



## Organizing Your Better Beginnings Program Portfolio

### Purpose of the Program Portfolio

Your Better Beginnings program portfolio contains documentation of both the PAS/BAS indicators and the Better Beginnings requirements. Program portfolios are required at Better Beginnings level 2 and level 3.

### Organizing Your Program Portfolio

- **Use a three-ring binder or a file box.**
- **Label each portfolio entry** with the number of the PAS/BAS item and indicator or the Better Beginnings requirement it supports.
- **Organize documents sequentially.** Insert Better Beginnings level 2 and level 3 documentation first. Behind those documents, include documentation for PAS and BAS items in numerical order.
- **Be concise.** Remove non-essential materials from the program portfolio. Only include documents that are required.
- **Be thorough.** Explain and/or highlight items to show how they relate to the requirement or indicator. Some items may need more than one piece of documentation.

Detailed descriptions of the steps to organizing the program portfolio can be found on pages 10 and 11 of the *Better Beginnings Guide*, <http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/child-care-providers/better-beginnings-guide/> .

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## Professional Organizations

### Opportunities for involvement in the local professional community

- Local director's roundtable or network
- AECA - Arkansas Early Childhood Association, <http://arkansasearlychildhood.org>
- SECA - Southern Early Childhood Association, <http://southernearlychildhood.org>
- NEAYC – National Association for the Education of Young Children, [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)
- Arkansas Head Start Association, <http://arheadstart.org>
- Arkansas Family Child Care Association, <http://arkansasfamilychildcareassociation.com>
- Arkansas Out of School Network, <http://aosn.org>

Detailed information regarding PAS Item 19, Community Outreach, can be found on pages 47 and 48 of the *Program Administration Scale*, by Teri Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom.

Information regarding documentation of PAS items can be found at [http://cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/resources/docreview\\_long.pdf](http://cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/resources/docreview_long.pdf).

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# Daily Schedule

## Components of a developmentally appropriate daily schedule

- Predictability
- Developmentally appropriate activities for children
  - Allow children to explore a variety of materials through first-hand, meaningful experiences.
  - Include all areas of development: physical, cognitive, language and literacy, and social and emotional.
  - Allow children to make choices and pursue their interests. Activity plans are based on children's ages, developmental needs, and interests.
  - Balance child-initiated activities and adult guidance and support.
- Alternating periods of active play and quiet times throughout the day
- An opportunity for a supervised rest period of at least one hour but not more than two hours.
- At least one hour of outdoor play in suitable weather

More information about developmentally appropriate daily schedules can be found on page 19 of the *Better Beginnings Guide*, <http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/child-care-providers/better-beginnings-guide/>.

Arkansas *Minimum Licensing Requirements for Child Care Centers* (section 400, #1).

Samples of daily schedules are included in the "Learning Environment" section of the Better Beginnings Toolkit, <http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/child-care-providers/provider-toolkits/>

*Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Eight, 3<sup>d</sup> Ed.* <http://www.naeyc.org/about/positions/daptoc.asp>

*All About the ECERS-R*, chapter 34



## Developing a Curriculum Plan

Your curriculum plan will be unique to your program. It should reflect your program's goals, philosophy, mission, and approach to children's learning and development. Curriculum is more than a collection of activities. By developing a curriculum plan, you are moving toward offering a balanced, comprehensive curriculum that meets the needs of all children.

### A curriculum plan might include

1. A statement of your program's overall goals for children
2. The name and description of curriculum used (may be more than one or may be self-developed)
3. Examples of topics of study and/or projects that you have planned in the past year and some that you expect to plan for the coming year
4. How your curriculum incorporates investigation and problem solving, play, child-initiated activities, and adult-facilitated activities

More information regarding curriculum plans can be found on page 22 of the *Better Beginnings Guide*, <http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/child-care-providers/better-beginnings-guide/> .

View some sample curriculum plans.

- Better Beginnings Tool Kit in the learning environments section at <http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/child-care-providers/provider-toolkits/> .
- Lindgren Child Care Center  
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/childcare/programs>
- Hilltop Children's Center  
<http://www.hilltopcc.com/about/overview-learning-at-hilltop>  
[Click on Hilltop's Approach and on Emergent Curriculum]
- Riverfield Country Day School  
Infant/toddler -- <http://www.riverfield.org/i23.php>  
Preschool -- <http://www.riverfield.org/325.php>



# Children's Portfolios

## What is a portfolio?

- A portfolio is organized documentation of the child's developmental progress.

## Where do we keep the contents of the portfolio?

- A well-done portfolio can be rather bulky. Consider how your program will store portfolios.
  - large pizza boxes
  - large brown envelopes
  - pocket file folders (legal size)
  - expandable file folders (legal size)
  - teacher-made over-size "envelopes" made from poster board
  - 3-ring binders
  - electronic files

## How do you use portfolio assessment?

- If the portfolio contains representative samples of the child's work over a period of time, a portrait of the child's developmental progress will emerge. This information will be valuable to the program staff as they plan daily activities for children and can be used as the centerpiece of parent conferences.

Find out more...

Grace, C., Shores, E., and Charner, K. (Ed.). (1998). *The Portfolio Book: A Step-By-Step Guide for Teachers*. Beltsville, MD: Gryphon House.

MacDonald, S. (2005). *The Portfolio and Its Use: A Road Map for Assessment*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Little Rock, AR: Southern Early Childhood Association.

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## Medical Care Plan

### Who should have a medical care plan?

- Children who require adaptations in daily activities because of a medical condition
- Children who need medication regularly
- Children who require a specialized emergency plan

### What should be included in a medical care plan?

- Accommodations in daily programming, including meals and snacks, playing, sleeping, and toileting
- When and how to give medication, and who may give it
- When and how to perform any required medical procedures, and who may perform them
- What procedures to follow in the event of a medical emergency

### Who should develop the medical care plan?

- Families
- Medical professionals
- Classroom staff
- Relevant members of the management team (e.g., health, disabilities, nutrition, and education specialists)

Information for this Tip Sheet was adapted from the Head Start Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center.

[http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/Disabilities/Services%20to%20Children%20with%20Disabilities/Identifying%20Children%20with%20Disabilities/health\\_lea\\_00200\\_072605.html#handout](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/Disabilities/Services%20to%20Children%20with%20Disabilities/Identifying%20Children%20with%20Disabilities/health_lea_00200_072605.html#handout)

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# Staff Orientation

## Considerations in designing a successful orientation procedure

- **Take plenty of time**—at least 3 months. This allows employees time to practice and understand policies, procedures, and expectations. Give a copy of the orientation timeline or plan to the new employee.
- **Prioritize content.** Avoid the temptation to tell the new employee everything you know on the first day. Provide written materials at appropriate times over the course of the orientation period.
- **Take a hands-on approach.** Orientation activities should offer many opportunities for the new employee to practice and apply what she is learning. There should also be abundant opportunities to become acquainted with other staff members, children, and families.
- **Individualize training.** Consider the previous knowledge and experience of the new employee as you implement your orientation plan.
- **Build in feedback.** Your plan should include strategies for providing feedback to the new employee throughout the orientation period.
- **Listen to your employee.** The questions and comments from the new employee cannot only guide you in individualizing the activities, but also help you improve the orientation plan for future employees.
- **Revise your plan** based on feedback from your employees and your observations of the effectiveness of your orientation plan.

Detailed information regarding PAS Item 4, Staff Orientation, can be found on pages 10 and 11 of the *Program Administration Scale*, Teri Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom.

Information regarding documentation of PAS items can be found at [http://cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/resources/docreview\\_long.pdf](http://cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/resources/docreview_long.pdf).



# Performance Appraisal

## Criteria for developing a written performance appraisal

1. Create job descriptions that align with your program's mission, vision, and philosophy, and with principles of developmentally appropriate practice.
2. Review the primary responsibilities listed in the job description and create a performance checklist based on those responsibilities. Performance criteria should be objective, vary from role to role, and be tied to specific responsibilities detailed in each job description.
3. Consider using feedback from parents and co-workers when completing the performance appraisal form.
4. The performance appraisal form should include the employee's professional development goals (short term and/or long term) and strategies that will be used to meet those goals.
5. Develop a system to provide ongoing feedback and support to teaching staff. Use information from videotaped classroom practices, journal entries, or observation notes.
6. Scheduled formal observations of teaching staff during the year.

Detailed information regarding PAS Item 2, Supervision and Performance Appraisal, can be found on pages 12 and 13 of the *Program Administration Scale*, by Teri Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom.

Information regarding documentation of PAS items can be found at [http://cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/resources/docreview\\_long.pdf](http://cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/resources/docreview_long.pdf).

Arkansas Children's Program Administrator's Credential module, "Performance Appraisal"

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## Staff Meetings

### Tips for conducting staff meetings

- Carefully choose a time for a staff meeting when all can be present. Time is valuable. Use time wisely to plan effective activities for communicating, problem solving, team building, and professional development.
- Record minutes of each staff meeting. Be sure the minutes include decisions and plans made by the group. Distribute the minutes to staff for their review prior to the next meeting.
- Every staff member should sign-in.
- Staff meetings should be scheduled regularly, at a time and place convenient to most of the staff.
- Be sure that staff members have a way to offer input into the agenda for each meeting. Enrich your meetings by inviting staff members to contribute information and lead discussions on topics with which they have knowledge and experience.

Detailed information regarding PAS Item 9, Internal Communications, can be found on pages 26 and 27 of the *Program Administration Scale*, by Teri Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom.

Information regarding documentation of PAS items can be found at [http://cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/resources/docreview\\_long.pdf](http://cecl.nl.edu/evaluation/resources/docreview_long.pdf).

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## Communicating With Families

Families are the most important people in a child's life. It is essential that early childhood programs work with families to support the child's development and learning. As we learn to appreciate each child within his/her own cultural context, we seek a variety of ways to communicate with their families.

### Examples of simple ways to communicate with families

- Bulletin boards and other displays
- Handbook for families
- Newsletters
- Handouts sent home with children
- Lending library of books and articles on specific topics
- Meetings, conferences, and home visits
- Phone calls and e-mail
- Website, blog, e-mail

Use a variety of ways to communicate with families and communicate often. Develop strategies for weekly and daily communication as you build partnerships with families.

Detailed information regarding PAS Item 16, Family Communications, can be found on pages 44 and 45 of the *Program Administration Scale*, by Teri Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom.

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## Handling Inquiries

### Do you have a plan for handling inquiries from prospective parents?

Whether people inquire of your services in person, on the phone, by e-mail, or via your Web site, their first impression is what counts. If you and your staff are courteous and professional, it will enhance the reputation of your program.

- After the initial call, **follow-up within forty-eight hours** with another phone call, an e-mail message, or mailed information about your facility. Prompt follow-up will show prospective clients that you are interested in their business. In our technology savvy world, e-mails, text messages, and social sites are great ways to follow up with inquiries.
- If possible, **refer families to another facility** when you cannot meet their needs.
- **Keep a telephone log** of all inquiries. Create a form that will provide the following information at a glance.
  - The time the call was taken
  - Who took the call
  - Caller's name, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address, and relationship to the child
  - The name and birth date(s) of the child(ren)
  - The type of care the family needs
  - When the family will need your services
- **Record all inquiries**, even those that are not a match for your program. If they feel that you are interested in helping them, they may tell a friend about you.

Detailed information regarding PAS Item 18, External Communications, can be found on pages 44 and 45 of the *Program Administration Scale*, by Teri Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom.

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