

Arkansas

Home Sweet Home

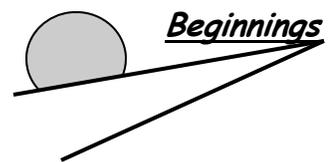


Beginnings 2008-2009 (2)

Arkansas Department of Human Services

Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, Little Rock, AR

School of Human Environmental Sciences, 1 U of A, Fayetteville, AR



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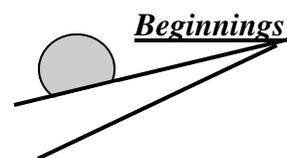
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About the Benchmarks

Many of the activities in *Beginnings* address multiple benchmarks, which are not necessarily referenced. Check the *Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework Handbook for Three & Four Year Old Children (2004)*.



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Arkansas

In this issue of Beginnings we are featuring fun facts and activities about our great state- ARKANSAS. It is important that children develop a sense of place and belonging. By becoming familiar with a few important features of our state they will gain a sense of appreciation of our uniqueness as well as a sense of security.

State Tree- Southern Pine

State Flower- Apple Blossom

State Bird- Mockingbird

State Insect- Honeybee

State Fish- Largemouth Bass

State Mammal- White-tailed Deer

Arkansas Storytelling

Telling and retelling family stories is important for family history. Children love to hear stories about family members, themselves, and their surroundings. Children will ask for the same story over and over again. The repetition of the stories gives children comfort, and soon they will be telling them, too.

Here are some helpful hints for storytelling:

- Use different movements, voices, and sounds- think about the story *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*.
- Practice, practice, practice. Retell the story over and over again to anyone that will hear it.
- Have fun with it.
- Ask your friends. If you think you need more practice, call upon friends, or colleagues- some people are really gifted at storytelling.
- Invite children's families in for storytelling about their families. Some families have great stories about holiday celebrations, family history, or funny vacation stories.
- Children are great storytellers. Invite children to tell stories they know.
- Great storytellers do not need images to tell a story, but visual aids, such as, a puppet or real object can be helpful for people just learning how to become storytellers.
- Tell stories with which you are familiar and comfortable. They will be easier to tell.
- Ask children to add to a story. Begin with what you have told them before, and ask them to finish it. Storytelling is a true art form. Children will add their own flair to a traditional story.

Writing and Mailing Letters to Relatives

Part of the fun of *family often includes* the extended family- aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins. Family reunions typically only come once a year, but keeping in touch throughout the year is important. Here is an activity the University of Arkansas Nursery School does to keep children in touch with their families.

- Discuss the importance of keeping in touch (calling, writing, visiting) with relatives.
- Plan a field trip to a local post office or arrange for your postal carrier to drop in and pick up the letters the children will write/send.
- Stock the writing and art centers with papers, markers, pens, colored pencils, and envelopes.
 - Invite the children to write or dictate letters to their parents, grandparents or other relatives.
- Take them to the post office and wait for the response from the relatives.
 - Discuss the importance of putting on a stamp.
 - Talk about what a letter needs.

Benchmark 3.6: Demonstrates an interest in using writing for a purpose



Family Traditions...and School Family Traditions

Many family traditions revolve around holidays. During this time families get together and visit, travel, eat, laugh, and love. Traditions and rituals are invaluable for children. Children feel a sense of security, constancy, and belonging with traditions. The importance of traditions is not only important for families, but can also be valuable in the classroom.

Here are some ideas for classroom traditions or rituals:

- **Always have a teacher at the door to greet every child upon arrival.**
- **Sing a song when you first see the child for the day:**
 "Hi, hello, and how are you?
 How are you?
 How are you?
 Hi, hello, and how are you today?"
- **Follow the same schedule everyday. Children will find comfort in knowing "what comes next" in their day.**
- **Eat snack and meals "family style." This will give you and the children an opportunity to talk. Children will often open up with stories about their evenings, or even classroom issues during meal time.**
- **Choose a song that is *your song* for the classroom. Sing *your song* everyday during a group time.**

Arkansas has many well-known authors and illustrators. Audrey Wood is one of the favorites. Search the web to locate others who call the Natural State home. By featuring local authors, children will realize that they too, can achieve great things.

Audrey Wood An Arkansas Born Author

Audrey Wood was born in Little Rock, Arkansas. Audrey's grandfather and her father were both artist. Some of Audrey's earliest memories are of a time when her family was living in Sarasota, Florida and her father was working for the Ringling Brother's Circus.

She recalls her father repainting the large murals on the sides of the big top and the side shows. From the time she was 2 until she was 5 she lived with her family in Mexico and so she became fluent in Spanish and voraciously read in both languages. She loved to read, especially Hans Christian Andersen and books like the *Borrowers* and *The Rescuers*.

Later, as the oldest of three sisters, she became the family storyteller. She would open up an illustrated art book from the family library and make up elaborate stories about the paintings.

Because she spent many hours in her father and grandfather's studios she was surrounded by art materials and plenty of instruction. By time she was in the first grade she had decided that she wanted to be an artist. By the time she was in the fourth grade she knew she wanted to be a children's book illustrator.

Audrey and her husband Don often work together to create children's books. In the book *Quick as a Cricket* their son Bruce was the model for the little boy in the story. Bruce is grown up now, and he is also an author. That means that in Audrey's family there have been five generations of artists!

Children's Books by Audrey Wood:

Quick as a Cricket

The Big Hungry Bear

Quick as a Cricket

Quick as a Cricket is full of beautiful illustrations that really invite the reader in as the main character compares himself to the animals around him. "I am as Quick as a Cricket. I am as nice as a bunny. I am as mean as a shark." After many comparisons, the child announces that if you, "Put it all together then you have ME!" This is a wonderful book to encourage creative play, especially outside where a child can feel free to be, "As wild as a chimp!"

Wood, A. (1982). *Quick as a cricket*. Singapore: Child's Play International, Ltd.

Ask children to complete this statement. Limit statements to 3 or 4 at a time. Ask a different questions each time you read the book.

What are you as quick as?

What are you as small as?

What are you as large as?

What are you as sad as?

What are you as happy as?

What are you as nice as?

What are you as mean as?

What are you as cold as?

What are you as hot as?

What are you as weak as?

What are you as strong as?

What are you as loud as?

What are you as quiet as?

What are you as gentle as?

Benchmark 1.6: Demonstrates confidence in growing abilities

N is for Natural State

An Arkansas Alphabet Book

What a lovely way to discover the diversity of the state of Arkansas. "I" is for the official state insect: the honeybee. "L" is for Little Rock. "M" is for the Mockingbird. "P" is for poultry. Every page is colorful and interesting and will illustrate to the reader the beauty of our state.

Shoulders, M. (2003). *N is for natural state*. Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press

Activity:

Instead of reading the whole book at one setting, try reading just one letter (page) at a time. With this approach, each letter can be discovered more thoroughly.

Example: B for Bobby, Barbara and Bekah refers to Blanchard Springs Caverns. After reading and looking at the pictures, children will discover that the caves have 80,000 (lots) of bats. Note that bats is also a B word.

Plan ahead and try to locate extra materials that would make the objects more meaningful. For Q (any Quentin's or Quincy's in the room?) a large crystal would make the meaning of quartz more meaningful. Parents may be able to supplement your resources.

Benchmark 3.9: Identifies some letters and makes some letter-sounds matches

Counting on the Woods

This simple counting book uses a rhythmic poem and brilliant photography to describe the beauty found in the woods. "Nine vines, earth to sky they climb. Ten trees whose innumerable leaves clean the air for everything that breathes."

Lyon, G.E. (1998). *Counting on the woods*. New York, NY: DK Publishing Inc.

Activity:

Counting Nuts

There are a variety of nuts that grow in Arkansas:

Pecans

Hickory Nuts

Black Walnuts

Acorns

Use small baskets for the children to sort the nuts. Have images of the nuts with the corresponding tree. Later, crack the nuts open and eat them. Watch for allergies!

Benchmark 3.10: Classifies objects by physical features such as shape or color

Pretending and building play scenarios about things they have experienced is an important part of children's cognitive development. There are many events and celebrations that are favorite themes. Have several prop boxes filled with items that can be a strong starting point for pretend play. Here are two ideas of new props. One features Arkansas picnic and the other is a Birthday box.

Arkansas Picnic

Picnics can happen anywhere in Arkansas- parks, trails, caves, or even backyards!

Arkansas Picnic Prop Box

Items needed:

- A red blanket
- Plastic food and dishes
- Picnic basket
- Plastic insects

Benchmark 2.1: Shows creativity and imagination in play with materials and props

Birthday Day Party Prop Box

You will need:

Birthday hats

Birthday cake- use a round hat box

Camera

Gift bags- presents

Birthday banner

Oh the children will know what to do with this prop box. They will take turns singing "Happy Birthday," present gifts to the birthday boy or girl, and take pictures of the whole event.

*Not all children celebrate their birthdays, please be sensitive to those children that do not celebrate.

Benchmark 2.2: Participates in dramatic play themes that become more involved and complex

Picking up Paw Paws

Picking up paw paws
 Put em' in a basket
 Picking up paw paws
 Put em' in a basket
 Picking up paw paws
 Put em' in a basket
 Way down yonder in Arkansas!

Move to the song, by pretending to pick up something and put it in a basket.



What is a Paw Paw?

The paw paw is a fruit. Sometimes this fruit is called the "Ozark Banana." The tree grows in Arkansas. Above is an image of children sampling the paw-paw fruit, and as you can see they have a branch from the tree. The leaves are beautiful. Some would say that the paw-paw has the texture of a mango or banana, with a tropical flavor of a papaya or pineapple. Yummy! Yummy!

Benchmark 2.5: Enjoys singing games, dramatizing songs and moving to music

Arkansas is a Great, Great State

Arkansas is a great, great state.
It's gone by many names.
But no matter what name it's called.
We love it just the same.

It once was called the Bear State
For there were many bears
(Growl like bear)

It once was called the Wonder State
For there were many wonders
(Yell Yeah!)

It once was called Land of Opportunity
For there are many opportunities
(Yell Opportunity)

Arkansas is a great, great state.
It's gone by many names.
Now it's called The Natural State,
We love it just the same.
(Yell Arkansas's the Natural State!)

Laverne Nelson

Benchmark 3.28: Shows pride in heritage and background

Arkansas

Gray Squirrel, Gray Squirrel

Arkansas also has lots of squirrels. Are they all gray?

Grey squirrel, gray squirrel,
Shake your bushy tail. (shake their bottoms)
Hide a nut between your toes,
Wrinkle up your little nose. (wrinkle nose)
Gray squirrel, gray squirrel,
Shake your bushy tail. (shake tail)

Here is a Bunny

Arkansas has lots of bunnies! Have the children talk about bunnies they have seen. Where and when!

Here is a bunny with ears so funny (holdup index and middle finger)
And here is a hole in the ground. (make a hole with left hand)
When a noise he hears, he pricks up his ears, (hold "ears" straight)
And hops into his hole in the ground. (hop bunny over and pop in hole.)

Benchmark 5.5: Participates in songs, finger plays, rhyming activities, and games

S
Y
E
-
P
R
O
P
-
L
-
A
S
K
S
G
O
O
D

Sleeping Bear

By Don K. Savelle, Charleston, SC

This is sleepy bear
(Wiggle thumb up, fingers out.)

This is his den.
(Curl fingers into fist, thumb up.)

When winter snows fall

He crawls safely in.
(Put thumb in fist.)

It's springtime and then,

This sleeping bear awakens
(Wiggle thumb still in fist.)

And crawls out again.
(Pull thumb out of fist.)

Song found in Ring A Ring O' Roses

The Winter Hokey Pokey

When temperatures drop, the winter clothing comes out of the closet.
To celebrate cold weather, play the winter hokey pokey outside.

You put your right boot in. .
You put your right boot out. . .
You put your right boot in
And you shake it all about.
You do the hokey pokey,
And you turn your self around.
That's what it's all about!

Continue with hat, mittens, scarves, etc.

Benchmark 2.4: Participates freely in music activities

Children and cats are curious creatures! A cat just has to pull open any door to see what's on the other side. Children just have to touch, taste, look, listen, and smell almost everything to find out about things. These are the very characteristics needed in sciences when studying the natural environment. Since Arkansas is known as The Natural State, there are ample opportunities for this natural curiosity to be encouraged. Let's help the children "discover" what Arkansas is all about.

Measuring and Comparing

Pine needles—Many areas of Arkansas have an abundance and variety of pine trees. There are several ways they can be measured and compared.

You will need:

- Tape measures

- Rulers

- Clip boards or notebooks and pencils.

Collect needles from several different varieties of pine.

Measure: How long are the needles?

Write down the measurements on the clipboard.

Arrange them in ascending or descending order.

How big around is the tree? Use a tape measure to circle the tree and mark down the measurements. Compare three or four different trees.

Expansion idea: Tape signs on the trees indicating Biggest, Middle-size, Smallest. If no pines are available, other trees can be measured and compared.

Benchmark 3.22: Makes comparisons (scientific process: comparing)

Caves and Shelters

Arkansas has an abundance of natural caves and shelters. Some are still being explored. Introduce pictures of some of the caves that are located in Arkansas. Blanchard Springs is spectacular, but there are many smaller caverns that are dotted across the northern part of the state. This will be an opportunity to introduce children to stalactites, stalagmites and other interesting formations that are seen in caves. They are formed by dripping water. Most of the caves in Arkansas are created in limestone.

Cave Explorers: People who explore caves are called spelunkers. This is a neat word. If visiting a cave is not in your future, try the website www.surfkids.com?caves.htm for a virtual tour.

Who Lives in Caves? The Bear Facts

Caves serve as sleeping quarters for bears. And, yes, there are bears in the Arkansas hills. At one time Arkansas was even known as The Bear State! Winter is a great time to talk about bears, and why they go into caves or shelters to sleep (lack of available food for them to eat. . . So they eat lots, get fat in the summer, sleep a really long time. . . And wake up hungry!)

Create a Bear Cave

In the art section, there is an activity to create a "cave" using a large box and painting with "rock art" (see page 27). This could be an expansion of that activity. Sometimes people lived in caves, and sometimes bears did. . . Hopefully, not at the same time.

You will need:

Large cardboard box
Tempera paint and large brushes.

Place box on a large drop cloth or old tablecloth in order to protect the floor. Painters masking paper (large rolls, available in several colors are around \$12. at most paint/hardware stores).

Expansion Idea:

Add sticks, small winter branches, etc. to create a "woods" atmosphere.

Benchmark 2.12: Recognizes and responds to beauty in the environment

Grow some Crystals

The formation of crystals is fascinating for all ages.

You will need:

Sunny day
Black construction paper
Scissors
Pie pan, cake pan or shallow bowl
Warm water
Epson salts

- Cut the black paper so it will fit in the bottom of the pan.
- Add 1 Tablespoon Epson salts to 1/4 cup of warm water. Stir until dissolved.
- Pour salty water into the pan.
- Place pan in the sun. After water evaporates, look for the crystal spikes.

Expansion idea:

Examine closely with a microscope or magnifying glass with adult supervision.

Benchmark 3.23: Shows awareness of cause-effect relationships

A family tradition in Arkansas and throughout the world is cooking together. In America there is a whole holiday specifically celebrating cooking together, Thanksgiving. Part of feeling at home in Arkansas or anywhere is eating your family food favorites. Here are a few found in Arkansas cookbooks.

Family Casserole

1 (8 oz) package egg noodles
2 tbs. Butter
1 1/2 pound of ground beef (optional)
Salt, pepper, and garlic powder to taste
1 can tomato sauce
1 cup cottage cheese
1 cup sour cream
1 bunch green onions, chopped
1 cup cheddar cheese, grated

Cook noodles, and then ground beef. Simmer salt, pepper, garlic powder, and tomato sauce for 5 minutes. In a large bowl combine cottage cheese, sour cream, green onions, and cooked noodles. In a buttered casserole dish, alternate noodle mixture with meat mixture and tape with cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Adapted by a recipe submitted by Mary McLin from Mulberry, AR in *Chef's Choice* a collection of recipes put together by Arkansas Western Gas Company.

Potato Soup

1 cup of butter
2 white onions chopped
8 potatoes peeled and sliced
1/2 gallon of milk (add or subtract depending on preference)
Salt and pepper to taste
Water
2 cloves garlic crushed or
1 tbsp. of dried minced garlic
1 tbsp. dried parsley
2 pinches of thyme

Melt butter, and add onions and potatoes. Cook until thoroughly until done- just about 30 minutes. While cooking, add just enough water to keep the potatoes and onions from browning. Once cooked, add milk and seasonings. Heat thoroughly before serving. Add green onions, or shredded cheddar cheese for additional flavor.

Adapted from *Downhome Food Fit for a President: Recipes And More for "A Place Called Hope"* by Wanda Powell and Helen Wood

Classic Spinach Dip

1 pkg. frozen chopped spinach, cooked
1 pkg. vegetable soup mix
1 can water chestnuts, chopped
1 cup mayonnaise
1-1/2 cup sour cream
3 green onions, diced

Squeeze spinach until dry. Stir together spinach, sour cream, mayonnaise, soup mix, water chestnuts, and green onions.

Refrigerate at least 2 hours. Serve with crackers.

Adapted from *Walker Aces: All Cooks Experiencing Success!*
Walker Elementary School Family Cookbook

Arkansas is a state rich in art—actually starting with a large, documented section of Rock Art. These paintings, or markings, are located in numerous bluff shelters located throughout the state. They are a legacy left by the very first inhabitants of our state, the native Americans (mainly from the Mississippian era, A.D. 900-1541). Much of Arkansas Art is about heritage. Quilts, once lovingly crafted by early settlers as a necessity, now blossom into outstanding art pieces by skilled fabric artists. The natural deposits of clay resulted in distinctive Arkansas pottery such as Camark, Ouachita and Niloak. Today there are wonderful craftspeople still carrying on the tradition. There is a total of 22 art centers or museums in our state. Our children are fortunate to have these resources available. Contact the art center nearest you and either schedule a visit or arrange for a speaker to bring the art to your center.

On a Sunny Day . . .

For this art project you really need a sunny day! It's also an outside art activity.

You will need:

- A collection of leaves, small rocks, acorns, or grasses
- Dark colored construction paper

Take a nature walk to collect leaves and other nature objects. Arrange them on top of the dark construction paper. Place small rocks on top of items to hold them in place. Leave in full sun for at least an hour. Remove the items and discover what has happened to the paper.

Expansion idea: Laminate the designs and use for placemats.

Benchmark 2.13: Recognizes and responds to beauty in the environment

Rockin' Rock Art

Show the children pictures of some Arkansas rock art (simply Google Arkansas Rock Art for some examples). Discuss how early Arkansans used paint or sharp objects to form symbols or pictures. This way they could leave messages and communicate with others.

You will need:

- A collection of rocks
- Paint and brushes

Paint the rocks. Older children may want to create symbols such as sun, moon, rain, grass or mountains.

Expansion idea:

Bring in a large cardboard box, encourage the children to pretend that it is a cave or bluff shelter. Give them chalk to create their own "rock art". Highlight the drawings by providing small flashlights.

Another idea:

Hang paintings inside of box for an early Arkansas Art Gallery.

Benchmark 2.10: Explores and manipulates art media

Fingerprint on the Natural State

You will need:

Large sheets of paper (masking paper, used by painters, is good, since it is water resistant.) However, any fairly heavy paper will work. Try cutting out large shapes to resemble Arkansas.
Fingerprint (see recipes below)

Give each child a tablespoon or so of paint. Encourage them to experiment to see how many different types of marks they can make—vertical, horizontal, diagonal, Zig-zag, loopy, thick, thin.

Expansion Idea: While designs are still wet, apply a piece of paper over them, smooth with hands and "pull a print".

Thick, Flour Finger Paint

2 cups flour	4 cups water
Salt	Food coloring

Microwave 3 to 4 minutes. Stir every 30 seconds (or cook over low heat). Add pinch of salt and food coloring. Beat to smooth out any lumps. Cool and store in the frig.

Note: This is a thicker, stiffer paint. Different but fun.

Very Simple Fingerprint

1 cup liquid starch
3 T tempera

Benchmark 1.7: Demonstrates willingness to try new things

Cardboard Print-Making

Printmaking is exciting for children.

You will need:

Corrugated cardboard cut into a variety of shapes

Paint pad (see below)

Paper

Glue shapes onto back of paper plates.

Turn some shapes up and some down.

Press into the paint pad, then stamp onto paper.

Expansion Idea:

Try printing using a berry box. Strawberries are an Arkansas product.

To Make a Paint Pad:

Place a large, moist sponge on a paper plate. Add tempera to the sponge. Now you have a paint pad!

Benchmark 2.12: Preplans art project and then works with care

Camping In Arkansas

Many families in Arkansas choose camping for family fun. There are numerous camping spots in Arkansas.

Here is a website link for camping in Arkansas:

<http://www.arkansas.com/outdoors/camping/>

Or...you could do like the children did recently at the U of A Nursery School. The children decided to gather up all the fallen sticks and tree limbs to create a campfire (no actual fire...just pretend). The children and teachers discussed camping and fire safety, told stories, pretended to cook, all around the "campfire". Not only was this a great experience to teach about camping safety, but also all the sticks and tree limbs were cleaned off the playground.

Storytelling by the campfire

You will need:

A bundle of sticks and tree limbs

Pretend camping food- or really have your snack outside

Flashlights

Ice coolers

Sleeping bags or blankets

A great tale to tell

Gather some children together around the "campfire." *Never use real fire.* Let the children get comfortable in their sleeping bags or blankets. Begin to tell a great story. Something as simple as We're Going on a Bear Hunt would be a great story. See page 31 to find out how to tell the story.

A Story to Tell... We're Going on a Bear Hunt

We're going on bear hunt
(children repeat)
We're gonna catch a big one
(children repeat)
We're not scared
(children repeat)
What a beautiful day
(children repeat)

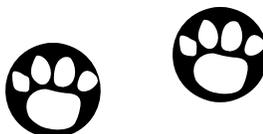
Pack your backpack,
put on your boots,
don't forget your flashlight
Let's start walking...

Oh no. I see a tall, tall grass.
We can't go over it.
We can't go under it.
We'll have to go through it.
(pretend to walk through)

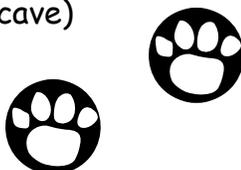


Oh no. I see a swamp,
We can't go over it.
We can't go under it.
We'll have to go through it.
(pretend to swim through)

Oh no. I see a tree.
We can't go over it.
We can't go under it.
We have to climb it.
(pretend to climb each branch)



Oh no. I see a cave.
We can't go over it.
We can't go under it.
We have to go through it.
(pretend to duck into the cave)



Wait I see something...
Two eyes. A wet nose.
Turn on your flashlight...
IT'S A BEAR!

Run out of the cave.
Climb up the tree.
Swim through the swamp.
Walk through the grass.
Run in the house.

Whoa! We are safe now!

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INFANT AND TODDLER PAGE

Out with Infants

By Kim Kearney

Outside experiences can foster a child's sense of wonder. The earliest years of life are the best time to begin providing direct interactions with great outdoors. Playing outside helps children develop a variety of cognitive and motor skills plus it helps shape life-long attitudes and values toward nature. But did you know that being outside literally helps grow healthy children. Our bodies need approximately 20 minutes of sunlight everyday to produce vitamin D and use calcium to form strong healthy bones.

Dress for outdoor success

Winter temperatures can be a challenge when trying to fit outdoor play into your schedule.

- When heading outdoors remember to dress warmly and stay dry.
- Both adults and children should wear several thin layers of clothing, such as thermal long Johns, turtlenecks, two shirts, pants, sweaters, etc.
- A good rule of thumb for babies and young children is to dress them in one more layer of clothing that an adult would wear in the same conditions.
- Wind and water resistant coats with sleeves that are snug at the wrist.
- Wear warm thick socks or even two pair of socks.
- Warm thick soled shoes.
- Wear mittens or gloves with liners
- Set reasonable time limits on outdoor play.
- Head indoors to warm up; then go back out if you can.
- Stay active; moving keeps you warm.
- Non-mobile infants should be off the ground and out of strong wind.

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests taking infants outdoors for long lengths of time should be avoided when it is colder than 40 degrees. Infants lose body heat more quickly than toddlers and older children. This does not mean young infants should not go outside in cold weather. If dressed properly for the weather conditions, infants can and do need to be out. Choose shorter periods of times and more often times during the day. Don't let the cold weather keep children away from the joys and learning experiences that nature has to offer. Plan ahead and make getting dressed in winter clothes part of your curriculum. **Children need to be outside to grow strong minds and bodies.**

PARENT PAGE

Traveling Arkansas By Vernoice Baldwin

Arkansas isn't called the natural state without reason. We are a state with over 50 state and national parks. We have mountains, forests, wild flowers, lakes, rivers, streams, biking and hiking trails, great campsites, deltas, farm lands, quartz crystals, and diamond mines. Look at the scene on the back of the Arkansas quarter. Dorthea Scott of Mount Ida designed the Arkansas quarter with items she felt represented our state—rice stalks, diamond, mallard, mountains. In addition, there are festivals and museums scattered all over the state.

Whether you are a native of Arkansas with fond memories or you've recently moved here and are ready to make memories, there are plenty of places for outings in your area of the state. I moved back to Arkansas at the age of 10. There were so many things to enjoy. When my children were young, my parents and I took them to dig for diamonds—in Murfreesboro and to take a bath at the Bath House Row in Hot Springs. I made a memory connection for my children by explaining that their great grandfather had taken the baths to help his arthritis. Papa and cousins later joined us at the crystal dig near Mount Ida. We didn't find diamonds—the caves aren't the Indiana Jones variety—but crystals could be dug and did become their favorite rock/mineral. Emily and Michael were also fascinated that another great grandfather had dug a crystal plate that had been displayed at the Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC.

List your memories and jot down some new ideas including some from Parks and Tourism, and consider these favorites.

The Boston Mountains, Pig Trail & Ouachita Mountains
 Crystal mines near Mount Ida and Hot Springs
 Crater of Diamonds State Park; Murfreesboro
 Hot Springs and Bath House Row
 Mount Petit Jean; Morrilton & Mount Magazine; Paris
 Rice, Soybean, and Cotton Farms
 Arkansas River, Clinton Museum, and Little Rock Zoo
 Caves at Jasper
 Devil's Den; West Fork
 Crowley's Ridge; Paragould
 White River Sugar Berry Natural Area and National Wild Life Refuge; Helena
 Louisiana Purchase State Park; Brinkley/Marvel

Periodically check the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism info@arkansas.com or call (501-682-7606) for listings and highlights of activities in your area. *Google state and national parks in Arkansas* for a complete listing of parks in your area.

It seems a shame to load up our vans and travel to the beaches of Florida or elsewhere without having first seen the wonders of Arkansas. So, learn the words to the song—*The Arkansas Traveler* and get out there and travel our state.

DIRECTOR'S PAGE

Families in Need? Here is a Way to Help By Mardi Crandall

Arkansas has something new to brag about—something that may make real difference to families enrolled in your program. The new 2-1-1 call system was initiated on May 8, 2008, when Governor Mike Beebe placed the first call from the State Capitol.

The 2-1-1 system is an on-the-ready resource service, linking Arkansans to services they may need. It is free and available by calling the number or by accessing the web address

www.arkansas211.org

In fact, Arkansas is the first state to offer both the land line and web format, blazing the way to linking people with information about food pantries, clothing closets, shelters, and rent and utility assistance, just to name a few of the topics. Whatever the need, the assistance available through 211 can connect people with available agencies in their communities.

In the year 2008, there were 34,559 such calls made. This number is likely to grow as needs increase during the economic downturn. You can play a role in helping your families be connected to resources.

Look For New Issues of *Beginnings* on the Division of Child Care's Website!

Here is the direct link:

<http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/services/printedmats/beginnings.html>

Or find it this way:

1. Begin at the Division of Child Care's Home Page:
<http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/>
2. Click on *Services* at the top of the page.
3. Then Click on *Printed Material* on the right hand side of the page.
4. On the next page choose *Beginnings!*

Some previous issues are already on this page. Soon there will be many more back issues to discover. Have fun!

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