maltreatment registry checks
- Proficient verbal and written communication skills

If a teacher or paraprofessional is to be out of the classroom longer than three weeks, the program agency shall obtain approval from the Division on the requirements for the long-term substitute.

11-12 Staff Qualification Plans

If the program agency has made efforts to locate staff who meet minimum requirements but cannot find acceptable candidates, the agency may petition the Division for permission to hire someone in the process of completing education requirements. The agency must complete a Staff Qualification Plan (SQP) Request Form and submit to their ABC Program Specialist. The Specialist will review the plan and, if approved, will send the program an agreement for signature by the program director and staff member. Requests must be submitted within 15 days of the date of hire.

The submitted request must contain a detailed plan to show how the employee will obtain the educational objective within two years of approval. ABC Program Specialists will track the progress of each SQP. Agencies must submit progress reports for each SQP no later than January 31 and July 31. The SQP may be terminated if the staff member does not show adequate and consistent progress or fails to submit required documentation.

Programs hiring unqualified staff to work in an ABC program without an approved SQP on file shall be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination from the ABC program.

11-13 Changes in Personnel

Program agencies must notify the Division ABC staff of any change, including personnel, in writing within five (5) calendar days of the change. Changing personnel information in the COPA system does not satisfy this requirement. Programs must complete a Personnel Change Form and a copy of the new staff credentials to the ABC Program Specialist for review.

11-14 Required Clock Hours

ADE rules require certified teachers to obtain 60 clock hours of professional development annually to maintain certification. To teach in an ABC classroom, 30 of those hours must be pertinent to early childhood education.

For non-certified staff, including paraprofessionals, a minimum of 30 clock hours pertinent to early childhood education is required annually. Hours shall be submitted to the TAPP Registry. Program must maintain current copies of staff Registry transcripts, and copies of certificates for trainings not on the TAPP Registry, as proof of professional development hours to be reviewed by ABC Program Specialists.

11-15 Required Training

ABC teachers and paraprofessionals shall be required to complete the following trainings:

- Environment Rating Scales – *This is required annually of all classroom staff.*
- Work Sampling – *Initial Work Sampling is required for all classroom staff. Curriculum Connections or a refresher is required every other year*

Curriculum Trainings (one-time for all classroom staff)

- Arkansas Early Childhood or Infant/Toddler Frameworks
- Pre-K Ella (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas)
- INDEX (Math and Science for Young Children)
- SEL (Social/Emotional Learning in Arkansas)

*Note: The Curriculum trainings do not all have to be taken in the same program year – the requirement is a **plan** for staff to complete these trainings.*

COPA

This training is only required for the person(s) that will be entering the eligibility information, attendance, billing information, etc., in the COPA system. It is recommended that the staff attend training annually to receive updates.

ABC Coordinators

ABC agency directors or coordinators shall also be required to attend **annual** ABC Coordinator Training and receive approved Financial Training which shall include guidance on budgets, acceptable financial documentation and recordkeeping. The Division shall notify providers of which trainings meet this requirement.

DCCECE may mandate additional training as specific program needs arise.

11-16 Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways (TAPP) Registry

All ABC staff and directors shall register with the TAPP Registry as a practitioner or trainer. Programs shall enter each staff member's TAPP Registry Number in the COPA system and on the annual ABC application.

<http://professionalregistry.astate.edu>

Section 12 Staffing Patterns/Classroom Programs

For every classroom with more than 10 children, a program must provide (1) teacher and (1) paraprofessional/assistant. For other classroom arrangements, the program should consult with the Division on the required pattern.

# Classrooms	Lead Teacher	Classroom Teacher	Paraprofessional
1	1	0	1
2	1	1	2
3	1	2	3
4	2	2	4

Section 13 Program Standards

13-1 Core Curriculum

All ABC programs must select and utilize a core curriculum approved by the state Early Childhood Curriculum Committee. At this printing, the following comprehensive curricula have been approved for use in ABC programs:

- Adventures in Learning
- Comprehensive Preschool Program (Abrams)*
- Core Knowledge
- Creative Curriculum
- Curiosity Corner
- DLM Early Childhood Express
- Harcourt Preschool Programs*
- High Reach**
- High/Scope
- Houghton Mifflin Pre-K
- The Investigator Club
- Montessori
- Opening the World of Learning
- Pebble Soup
- Preschool First
- Project Approach

- Reggio Emilia
- Scholastic Early Childhood Curriculum

**Must order and use all components*

***The "fun page" packet may not be used.*

If a program wishes to use a core curriculum not on this list, the program must first petition the Division in writing. Prior to approval, the Division may require a presentation of the curriculum to either the Early Childhood Curriculum Committee or other ad hoc committee.

Programs wishing to utilize a supplementary curriculum specific to a content area in addition to the comprehensive core curriculum may do so at their discretion (ex. a supplemental literacy or math/science curriculum). The program is at liberty to select supplemental materials but any materials chosen must meet the Arkansas Framework.

Directors and coordinators must ensure teachers and paraprofessionals have adequate training on the selected curriculum model. Funds from the ABC curriculum budget may be utilized for curriculum training.

13-2 Equipment

ABC programs must provide an environment properly equipped for preschool children. The ABC budget contains funds which may be used to purchase developmentally appropriate equipment.

Each ABC classroom and family home shall be equipped with enough developmentally appropriate supplies, toys, books and play apparatus to take care of the needs of the total group and to provide each child with a variety of activities through the day.

The outdoor play area shall also be developmentally appropriate and meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission standards listed in Public Playground Safety Handbook revised in April 2008. A copy of this guide may be downloaded from the CPSC website at <http://www.cpsc.gov/cpsc/pub/pubs/325.pdf>.

Because of the great expense associated with purchasing outdoor equipment, programs are strongly advised to seek technical assistance **BEFORE** purchasing equipment to ensure its compliance with CPSC recommendations for preschool, as well as the ERS indicators at the "quality" (5.0) level.

The arrangement of indoor and outdoor equipment, materials and interest areas for each group shall provide for accessibility from low shelves so children may select and return materials easily; an orderly, uncluttered atmosphere; visual and/or auditory supervision of children in all areas; separation of active and quiet play and traffic patterns that avoid disruption of activities.

13-3 Technology

Because of the limited staff available to assist programs, the Division has selected several technological solutions to make program operations more efficient. This system of technology includes web-based systems to capture and maintain child, family and staff data (COPA), as well as child assessment data (Work Sampling).

Electronic mail is the primary means of communication between DCCECE staff and ABC programs. A working email address must be maintained and checked on a daily basis, *even when the program is not in operation (holidays and summer months)*.

In order to utilize these systems, ABC teachers, home visitors and parent educators must have reasonable access to a computer with high-speed Internet access. Funds from the ABC budget may be used to purchase a computer for each classroom, family home, home visitor and parent educator. Computers may be replaced every three years.

A separate computer may be purchased for the computer interest center in the classroom. Classrooms may allow children to use computers no more than 20 minutes daily. Computer activities must be age and developmentally appropriate.

13-4 Enhancement Programs

If programs wish to add enrichment activities outside of the standard preschool schedule (for example, dedicated music and/or art classes), qualified staff must provide the instruction and the daily schedule must still meet SPOD.

Each ABC classroom and family home must demonstrate the daily schedule for ABC satisfies “substantial portion of the day” (SPOD) as defined by the ERS. The Division and authorized representatives are available to provide assistance to programs in developing an appropriate schedule.

13-5 Child Record and Portfolio

Programs shall maintain an individual child record/portfolio on site for all enrolled children. Records shall contain copies of:

- Birth certificate or official hospital record containing birth date (documentation as per section 3 of the ABC Program Manual)
- Documentation of income eligibility (documentation as per section 3 of the ABC Program Manual)
- Completed, signed and dated application form with enrollment date and number of caregivers in household and total number of children in household
- Emergency information, including non-parental contact and medical information
- Parental authorization for medical care, daily pick-ups and field trips
- Completed health form and immunization records
- Record of completed developmental screening and referral to Special Education, if applicable
- Samples of child's work*
- Teacher and parent observations and summaries of parent-teacher conferences. This includes a summary of what is discussed and any comments from the parent/caregiver. This document shall be dated and signed by the parent/caregiver.
- Work Sampling checklist completed for Period #3 (a paper document does not have to be on file as long as the information can be accessed electronically when requested by DCCECE staff)

*-Program may choose to use separate portfolio to keep samples of a child's work as long as portfolio is available for viewing to parents and ABC Program Specialists upon request.

Records shall be kept in a locked file cabinet with access granted only on a “need to know” basis. The child record shall be available for inspection by Division staff or authorized representative upon request.

If certain records are stored off-site, copies shall be made and given to teachers to maintain in the classroom.

Other than those documents required to be retained for licensing purposes, teachers shall give a copy of the child's record to the parent or kindergarten program (with permission from the parent/guardian) upon a child's completion of or withdrawal from the program.

13-6 Meals and Snacks

During the 7-hour program day, the ABC program shall provide breakfast, lunch and snack to each enrolled child. Meals and snacks must meet USDA nutritional requirements. For any child who brings a lunch from home, programs are required to monitor the contents of the meal to ensure all nutritional components are met.

Programs shall not withhold meals or snacks from any ABC child based on the qualification of the family for free/reduced-price meal. Programs shall not use food as a method of reward or the withholding of food as a method of punishment.

Mealtimes may not be used as an opportunity to provide staff breaks.

13-7 Outdoor Activity

Preschool children shall be allowed the opportunity for a minimum of one (1) hour of outdoor activity daily. ABC programs shall utilize the definition of "weather permitting" from the ERS to determine whether children shall go outside. ERS defines "weather permitting" as almost always – unless there is active precipitation or a public announcement advising people to stay indoors.

The required ABC ratios and supervision must be maintained during outdoor play. Outside play may not be used as an opportunity to provide staff breaks.

Section 14 Classroom Management/Special Education

14-1 Challenging Behavior

Properly addressing challenging behavior is one of the most critical parts of the ABC staff responsibilities. By utilizing appropriate techniques, staff will help ensure a more positive outlook and self-esteem for the children exhibiting inappropriate behavior patterns.

Children cannot be suspended or dismissed from the ABC program for challenging behavior unless prior approval is granted from the Division ABC Administrator or Program Specialist.

In rare instances when a child's behavior causes severe imminent danger to himself or others (this greatly exceeds typical developmentally appropriate aggressive behaviors seen in a child) , with authorization from the ABC Program Specialist, A program may ask the parent to pick the child up and keep him/her at home. This can only be for a brief period of time (24 hours), and **ONLY** while awaiting a parent-teacher

conference to address behavior concerns, which constitute immediate physical harm to the child or others. This timeframe may be extended, only at the request of the parent, until such time when the parent can attend the meeting. If the parent refuses to attend the conference or participate in developing a behavior plan, the program has made every effort to accommodate and meet the needs of the child. The program may then contact the Division regarding the appropriateness of the placement for the child, due to the parent's decision not to participate in their child's program.

Any decision to pursue an alternate environment (classroom/site) for a child eligible for services und IDEA, must be in the best interests of the child and shall be the result of an Individualized Education Plan Team Meeting and Division approval.

ABC forbids the use of corporal punishment. Other unacceptable methods of discipline include, but are not limited to, suspension, expulsion, isolation, inappropriate verbal comments, yelling and withholding of food or activities.

When a child presents with inappropriate behavior, staff shall follow the standards set by the NAEYC Accreditation process:

- Observe the child to identify events, activities and interactions that may predict, trigger or contribute to the behavior.
- Rather than only focusing on stopping the behavior, focus on teaching the child social, communication and emotional regulation skills.
- Use environmental or activity modifications, adult/peer support and other teaching strategies to support appropriate behavior.
- Request assistance from the Behavior Specialist at the local education cooperative.

Most importantly, staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that provides safety for the child and others in the classroom, is calm and respectful and provides the child information on acceptable behavior.

In addressing parents about behavior concerns, staff should be careful to present facts only, not opinions or diagnoses. Allow the parent to be part of the solution. If programs find parents to be uncooperative in the process, the program should consult the Division about available options.

14-2 Special Education Services / Special Needs

The Special Education Program for children ages 3 to 5 years, is administered through Early Childhood Special Education at the Arkansas Department of Education. Early Childhood Special Education is an active partner with ABC to assist children with special needs. These professionals work through a network of education cooperatives and school districts to deliver services to preschool children.

Services are provided as a result of a referral made to Special Education by early childhood programs. Once developmental screenings are administered to ABC children, ABC programs must refer any child with a suspected delay to Special Education within seven (7) calendar days after the screening. Following a

referral, the Special Education Coordinator will meet with the parent and explain their parental rights under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The parent may then decide if they wish follow-up services to be provided by the cooperative or other therapist. A parent cannot “refuse” special education services before a referral is made and parental rights are explained by the COOP representative.

An ABC program may NOT waive Special Education services through the cooperative on behalf of a parent, nor can a parent be required to select a certain therapist recommended by the ABC program. If Special Education services are provided by the cooperative or other therapist not affiliated with the ABC program, the ABC program must make appropriate space available to the therapist to administer the services.

The ABC program is required to work collaboratively with the team to ensure that the IEP/IFSP is implemented in the natural /least restrictive environment for all eligible children having an IEP/IFSP/health plan/medical plan developed by the appropriate professional / team. The ABC Program is required to allow the special services identified on the plan to be implemented in the program setting. The program is not required to make accommodations for children without one of the aforementioned treatment plans.

For any child placed on an IEP, the ABC teacher should play an active role in the planning and follow-up care. The classroom teacher is a critical member of the IEP team and must attend the meeting. If the classroom teacher is unable to attend, the Sp Ed Coop must request permission from the parent to arrange for input by written or telephone participation. IEP objectives worked on by the special services provider shall be reinforced as a part of the daily classroom routine. A copy of the IEP or goals and objective page shall be placed in the child’s ABC record. Records shall be housed in a locked file cabinet and maintained in a strictly confidential manner.

Parents who waive kindergarten are no longer eligible for free special education services.

14-3 Toilet Training

Regardless of the reason a preschool child may not yet be toilet-trained, early childhood professionals must approach this situation with a positive and cooperative spirit. An otherwise eligible child cannot be dismissed from or denied admission to the ABC program due to a lack of toilet training skills. Teachers and paraprofessionals must understand assisting children with toilet training is part of their job as early childhood educators. If a child has an accident, staff shall work together to immediately assist the child in a sensitive manner. A child shall not be left in soiled clothes as punishment nor because classroom staff are waiting on custodial staff or parents to clean.

In assisting children, programs shall use techniques, which are non-punitive and non-shaming to the child. Programs are encouraged to include the parent or guardian in any plan or intervention to encourage reinforcement at home.

If programs have a child in class who has difficulty with toileting, programs may use funds from ABC to purchase appropriate resources necessary to support toilet training. In other words, do not expect the parent to remember Pull-ups every day if they are required. Keep them on hand as needed.

15-1 Child Assessment

By law, each child enrolled must be assessed using the instrument selected by ADE and the Division. The ABC program currently uses the Work Sampling System (WSS) to assess preschoolers and The Ounce Scale to assess infants and toddlers.

The WSS has been selected due to its high correlation to the Arkansas Framework for Early Childhood, neutrality with respect to curriculum, and observation-based approach to assessment. Children are currently assessed across all seven WSS domains three times during the program year. In 2009-2010, programs shall enter and finalize observation data by the following deadlines:

Period #1: November 13, 2009

Period #2: February 12, 2010

Period #3: May 14, 2010

WSS training is required for all teachers, paraprofessionals and home visitors. This training must be updated on a regular basis. Implementation of the WSS is a developmental process as teachers internalize the guidelines, hone their observations and documentation skills and enhance their ability to use assessment information to inform instruction. It is expected that experienced ABC teachers who have used WSS for more than one year shall utilize WSS as a tool to guide instruction. Training is available to assist in this area.

Children enrolled in the ABC program must have a developmental and health (well child) screening conducted within the first 45 days of attendance. The purpose of this screening is to identify developmental delays and medical/health issues; and modify your classroom curriculum to meet the needs of each child. The program agency shall be responsible for completing this screening.

15-2 Developmental Screening

The program may either use qualified staff (if trained) to administer the screening or may contract the screenings to a local cooperative or other qualified screener. The staff person administering the instrument must meet the qualification requirements as specified in the instrument manual as well as be able to demonstrate experience in administering the instrument.

Programs must select a research-based tool or combination of research-based tools to cover the developmental domains. The selected screening tool should also be culturally sensitive. The administering staff must be able to document training received and demonstrate competency in administering the screening if requested.

The developmental screening must include, at a minimum, the following areas: vocabulary, visual-motor integration, language and speech development, fine and gross motor skills, social skills and developmental milestones.

Comprehensive Screenings that meet the requirements as specified in 15.06 of the ABC Rules and Regulations:

Instrument	Requirements For Use	Where Available
Battelle Developmental Inventory	Meets requirements	Riverside Publishing http://www.riverpub.com/index.html
Brigance Screen	Meets requirements	Curriculum Associates http://www.curriculumassociates.com
Denver II	Must be used with a supplemental instrument which screens cognitive developmental milestones	Denver Developmental Materials http://www.denverii.com/home.html
Devereux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)	Social Emotional only May be used to supplement other Screenings	Kaplan www.kaplanco.com
Developmental Indicators for Assessment of Learning, Third Ed. (Dial-3)	Meets requirements	Kaplan www.kaplanco.com
Early Screening Inventory, Revised (ESI-R)	Must be used with a social emotional supplemental screening	Pearson http://www.pearsonassessments.com/
Learning Accomplishment Profile, Diagnostic Edition (LAP-D)	Meets requirements	Kaplan www.kaplanco.com
Ages & Stages Questionnaire	Meets requirements	Brookes Publishing
Ages & Stages SE	Social Emotional only May be used to supplement other Screenings	Brookes Publishing

15-3 Well Child Screening

Health/well child screenings should be completed every twelve (12) months while the child is between 3 and 5 years of age. This well child exam must include all of the elements defined in the age-appropriate Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) screening from Medicaid. A licensed physician or registered nurse practitioner must administer the screening. Health care providers may bill AR Kids First health insurance program for the cost of this screening for any ABC children enrolled in that insurance program.

The Agency shall pay for the well child screening if the family does not have any form of insurance. If the family's insurance is used, the Agency shall pay the co-pay if applicable.

This screening should be used as a diagnostic tool to determine if any follow-up care is needed and to provide ABC programs with information concerning the child's health which might impact overall development of kindergarten readiness skills.

Programs should distribute copies of the ABC Health Screening form to parents for completion. This form must be completed by both the parent and health care provider then returned to the program for placement in the child's record within 45 days of enrollment. An alternate form may be accepted if it includes all required information as specified in 15.08 of the ABC Rules and Regulations. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure this screening is completed in a timely manner. Children not completing the

health screening within the required timeframe shall be suspended (not to exceed 30 days) or dismissed from the program.

Section 16 Parent and Community Involvement

16-1 Parent Involvement

The ABC program places great emphasis on the role of parents in the educational process of children. While we understand the schedule of working families often prevents a high level of involvement in a child's education, we expect parents of enrolled children to take a role in supporting program activities and classroom lesson plans.

In accordance with minimum licensing requirements, parents must have open access to their children at any time during the day. In addition, we encourage programs to offer opportunities for parents to interact during program hours, such as mealtime.

ABC programs must provide two (2) parent-teacher conferences each program year. During this conference, we expect programs to have dialogue with parents regarding their child's development.

Programs must have a Parent Involvement Plan detailing the strategies, to be used to involve parents in their child's educational program, and obtain parent input in to the operation of the program. This plan must be maintained on site; however, it is also recommended that it be included in the Parent Handbook.

16-2 Community Involvement

ABC programs must also implement strategies to improve community involvement in the program by developing a Collaboration Plan in conjunction with local community partners invested in the future of their children. The written plan must be maintained on file in the program and updated periodically as a result of collaboration meetings and activities. At a minimum, the following partners should include:

- ◆ Public School District
- ◆ Early Childhood Special Education Cooperative
- ◆ Head Start
- ◆ Other Child Care and ABC Providers
- ◆ Local Health Units and / physicians
- ◆ HIPPIY / PAT
- ◆ Mental Health

Examples of additional partners which could be very beneficial to the development and provision of services and programs are:

- ◆ Court System
- ◆ Library
- ◆ DHS Offices/Programs such as DCFS, Volunteerism, DCCECE, County Operations, Medicaid
- ◆ Higher Education such as local community colleges or universities

◆ Hospitals

Section 17 Transportation

Transportation of children to and from an ABC program is responsibility of the parent or guardian. Offering transportation services to families is strictly discretionary on the part of a program. Agencies must carry an appropriate level of insurance to cover collisions and liability. Child Care Licensing Specialists must be informed by the program agency that transportation is being provided

Programs must ensure that any person who picks a child up from the program is an adult authorized by the parent or guardian to take the child.

Section 18 Other Program Models

No clarification needed.

Section 19 HIPPY

No clarification needed.

Section 20 Parents as Teachers

No clarification needed.

Section 21 Child Care Family Homes

No clarification needed.

Section 22 Compliance

22-1 Types of Corrective Action

Depending on the severity and frequency of the infraction, ABC staff may impose corrective action on ABC programs. Such corrective action may include but not limited to:

- Increase monitoring
- Required technical assistance
- Withholding of payments
- Repayment of funds
- Reduction of ABC slots or denial of future slots
- Required changes in ABC staff

- Defunding of program site(s)
- Non-renewal or termination of ABC grant

22-2 Termination and Due Process

If the Division determines termination of the ABC grant agreement is warranted, ABC staff shall send the program agency a certified letter stating the agency shall be recommended for termination to the State Board of Education. The notice shall state the reasons for termination along with the date, time and location of the State Board meeting. During the meeting, the program agency shall be allowed the opportunity to address the Board. If the Board votes to terminate the grant, the Division shall notify the program via certified letter of the final date of operation and negotiate a final payment, if any payment is due. There is no appeal beyond the State Board of Education other than to Pulaski County Circuit Court. If a grant agreement is terminated for cause, program agency or authorized representatives may not reapply for the ABC grant for 12 months from the date of termination.

The Division may also terminate a grant agreement with 30 days notice due to inadequate funding to continue the program.

22-3 Action by Other Units or Agencies

If a program agency is excluded from DHS programs under DHS Policy 1088, any ABC grant agreement in effect is automatically rendered invalid on the date of exclusion. An agency excluded under 1088 is also prohibited from applying for the ABC grant.

Correction action or exclusion by any other state or federal agency may result in corrective action under ABC guidelines, up to and including termination from the ABC program.

APPENDIX A
Financial Procedures

A-1 Payments

Program agencies are awarded a maximum amount of funding based on the number of ABC slots for which the agencies applied and is approved. Actual funding received shall be dependent upon child enrollment during the year. The following procedures will be used for paying ABC programs:

- After approval and signing of the grant agreement, 10% of the agency's total ABC funding will be paid on August 1 and again on September 1.
- Eight (8) additional payments shall be paid to an approved program on the first of each month from October through May. These payments shall be calculated as follows:
 - **\$486 per child for centers/family homes**
 - **\$175 per child for home-visiting programs**
- These payments shall be based upon actual child enrollment reported in COPA on the 5th of the previous month.

For example, a center-based program is approved for 20 ABC slots. The maximum funding to be received by this program would be:

$$20 \times \$4,860 = \$97,200$$

On August 1, the program will be paid $10\% \times \$97,200 = \$9,720$.

On September 1, the program will be paid $10\% \times \$97,200 = \$9,720$.

On September 5, the COPA data is submitted by program. The program shows 17 children actually enrolled.

On October 1, the program shall be paid $17 \times \$486 = \$8,262$.

- Programs not operating 178 days shall not receive full payment.
- During the year, programs shall be randomly reviewed to ensure compliance with child enrollment, as well as COPA and attendance policies.

If a program begins late and does not receive the first payment until September 1, that program shall receive a 10% payment on September 1 and October 1. The first payment based on child enrollment will occur on November 1. If these programs operate 178 days, the program will receive ten payments (September – June).

Program attendance shall be monitored. Programs with consistent under-enrollment may not have vacant slots renewed the following program year or may be subject to having vacant slots redistributed during the year.

Payments not disputed with 30 days of receipt shall be assumed to be correct. It is the responsibility of each program agency to track payments received and report any suspected discrepancy. The Division cannot correct or make additional payments to programs beyond June 1 of each program year.

A-2 COPA

Programs are required to utilize the COPA system to maintain information on child/family demographics. Enrollment data from COPA will automatically be captured and used to calculate monthly payments. Payments will not be made for any child not enrolled in the COPA system. Training is available and required for all programs.

A-3 Start-up Funds

Subject to availability, center-based and family home ABC programs receiving new or expansion slots will also receive \$250 per slot in start-up funds. The full amount of any start-up funds will be added to the first regular payment a program receives. The Division shall notify programs annually as to the availability of start-up funds. Start-up funds shall be used to purchase materials and supplies for a new classroom or family home. These funds should not be added in to the regular ABC program budget. Programs receiving start-up funds should use the Start-up Funds Expense Report to document how funds were expended.

A-4 Direct Deposit

Program agencies may select to receive their payments in the form of a paper check (warrant) by mail or through Direct Deposit. Programs selecting Direct Deposit must complete a Direct Deposit form and submit along with a voided check.

If a program closes or changes bank accounts to which ABC payments are deposited, the Division ABC staff must be notified by the 5th of the month prior to the payment. The Division is not responsible for payments deposited into an incorrect account due to the failure to notify us of changes timely.

A-5 Suspension and Termination of Payments

Payments may be suspended for any program that is late in submitting any required or requested report or documentation. In such cases, programs will be notified in writing that the next payment will be withheld unless the information is received by a specific due date. When the requested information is received, the amount of any withheld payment(s) shall be added to the next regular monthly payment.

If an agency is terminated from the ABC program, a final payment amount (if any amount is due) shall be negotiated and agency shall be notified of the payment date and amount. Agencies owing money to the Division must negotiate and sign a repayment agreement with the Division Compliance Unit within 14 days of termination from the program. Agencies failing to repay funds will face possible legal action.

A-6 Budget - Core Models

To determine the cost per child, a core model containing the elements of a high quality prekindergarten program was developed for each of the ABC program types:

Center-based:
(based on classroom
of 20 children)

2009-2010 ABC CORE MODEL for CENTERS			
Well-Qualified and Compensated Staff	Classroom Teacher	Salary	\$ 30,000.00
		Range	\$ 44,160.00
		Fringe	\$ 7,500 to
	Paraprofessional	Range	\$ 11,040.00
		Salary	\$ 18,000.00
		Fringe	\$ 4,500.00
Administrative Costs	\$ 220.00	per child	\$ 4,400.00
Curriculum and Equipment	\$ 275.00	per child	\$ 5,500.00
Parent Involvement	\$ 100.00	per child	\$ 2,000.00
Transportation	\$ 110.00	per child	\$ 2,200.00
Professional Development	\$ 1,650.00	per staff	\$ 3,300.00
Screenings	\$ 50.00	per child	\$ 1,000.00
Technology	\$ 55.00	per child	\$ 1,100.00
Total ABC Funding for 20 children			\$ 97,200.00
40% Match			\$ 64,800.00
TOTAL PROGRAM COST			\$ 162,000.00
State Cost per child			\$ 4,860.00
40% Match			\$ 3,240.00
Total Cost per child			\$ 8,100.00

Home-Visiting:
(based on caseload
of 27 children)

2009-2010 ABC CORE MODEL for HIPPIY and PAT			
Well-Qualified and Compensated Staff	1/6 Coordinator	Salary	\$ 6,341.00
		Fringe	\$ 1,585.00
	Home Visitor	Salary	\$ 18,000.00
		Fringe	\$ 4,500.00
Administrative Costs	\$ 95.00	per child	\$ 2,565.00
Curriculum and Equipment	\$ 187.00	per child	\$ 5,049.00
Parent Involvement	\$ 50.00	per child	\$ 1,350.00
Transportation	\$ 125.00	per child	\$ 3,375.00
Professional Development	\$ 1,650.00	per staff	\$ 1,650.00
Screenings	\$ 50.00	per child	\$ 1,350.00
Technology	\$ 55.00	per child	\$ 1,485.00
Total ABC Funding for 27 Children			\$ 47,250.00
40% Match			\$ 31,500.00
TOTAL PROGRAM COST			\$ 78,750.00
State Cost per child			\$ 1,750.00
40% Match			\$ 1,166.67
Total Cost per child			\$ 2,916.67

Family Homes:
(based on 10
children)

2009-2010 ABC CORE MODEL for LICENSED FAMILY HOMES			
Well-Qualified and Compensated Staff	Family Home Teacher	Salary	\$ 30,640.00
		Fringe	\$ 7,660.00
Administrative Costs	\$ 220.00	per child	\$ 2,200.00
Curriculum and Equipment	\$ 275.00	per child	\$ 2,750.00
Parent Involvement	\$ 100.00	per child	\$ 1,000.00
Transportation	\$ 110.00	per child	\$ 1,100.00
Professional Development	\$ 2,200.00	per staff	\$ 2,200.00
Screenings	\$ 50.00	per child	\$ 500.00
Technology	\$ 55.00	per child	\$ 550.00
Total ABC Funding for 10 children			\$ 48,600.00
40% Match			\$ 32,400.00
TOTAL PROGRAM COST			\$ 81,000.00
State Cost per child			\$ 4,860.00
40% Match			\$ 3,240.00
Total Cost per child			\$ 8,100.00

These core models serve as the basis for the ABC budgeting process.

A-7 Salaries and Fringe Benefits

In this category, the following salaries may be budgeted per classroom:

- Teacher
- Paraprofessional (Teacher Assistant)
- 20% ABC Coordinator
- 20% Administrative Assistant

For a home-visiting program, the following items may be included in the salary category:

- Home visitor
- 1/6 Home-visiting Coordinator
- 20% Administrative Assistant

Family homes may budget one (1) family home teacher per 10 children.

Staff having additional duties outside of ABC shall have a prorated salary based on the percentage of time spent in the ABC program. This includes classroom responsibilities for children paid with any funds other than ABC. For example, if you have a classroom with 10 ABC children and 10 private-pay children, you should only allow 50% of that staff salary to come from ABC.

Salaries for each position shall be based on a 190-day program (178 instructional days and 12 professional development days). If ABC teachers and assistants are expected to work in another part of the agency when ABC is not in session, that requirement must be made in writing to the staff person and that part of the staff salary CANNOT be paid from ABC.

School districts and cooperatives must pay staff according to the established school district/cooperative salary schedule. All other agencies or any school district/cooperative that does not have a schedule for a specific position must utilize the ABC Salary Matrix (see below) to establish salaries. Coordinator salaries are recommendations only.

Certified Teachers (P-4 or K-6)							
BA/BS in ECE				MA/MS in ECE			
0 years	5 years	10 years	15 years	0 years	5 years	10 years	15 years
\$31,631	\$33,108	\$36,183	\$39,258	\$35,158	\$38,164	\$41,171	\$44,178
Non-Certified Classroom Teachers							
AA/AS in ECE		BA/BS in ECE				MA/MS in ECE	
0 years	5 years	0 years	5 years	10 years	15 years	0 years	5 years
\$27,122	\$29,382	\$29,227	\$32,219	\$35,212	\$38,204	\$34,214	\$37,140
Paraprofessionals and Home-Visitors							
CDA		AA/AS in ECE			BA/BS in ECE		
0 years	5 years	10 years	0 years	5 years	10 years	0 years	5 years
\$15,766	\$17,364	\$20,837	\$16,786	\$19,101	\$21,995	\$23,042	\$27,893
Program Coordinator or Director (0.2 FTE)*							
Non-Degree			2-Year Degree			4-Year Degree	
0 years	5 years	10 years	0 years	5 years	10 years	0 years	5 years
\$3,695	\$4,396	\$5,232	\$4,549	\$5,414	\$6,442	\$5,821	\$6,928

ABC agencies must abide by all minimum salary laws set for certified teachers. Private program must follow the current year's salary matrix.

Fringe benefits shall be budgeted at a minimum rate of 25% of the salary amount. Fringe benefits include:

- Employer-paid taxes
- FICA
- Insurance
- Retirement
- Bonuses
- Free/reduced child care
- Paid lunches for staff who eat with children

At a minimum, each ABC teacher and paraprofessional must be offered comprehensive health insurance which is at least 75% paid by the agency or the maximum amount allowed by law for school districts and cooperatives. Employees covered under another plan may decline the offer of insurance in writing.

A-8 Administrative Costs

The total amount of administrative costs paid from ABC and match CANNOT exceed **15% of the total ABC budget**. All administrative costs must be cost-allocated to ABC based on a PERCENTAGE method of ABC children to total children served in agency. For example, if a program is awarded \$97,200 with a required match of \$64,800, the total ABC budget will be \$162,000 and maximum administrative costs will be 15% x \$162,000 = \$24,300.

Administrative costs may include:

- Rent, mortgage and property taxes
- Utilities
- Maintenance and grounds keeping
- Washer/dryer

- Office supplies/Postage
- Lease of Copy Machine
- Salaries for owner, counselor, nurse and custodian

- Refrigerator
- Minor repairs (paint, plumbing)

Administrative costs may not include major building repairs or renovations, outside painting, stoves and ovens, televisions, VCRs or DVD players.

A-9 Nutrition

Programs may count 100% of the nutrition reimbursement amount from USDA or Department of Education received on behalf of ABC children as matching funds. For breakfast, lunch and snack, the current reimbursement rate is \$4.68 per day per child. All other costs associated with nutrition should be placed in this category, including plates, cups, utensils and napkins. If you pay a salary from this category, it must be prorated on a percentage basis.

(For teachers and staff who eat with children, programs may pay for the staff person's meal from ABC funds and count the expense in the fringe benefit category, not nutrition.)

Programs currently not participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program or Snack Program may receive information by calling the Division Special Nutrition Unit at 1-800-482-5850. School districts wishing to participate in the USDA Snack program only may also call the Special Nutrition Unit to get information.

A-10 Curriculum and Equipment

In this category, programs may budget 100% ABC funds, 100% match or any combination of the two funding streams. The amount of ABC funds in this category should be approximately \$275 per child for center/family home programs and \$187 per child for home-visiting programs. Curriculum and equipment includes items which enhance a child's learning and may include:

- Core and supplementary curricula
- Curriculum training and coaches
- Supplies for interest centers (manipulatives, books, toys)
- Tables and chairs
- Outdoor play equipment
- Consumables (crayons, markers, paper, glue, art supplies, etc.)
- Cots or mats

Locally built materials may be counted towards matching funds in an amount equal to the cost of materials plus modest labor fees.

Cost of therapy or specialized instruction for ABC children may be counted in matching funds in an amount up to \$550 per child. Programs may use an estimate based on the previous year's enrollment.

Subject to available funds, ABC programs may also apply directly to the ABC unit for enhancement grants not to exceed \$50 per ABC slot. Applications may be downloaded from the ABC website. Applications

shall be accepted through **October 31, 2009**. The Division may discontinue this program at any time due to lack of available funding.

A-11 Parent Involvement

Parent involvement may include the cost of any materials or activity by which the parent becomes engaged in their child's learning process, including on-site and at-home activities.

Specific examples include:

- Parent education kits and newsletters
- Dinners and open houses
- Speakers at parent meetings, up to \$150 per event
- Translators/interpreters needed at parent functions
- Field trip fees for parents
- Cost of T-shirts for children and parents (may only purchase once during the year)

Parents or grandparents who assist with light duties may be counted in this category at a rate not to exceed (# of hours worked) x (minimum wage). **Parent time spent with children at home nor parent mileage to meetings may not be counted as match.** Door prizes shall be limited to \$25 per parent meeting.

A-12 Transportation

If the program transports children, allowable prorated transportation costs include payments for van/bus lease or purchase, insurance, fuel, driver and maintenance. If parents transport children to the program, programs may count up to \$5.50 per day per child towards matching funds (or \$979.00 per child for 178 days). ABC staff and home visitors required to travel as part of their employment shall be reimbursed at a minimum of \$0.44 per mile. Mileage reimbursement is not required for travel from home to the employee's regular work site.

A-13 Professional Development

The amount of funds budgeted for professional development may vary, depending on the particular needs of agency staff. Programs are allowed a maximum of \$1,650 per teacher, paraprofessional and home visitor for professional development. Family homes are allowed a maximum of \$2,200 for the teacher.

Professional development may be budgeted as 100% ABC, 100% match or any combination of the two funding sources.

Free trainings provided through TAPP may be counted as match at \$150 per day.

For any teacher or paraprofessional working in a program under a Staff Qualification Plan (SQP), programs are required to use ABC professional development funds to assist with the cost of tuition, books, testing (PRAXIS) and travel. The program may require the staff person to sign a service agreement guaranteeing the staff person will work in that ABC program for a certain length of time or will repay the funds. Please be aware that lack of funds is not a valid justification for lack of progress on a SQP. The ABC Program must provide the funding necessary, rather than reimburse after the fact.

Professional development funds may also be used to pay substitutes while permanent staff are attending training. Programs may count the actual cost of attending any relevant conferences in either ABC or match funds. Costs may include registration, travel, meals and lodging (if overnight stay is required).

Programs shall utilize the ABC professional development budget to train ABC staff in CPR/First Aid training as required by Minimum Licensing Standards.

A-14 Screenings

For each ABC child's developmental screening, a program may count either \$50 per child in matching funds or ABC funds. Program agencies may count \$50 per child in match for health screenings paid for by AR Kids First or other insurance.

Programs must cover the cost of any health screenings not paid for by AR Kids First or private insurance. Plan early to work with local clinics on such needed payment arrangements so parents are not financially burdened.

A-15 Technology

Every classroom and home visitor shall be equipped with a PC or notebook computer with high-speed internet access. Each classroom may also purchase one (1) computer for use by children. Computers may be replaced every three (3) years.

In addition to computers, each classroom may spend up to \$500 to purchase a printer plus either a digital camera or video camera to record classroom activities and artwork. These items may also be replaced every three (3) years. If not in a local school district setting, monthly internet service may be charged to ABC funds. As with other similar expenditures, internet service should be prorated based on the percentage of ABC children in the program.

APPENDIX B
COPA Information Checklists

- B-1 Center Based
- B-2 HIPPY/PAT

APPENDIX C
Reporting Deadlines

Arkansas Better Chance For School Success
2009-2010
Deadlines to Remember

COPA Billing Report

- September 5, 2009
- October 5, 2009
- November 5, 2009
- December 5, 2009
- January 5, 2010
- February 5, 2010
- March 5, 2010
- April 5, 2010

WORK SAMPLING FINALIZATION

- November 13, 2009
- February 12, 2010
- May 14, 2010

BUDGET

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------------|
| January 31, 2010 | Mid year expenditure Reports |
| March 31, 2010 | Enhancement Grant Expense Report |
| July 31, 2010 | Final expenditure Report |
| | Start up Funds Report |
| June 1 2010 | Budget Amendment |

Disclosure Audit

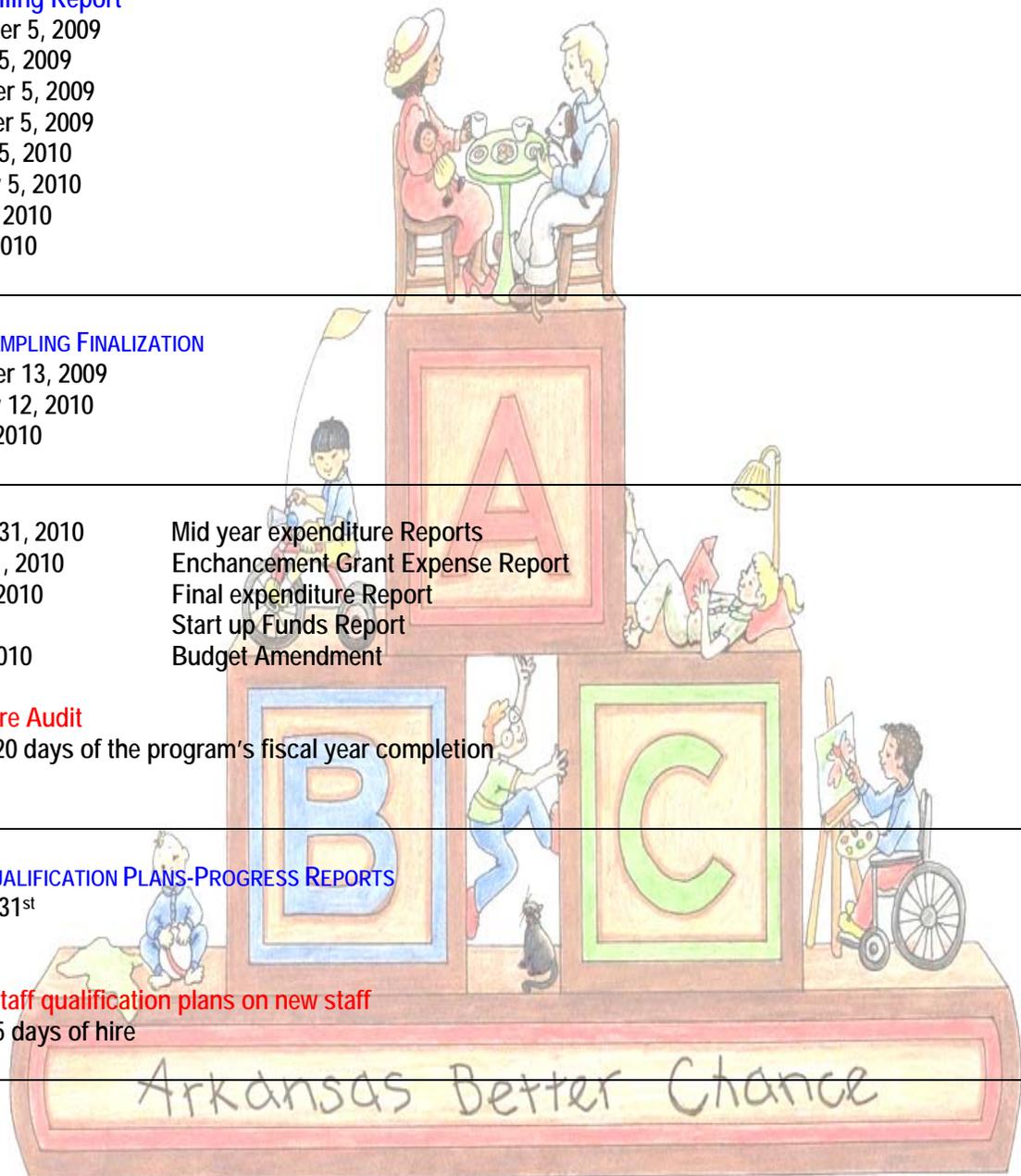
Within 120 days of the program's fiscal year completion

STAFF QUALIFICATION PLANS-PROGRESS REPORTS

- January 31st
- July 31st

Submit staff qualification plans on new staff

Within 15 days of hire



PROGRAM CHANGES

Report changes to program (New location, new classroom, etc)
Within 5 days of change