Arkansas Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

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Arkansas Better Chance

Program Manual

The purpose of this manual is to provide clarification of the promulgated ABC Rules & Regulations of October 2012.

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

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Arkansas Better Chance Website:

http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/ArkansasBetterChance.aspx

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SECTION 1 – REGULATORY AUTHORITY

REGULATION 1.01:

These rules are enacted pursuant to the authority of the State Board of Education under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-11-105 and 6-45-101 et seq. as amended.

CLARIFICATION:

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.

REGULATION 1.02:

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE), Arkansas Department of Human Services, shall coordinate and administer the Arkansas Better Chance Program, providing all appropriate technical assistance and program monitoring necessary to fulfill the requirements of Ark. Code Ann. § 6-45-101 et seq., 20-78-206 and 6-11-105. DCCECE will annually provide the State Board of Education a list of grants, which are recommended for funding for the next year.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix A for listing of current ABC contacts.

REGULATION 1.03:

The State Board of Education will approve all rules developed pursuant to Act 212 of 1991 and Act 49 of 2003 as amended and will approve all programs funded under the Arkansas Better Chance Program.

SECTION 2 - PURPOSE

REGULATION 2.01:

It is the purpose of these rules to set the general guidelines for the operation of early childhood programs funded under the Arkansas Better Chance Program and the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program.

CLARIFICATION:

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 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 (HIPPY and PAT) and Family Child Care Homes.

SECTION 3 - DEFINITIONS

3.01 ABC: Arkansas Better Chance

3.02 ABCSS (Arkansas Better Chance for School Success): Unless standards for ABC and ABCSS are listed separately, the term 'ABC' will be used to refer to all participating programs.

3.03 ADE: Arkansas Department of Education

3.04 AECPDS: Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System

3.05 APSCN: Arkansas Public School Computer Network

3.06 Agency: For purposes of these rules, "Agency" refers to any entity funded under the Arkansas Better Chance or Arkansas Better Chance for School Success program.

3.07 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.

3.08 CCFH: Child Care Family Home

3.09 CDA: Child Development Associate credential

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

3.11 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.

3.12 Core Quality Components: The six key areas of ABC which include:

- Low student to teacher ratio
- Well-qualified and compensated staff
- Professional development
- Developmental Screening and Child Assessment
- Proven curricula and learning processes
- Meaningful parent and community engagement activities

These components serve as the basis for ABC funding levels.

3.13 DCCECE: Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education

3.14 DECA: Deveraux Early Childhood Assessment

3.15 DHS: Arkansas Department of Human Services

3.16 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.

3.17 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 Rating Scale, Family Child Care Rating Scale and School-Age Care Rating Scale.

3.18 FPL: Federal Poverty Level

3.19 IEP: Individualized Education Program

3.20 IDEA: Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

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

3.22 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 the ABC program.

3.23 HIPPY: Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters

3.24 LEA: Local Education Agency

3.25 NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children

3.26 PAT: Parents as Teachers

3.27 Single-Site Classroom: One ABC classroom at a geographic location.

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

3.29 SSN: Social Security Number

3.30 Shall: Mandatory standard

3.31 Should: Standard is recommended but not mandatory.

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

3.33 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.

CLARIFICATION - ADDITIONAL PROGRAM DEFINITIONS:

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.

Better Beginnings: The current system for becoming a quality early childhood program in Arkansas.

Compliance Plan: A document placing an ABC program on a probation 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.

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.

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

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

Homeless: Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act [July 27, 2016] - Section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Act10 defines "homeless children and youths" as individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes—

- Children and youths who are:
  - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as "doubled-up");
  - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - living in emergency or transitional shelters; or
  - abandoned in hospitals;
- Children and youths who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
- Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

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.

Program Improvement Plan (PIP): see Compliance Plan

DCCECE Professional Development Registry: The statewide professional development system specifically designed for Early Childhood professionals. Formerly Traveling Arkansas' Professional Pathways (TAPP) and Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (AECPDS).

Immediate Family – A family unit is defined as individuals living in the same home as the child and includes: the child enrolled in the program; parent (s) / step parent(s) / or guardian(s); and siblings related to the enrolled child by birth, marriage, or foster siblings.

SECTION 4 – CHILD ELIGIBILITY

REGULATION 4.01:

The ABC Program serves educationally deprived children, ages birth through 5 years, excluding a kindergarten program. The Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program serves children ages 3 and 4 years from families with gross income not exceeding 200% of the FPL. Programs wishing to enroll a kindergarten-eligible child must obtain a written waiver from DCCECE before enrolling the child in ABC. Parents must also complete a kindergarten waiver process through the local school district.

CLARIFICATION:

Both Arkansas Better Chance and Arkansas Better Chance for School Success utilize the same regulations for the exceptions of eligibility. Kindergarten waivers will be considered on a case by case basis and will be approved only in situations where significant multiple at risk factors exist that prevent the child from being able to be placed in a kindergarten classroom.

REGULATION 4.02:

To be eligible, children shall reside within the boundaries of an Arkansas school district. Programs may accept children outside of their local area if they have exhausted local recruiting efforts and have unfilled ABC slots.

CLARIFICATION:

Programs must abide by the boundaries of local school districts as approved in the grant agreement. A written request must be submitted and approved by the ABC Program prior to any changes in the current boundaries /services. Staff who are employed in a district but reside in another district may enroll their child ONLY IF the child meets the ABC/ABCSS eligibility requirements.

REGULATION 4.03:

Eligible children for the ABC program shall have at least one of the following characteristics:

-Family with gross income not exceeding exceeding 200% of FPL
-Parents without a high school diploma or GED
-Low birth weight (below 5 pounds, 9 ounces)
-Parent is under 18 years of age at child's birth
-Immediate family member has a history of substance abuse/addiction
-Has a demonstrable developmental delay as identified through screening
-Eligible for services under IDEA
-Income eligible for Title I programs
-Limited English Proficiency
-Parent has a history of abuse or neglect or is a victim of abuse or neglect

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix B for a list of acceptable forms of documentation.

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 prior to the first day of attendance. Failure to maintain documentation will constitute a program violation of enrolling ineligible children and may result in termination from ABC participation.

Children of staff may enroll ONLY IF they meet the eligibility requirements of the ABC Program.

Three-year old children enrolled in ABC and ABCSS during the program year do NOT require re-qualification to continue enrollment for the program as a four-year old.

However, each child in a family must establish eligibility and provide current documentation of family income. Siblings DO NOT automatically qualify for the ABC Program.

REGULATION 4.04:

Eligible children for the ABC for School Success program must meet the following qualifications:

-Must be three or four years old by ADE cutoff date
-Gross family income < 200% of FPL
-A program is available in the area where the child resides and there is available space for the child to attend

To receive special education services a child must reside within certain district/co-op boundary lines.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix C for a list of acceptable forms of documentation.

Children of staff may enroll ONLY IF they meet the eligibility requirements of the ABC Program.

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 a program violation of enrolling ineligible children and may result in termination from ABC participation.

Three-year old children enrolled in ABC and ABCSS during the program year do NOT require re-qualification to continue enrollment for the program as a four-year old.

However, each child in a family must establish eligibility and provide current documentation of family income. Siblings DO NOT automatically qualify for the ABC Program.

REGULATION 4.05:

To enroll an eligible child, the child's parent or guardian shall furnish documentation of eligibility and other required information, including household income and household member information. A list of all acceptable documentation will be published annually by DCCECE. Children of parents or guardians

refusing to furnish required information shall be deemed ineligible for participation. Programs are responsible for verifying eligibility before the child attends and shall maintain copies of eligibility documentation in the child's record.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendices B and C for a list of acceptable forms of documentation (Additional clarification added).
Eligibility documentation MUST be on file prior to first day of attendance.

REGULATION 4.06:

A copy of the child's birth certificate or hospital record listing a date of birth is required. If official documentation of date of birth is unavailable, the ABC program shall follow the guidelines of the local district in such instances.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendices B and C for a list of acceptable forms of documentation. Program shall maintain a copy of the school district's alternate policy regarding birth documentation on site.

REGULATION 4.07:

In determining income eligibility, programs shall use a family's gross income from employment plus any unemployment compensation. Documentation of income eligibility must be present in each child's record. If pay stubs are used to document eligibility, recent documents (dated within 30 days) shall be used. DCCECE shall publish a list of acceptable documentation annually. If a three-year old child has been qualified for ABCSS, that child shall remain eligible for two years.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix D for Income Eligibility Chart and Appendices B and C for a list of acceptable forms of documentation. Additional clarification has been added to the Appendices. If income tax is used, the "adjusted" gross income may be used to determine income. If pay stubs are used, eligibility must be determined using the full 30 days of paystubs.

REGULATION 4.08:

Families claiming no earned income (full-time students or unemployed) shall produce a signed and notarized statement to that effect, which shall be maintained in the child record.

CLARIFICATION:

Each parent must sign statement to document "no earned income". One parent MAY NOT sign for both.

REGULATION 4.09:

Parents or guardians shown to have submitted a falsified document shall be subject to repayment of funds to DCCECE and referral for prosecution.

CLARIFICATION:

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.

REGULATION 4.10:

Agencies shown to have enrolled ineligible children or children with no documentation of eligibility shall be required to repay the funds expended on behalf of the child to DHS.

CLARIFICATION:

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.

REGULATION 4.11:

An age-eligible child who falls into one of the following categories shall be exempt from family income requirements:

- Foster child
- Child with an incarcerated parent
- Child in the custody of/living with a family member other than mother or father
- Child with immediate family member arrested for or convicted of drug-related offenses
- Child with a parent activated for overseas military duty

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix E for a list of acceptable forms of documentation.

A family unit is defined, as individuals living in the same home as the child and includes: the child enrolled in the program; parent (s) / step parent(s) /guardian(s); and siblings related to the enrolled child by birth, marriage, or foster siblings.

A legal parent must be deployed out of state or overseas, for military duty for a minimum of 30 days.

The following must be during the lifetime of the child: incarcerated parent; arrested for or convicted of a drug related offense.

The following must be at time of enrollment: activation for military duty; in custody of or living with a family member; and foster child.

REGULATION 4.12:

The ADE and DCCECE may develop a fee schedule and establish eligibility based on family income for children who are not eligible under Section 4.4, but priority enrollment shall be provided to children eligible under Section 4.4. Families who are qualified for enrollment under a sliding fee scale should pay fees directly to the program. The amount of any parent co-pay as determined by DCCECE shall be deducted from the reimbursement to programs accepting children on a sliding fee scale.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix F for Sliding Fee Scale.

REGULATION 4.13:

DCCECE, with approval from ADE, may grant waivers to children not meeting the eligibility criteria under Sections 4.3 or 4.4 but possessing multiple risk factors for learning and developmental impairment. Requests for such waivers must be submitted to DCCECE in writing and will be considered on a case by case basis.

CLARIFICATION:

Programs wishing to enroll a child not meeting the ABC eligibility criteria must petition the Division using a 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 well documented.

Children who are eligible for kindergarten services (and the parent elects to “waive” such services) are NOT eligible for the ABC/ABCSS Program. Kindergarten waivers will be considered on a case by case basis and may be approved only in situations where significant multiple at risk factors exist that prevent the child

from being able to be placed in a kindergarten classroom. Programs are responsible for the submission of specific documentation which fully substantiates the need for alternate services.

All forms may be found on the Arkansas Better Chance website:

http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/dccece/Pages/ArkansasBetterChance.aspx

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REGULATION 4.14:

Children having certain risk factors may be eligible for home-visiting services, in addition to attending a center-based ABC program. See Section 19.06 for eligibility requirements.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix G for a list of acceptable forms of documentation for dual eligibility.

REGULATION 4.15:

Eligible children shall not be denied enrollment into an available ABC program or dismissed from an ABC program due to non-payment of any fees associated with another child care program.

CLARIFICATION:

This may include other services such as before/after school care offered by the same agency providing ABC care.

SECTION 5 – PROGRAM/ AGENCY ELIGIBILITY

REGULATION 5.01:

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 child care family 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 (HIPPY 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.

The local-to-state match may be waived by DCCECE if the program is in a school district that has been designated by ADE as being in academic distress and DCCECE determines that the school is unable to provide the local-to-state match requirement. This determination may be made only after DCCECE has assisted the school in identifying potential funding sources to provide local-to-state match requirements.

REGULATION 5.02:

Any provider wishing to be considered for funding must fully complete a grant application supplied by DCCECE. Grant applications will be evaluated and scored on the following factors:

- Status of child care license and quality approval accreditation
- The degree to which the program can provide a developmentally appropriate preschool program as outlined in the grant application
- A strategy of collaboration with the local business and education community
- A fiscally responsible budget which correlates to core quality models
- A plan of action for parent involvement

CLARIFICATION:

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 early childhood providers and school districts of the availability of the application and deadlines for submission.

REGULATION 5.03:

DCCECE will determine an acceptable cutoff score for approved applications. Questions and concerns regarding grant scoring should be referred to the Program Administrator. The ABC Administrator shall make the final determination of all grant scores. Grant scores are final.

CLARIFICATION:

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. Approval is contingent upon a favorable vote by this Board. Notice of Grant Award and Grant Agreement shall be sent to the applicant with an established due date for authorized signature and return. The Division must have all returned documents on file BEFORE an applicant may begin serving children under the ABC program.

A. <u>New and Expansion Programs</u>

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. Applications will be reviewed and scored using an established rubric.

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.

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.

Failure to follow any conditions of renewal may result in either immediate termination from ABC program or non-renewal the following program year.

REGULATION 5.04:

All applications shall include a budget which corresponds to the ABC core quality components, details program costs and demonstrates fiscal responsibility. Allowable costs include:

- salaries/fringe
- instructional materials
- staff development
- developmental screenings
- parent/community engagement activities
- financial assistance for staff working towards a degree or credential, including but not limited to books, tuition and travel.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to ABC Financial Manual for further clarification.

SECTION 6 - FUNDING

FOR ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATION ON THE REGULATIONS IN THIS SECTION, PLEASE REFER TO THE ABC FINANCIAL MANUAL.

REGULATION 6.01:

Upon approval of an ABC application, the order of funding shall be based on criteria stated in Act 49 of 2003, which includes areas of the state containing:

- Schools that have 75% or more students scoring below proficiency level on the primary benchmark exams (math and literacy) in the preceding two (2) school years
- Schools designated by ADE as being in school improvement status
- Schools located in a school district in academic distress.

Other factors determining areas to be funded may include socio-economic status of the service area and the availability of existing quality preschool services in an area.

REGULATION 6.02:

Any program funded through ABC shall work in collaboration with DCCECE, ADE, local businesses and other early childhood providers (school districts, educational cooperatives, Head Start, HIPPY, private and non-profit providers, etc.) to ensure that all eligible children are served in the most suitable environment. This collaboration shall include, but is not limited to, participation in and/or facilitation of local early childhood meetings and referring families to other programs when appropriate.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Section 16 for further information regarding collaboration.

REGULATION 6.03:

The required local 40% match may include only the cost of providing necessary services for ABC children. Matching funds may be cash or in-kind.

REGULATION 6.04:

State ABC Funding (60%) for the core components of the program may include salaries and fringe for staff giving direct services to ABC children, professional development, child assessment, developmental screening, meaningful parent and community engagement activities, proven curricula and learning processes, transportation and administration.

REGULATION 6.05:

The maximum amount of funding is based upon projected child enrollment. Programs will be paid monthly. Payment shall be pro-rated for agencies not in operation a full program year. During the year, programs shall be audited to ensure compliance with child enrollment and attendance policies. An ABC program found to be enrolling ineligible children shall be required to repay applicable funds to DHS and be subject to all collection proceedings allowed by law. Funds may be withheld from future payments to satisfy repayment. Overpayments or the amount of any end of year carry-forward funds shall be deducted from future payments.

REGULATION 6.06:

DCCECE shall not be responsible for sending out additional or late payments due to failure of Agency to enter data in COPA. DCCECE will assume any payments not disputed within 30 days of receipt shall be correct. DCCECE cannot retroactively pay any Agency for previous year services.

REGULATION 6.07:

Payment shall be withheld if a program does not comply with reporting requirements.

REGULATION 6.08:

ABC is intended to supplement, not supplant, existing early childhood funding sources.

CLARIFICATION:

Current legislation allows any licensed early childhood provider in the state willing to meet quality guidelines to apply for funding. The ABC cost model has NO net income built in.

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

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 subject to corrective action.

REGULATION 6.09:

Funding, not to exceed 2% of the total ABC funding pool, shall be available from the ABC monies for the additional support services required of DCCECE in administering the ABC program.

SECTION 7 - REPORTING

REGULATION 7.01:

All child, family and staff information shall be maintained in COPA by the program. Attendance shall be taken daily and recorded in COPA at least monthly. Initial data must be entered by the due date set and published by DCC-ECE. Agencies shall update COPA data within ten (10) days of any change to family, child or staff data.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix H for a list of deadlines. While required monthly, it is highly recommended that attendance be recorded in COPA weekly at a minimum.

REGULATION 7.02:

Each ABC program shall submit to DCCECE two (2) financial expenditure reports—due on January 30 and July 30 of each year—which detail operating expenses and enrollment data. Programs shall receive guidance from DCCECE on the specific format of each report.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix H for a list of deadlines.

Refer to the ABC Financial Manual for guidance on the format of each report.

Late or incomplete reports may result in withholding of program payments. It is the provider's responsibility to ensure all reports are submitted completely and within established timeframes.

REGULATION 7.03:

An Agency shall operate its ABC program according to the financial guidelines outlined in the grant application instructions.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to the ABC Financial Manual for additional information.

REGULATION 7.04:

A complete and final disclosure audit of each ABC program is required and must be submitted annually for review to DCCECE. Any ABC program that is annually reviewed by Legislative Audit may submit the summary completed by that agency. All final audits shall be submitted within 120 days of the program's fiscal year completion.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix H for a list of deadlines.

Failure to submit the program's audit timely will result in the delay of funding or termination from the ABC Program. 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.

When submitting financial reports, a cash disbursements journal is required for programs not operated by a school district or educational cooperative. School districts and educational cooperatives are not required to submit documentation; 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.

REGULATION 7.05:

Programs that fail to adhere to a reporting deadline or respond to a request for information by DCCECE will be subject to compliance action as outlined in Section 22.

REGULATION 7.06:

Children qualifying under the sliding fee scale must be clearly marked as such in COPA. Programs shall also report any non-ABC qualifying children who have been assigned to an ABC classroom. Failure to do so is grounds for a compliance plan (See Section 22). DCCECE will inform programs as to the manner that reporting shall take place.

REGULATION 7.07:

Once a grant agreement has been signed, any change made to the program whatsoever shall be reported to DCCECE within five (5) working days of the change. This includes, but is not limited to, any changes in address, phone, e-mail address, staff, slot locations or budget items.

CLARIFICATION:

Any change to the program must be submitted in writing to the ABC Program Specialist.

SECTION 8 – APPLICATION/ RENEWAL APPLICATION

REGULATION 8.01:

The Request for Applications will specify all application procedures for an ABC program. DCCECE is not obligated to review any proposal received after the submission deadline stated in the application.

CLARIFICATION:

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

REGULATION 8.02:

If all ABC funds are not allocated or expended during any program year, the DCCECE may initiate an additional application period to fully obligate all available funds.

REGULATION 8.03:

An Agency shall operate its ABC program in accordance with all information contained in the grant application. Any deviation from the information in the application must first be approved by DCCECE. This includes budget items.

CLARIFICATION:

Any change to the program must be submitted in writing to the ABC Program Specialist for approval prior to making the change. Examples of programmatic changes include but are not limited to: movement of classrooms, sites, and agencies; staff changes (including sharing of job functions), transfers of ABC slots from one age group to another; ownership arrangements; and change of program models; and transfer of slots from school district to school district; another and slots from site to site.

REGULATION 8.04:

All applications submitted by sectarian or sectarian-affiliated programs must first be reviewed to assure that approval of funding will not result in a violation of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution.

SECTION 9 – MINIMUM STANDARDS/CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

REGULATION 9.01:

All ABC classroom programs shall satisfy the requirements specified in The Child Care Licensing Act, Ark. Code Ann. § 20-78-201 through 224 and rules and regulations enacted pursuant to these sections.

REGULATION 9.02:

All ABC center-based or family-home based programs shall maintain a license in good standing as referenced in Section 9.1. Any ABC program whose license is revoked shall be immediately terminated from the ABC program.

REGULATION 9.03:

Agencies that are barred from participating in DHS programs pursuant to DHS Policy 1088 shall be ineligible for participation in ABC. Grant agreements for any existing programs excluded pursuant to this policy shall be terminated immediately. Programs placed on corrective action by DHS shall be subject to ABC compliance action as outlined in Section 22.

REGULATION 9.04:

DCCECE is directly responsible for the inspection and evaluation of programs as referenced in Section 9.1. Inspections and monitoring visits may occur without prior notice. This includes quality visits, program reviews or any other visit by a DCCECE or authorized representative.

CLARIFICATION:

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.

DCCECE funded Contractors abide by the confidentiality requirements and have the responsibility to maintain the security and integrity of program information.

ABC Program Specialists will visit program agencies during the year. During the visit, Program Specialists will review the program's compliance with the current ABC Regulations. Any issues that require immediate attention or correction shall be submitted to the ABC Coordinator as a Program Compliance Plan. The PCP shall outline what steps need to be taken for the program to be in compliance with accompanying deadlines by which corrections must be made.

If programs need additional time for corrections, the ABC Program Coordinator may request an extension from the Program Specialist in writing BEFORE the deadline. Programs failing to correct issues on a PCP by the established deadline shall be subject to Section 22- Compliance and may result in loss of funding, or the program being placed in a probationary status and possible re-competition for funding.

REGULATION 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. An overall score of 5.0 is required for the ERS which is applicable to each classroom. DCCECE will utilize the following procedure for any program failing to meet these requirements:

Result of Program Review Action Taken
First - No Pass (ERS Score< 5.0) Recommendations for improvements shall be made in writing to the Agency ABC Administrator/Coordinator and Teacher. Technical assistance shall be given to the Agency.

Second - No Pass (ERS Score< 5.0) Conference shall be held between Agency ABC Administrator/Coordinator, Teacher and DCCECE staff to advise Agency of 2nd No Pass Status and required improvements. Agency is placed on probationary status with third review scheduled within 60 days of conference.

Third - No Pass (ERS Score < 5.0) Agency is partially or fully de-funded for next program year. Any agency which is not renewed pursuant to this policy shall be ineligible to reapply for an ABC grant for a period of 12 months.

At the discretion of DCCECE, the following may be considered as mitigating circumstances: impact of deficiencies on child health, safety and welfare; willingness to improve upon factors within Agency control; likelihood of program passing next review and the time in which such improvements can be implemented. Recommendations for improvement may include staff changes.

CLARIFICATION:

Each ABC center-based site or family home shall be reviewed 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, each classroom shall have a copy of the appropriate rating scale book and a copy of the guidance. (i.e. All About the ECERS-R or All About the ITERS-R).

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. Re-assessments may be scheduled during the same or following program year as deemed necessary.
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. The site contact 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. With the exception of holiday breaks, the site contact 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. Selection of classrooms for assessment will include classrooms with first year and / or veteran staff.

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

REGULATION 9.06:

For each child enrolled, ABC programs shall provide a minimum of 7 hours per day, 178 days per year for instruction.

CLARIFICATION:

Upon the submission of the renewal application, a program calendar and class schedule shall be placed in COPA and as updates occur, the changes must be placed in COPA. Arrival and departure times designated in the parent handbook must allow for 7 instructional hours between the latest arrival time and earliest departure time.

REGULATION 9.07:

Classroom-based programs shall follow public school regulations regarding the time requirements for teacher planning periods. However, planning periods for ABC teachers shall be scheduled at a time that does not violate minimum staff-child ratios or other ABC standards.

REGULATION 9.08:

Programs shall utilize a parent handbook specifically designed for the ABC program. Attendance and tardy policies shall be clearly outlined in the handbook. Parents shall sign a statement stating they have received a copy of the handbook and understand its contents.

Programs shall maintain a copy of the signed statement in the child record. Programs should direct specific cases to DCCECE for technical assistance or guidance.

CLARIFICATION:

The parent handbook should include but not limited to the following:

- Behavior Guidance Policy
- Clearly outlined Attendance and Tardy Policy
- Separation of Church and State Policy
- Parent Involvement Plan/ Activities
- Community Resources
- Kindergarten Transition Plan/ Activities
- School Calendar
- Class Schedule

SECTION 10 – STAFF/ PUPIL RATIO FOR CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

REGULATION 10.01:

The group size in any classroom with ABC children shall not exceed:
 8 children for ages birth-18 months
 14 children for ages 18 months-3 years
 20 children for ages 3-5 years
 or the classroom licensing capacity, whichever is less.

Programs may integrate ABC classrooms with children funded through other sources. However, the maximum group sizes listed above apply to ALL children in a classroom containing ABC children, regardless of funding source.

CLARIFICATION:

The maximum group size for each age group cannot be exceeded at any time even if the individual classroom has a larger licensed capacity.

REGULATION 10.02:

The adult-to-child ratio in any classroom with ABC children shall not exceed:

 1:4 (birth to 18 months)
 1:7 (18 months-3 years)
 1:10 (3 years-5 years)

REGULATION 10.03:

A minimum of 50% of the staff must remain in the classroom during rest time for children 3-5 years old only. Full staffing must occur for all other ages and at all other times, including meals.

REGULATION 10.04:

Pursuant to licensing regulations, a teacher or aide may escort a child or group of children to a bathroom or school nurse if another qualified staff person remains in the classroom. A classroom shall not be counted out of compliance for a teacher taking a brief bathroom break as long as the other staff member remains in the classroom.

CLARIFICATION:

Routine absences from the classroom such as to retrieving meals/ taking lunch counts, etc. are not permitted under this regulation.

SECTION 11 – STAFF QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

REGULATION 11.01:

The lead teacher shall hold a standard Arkansas teacher license with P-4 certification. Nonpublic school based or non-educational cooperative based ABC programs may hire a noncertified teacher with a bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development. Non-public school or non-cooperative based ABC programs may not hire teachers with a provisional or initial teacher license. The Division shall consider degree exemptions for nonpublic school/coop based providers on a case-by-case basis, contingent upon the teacher having a requisite number of hours in early childhood and/or child development. Lead teachers must be able to demonstrate competency in the areas of developmentally appropriate programming, curriculum development and daily classroom management.

REGULATION 11.02:

For multiple classroom sites, the teacher of a second classroom shall hold, at a minimum, an associate degree in early childhood education or early childhood development. Teachers must be able to demonstrate competency in the areas of developmentally appropriate programming, curriculum development and daily classroom management. The Division shall consider degree exemptions for non-public school/coop based providers on a case-by-case basis, contingent upon the teacher having a

requisite number of hours in early childhood and/or child development. Non-public school or non-cooperative based ABC programs may not hire teachers with a provisional or initial teacher license.

REGULATION 11.03:

The paraprofessional shall hold one of the following: an associate degree in early childhood education or child development OR a CDA credential. Paraprofessionals are an integral part of classroom instruction and should be given responsibilities which are commensurate with their education and experience. In general, paraprofessionals should be able to assist with classroom activities, interaction, supervision and observation.

CLARIFICATION:

All paraprofessional staff spending at minimum of 50% of the work day/week in ABC classrooms must meet the minimum credentialing requirement for a paraprofessional in an ABC classroom. This does not include dedicated one to one aides for children with special needs or staff who provide breaks only.

REGULATION 11.04:

Programs replacing a teacher or paraprofessional during the year—including those taking an indefinite leave of absence—shall consult with DCCECE on specific qualifications needed.

CLARIFICATION:

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
- Satisfactory criminal background/child maltreatment registry checks

If a teacher or paraprofessional is to be out of the classroom longer than three weeks, the program agency shall obtain written approval from the Division on the requirements for the long-term substitute. Requests for alternate compliance must include a detailed plan including support measures for substitute staff.

REGULATION 11.05:

An ABC program coordinator or site director without teaching responsibilities shall meet the minimum licensing requirements for a center director AND complete Director's Orientation within a reasonable time

period, subject to the availability of training. The coordinator or director will preferably have some experience in early childhood.

CLARIFICATION:

A Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and experience in administering early childhood programs is preferred but not required.

REGULATION 11.06:

Caregivers in an infant/toddler ABC room shall hold a minimum of a CDA credential in infant/toddler care.

REGULATION 11.07:

Staff members not qualifying under Sections 11.01-11.02 may work in an ABC program under an approved SQP. DCCECE will approve these plans on a case-by-case basis and shall monitor the plan to ensure adequate progress is being made. Programs shall file a SQP with DCCECE within fifteen (15) days of the date of hire and shall submit progress reports on January 30 and July 30 annually. Programs hiring staff members not meeting minimum qualifications without an approved SQP shall be subject to termination from the ABC program.

CLARIFICATION:

A program agency must make every effort to locate staff meeting minimum requirements. Should a program be unable to locate and hire a qualified applicant, 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.

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.

The ABC Staff Qualification Plan (SQP) Manual is available for further guidance.

REGULATION 11.08:

While adhering to the necessary qualifications, ABC programs should also strive to maintain an ethnically diverse staff appropriate to child enrollment.

REGULATION 11.09:

Between July 1 and June 30 each year, All ABC teachers and aides shall participate in a minimum of thirty (30) hours of staff development on topics pertinent to early childhood education and approved by DCCECE. Persons who are obtaining an early childhood degree may count college course hours pertinent to early childhood education toward the required hours of staff development. Programs should multiply semester hours by 5 to obtain the number of semester hours counted towards ABC professional development.

CLARIFICATION:

Program Specialists evaluate the completion of staff development by utilizing the state professional development registry and by reviewing any additional program documentations. Program should ensure access and documentation in the registry. For returning staff, July-June of the previous year will be reviewed. For new staff current year progress will be reviewed.

REGULATION 11.10:

Teachers and paraprofessionals shall be required to receive training in the following areas:

- Arkansas Early Childhood or Infant/Toddler Education Frameworks
- Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas)
- INDEX (Math and Science for Young Children)
- Social/Emotional Learning in Arkansas
- Work Sampling Online
- COPA
- Deveraux Early Childhood Assessment (DECA)
- Special Needs, including process, Special Education rules and regulations and IDEA

With the exception of annual Work Sampling training and updates, timeframes for completing such requirements may vary with availability and access to the above trainings. DCCECE or ADE Special Education may mandate additional training subject to needs in various locations.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix I for a list of mandatory ABC trainings.

All hours of each cited mandatory training must be completed. Partial completion of any identified course does not satisfy this requirement.

ADE rules require certified teachers to obtain 36 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 state professional development Registry. Program must maintain current copies of staff Registry transcripts, and copies of certificates for trainings, as proof of professional development hours.

REGULATION 11.11:

In addition to the requirements of 11.10, coordinators for each ABC programs shall ensure that all appropriate staff members attend mandatory ABC training (budgets, reporting, assessments, information technology, etc.) provided by DCCECE. Programs with staff members not adhering to these requirements are subject to the terms of a compliance plan as outlined in Section 21.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix I for a current listing of mandatory ABC trainings.

Failure to attend the mandatory training will result in the submission and approval of a professional development plan or proof of registration and attendance in required training.

REGULATION 11.12:

The ABC program coordinator and all ABC staff shall register with the AECPDS Registry. The Registry identification number for each staff shall be entered in COPA.

CLARIFICATION:

AECPDS – AR Early Childhood Professional Development System and is synonymous with the state professional development registry.

REGULATION 11.13:

ABC programs shall establish an employment agreement in writing with all classroom staff. This agreement shall outline working conditions, dates and hours of employment, compensation and fringe benefits. A copy of the public school teacher contract shall satisfy this requirement.

CLARIFICATION:

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:

<u>Working conditions (to include but not limited to):</u>
-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

Work activities not affiliated with the ABC program must be funded through a different source. This would include but not limited to before and after school, working in a non-ABC classroom, summer care, etc. An ABC program shall be required to produce signed copies of employment agreements upon request.

SECTION 12 – STAFFING PATTERNS/ CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

REGULATION 12.01:

Single classroom sites for preschool shall have a teacher qualified under 11.01-11.02. Classrooms with over 10 children must have a paraprofessional qualified under 11.03.

REGULATION 12.02:

For ABC programs operating infant/toddler classrooms, programs must have one (1) qualified caregiver meeting the requirements of Section 11.6 for either every four children (infants) or seven children (toddlers).

REGULATION 12.03:

In multi-classroom sites, the following staffing patterns shall be adhered to:

# Classrooms	Lead Teacher (11.01)	Classroom Teacher (11.02)	Paraprofessional (11.03)
1	1	0	1
2	1	1	2
3	1	2	3
4	2	2	4

REGULATION 12.04:

A classroom which is partitioned in any way may be considered multiple classroom space by DCCECE. Factors to be considered in this decision shall include supervision issues, as well as level of staff qualifications in the classroom areas.

CLARIFICATION:

Use of partitions will be viewed on a case-by-case basis. Any classroom space should be adequate to promote positive student learning and limit distractions. Rooms separated by a door are not considered the same classroom. Storage or unused space is not included in the designated classroom space.

SECTION 13 – PROGRAM STANDARDS

REGULATION 13.01:

All early childhood programs funded by ABC monies shall be developmentally appropriate and individualized to meet the needs of each student enrolled. The following references shall be utilized to determine developmental appropriateness:

- Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, Revised Edition, Edited by Sue Bredekamp and Carol Copple, © 2004 by NAEYC
- From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development, Edited by Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D. and Deborah A. Phillips, © 2000 by National Academy of Sciences.
- Arkansas Early Childhood Frameworks

REGULATION 13.02:

Programs shall demonstrate that the classroom arrangement satisfies "substantial portion of the day" as defined by the environmental rating scales. If used, room dividers shall be arranged and of sufficient height to prohibit distractions from other classes yet not hinder proper supervision within the classroom.

CLARIFICATION:

The materials and space arrangement must adhere to the components of the appropriate environmental rating scale assessments and best practice of serving preschool aged children.

REGULATION 13.03:

Each classroom shall be equipped with 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. A variety of equipment shall be accessible from low shelves to children of all ages and shall be arranged in learning centers.

CLARIFICATION:

Appropriate classroom materials and supplies should be available on a continual basis and not in preparation for monitoring purposes. Classroom should be organized, accessible to children and promote optimal learning according the various learning levels of the children meaningful and productive sustained play. Children with special needs must have classroom materials to accommodate their individual needs.

Further details may be found in guidance materials for the environmental rating scales.

REGULATION 13.04:

The program shall be individualized to meet the needs of each student enrolled. Each curriculum model and the actual classroom practice will be assessed using the applicable environmental rating scale to ensure the model is developmentally appropriate.

REGULATION 13.05:

The program shall have a written overall curriculum plan, which is arranged in thematic units, projects or topics of study and includes goals and objectives related to the following: cultural diversity, social/emotional development, creative/aesthetic learning, cognitive/intellectual learning, physical development and language.

CLARIFICATION:

The curriculum plan must support the curriculum in use by the program, which is stated in the grant application.

REGULATION 13.06:

All programs must utilize a curriculum approved by DCCECE. A list of approved curriculum models will be made available by DCCECE on an annual basis. A program wishing to use a curriculum not on the list may request, in writing to DCCECE, consideration of an additional curriculum. Program coordinators shall ensure teachers have adequate training on curriculum.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix J for a list of approved curricula.

If a program wishes to use a core curriculum not on this list, the program must first petition the Division in writing and provide evidence of how it meets the components to promote school readiness and in alignment with the state frameworks/ Common Core. Prior to approval, the Division may require a presentation of the curriculum to a committee with background in child development and curriculum instruction.

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 state frameworks/ Common Core.

Directors and coordinators must ensure teachers and paraprofessionals have adequate training on the selected curriculum model(s). ABC funds may be utilized for professional development in curriculum instruction.

REGULATION 13.07:

Children shall participate in a daily schedule that reflects a balance among the following types of activities: indoor/outdoor; quiet/active; individual/small group/large group; gross motor/fine motor; child initiated/teacher initiated.

CLARIFICATION:

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. Technical assistance is available to programs through state funding.

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

REGULATION 13.08:

Routine and transition times throughout the day, such as preparing for mealtime, shall be used as opportunities for incidental learning. Transition times shall be planned to avoid frequent disruption of children's activities and long waits between activities.

CLARIFICATION:

Every moment of the day should be a learning opportunity for children. Transitions work best when staff have planned ahead, avoid having children wait, and keep them actively involved.

REGULATION 13.09:

Programs shall maintain an individual child record on site. At a minimum, the record shall contain copies of:

- Birth certificate, hospital birth record or other official verification of birth date
- Documentation of child eligibility
- Completed and dated application form
- Emergency information, including non-parental contact and medical information
- Parental authorization for medical care, daily pick-up and field trips

- Field trip authorization
- Completed Health Form and Immunization record (or proof of current immunizations)
- Record of completed developmental screening
- Samples of child's work
- Teacher and parent observations and summaries of parent-teacher conferences
- Work Sampling Developmental Checklists

Child records or any ABC file containing personal information on families and children 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 DCCECE staff. If certain records must be stored offsite, copies shall be made and given to teachers to maintain in a record on-site. In maintaining and updating child and family data, ABC programs shall utilize COPA. Other than those documents required to be retained for licensing purposes, teachers shall give a copy of the child's record to the parent upon completion of or dis-enrollment from the program or forward the record to the child's kindergarten program.

CLARIFICATION:

Children's files should be maintained individually and in an organized manner. 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. All child specific information must be maintained in individual child records to maintain confidentiality.

Refer to Appendices B, C, E and G for acceptable forms of eligibility documentation.

REGULATION 13.10:

The arrangement of indoor and outdoor equipment, materials and interest areas for each group shall provide for:

- Accessibility to equipment and materials so that children may select and return them easily
- An orderly, uncluttered atmosphere
- Visual and/or auditory supervision of children in all areas
- Separation of active and quiet play areas
- Traffic patterns that avoid disruption of activities

CLARIFICATION:

ABC programs must provide an environment properly equipped for preschool children. ABC funding 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. Outdoor play should include the availability of centers with appropriate materials and equipment.

REGULATION 13.11:

At a minimum, developmentally appropriate equipment and materials of sufficient quantity to accommodate a sustained learning environment shall be provided in the following interest areas/learning centers:

1. Blocks
2. Dramatic Play
3. Stories/Language Development
4. Art
5. Discovery/Science Sensory
6. Sand/Water Play
7. Manipulative
8. Music

CLARIFICATION:

ABC funding may be used for the purchase of technology equipment and educational software. Classrooms may allow children to use technology equipment no more than 20 minutes daily. Technology related activities must be age and developmentally appropriate.

REGULATION 13.12:

Outdoor play shall be used as an extension of the learning activities that occur in the classroom. As such, ABC staff shall participate in this activity. Each ABC classroom shall offer a minimum of 60 minutes of outdoor play daily unless prevented by inclement weather.

CLARIFICATION:

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.

REGULATION 13.13:

The outdoor play area shall be developmentally appropriate and meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission standards for outdoor play areas. The outdoor play area shall provide the following:

- A variety of surfaces
- An arrangement designed for appropriate flow of activities
- Climbing and other active play items and structures
- Open areas for running and games
- Opportunities for dramatic play
- Adequate storage for equipment and materials
- Partial shade
- Quiet, private spaces
- A separate outdoor area equipped for infants and toddlers (if applicable)

CLARIFICATION:

The outdoor play area shall also be developmentally appropriate and meet the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards listed in the "Handbook for Public Playground Safety". 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.

REGULATION 13.14:

Provision should be made through program design and networking efforts to ease the transition of children moving from one program or age grouping to another or to public school kindergartens. This provision must include individual needs assessments on each child, lesson plans and specific activities written into the program design. At a minimum, the transition plan shall involve parents and appropriate school district personnel.

CLARIFICATION:

Best practice to assist in transitioning children from one program to the next is to establish a relationship with the next program/ classroom the child will be attending in the upcoming year. Develop a list of activities and maintain the results of implementation in folders or a notebook for documentation of transition. Parents will be involved throughout the plan to ensure the ease of transition for the child and family.

REGULATION 13.15:

ABC programs are required to provide free nutritious meals and snacks for all children enrolled in ABC/ABCSS. Mealtime is an opportunity to engage children in conversation about the day and themselves. Therefore, ABC staff shall participate with the children during this time. Children shall be given an appropriate amount of time for meals and conversation.

CLARIFICATION:

During the seven (7) hour program day, the ABC program shall provide breakfast, lunch and snack to each enrolled child in adherence to minimum licensing requirements. 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 nor may an ABC eligible child be dismissed due to non-qualification for NLSP. Programs shall not use food as a method of reward or the withholding of food as a method of punishment.

REGULATION 13.16:

Parents or guardians of children qualified as eligible for ABC services shall not be required to pay any fees or provide food or supplies during ABC program hours. This includes enrollment fees, field trip expenses or uniforms.

REGULATION 13.17:

Electronic mail is a necessary means by which DCCECE communicates vital information to programs. All participating programs must maintain a working e-mail address which is checked daily. Applicable information shall be distributed to classroom staff by the program coordinator.

CLARIFICATION:

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).*

SECTION 14 – CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT/ SPECIAL EDUCATION

REGULATION 14.01:

No child in ABC shall be dismissed or expelled from the program for behavior without approval from DCCECE.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix K for policy clarification regarding dismissal or expulsion of children.

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.

Strategies that were utilized to intervene or alter the child's behavior must be documented along with referrals for special services and/or training/ technical assistance. A behavioral plan should be developed with the assistance of the parent and the other individuals who will be interacting with the child. In rare instances when a child's behavior causes severe imminent danger to him/ herself or others (this greatly exceeds typical 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. For further clarification, please refer to Appendix N "The ABC Behavior Process" which must be utilized when requesting assistance from the Program Specialist.

REGULATION 14.02:

Discipline shall reflect positive guidance, be consistent and individualized for each child. Such discipline shall be appropriate to the child's level of understanding. Corporal punishment is an unacceptable method of discipline and shall not be used. Programs shall specifically define their approach to handling inappropriate behavior in the ABC parent handbook.

CLARIFICATION:

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

The use of corporal punishment is prohibited by DCCECE. Other unacceptable methods of discipline include, but are not limited to, suspension, expulsion, isolation, inappropriate verbal comments, yelling and withholding of food or activities.

REGULATION 14.03:

When a child presents with challenging behavior, teaching staff shall follow the standards of NAEYC Accreditation:

- Observe the children, then identify events, activities, interactions and other factors that predict and may contribute to challenging behavior.
- Rather than focus only on eliminating the behavior, teaching staff shall focus on teaching the child social, communication, and emotional regulation skills and using environmental modifications, activity modifications, adult or peer support and other teaching strategies to support the child's appropriate behavior.
- Teaching staff shall respond to challenging behavior, including physical aggression, in a manner that:
  - provides safety of the child
  - provides for the safety of others in the classroom
  - is calm

- is respectful to the child
- and provides the child with information on acceptable behavior.(From Accreditation Standards, National Association for the Education of Young Children

CLARIFICATION:

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.

For further clarification, please refer to Appendix N "The ABC Behavior Process" which must be utilized when requesting assistance from the Program Specialist.

REGULATION 14.04:

Teacher-parent discussions regarding a child's behavior shall be held in private and shall focus on working as a team to develop and implement an individualized plan that supports the child's inclusion and success. (Adapted from NAEYC) Teachers should request technical assistance from DCCECE on any discipline issues on which they have questions.

CLARIFICATION:

Confidentiality of each child/family should be maintained at all times.

REGULATION 14.05:

If necessary, intervention shall ensure each child has access to professional services, such as referrals to the educational cooperative behavioral specialist, the ADE-funded regional support network for early autism identification, community mental health center and a private therapist. If a child in question has a disability and is in the process or has been identified under IDEA, the ABC program shall follow state special education rules and regulations governing suspension/expulsion.

CLARIFICATION:

Programs should develop a list of contact information for state and local resources, accessible when needed. This area is an integral part of an effective local collaboration plan. Referral to the legally responsible special education entity (school district or early childhood special education cooperative) is required.

REGULATION 14.06:

If children demonstrate inappropriate behavior, as indicated by the results of the DECA given by ABC staff, the ABC program shall consult with the Early Childhood Special Education program regarding classroom modifications and interventions.

REGULATION 14.07:

For any ABC child also receiving special education services, appropriate staff from the Education Cooperative or school district shall have access to the child at mutually agreeable times during the program day in order to provide services outlined in the child's IEP.

CLARIFICATION:

The Special Education Program for children ages 3 to 5 years, is administered through Early Childhood Special Education at the Arkansas Department of Education. For children, birth to three years, special education is administered through DHS- Division of Disabilities Services, First Connection. These Early Childhood Special Education Programs are active partners with ABC to assist children with special needs. These professionals work through a network of education cooperatives, school districts and approved First Connection service providers to deliver services to preschool children/ infants-toddlers.

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 or First Connections depending on the age of the child. Following a referral, the Special Education Coordinator or representative of First Connections 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. A parent cannot "refuse" special education services before a referral is made and parental rights are explained by the Special Education representative. Programs may <u>not</u> refer to private providers in lieu of referral to the legally responsible special education entity.

An ABC program may NOT waive Special Education services through the cooperative/ school district on behalf of a parent, nor can a parent be required to select private therapeutic service providers.

The ABC program must make appropriate space available for service providers employed or contracted with the legally responsible special education entity. If space is limited, priority must be given to the service provider who represents the legally responsible special education entity (school district/education coop).The program should also collaborate with independent entities providing services to the child at the request of the parent.

The ABC program should verify all individuals serving children have the proper rights of access and documentation as required via Minimum Licensing Requirements are met.

REGULATION 14.08:

For any ABC child requiring the intervention services of special education, the ABC program shall collaborate with special education professionals to ensure each party has access to necessary information to provide the appropriate services. Early Education Special Education teachers shall have access to any information pertaining to a child receiving special education that is in the possession of the ABC program that would be necessary for reviewing and evaluating the child's progress in the general education setting. Access to proprietary information on the child shall be on a need-to-know basis.

CLARIFICATION:

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/ IFSP, 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/ IFSP team and must attend the meeting. If the classroom teacher is unable to attend, the Special Education provider must request permission from the parent to arrange for input by written or telephone participation. IEP/ IFSP objectives worked on by the special services provider shall be reinforced as a part of the daily classroom routine. The service provider should provide activities to be reinforced by the teacher. A copy of the IEP/ IFSP 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.

REGULATION 14.09:

A child shall not be dismissed from the ABC program due to a lack of toilet training skills. Nor may a program refuse to admit a child because of toilet training issues if the child meets all other age and income eligibility requirements.

CLARIFICATION:

Funds from ABC may be used to purchase resources such as diapers, pull-ups, wipes and private changing location.

REGULATION 14.10:

ABC programs shall assist children not yet toilet-trained with cooperation and enthusiasm. Programs shall not employ toilet-training techniques which could be construed as punishment or shaming the child. Programs are encouraged to include the parent or guardian in any plan so it may be reinforced at home. Funds from ABC may be used to purchase resources necessary to support toilet training.

CLARIFICATION:

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.

SECTION 15 – ASSESSMENT AND SCREENINGS

REGULATION 15.01:

DCCECE and ADE shall work cooperatively to ensure that the assessments are conducted as required by Act 49 of 2003.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix H for a list of deadlines.

REGULATION 15.02:

Children in the ABC program shall be assessed annually to provide an indication of each child's progress towards school readiness.

CLARIFICATION:

The current assessment instrument is Work Sampling or Ounce for the center-based programs. The HIPPY and PAT programs are using the Brigance Screening.

REGULATION 15.03:

The assessment shall address a child's strengths, progress, and needs and shall serve as a central part of an effective early childhood program. The assessment instrument selected by DCCECE and ADE shall be used for children enrolled in an ABC program.

REGULATION 15.04:

A comprehensive longitudinal study shall be implemented to evaluate the ABC program to ensure that the program goals are achieved. The study will be designed to use sound research-based evidence to determine whether the programs meet the expected standards. This research shall include children

entering the program at ages three (3) and four (4) years and follow the children through completion of the fourth grade benchmark exams. Research results will be provided annually to the Governor and the Senate Interim Committee on Education and the House Interim Committee on Education.

CLARIFICATION:

All ABC agencies are expected to fully cooperate and participate in the longitudinal study and any other research designated by the Legislature.

REGULATION 15.05:

Within forty-five (45) days of entering an ABC program, a child shall receive a routine annual developmental screening to determine individual needs. The program agency shall be responsible for completing the developmental screening. The purpose of screening is to identify developmental delays and/or educational deficiencies. Children so identified shall be referred to Special Education within seven (7) calendar days of the date of screening. Programs shall comply with state and federal laws for Special Needs students.

CLARIFICATION:

The program may either use qualified ABC staff who are trained to administer the screening or may contract the screenings to a local cooperative or other qualified assessor. The individual 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. The screening is a three part process consisting of observation, interview and administration of the instrument resulting in a decision. Documentation of the decision (pass, fail, refer, rescreen within 30 days), including referral when appropriate, must be maintained in the individual child's record.

REGULATION 15.06:

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.

REGULATION 15.07:

DCCECE will provide a list to programs of all acceptable developmental screening instruments on an annual basis.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix L for a list of approved developmental screening tools.

REGULATION 15.08:

Within 45 days of the first day of attendance, every child shall receive an age-appropriate health screening, which includes a hearing and vision test, performed by a licensed physician or physician assistant. Programs should contact DCCECE for information on seeking a waiver under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-701. Programs shall work in partnership with parents to obtain health screening information.

CLARIFICATION:

Health/ well child screenings should be completed every 2 years while the child is in the ABC program. However, parents should be encouraged to obtain the screening annually. This well child exam must include all of the elements defined in the age-appropriate screening such as the state sponsored (ARKids) Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) screening. A licensed physician or registered nurse practitioner must administer the screening. Hearing and vision screening are an integral part of the health screening and must be completed using an alternate source if not completed on the health screening.

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 the first day of attendance. 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 within the 45 day time frame.

REGULATION 15.09:

On or before the first day of attendance, parents or guardians shall provide proof that their child is current on all required immunizations or is on an acceptable "catch up" schedule. A waiver from this requirement may be granted from the Arkansas Department of Health under Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-702.

CLARIFICATION:

If the parents obtain a waiver from the AR Department of Health, this documentation must be a part of the child's record.

REGULATION 15.10:

Every classroom shall be equipped with a computer with high-speed internet access (where available in the state). Each home-based educator shall also have such access to a computer. This equipment is necessary for the timely completion of enrollment data in COPA and assessment data in the Work Sampling System.

CLARIFICATION:

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, tablets, cameras, printer/scanner for each classroom, family home, home visitor and parent educator. Technology equipment may be replaced every three years. The DCCECE will be requiring electronically scanned documents as more items will be transmitted via the data management system such as COPA.

SECTION 16 – PARENT AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

REGULATION 16.01:

Each program shall have a plan for parent involvement which includes opportunities for parental input into program operation and design. Parent involvement plans shall include a mechanism for parental advice and review of programmatic plans, parent conferences and a method to involve the parent in the child's educational experience.

CLARIFICATION:

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, classroom volunteering, fatherhood events and classroom lesson plans. Documentation of parent involvement activities specifying date, time and names of parents will be maintained for review.

REGULATION 16.02:

The program shall have an "open door" policy for parents which encourages visiting and participation in classroom activities. Opportunities for at least two parent-teacher conferences shall be given to parents.

CLARIFICATION:

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.

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.

REGULATION 16.03:

The program shall publish and utilize a parent handbook specifically for ABC program.

CLARIFICATION:

The following policies are required to be included in the parent handbook:

*Attendance policy (9.08)
*Tardy policy (9.08)
*Behavior guidance policy (14.02)

Other recommended items for the parent handbook:

Program's calendar
Parent Involvement Activities/ Plan
Kindergarten Transition Plan
Community Involvement Plan
Separation of Church and State Policy
Available Community Resources
Field Trip Requirements

REGULATION 16.04:

Each program shall have a plan for community/school district/educational services cooperative/agency involvement, which includes a description of how cooperation with other service providers who are concerned with the education, welfare, health and safety needs of young children, will be established and maintained. Programs should consider providing opportunities for community representatives to participate in the educational activities of the classroom.

CLARIFICATION:

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. Documentation of community involvement activities specifying date and time will be maintained for review. 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
- HIPPY / 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

REGULATION 17.01:

ABC Programs shall be required to comply with all applicable state and federal laws and guidelines (including the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's Guidelines for the Safe Transportation of Children in School Buses), as well as Child Care Licensing Standards, regulating the transportation of children.

REGULATION 17.02:

Offering transportation to and from an ABC program is strictly optional. DCCECE and ADE accept no liability for the transportation of children participating in an ABC program. Program agencies shall be responsible for the actions of their drivers. Drivers are subject to all background checks and exclusionary violations applicable to school district employees having contact with children.

CLARIFICATION:

Transportation of children to and from an ABC program is responsibility of the parent or guardian. 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.

REGULATION 17.03:

If an ABC program is approved to use the "buddy" system on a bus, the Agency shall NOT pair an ABC child with another child younger than sixth grade.

REGULATION 17.04:

An ABC child shall NOT be released from the vehicle unless an authorized adult meets the vehicle at a stop or in front of the child's home. Programs shall never release an ABC child from the vehicle alone. After exiting the vehicle, an ABC child shall not cross a street unless accompanied by the authorized adult.

CLARIFICATION:

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. Documentation of the adult authorized to either pickup or meet the child must be present in the child's record.

SECTION 18 – OTHER PROGRAM MODELS

REGULATION 18.01:

Alternate programs may include, but are not limited to, Licensed Child Care Family Homes, PAT and HIPPY. These programs will comply, where applicable, with the regulations herein.

REGULATION 18.02:

All ABC funded alternate program models will be developmentally appropriate, meet applicable health and safety standards, provide developmental and health screenings and ensure immunizations of the child served.

SECTION 19 – HIPPY REGULATIONS

REGULATION 19.01:

HIPPY programs shall meet program criteria as outlined in the contractual agreement signed by each site with Arkansas Children's Hospital and HIPPY USA.

REGULATION 19.02:

Each HIPPY program serving at least 160 families must have one (1) full-time coordinator, holding a minimum of a bachelor's degree in education, social work, sociology, psychology, or related field. Those coordinators without a related degree must obtain at least 12 college course hours in early childhood. Programs with more than 250 children must also have at least one part-time coordinator who holds a minimum of an Associate's Degree in early childhood education, social work, psychology or related field. Coordinators shall also meet additional job requirements as described in the HIPPY USA Coordinator job description. HIPPY Coordinators must attend National HIPPY Pre-service Training and receive certification. Regardless of the number of children served, HIPPY Agencies must make provision to ensure all home-based visitors are supervised appropriately by trained staff.

REGULATION 19.03:

Home Based Educators working 31-40 hours per week may not serve more than 27 families. Minimum requirements for home educators include a high school diploma/GED and a current CDA credential. All new HIPPY home-based educators are required to attend new Home-based Educators training provided by Arkansas State HIPPY.

REGULATION 19.04:

Hiring of any HIPPY coordinator or home-based educator not meeting the requirements of 19.02-19.03 must be approved by DCCECE through a Staff Qualifications Plan. DCCECE shall monitor such plans to ensure adequate progress is being made. HIPPY Coordinators working under a staff qualifications plan must obtain at least 12 college hours per year.

CLARIFICATION:

The teacher or a paraprofessional on a Staff Qualifications Plan (SQP) must show progress each semester toward obtaining a degree toward early childhood education/ development. SQP application and progress reports must be submitted to the ABC Program staff for approval.

REGULATION 19.05:

HIPPY programs must follow the child eligibility requirements found in Section 4. However, the cut-off date for determining age eligibility for children served in HIPPY is December 31 of each year.

REGULATION 19.06:

In order to dually enroll a child in an ABC center and HIPPY, a child must meet the ABC income requirements (< 200% FPL) plus possess at least one of the following factors:

-Parents without HS diploma or GED
-Birth weight < 5 pounds, 9 ounces
-Parent is < 18 years of age at child's birth
-Family has a history of substance abuse/addiction
-Eligible for services under IDEA
-Parent has history or abuse or neglect or is a victim or abuse or neglect
-Child exhibits a demonstrable developmental delay as identified through an appropriate screening
-Child lives in a single parent household or has parents who are divorced
-Child is a foster child
-Child has an incarcerated parent
-Child has parents who cannot read
-Child is homeless
-Child or parent has limited English proficiency
-Child is in the custody of family member other than mother and father

Whichever program enrolls the child at the later date shall be responsible for verifying eligibility for dual enrollment. Dual enrollment shall not exceed 25% of the program's total ABC enrollment. If the same Agency operates both a center-based and home-visiting program, dual enrollment shall not exceed 25% of the average of both programs' enrollment.

CLARIFICATION:

Refer to Appendix G for a list of acceptable forms of documentation for dual eligibility.
When a child is dually enrolled, both programs shall maintain documentation of program and dual eligibility. The center based program will be responsible for maintaining the COPA record for each child. The home visiting program will be responsible for entering home visit information.

REGULATION 19.07:

Center-based and home-visiting programs shall collaborate in providing services to any child qualifying for dual enrollment under 19.06.

CLARIFICATION:

Parent teacher conferences will be coordinated and held jointly to reflect the comprehensive services provided by both ABC agencies. Documentation will include the names of the representatives of both programs in attendance.

REGULATION 19.08:

The Arkansas HIPPY Training and Technical Assistance (T and TA) Office will monitor and assist HIPPY programs throughout the state. Annual program site reviews and assessments will be forwarded to DCCECE for consideration of program compliance and funding renewal. The Arkansas HIPPY Office will assist DCCECE with determining program compliance at the local level.

CLARIFICATION:

The ABC Program Specialists will work with the AR HIPPY T/TA Office to coordinate monitoring activities. Annual program site reviews and assessments will be forwarded to the assigned ABC Program Specialist.

REGULATION 19.09:

HIPPY programs shall meet requirements as set forth in Sections 4-9 and 13-16.

REGULATION 19.10:

Group meetings should reflect the educational programming standards as set forth in Section 13 and guidelines set forth in the HIPPY model.

REGULATION 19.11:

Any enhancements designed to complement the HIPPY curriculum must be approved by the Arkansas HIPPY Office prior to implementation with families.

SECTION 20 – PARENTS AS TEACHERS REGULATIONS

REGULATION 20.01:

PAT Programs shall meet program criteria as outlined in PAT Program Implementation and Planning Guide.

REGULATION 20.02:

All PAT Coordinators must attend the PAT Institute Training and obtain either a Parent Educator Certificate or an Administrator's Certificate.

REGULATION 20.03:

Each program must have a certified Parent Educator, who may also serve as Coordinator.

REGULATION 20.04:

PAT Parent Educators working on a part-time basis (20 hours per week) should serve 30 and not more than 40 children and their families.

REGULATION 20.05:

PAT Programs shall operate on a twelve month, year-round basis. Families must be offered twelve personal visits and six parent group meetings.

REGULATION 20.06:

PAT Programs shall follow the child eligibility requirements found in Section 4.

REGULATION 20.07:

PAT programs may dually enroll children also participating in a center-based program under the guidelines of 19.06-19.07.

CLARIFICATION:

Parent teacher conferences will be coordinated and held jointly to reflect the comprehensive services provided by both ABC agencies. Documentation will include the names of the representatives of both programs in attendance.

REGULATION 20.08:

PAT Programs must coordinate services with HIPPY Programs where both exist in the same community to avoid duplication of services.

REGULATION 20.09:

PAT Programs shall meet requirements as set forth in Sections 4-7 and 14-16.

SECTION 21 – CHILD CARE FAMILY HOMES

REGULATION 21.01:

Licensed child care family homes participating in ABC must meet the same requirements as an ABC center, except where listed in this section.

REGULATION 21.02:

Group size for an ABC classroom in a CCFH shall not exceed sixteen (16) children or maximum licensing capacity, whichever is less.

REGULATION 21.03:

The ABC family home teacher must possess a minimum of a CDA credential and file a Staff Qualifications Plan which outlines a plan to complete a four-year degree in early childhood or child development. For any ABC room with more than 10 children, an additional staff person with a minimum of a CDA credential must also be present.

CLARIFICATION:

The teacher or a paraprofessional on a Staff Qualifications Plan (SQP) must show progress each semester toward obtaining a degree toward early childhood education/ development. SQP application and progress reports must be submitted to the ABC Program staff for approval.

REGULATION 21.04:

No SQP shall be approved for an ABC family home teacher to complete a CDA credential or Associate degree. The only SQP that shall be approved for an ABC family home teacher is for a four-year degree in early childhood or child development.

REGULATION 21.05:

In evaluating the ABC program in a CCFH, the applicable ERS for family homes shall be utilized. Family homes shall be subject to the same guidelines as listed in Section 9.

CLARIFICATION:

Each ABC center-based site or family home shall be reviewed 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, each classroom shall have a copy of the appropriate rating scale book and a copy of the guidance. (i.e. All About the ECERS-R or All About the ITERS-R).

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. The site contact 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. With the exception of holiday breaks, the site contact 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.

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

SECTION 22 - COMPLIANCE

REGULATION 22.01:

Any person may make a formal complaint with the DCCECE if that person has reason to believe that an ABC provider failed to comply with these rules or Ark Code Ann. 6-45-101 et seq.

22.01.1 The formal complaint shall include the following:

22.01.1.1 The name, phone number and address of the complaining party;

22.01.1.2 The name of the ABC program complained of;

22.01.1.3 A brief description of the acts or omissions the complaining party has reason to believe constitute a violation of these rules or Ark Code Ann. § 6-45-101 et seq;

22.01.1.4 Documents, if any, that support the complaint; and

22.01.1.5 The names and contact information, if known, of any witnesses who may possess information relevant to the complaint.

22.01.2 Signed complaints shall be mailed to the DCCECE at:

Arkansas Better Chance Program
Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
700 Main Street, Slot S-140
Little Rock, Arkansas 72203-1473

22.01.3 DCCECE staff shall investigate the complaint. The investigation shall afford an opportunity for the ABC provider to respond to the complaint.

REGULATION 22.02:

An ABC program found to be out of compliance with any ABC Rule or Regulation shall be placed on a 60-day Compliance Plan. During this probationary period, a program must make all necessary corrections or be subject to termination from the ABC program. Compliance deficiencies may also result in immediate termination from the ABC program, denial of future ABC funds, repayment of funds and exclusion from participation in any DHS programs.

CLARIFICATION:

If the Division recommends termination of an ABC grant agreement due to ongoing non-compliance findings with the ABC Rules/ Act or the health and safety of children, the DCCECE shall send the agency a certified letter recommending 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 agency shall be allowed the opportunity to address the Board. If the Board votes to terminate the grant, the Division shall notify the agency via certified letter of the final date of operation and negotiate a final payment. If a grant agreement is terminated for cause, agency or authorized representatives may not reapply for the ABC grant for 12 months from the date of termination.

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. 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.

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

REGULATION 22.03:

Issues for a compliance plan may include, but are not limited to:

- Founded licensing or maltreatment complaints
- Violations of minimum licensing standards
- Revocation of Quality Approval status or failing to meet Quality Approval standards
- Financial mismanagement, including use of funds for programs other than ABC programs as set forth in these rules.
- Failure to operate program in accordance with approved budget or any part of an approved grant application
- Enrolling ineligible children or refusing to enroll an eligible child due to toilet training issues or non-payment of other child care fees
- Habitually late reports or missing information
- Failure to report a change in program status within five working days
- Program deficiencies documented by DCCECE or any authorized representative
- Erroneous or fraudulent billing of DCCECE vouchers or Special Nutrition programs
- Falsification of any document or information
- Hiring of unqualified staff without consultation with DCCECE on a Staff Qualifications Plan.
- Staff members not meeting the requirements of a Staff Qualifications Plan.
- Dismissing or expelling a child from a program without approval from DCCECE.

REGULATION 22.04:

Any program who submits a falsified document will be subject to immediate termination from the ABC program, repayment of funds and possible referral of program officials and/or responsible employees for criminal prosecution.

CLARIFICATION:

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

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
- Alteration of reports such as financial, etc.

REGULATION 22.05:

An ABC program may appeal any adverse action taken by DCCECE. Such appeals must be in writing and be received within thirty (30) days of the notice of corrective action. A program wishing to appeal should send a written notice to Attention: DCCECE Division Director, P.O. Box 1437, Slot S-140, Little Rock, AR 72203. The Division Director will make a recommendation to the State Board of Education, which will issue a final ruling.

SECTION 23 – ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE USE OF ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE PROGRAM FUNDS

Refer to Appendix M for further clarification of this section.

REGULATION 23.01:

Purpose: To assure that public funds are spent in compliance with U.S. Const. Amend. I, which prohibits any state or federal “law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.”

REGULATION 23.02:

Limitation: This section is not an exhaustive list of criteria to test constitutional sufficiency. The question in every case is whether state funds impermissibly aid a religiously based or affiliated entity in discharging its religious mission. The answer will be controlled by the particular facts of each case.

REGULATION 23.03:

Definitions: As used in this Section 23:

23.03.1 “ABC day” means the seven (7) hours beginning with the first ABC activity of the day and includes all activities described in Section 13 of the ABC Program Standards.

23.03.2 “ABC instructional materials” means any tangible thing, such as a book, paper, poster, picture, slide, object, or display; or image or sound that an ABC provider uses to impart knowledge during an ABC day.

23.03.3 “Administrative costs” means:

(a) Salaries (including fringe)-Director and Assistance Director;

(b) Salaries-Housekeeping;

(c) Group Health Insurance;

(d) Child Care Center liability insurance;

(e) Pensions;

(f) Unemployment Taxes;

(g) Worker’s Compensation;

(h) Accounting Fees;

(i) Housekeeping Supplies; and

(j) Criminal Background Checks.

23.03.4 “Professional services” means, without limitation, assessment, screening, Instruction, and parent/community engagement activities.

23.03.5 “Religious activities” means, without limitation, religious services, prayer, religious rituals, or religious instruction provided or carried out by or under the authority of the ABC program.

23.03.6 “Secular” means not related to religion.

REGULATION 23.04:

Conditions of Participation as an ABC Provider:

23.04.1 ABC programs must admit eligible students without regard to race, gender, national origin, ancestry, color, disability, creed, political affiliation, or religion.

23.04.2 ABC funds must be used exclusively for the following expenses incurred to provide ABC services:

(a) Professional services (compensation and fringe benefits);

(b) Assessment and screening tools;

(c) Instructional materials;

(d) Transportation to and from ABC programs;

(e) Staff development;

(f) Financial assistance for staff working towards a secular degree or credential relating to early childhood education, including but not limited to books, tuition and travel; and

(g) If ABC funds remain after paying the expenses described in subparagraphs (a)-(f), those funds may be used to:

(1) Provide food for ABC students;

(2) Pay that portion of administration costs, utilities, or both, attributable to day care operations multiplied by the following fraction: number of ABC students/ total number of day care students.

23.04.3 All ABC instruction and instruction materials must be secular and neutral with respect to religion.

23.04.4 No religious activity may occur during any ABC day and no ABC funds may be used to support religious services, instruction or programming at any time.

23.04.5 Each ABC provider must maintain documentation that it has provided parents and guardians with the following written notice:

"To assure that no religious activity is paid or subsidized by public funds or occurs in any manner suggesting governmental endorsement of any religion or message:

(a) ABC funds must be used exclusively to support allowable ABC program costs incurred to provide non-religious instruction and activities during the ABC day; and

(b) No religious activity may occur during any ABC day regardless of the source of funds used to support the activity."

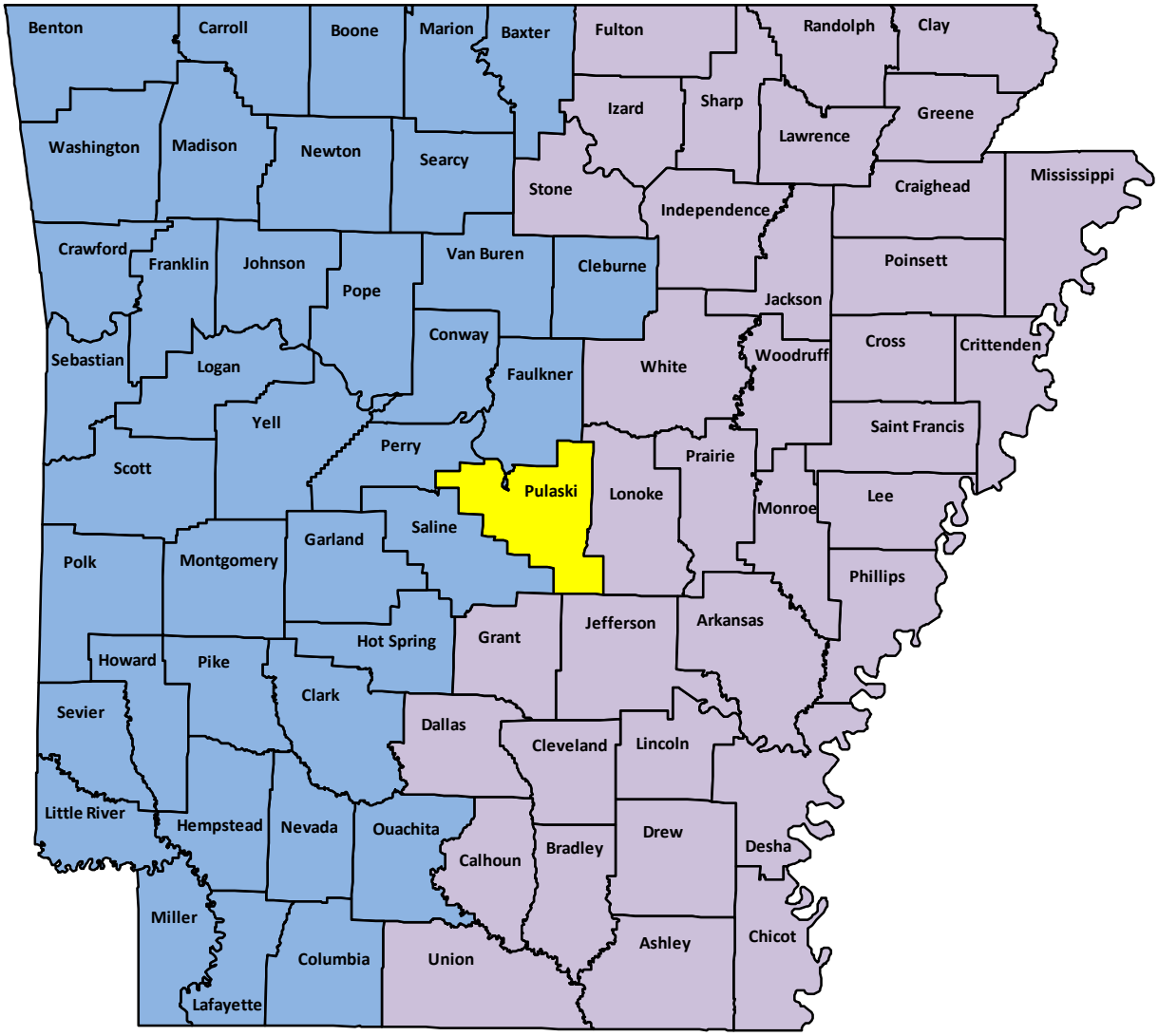
23.04.6 Each ABC provider must annually certify compliance with each requirement of this rule and agree to such unannounced public inspection and investigation as may be necessary to ascertain and monitor the provider's compliance.

23.04.7 Each ABC provider must establish and maintain a separate bank account for the deposit, transfer and withdrawal all ABC funds. No other funds of the ABC provider shall be commingled in the bank account with ABC funds and no ABC funds shall be placed in another bank account maintained by the ABC provider.

APPENDIX A – ABC CONTACT INFORMATION

PROGRAM SPECIALISTS

DATA SPECIALISTS



Map Created:
Wednesday, August 20, 2014

Kathy Miles	501-320-8949	kathy.miles@dhs.arkansas.gov
Nancy Pearlstein	501-320-8948	nancy.pearlstein@dhs.arkansas.gov
Pulaski Co: Kathy: non-SD, LRSD Nancy: NLRSD - PCSSD		

ADDITIONAL ABC CONTACTS:

Program Administrator

Mary Kaye McKinney 501-320-8946 mary.mckinney@dhs.arkansas.gov

Program Manager

Susan Underwood 501-320-8920 susan.underwood@dhs.arkansas.gov

Financial Specialist

Vacant

Administrative Assistant

Lynda Lee 501-320-8942 lynda.lee@dhs.arkansas.gov

APPENDIX B - ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE (ABC) ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTATION

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 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 which is published annually

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. W-2 forms
c. Federal Income Tax Forms
d. Schedule C or Schedule F, for self-employed only
e. Free/Reduced Lunch Application documenting income amount, only if income is verified and signed by district representative (cannot be used by private providers)
f. Letter from DHS caseworker showing family gross income is ≤ 200% of FPL (TEA, food stamp approval, child care voucher approval, verification of ARKids A with current eligibility status)
g. Notarized letter, or letter on company letterhead, signed by employer showing annual, monthly, or hourly income (if hourly or weekly, number of hours worked daily or weekly).
h. Notarized letter signed by each parent in the household verifying that parent(s) is not employed and has no earned income.
I. Medicaid Card if accompanied by written verification by DHS of ARKids of current active status.

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

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

APPENDIX C – ARKANSAS BETTER CHANCE FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS (ABCSS) ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTATION

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 that is in alignment with the legislated Kindergarten enrollment date:

- The child is 3 years of age by August 1
- The child is 4 years of age by August 1

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, etc. 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)
- W-2 forms
- Federal Income Tax Forms
- Schedule C or Schedule F, for self-employed only
- Free/Reduced Lunch Application showing income amount, only if income is verified and signed by district representative (cannot be used by private providers)
- Letter from DHS caseworker showing family gross income is ≤ 200% of FPL (TEA, food stamp approval, child care voucher approval, verification of ARKids A with current eligibility status)
- Notarized letter or letter on business letterhead, signed by employer showing income and hours worked daily or weekly.
- Notarized letter signed by each parent in the household verifying that parent(s) is not employed and has no earned income.
- Medicaid Card if accompanied by written verification by DHS of ARKids with current active status.

2016-2017 ABC PROGRAM INCOME GUIDELINES

Family Size	100% of FPL	185% of FPL	200% of FPL
1	$ 11,880	$ 21,978	$ 23,760
2	$ 16,020	$ 29,637	$ 32,040
3	$ 20,160	$ 37,296	$ 40,320
4	$ 24,300	$ 44,955	$ 48,600
5	$ 28,440	$ 52,614	$ 56,880
6	$ 32,580	$ 60,273	$ 65,160
7	$ 36,730	$ 67,951	$ 73,460
8	$ 40,890	$ 75,647	$ 81,780
For each additional person add	$4,160 per person	$7,696 per person	$8,320 per person

APPENDIX E - INCOME EXEMPTION DOCUMENTATION

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 (at time of enrollment)

a. Court record
b. Documentation from DHS

• Child has incarcerated parent (during child's lifetime)

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 (at time of enrollment)

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 (within the lifetime of the child)

a. Law enforcement
b. Court document
c. Documentation from Department of Corrections website
d. Newspaper article

• Child has parent activated for (may be stateside /out of state or overseas, and must be a minimum of 30 days duration) overseas military duty (at time of enrollment)

a. Deployment Orders
b. Letter from Department of Defense notifying that parent will be deployed

APPENDIX F - 2016-2017 SLIDING FEE SCALE CHART

2016 -2017 Sliding Fee Scale

Family Size	up to 200%	up to 212.5%	up to 225%	up to 237.5%	up to 250%	Not Eligible
1	$0 - $1980.00	$1980.01 - $2103.75	$2103.76 - $2227.50	$2227.51 - $2351.25	$2351.26 - $2475.00	$29,700.01
2	$0 - $2670.00	$2670.01 - $2836.88	$2836.89 - $3003.75	$3003.76 - $3170.63	$3170.64 - $3337.50	$40,050.01
3	$0 - $3360.00	$3360.01 - $3570.00	$3570.01 - $3780.00	$3780.01 - $3990.00	$3990.01 - $4200.00	$50,400.01
4	$0 - $4050.00	$4050.01 - $4303.13	$4303.14 - $4556.25	$4556.26 - $4809.38	$4809.39 - $5062.50	$60,750.01
5	$0 - $4740.00	$4740.01 - $5036.25	$5036.26 - $5332.50	$5332.51 - $5628.75	$5628.76 - $5925.00	$71,100.01
6	$0 - $5430.00	$5430.01 - $5769.38	$5769.39 - $6108.75	$6108.75 - $6448.13	$6448.14 - $6787.50	$81,450.01
7	$0 - $6121.67	$6121.68 - $6504.27	$6504.28 - $6886.88	$6886.89 - $7269.48	$7269.49 - $7652.08	$91,824.97
8	$0 - $6815.00	$6815.01 - $7240.94	$7240.95 - $7666.88	$7666.89 - $8092.81	$8092.82 - $8518.75	$102,225.01
FEE %	No Fee	20%	40%	60%	80%	Full Rate
Monthly Center/FH Fee (per child)	$0	$97.20	$194.40	$291.60	$388.80	$486.00
Monthly HIPPY/PAT Fee (per child)	$0	$35.00	$70.00	$105.00	$140.00	$175.00

APPENDIX G - DUAL ENROLLMENT ELIGIBILITY DOCUMENTATION

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 (Refer to Homeless Definition under Additional Definitions – Section 3):

a. Notarized statement by parent
b. Documentation from DHS or school documentation for sibling

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 (within the lifetime of the child)

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. Maintenance of the child data in COPA is the responsibility of the center based program. Both programs should maintain documentation of both eligibility and dual eligibility.

APPENDIX H - REPORTING DEADLINES

COPA Billing Report

October 5
November 5
December 5
January 5
February 5
March 5
April 5

WORK SAMPLING FINALIZATION

November 4
February 10
May 12

BUDGET

January 30 Mid-year expenditure Reports
July 30 End of Year /Final expenditure Report

June 1 Last Date to Submit Budget Amendment

Disclosure Audit

Within 120 days of the program's fiscal year completion

STAFF QUALIFICATION PLANS-PROGRESS REPORTS

January 30
July 30

Submit staff qualification plans on new staff

Within 15 days of hire

PROGRAM CHANGES

Program changes made to the program shall be reported to the ABC Program Specialist within 5 days of change. This may include but not limited to new location, new classroom, staff changes, etc.

DEVELOPMENTAL AND HEALTH SCREENINGS

Within 45 calendar days of first day of attendance screenings completed
Within 60 calendar days of first day of attendance screenings entered in COPA

APPENDIX I - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

Program Coordinators

Required

1. ABC Coordinator Training (annually)
2. ABC Financial Training
3. New Director's Orientation (one-time only)

As part of Better Beginnings, Coordinators are required to attend:

1. PAS Basics (or BAS Basics for homes)
2. ERS Training
3. Training on developmentally appropriate physical activities for children

NOTE: These are one-time only trainings.

While Program Coordinators are not required to take the following trainings (unless they are also classroom staff), we highly encourage that they obtain the training for informational purposes:

1. COPA
2. Work Sampling Administrative Overview

Classroom Staff (Teachers and Paraprofessionals)

Environmental Rating Scales (ECERS, ITERS, FCCERS) for new staff and as needed thereafter

Work Sampling Training:

1. Initial Work Sampling training is required for all new classroom staff (one-time)
2. Work Sampling Refresher is required annually (accessible via webinar, etc.)
3. Work Sampling Curriculum Connections (this is highly recommended for existing classroom staff but not required)

Curriculum Trainings (one-time for all classroom staff):

1. Arkansas Early Childhood or Infant/Toddler Frameworks
2. Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas)
3. INDEX (Math & Science for Young Children)
4. Social/Emotional Learning in Arkansas

NOTE: All courses do not all have to completed in the same year – must have a plan for staff to complete.

COPA

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

APPENDIX J - APPROVED CURRICULA LIST

Curriculum Name	Publisher	Vendor Name	Address	Phone Number	Website
Adventures in Learning Curriculum	AR DHS/Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education	ARDHS/DCCECE	P.O. Box 1437, Slot S160 7th & Main Street Little Rock, AR 72203	1-800-445-3316	http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/adventures/#Adventures In Learning Program
Adventures for Toddlers	AR DHS/Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education	ARDHS/DCCECE	P.O. Box 1437, Slot S160 7th & Main Street Little Rock, AR 72203	1-800-445-3316	http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/advfortoddlers/#Adventures For Toddlers Program
All About Preschoolers	Kaplan Early Learning Company	Kaplan Early Learning Company	ERSI 711 Greenwood Rd. Chapel Hill, NC 72514	800-334-2014 ext. 5346	http://ers.fpg.unc.edu/node/150
Big Day for Pre-K	Scholastic Educational	Scholastic, Inc.	N/A	1-877-234-7323	www.scholastic.com
Comprehensive Preschool Program (Letter People/Big Book Math/Big Book Science)	Abrams & Company	Abrams & Company Publishers, Inc.	P.O. Box 10025 Waterbury, CT 06725	1-800-227-9120	www.abramsandcompany.com
Core Knowledge	Core Knowledge Foundation	Core Knowledge Foundation	801 E. High Street Charlottesville, VA 22902	1-800-238-3233	www.coreknowledge.org
Creative Curriculum	Teaching Strategies	Teaching Strategies, Inc.	7101 Wisconsin Ave. Suite 700 Bethesda MD 20814	1-800-637-3652	www.TeachingStrategies.com
Curiosity Corner	Success For All Foundation	Success For All Foundation	200 W. Towsontown Blvd. Baltimore, MD 21014	1-800-548-4998	www.successforall.net
DLM Early Childhood Express	McGraw-Hill	Wright Group	P.O. Box 182605 Columbus, OH 43218	1-800-334-7344	www.mheonline.com
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt PreK Education	HMH Publishers	HMH -Publishers	Kim Hearne 2405 Crown Court North Little Rock, AR 72116	1-800-225-5425	www.hmhschool.com
High Reach Learning Curriculum	High Reach Learning	High Reach Learning	HighReach Learning PO Box 35665 Greensboro, NC 27425-5665	1-800-729-9988 Fax: 800-729-4754	www.highreach.com
HighScope	HighScope Educational Research Foundation	HighScope	600 N. River St. Ypsilanti, MI 48198-2898	1-800-40-PRESS	www.highscope.com
Montessori	N/A	Montessori Educators International, Inc.	Aleta Ledendecker Montessori Educators International, Inc 913 Cumberland Drive Louisville, TN 37777	1-865-970-4322	www.discoveret.org/mei_inc/
Opening the World of Learning	Pearson Early Learning	Pearson Early Learning	Pearson K12 P.O. Box 2500 Lebanon, IN 46052	1-800-848-9500	www.PearsonEarlyLearning.com
Pebble Soup	HMH Publishers	HMH Publishers - Steck Vaughn	Jim and Debra Simpson 222 Berkley St Boston, MS	1-800-289-4490	www.steck-vaughn.com
PreschoolFirst	The Source for Learning	PreschoolFirst	Sheila Sabio, Educational Srvcs Mngr 12355 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 625 Reston, VA 20191	703-860-9200 or 1-866-584-2900	www.preschoolfirst.com
Project Approach	N/A	N/A	N/A	For more information please contact: Clarissa Wallace 870-972-3055	projectapproach.org
""					IllinoisPIP.org
""					ECRP.uiuc.edu
Reggio Emilia Inspired	N/A	N/A	N/A	For more information please contact: Terry Michaels 870-972-3055	North American Reggio Emilia Alliance (NAREA) www.reggioalliance.org
Scholastic Early Childhood Curriculum	Scholastic Educational	Scholastic, Inc.	N/A	1-877-234-7323	www.scholastic.com
The Investigator Club	Robert-Leslie Publishing	Robert-Leslie Publishing, Inc.	4147 N. Ravenwood, Suite 301 Chicago, Il 60613	1-773-935-8358	www.robert-leslie.com

APPENDIX K - CLARIFICATION REGARDING DISMISSAL/EXPULSION

Arkansas Better Chance/Arkansas Better Chance for School Success
Program Update: November 8, 2011

Purpose:

This clarification is provided to ensure intervention strategies, for a child who is an imminent danger to himself or others are timely and effective.

It is the intent of the Division to enable programs to address situations in which an imminent danger exists in a timely manner, while meeting administrative responsibilities.

This clarification does not pertain to those instances when a child is "non-compliant" or exhibiting behaviors that are age appropriate, and for which appropriate classroom interventions can be effective.

Definitions:
 The terms "dismissed" and "expelled" are defined as a permanent discharge of the child and as such require prior approval from the State Pre-K/ABC Program Administrator within the Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education.
 The term "imminent danger" refers to an immediate serious risk of harm.

Procedures:
Steps to be completed when a child must be removed temporarily for challenging behaviors that constitute an imminent danger to the child or others follow:

 Document challenging behaviors and interventions attempted using a behavior tracking log and maintain log on premises.

 Notify the Division within 24 hours after the temporary removal via an email to the ABC Program Specialist. Include notice of the action taken (removal to home) and the specific reasons for removal as an imminent danger to the child or others.

 Make a referral to the agency responsible for early childhood special education services in local area. If a child's behavior is such that it necessitates temporary removal on a repeated basis, there should be sufficient documentation for consideration of special education services.

 Maintain documentation on file of the outcomes of the incident, subsequent parent conference, and plan developed that includes appropriate intervention strategies. The purpose of the parent conference is to develop a plan jointly with the family and available resources, to address the specific behaviors which constitute an imminent danger (recurring violence, behavior, or aggression).

APPENDIX L – LIST OF APPROVED DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING TOOLS

The following screening tools have been approved for use within the ABC Program:

- Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ-3), Third Edition
- Battelle
- Brigance
- Carolina
- Denver II
- Dial
- Early Screening Inventory (ESI)
- LAP-D

APPENDIX M – CLARIFICATION REGARDING SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

Arkansas Better Chance/Arkansas Better Chance for School Success
Program Update: January 23, 2012

Subject: Separation of Church and State

You may be aware of recent complaints that some Arkansas Better Chance/Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABC) Programs include religious activities. The Establishment Clause in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution prohibits public aid for religious worship or instruction. Court decisions interpreting the Establishment Clause make it clear that ABC materials must be neutral with respect to religion, and that no religious activity may occur during the ABC day. As a result, the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education must:

1) Monitor First Amendment compliance during regular licensing visits to providers receiving public funds; and
2) Respond to complaints of First Amendment violations.

Providers found to be out of compliance with the Establishment Clause will be given 30 days to correct all Constitutional violations or lose public funding, subject to appeal.

The Department of Education and the Department of Human Services have developed a proposed rule to provide guidance about the Constitutional prohibitions. Compliance with the proposed rule will assure that public funds are not to be used for any religious activity.

The proposed rule will take effect after notice and public comment as required by the Arkansas Administrative Procedure Act.