

Arkansas Better Chance Program
POLICY CLARIFICATION #2009-A – February 2, 2009
Subject: Quality Approval Status of ABC Programs



To	All ABC Programs	From	Paul Lazenby
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Rule(s) At Issue:

9.05 All ABC classrooms shall meet the criteria for becoming an "approved" Early Childhood program under the Arkansas Child Care Approval System Rules and Regulations, Ark. Code Ann. 6-45-103 and 106 (Supp. 1993). An overall score of 5.0 is required for the ERS which is applicable to each classroom...

Question

Are ABC programs considered quality approved by the State of Arkansas?

Clarification:

Arkansas Quality Approval Accreditation of an early childhood program requires an agency to meet certain environmental quality standards for all age groups served in the program, including school-age children. There are many advantages to seeking this distinction, including additional grant funds, resources and technical assistance. However, we recognize for some programs, it is difficult to go through this process when many different ages are served under different programs and directors. Therefore, while the Division encourages all facilities and agencies participating in ABC to seek this status, it is only a requirement in ABC that the classroom space used for the program meet the criteria for quality approval.

The Division considers ABC classroom space to be a quality approved environment for children, regardless of whether the entire facility/program has sought Quality Approval Accreditation. Only in the case of a specific classroom consistently not meeting the requirements of the Environment Rating Scale would this not hold true.

Any legislation which would affect "quality-approved" programs would also affect all ABC programs. For example, there is pending legislation (House Bill 1098) which would allow four-year old children who attended a quality-approved facility at least 100 days in 2008-2009 to enroll in public kindergarten this coming fall. This bill would apply to all ABC classrooms in the state.

If you have any questions or need further clarifications, please contact me or Division Director Tonya Russell at 501-682-4891. Thank you.

Paul Lazenby, Assistant Director
DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

