



## **State Support for the First Thousand Days After Birth**

### **State Spotlight: Arkansas**

*Information current as of December 2025.*

## **1. Care Coordination and Pregnancy Support**

### **1.1 Pregnancy Support**

#### **Alternatives to Abortion**

Arkansas funded a \$1 million grant program for fiscal year 2024. Funds were available to support “pregnancy help organizations,” which include pregnancy centers, adoption agencies, maternity homes, and other social services organizations.

#### **SB 286 (2023)**

This legislation allocated \$ 1 million in grants to pregnancy care organizations that provide material or medical assistance to families or individuals facing an unexpected pregnancy. The goal of this legislation was to promote childbirth over abortion.

### **1.2 Care Coordination**

#### **ConnectCare**

This component of Medicaid helps Arkansas Medicaid members as well as ARKids First members find primary care providers and dentists. Components of this program include a toll-free helpline, a dental coordinated care program, and health promotion and outreach services.

#### **Life Choices Lifeline and Continuum of Care**

This program funds providers who offer care coordination and resource referrals via telemedicine. Providers must offer healthy pregnancy program services. Program services include evaluating participant needs; providing information and helping in obtaining health care; care plan coordination services, which include developing a care plan, providing referrals to needed resources, and aiding participants in accomplishing the plan; and resource access assistance, which involves education on available resources

and screening for abuse. To qualify for assistance through this program, recipients must be one of the following:

- A biological parent of an unborn child or an adoptive parent of a child under two.
- A pregnant woman seeking an abortion in Arkansas.
- A parent or legal guardian of a pregnant minor who is an Arkansas resident.

Participants and participating organizations cannot be an abortion provider, assist women in obtaining an abortion (through referrals, recommendation, promotion, or facilitation), or own or operate an abortion center.

## 2. Women's Health

### *2.1 Prenatal and Postpartum Medical Care*

#### Family Planning Program

Arkansas' Family Planning Program provides family planning services at 92 of its Local Health Units. Services are available to all Arkansas residents regardless of their ability to pay. Services include contraception provision and education, physical exams, Pap/HIV testing, STI testing, preconception health services, pregnancy testing and counseling, and basic infertility services.

#### ADH Maternity Program

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) Local Health Units provide prenatal and women's health care at little to no cost. No one is turned away because of inability to pay. ADH maintains a [directory](#) of Local Health Units.

### *2.2 Prenatal and Postpartum Support*

#### SB 426 (2023)

This legislation extended the paid maternity leave time for state employees from four to 12 weeks. This benefit extends to women who gave birth, adopted a child, or are fostering a child.

#### Breastfeeding Information and Support

Arkansas WIC includes free breast pumps available to every mom enrolled in the program. WIC also provides free breastfeeding educational materials and support from WIC staff, including Breastfeeding Peer Counselors. Breastfeeding Peer Counselors are Arkansas moms who can help new breastfeeding moms learn about the process.

#### Evidence-Based Home Visiting (EBHV) Programs

The ADH administers federal Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Education (MIECHV) funding to state and non-profit-run home visiting models. Supported models include:

- [Nurse-Family Partnership](#)

The NFP program is directly run by the ADH. This program promotes the mother's health during pregnancy, child development, and her personal growth. The program is administered by public health nurses.

- The NFP model is designed for first-time moms and their children who are low income.
- Women can be enrolled through 28 weeks of pregnancy and home visits continue until the child turns two.

- [Healthy Families America](#)

The HFA program provides weekly home visits to at-risk families, including single-parent families and those with a history of substance use or domestic violence. Women can enroll during pregnancy or the first three months after birth. The program continues through ages three to five.

- Eligibility is determined by the local HFA site.

- [Parents as Teachers](#)

PAT is a nonprofit that promotes child development and learning by providing caregivers with regular home visits, group meetings, health screenings for kids, and family resources. Families are eligible from pregnancy until the child's fifth birthday. The program is focused on kids with special health needs; parents with mental health or substance use issues; first-time or teen parents; immigrant families; and families at risk for child abuse.

- Eligibility is determined by each PAT affiliate.

- [Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters \(HIPPY\)](#)

This home visiting model focuses on promoting preschool readiness and helping parents become their child's first teacher. The program provides families with free books and learning materials and free home visits once a week. Group meetings are held at least once a month for parents to connect with other parents in the program. This program is for families with children ages 2-5.

- [Following Baby Back Home \(Promising Approach\)](#)

The FBBH program offers services from nurses and social workers to educate, support, and guide families of high-risk infants after they are discharged from NICUs (and up to 3 years of age). These services are directed at both parents and children (entire families) and may start with the parents before the child is born. Main program goals include: prevention, compliance, assistance, and education. State funding comes from Arkansas Medicaid and the UAMS Institute for Digital Health and Innovation High-Risk Pregnancy Program, which is a joint program offered by the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and the Arkansas Department of Human Services. Federal funding comes from the MIECHV grant.

## *2.3 General Medical Care for Women*

### [HB 1035 \(2023\)](#)

This legislation was signed into law by Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders in March 2023. It requires that insurance covers depression screenings at the time of birth and that such screenings do occur.

### [BreastCare Program](#)

This program provides free breast and cervical cancer screening services to Arkansas women who are between 21 and 64 and need cervical cancer services, or between 40 and 64 years old and need breast cancer services, or under 40 years old with breast symptoms. Other eligibility requirements include being uninsured or underinsured or having a household income at or below 250% of the FPL. Examples of

covered services include mammograms, clinical breast exams, pelvic exams, pap smears, and follow-up testing if necessary.

## Medicaid

Medicaid in Arkansas provides health coverage to eligible Arkansas residents who meet the income guidelines and are U.S. citizens or have satisfactory immigration status. There are various Medicaid programs available in Arkansas for individuals and families, each with their own additional requirements. Below are [several groups](#) that are eligible for Arkansas Medicaid.

- Pregnant women: Pregnant women aged 19 and older are eligible for full-coverage Medicaid if they meet certain family size and [income limits](#). If a woman's income is at or below 209% of the FPL, they are eligible for the Limited Medicaid Pregnant Women program. The limited services coverage program only covers prenatal, delivery, and postpartum care services. Non-citizen pregnant women who meet the income requirements at or below 214% of the FPL for this eligibility group, but are not lawful citizens, are eligible for prenatal and postpartum care coverage.<sup>1</sup> A newborn's Medicaid eligibility depends on the mother's Medicaid eligibility at the child's birth. Pregnant women can apply for retroactive pregnancy coverage up to three months after giving birth.
- Parents and Caretakers: Parents with children under the age of 19, living in their home, who also meet resident, citizenship, and [income requirements](#) are eligible for full coverage Arkansas Medicaid.
- Adult Expansion Group (ARHOME): Adults, ages 19 through 64, who don't otherwise qualify for other Arkansas Medicaid programs and have an income at or below 138% of the FPL qualify for the state's expansion eligibility category.<sup>2</sup> There are also non-income-related eligibility requirements, such as residency and citizenship requirements. Medicaid coverage for this eligibility group is provided through private insurance plans and covers outpatient services, emergency services, services related to hospitalizations, maternity and newborn care, mental health and substance abuse services, dental and vision services, and prescription drugs, etc.
  - o A component of the ARHOME Medicaid program is the [Life360 HOMEs Program](#). The program provides intensive, wraparound services to women with high-risk pregnancies who enrolled in ARHOME or traditional Medicaid, adult ARHOME clients in a rural area of Florida with mental illness or a substance abuse disorder, and young adults at risk of long-term poverty and poor health outcomes. Each group receives services through their respective Life360 programs that focus on improving long-term health outcomes and related social determinants of health.

Lastly, those who would otherwise be eligible for Medicaid apart from their citizenship status can receive Medicaid coverage for [emergency services only](#).

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<sup>1</sup> The 5% difference between the stated income limits for different eligibility groups within the Arkansas document linked above and the amount listed in this document is because the Arkansas document didn't account for the 5% disregard that applies to Medicaid eligibility groups.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

For more information on disability-specific Medicaid programs, see section 6.1. See section 7.2 for child-specific Medicaid programs, section 7.4 for adoption-specific Medicaid programs, and section 7.5 for foster care-specific programs.

## 3. Finances, Work, and Education

### 3.1 Help Paying Bills

#### [Transitional Employment Assistance \(TEA\)](#)

TEA, Arkansas' TANF program, is federally funded and administered by the state. The program provides low-income families with dependent children with short-term financial assistance. Beyond financial aid, TEA also helps with job preparation, transportation, childcare help, and other services. To be eligible, a family's net income must not exceed \$513 per month regardless of household size. Participants may remain on TEA for 12 months. To receive TEA benefits, adult recipients must sign a [Personal Responsibility Agreement](#) that mandates parents must cooperate with child support enforcement if applicable, work, and immunize school-aged children.

#### [Arkansas Work Pays](#)

This is a transitional program for families coming off TEA. Participants receive a \$204 monthly check, large bonuses for achieving employment goals, and one-on-one case management. A list of other, in-depth eligibility requirements can be found [here](#). Some of the requirements include having an income below 150% of the FPL, complying with the Work Pays Personal Responsibility Agreement, and meeting citizen or alienage requirements.

#### [Diversion assistance](#)

This is a one-time payment to TEA families who are going through hard times and need assistance to keep or accept a job. The payment amount depends on the amount needed to solve the problem (there is a maximum) but ultimately, the case manager decides the amount given.

#### [Extended Support Services](#)

This feature of Arkansas' TEA program provides families who are no longer eligible for TEA because they became employed with extended childcare, Medicaid, job retention, and case management services.

### 3.2 Employment Support

#### [Arkansas Workforce Connections](#)

This is the state's employment program. It uses federal funding to provide career counseling, tuition assistance, and support with childcare and transportation. A [list](#) of the locations of programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) can be found [here](#). [Arkansas Workforce Centers](#) are a component of Arkansas' Workforce Connections employment program. There are Workforce Centers across Arkansas that provide employment education and coaching, opportunities to connect with potential employers, and practical support like internet access, all free of charge.

### SNAP Employment and Training Program

This is the Arkansas SNAP program's voluntary employment program. It provides job search and retention services; educational services related to obtaining a GED or learning English; and job training programs. The purpose of this program is to help SNAP recipients become employed, self-sufficient, and come off the program.

## *3.3 Education and Training*

### Adult Education Centers

Adult Education Centers across the state provide basic education to adults who have not finished high school. These include English-language education, workforce education, and skills refreshers for those planning to attend college.

### Support for Pregnant and Parenting Students Act

A new Arkansas law requires public schools to excuse student absences for reasons related to pregnancy and parenting, provide parenting students with flexible options in making up work, and provide reasonable accommodations for breastfeeding students.

## *3.4 Financial Advice or Education*

No applicable and/or known programs.

## **4. Material or Legal Support**

### *4.1 Transportation*

#### Non-Emergency Transportation (NET)

This is a Medicaid benefit that provides free and unlimited rides to and from Medicaid-covered visits. Recipients must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Must be on Medicaid or ARKids First-A.
- Must try to find another ride first (e.g. ask a family member or a friend) and not have another way to get to the appointment.
- You cannot use NET if you live in a nursing home; are in an ICF/IID (home for people with intellectual disabilities); are a qualified Medicare beneficiary (QMB) or use ARKids First-B.

### *4.2 Food and Nutrition*

#### WIC

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides supplemental nutritious foods needed for growth and development and nutrition education to improve diet and health habits. It also provides [information](#), support, and encouragement for breastfeeding as well as referrals for other health services. Recipients must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women and infants/children under five.
- Income eligibility is 185% of poverty and revised each year.

- Have a nutritional need (as determined by WIC staff during 1<sup>st</sup> appointment).
- Live in Arkansas--must provide proof of residency (e.g. utility bill, mortgage/rent receipt, proof of Medicaid, TEA or SNAP).

## SNAP

SNAP provides financial assistance to help with food costs. Benefits cover the purchase of eligible food for consumption at home as well as seeds and plants. Funds may also be spent at farmers' markets. The program also offers nutrition education, employment and training, and work experience. Benefits are distributed via an Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card. While general participants' benefits are time-limited that limit doesn't apply to pregnant women or someone living with a child under 18.

## Special Nutrition Programs

### National School Breakfast and Lunch Program

This federally funded program is run by the state and provides low-cost or free breakfasts and lunches to participating private schools, public schools, and residential childcare institutions. [Income requirements](#) apply.

### Afterschool Snack Program

This is a component of the federal National School Lunch program and is administered at the state level. The federal government reimburses schools for providing low-income, eligible students enrolled in afterschool activities with free or reduced-cost after-school snacks.

### Child and Adult Food Care Program

This federally funded program is run by the state and provides reimbursable meals to childcare centers that take care of children in lower-income areas.

### Special Milk Program

This federally funded program is run by the state and provides milk to low-income or very low-income children in public and private schools, childcare institutions, and camps that do not participate in other federal child-nutrition meal-service programs.

### Summer Food Service Program

This federally funded program is run by the state and provides free or reduced cost meals to participating public or private schools, summer camps, local/state/tribal governments, national youth sports program participants, or nonprofit 501(c)(3) programs. Children have to meet [income requirements](#) to qualify.

### The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

TEFAP is a federally funded program that provides states with 100% American grown foods which are allocated to participating food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens. Low-income individuals and families can then go and receive supplemental food boxes from these entities. These supplemental food boxes contain three to five days' worth of food. Monthly income limits apply.

### Summer EBT Program

This is a federally funded and income-based program that gives low-income families a \$120 benefit during the summer to buy food for their children when they are not in school. The benefits can be used in any store that accepts Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards. This benefit is available to qualifying families in addition to the summer meal programs listed above. Eligible children include those who are in a household that receives SNAP or TEA assistance or if they attend a school that offers the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Program, and their household income meets the requirements for free or reduced-price school meals.

### *4.3 Clothing, Household Goods, and Baby Supplies*

No applicable and/or known programs.

### *4.4 Housing, Shelters, and Maternity Homes*

#### Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

LIHEAP is a federally funded program that is administered by the state. It offers energy cost assistance for cooling in the summer and heating in the winter. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis from January through April (for the winter season) and July through September (for the summer season). This program offers both regular benefit payments and crisis benefit payments. The regular is a fixed benefit based on household income, household size, and the type of energy source. The crisis benefit is “up to a maximum amount established by policy to prevent disconnection or restore service or provide energy/fuel when supply is depleted.” To be eligible, a recipient’s income must not exceed the [maximum monthly countable income](#) (MCI), which differs depending on household size. They must also be able to provide a lease agreement if utilities are included in their rent and must have a high home energy burden based on the “percentage of income that goes to heating and cooling bills.”

### *4.5 Legal Support*

No applicable and/or known programs.

### *4.6 Miscellaneous*

No applicable and/or known programs.

## **5. Recovery and Mental Health**

### *5.1 Addiction Recovery*

#### Mental Health and Addiction Services

The Arkansas Department of Human Services provides mental health and substance abuse help to uninsured or low-income Arkansans in state-funded clinics. Services provided include assessment; individual and group counseling; family counseling; substance abuse counseling and treatment; parent and child counseling for children younger than four; mental health medication; and help during a mental health crisis.



In 2023, Arkansas Attorney General Tim Griffin awarded \$50 million of opioid settlement funds to Arkansas Children's Hospital to create the [National Center for Opioid Research & Clinical Effectiveness \(NCOR\)](#), which "will position Arkansas as a national leader in understanding the impacts of the opioid crisis on the fetus, newborn and developing children." The project "will center around brain imaging technology."

### [Be Well Baby](#)

This is a free Arkansas Department of Health program without age, income, or insurance requirements. It helps pregnant mothers stop using tobacco. Enrollees can earn up to \$250 in Walmart diaper vouchers. Recipients must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

- Must be pregnant at 36 weeks of gestation or less.
- Must be a current tobacco user or someone who has quit since becoming pregnant or has quit 3 months before becoming pregnant.
- Being a smoker who lives with an enrolled participant and wishes to quit smoking.

## *5.2 Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault and Trafficking Recovery*

No applicable and/or known programs.

## *5.3 Mental Health*

In February 2024, Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders and the Arkansas Department of Human Services (DHS) [announced](#) "a comprehensive plan to invest \$30 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to improve mental health and substance abuse services across the state through a variety of initiatives, including a statewide coordinated crisis response system." Initiatives directly related to mental health recovery include:

- Community re-integration programs for children.
- Youth and adult substance-abuse residential treatment programs.
- Supportive housing for adults with mental illness.
- Supportive housing for youth and young adults to prevent homelessness, incarceration, and institutionalization.

In 2023, Arkansas passed two laws to strengthen coverage of depression screening for pregnant women, one ([Act 316](#)) which mandates that insurance policies cover screenings and another ([Act 562](#)) which mandates that the Arkansas Medicaid Program reimburse for screenings.

### [Crisis Stabilization Units](#)

The state has three crisis stabilization units that operate twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. They are alternatives to jails and emergency rooms for people who experience a mental health or substance-abuse crisis and encounter law enforcement. The units have 16 beds each and are staffed by mental health professionals and licensed nurses. Patients can stay for a short time while their mental health is stabilized. The units are in Pulaski, Sebastian, and Craighead counties, but accept patients from any county in Arkansas.

## 6. Disability Assistance

### [Developmental Disabilities Services](#)

This program provides tailored support for children with intellectual or developmental disabilities, regardless of family income.

### [Early Intervention Day Treatment \(EIDT\)](#)

EIDT offers diagnostic, therapeutic, developmental, and preventative health services to children aged 0-6 year-round and to children aged 6-21 during the summertime. Services are provided through a licensed pediatric day treatment clinic. To be eligible, children must be on Medicaid, have a documented developmental disability or delay, need either some type of therapy (speech, occupational, etc.) or nursing services, and have a written prescription from a physician.

### [First Connections](#)

The program serves children from birth to 36 months and has either a diagnosis with a high probability of developmental delay or who have been determined by a multidisciplinary team to be experiencing a significant developmental delay in one or more areas. First Connections provides early intervention and developmental support, including medical services, physical and speech therapy, and service coordination. It is a grant program for families not eligible for Medicaid. Children do not need a diagnosis to be referred.

### [Children's Special Services Program \(CSS\)](#)

This program provides children under the age of 21 who suffer from chronic illnesses, physical disabilities, or other special health care needs with disability-related services. Services provided include medical supplies, durable medical equipment and adaptive equipment, vehicle modifications, case management, etc.

## Disability-Specific Medicaid Programs

Arkansas Medicaid offers home and community-based services (HCBS) waivers to individuals who require full, comprehensive coverage and additional long-term support services that allow disabled individuals to live at home instead of in a long-term care facility. Arkansas [HCBS waivers include](#):

- [Autism Waiver](#) - This waiver provides early intervention services to those 18 months to five years old who are on the autism spectrum. These services are provided to waiver recipients in their homes or a parent-approved, community-based location.
- [AR Choices in Homecare Waiver](#) - This waiver provides home health care and support services to financially eligible, physically disabled adults (21 through 64) as well as those 65 and older. Participants must meet the nursing home admission level of care criteria.
- [Living Choices Assisted Living Waiver](#) - This waiver allows participants to live in apartment-style units within assisted living facilities so that they may simultaneously enjoy independence as well as receive 24/7 care. Participants must be physically disabled and ages 21 through 64 or be 65 and older and meet established level of care as well as financial criteria. Some services covered

by this waiver include attendant care services, periodic nursing evaluations, limited nursing services, and medication oversight.

- [Community and Employment Supports Waiver](#) - This waiver provides support to participants with intellectual or developmental disabilities with their major life activities, allowing them to live independently and work a job. People of all ages can apply for this waiver, but they must meet the institutional level of care criteria and be diagnosed with a developmental disability such as Down Syndrome or Cerebral Palsy before they were 22 years old.

Another disability-specific program covered by the state's Medicaid program is the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act ([TEFRA](#)) program (otherwise known as the Katie Beckett program). This program is for children eighteen years old and younger with disabilities who want to live at home but qualify for institutional placement in a hospital or intermediate care facility. This program provides full Medicaid coverage and additional program-specific services. The income limit for this program is three times the current SSI payment rate, and there are additional resource limits. In some instances, families will pay a monthly premium, and in others, Medicaid will pay for the full cost of the services provided. Some services covered by this program include physical, occupational, and speech therapy, outpatient behavioral health counseling, nursing services, etc.

[Aged, blind, and disabled adults](#) also can receive full Medicaid through the state's Medicaid program. Those who are disabled but still work, are at least 16 but less than 65 years old, and meet financial eligibility requirements are eligible for coverage under Arkansas' ARChoices Waiver.

## 7. Care for Children

### 7.1 Childcare

#### [Child Care Assistance](#)

Child Care Assistance provides financial aid for childcare through the Child Care Development Fund (CCDF), a federal-state partnership. While this program is administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Arkansas version is managed by the Office of Early Childhood. To be eligible, families must meet sliding-scale income guidelines; be employed, in school, or a combination of the two; and have a child under the age of 12.

#### [Arkansas Early Childhood Tax Credit](#)

Arkansas provides a refundable tax credit for childcare expenditures for children younger than six. Families that have paid for childcare through the Better Beginnings program and meet the requirements for the Federal Child Care Tax Credit may be eligible.

#### [Federal Waiver \(2024\)](#)

Arkansas participates in a federal waiver that was finalized in 2024 that makes childcare workers and foster parents eligible for federal Child Care and Development program funds, regardless of their income.

## [HB 1155 \(2023\)](#)

This legislation prevents local zoning authorities from adding additional zoning regulations on applications for home-based childcare facilities.

## *7.2 Children's Health Care*

### [Medicaid for Children](#)

Arkansas residents under the age of 19 can qualify for Medicaid if they meet citizen or immigration criteria as well as income guidelines. The income of all people in the household (such as a legal parent or stepparent) included in "family size" is counted.

Children whose family income is at or below 147% of the federal poverty level (FPL) are eligible for the AR Kids First A eligibility group, which is paid through the state and federal Medicaid programs.<sup>3</sup> The AR Kids First A eligibility group pays no co-pay for any services covered and provided through Medicaid, and the full range of Medicaid services are provided to this eligibility group. Financially eligible newborns are considered to be a part of the AR Kids First A eligibility group for the first 12 months after delivery.

Children whose family income is between 148% and 216% of the FPL are eligible for the AR Kids First B eligibility group which is part of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).<sup>4</sup> This eligibility group pays copays for some services provided through Medicaid and has access to a more limited range of services.

Arkansas' Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment (EPSDT) benefit provides health coverage for well-child visits and diagnostic screenings from birth to age 21 for all children who are enrolled in Medicaid and have actual or potential health issues. This mandated Medicaid benefit screens children with actual or potential health problems to treat those problems before they become permanent disabilities. Preventive health services are also available to Medicaid-eligible children under age 21.

### [Newborn Screening Program](#)

This program requires that all babies born in Arkansas hospitals are screened for 31 potentially life-threatening disorders before they are discharged from the hospital using a blood spot test. Parents can opt out of screening, and it is important to note that while this program is required, parents pay for these services as a part of the cost to deliver their child. However, the state facilitates the program and provides payment options for low-income families. If the blood spot detects a baby has one of 31 disorders the Arkansas Department of Health can help coordinate treatment and follow-up services.

### [Infant Hearing Program](#)

This program requires that all babies born in Arkansas hospitals be screened for hearing loss before they are discharged or before the baby turns one month old.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid

<sup>4</sup> Ibid

## Vaccines for Children Program

This is a federal program run at the state level that provides participating doctors' offices with free vaccines to administer to children whose families could otherwise not afford to vaccinate their children. Arkansas children aged 18 and younger must meet one or more of the following eligibility requirements:

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Medicaid-eligible
- Uninsured
- Underinsured

As a note, ARKids B members are not eligible for this program. However, they can obtain vaccines from providers who participate in the SCHIP vaccine program.

## Children with Chronic Health Conditions

This is a federally funded program run at the state level and is otherwise known as the Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program. This program provides children with developmental and physical disabilities and chronic conditions with medical support and case management services. Examples of covered conditions include asthma, Sickle Cell Anemia, and Down Syndrome. To be eligible, children must be under 21, Medicaid-eligible through SSI, TEFRA, or AR Kids A, not already receiving case management support, and meet financial and medical requirements.

## *7.3 Family and Parenting Education*

### Arkansas Better Chance

The Arkansas Better Chance programs provide early education to children aged birth through five with developmental and socioeconomic risk factors. The program emphasizes pre-K services for three-year-old and four-year-old children. To be [eligible](#), a child must meet one of the following criteria:

- Family gross income cannot exceed 200% of the federal poverty level
- Has a demonstrable developmental delay
- Parents do not have a high school diploma or GED
- Eligible for services under IDEA; low birth weight
- Income eligible for Title I programs
- Parent under 18 years at child's birth
- Parent has limited English proficiency
- Parent or immediate family member has a history of abuse or neglect, substance abuse/addiction or is a victim of abuse or neglect.
- Low birth weight (below 5 pounds, 9 ounces).

### Arkansas Head Start and Early Head Start

This is a federally funded program that coordinates with service sites to educate low-income parents of children aged birth to five on child development and school readiness. Head Start typically serves children between three and five, and Early Head Start serves infants, toddlers, and pregnant women. The program is free to families at or below federal [poverty guidelines](#). Children whose families receive public assistance,

are in foster care, or are experiencing homelessness are also eligible, regardless of income. The state's Head Start program is administered by the federally funded Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Office.

## *7.4 Adoption*

### Adoption awareness education

A new Arkansas law requires that students in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> receive adoption education.

### Adoption Tax Credit

A credit of 20% of the federal adoption tax credit can be claimed.

### State Adoption Assistance Program

In addition to the federal (Title IV-E) adoption subsidy, the state of Arkansas offers a state-funded and run adoption subsidy as well. This specific program is for adoptive children with special needs or severe medical or psychological needs.

### Medicaid

In Arkansas, children who are eligible for federal Title IV adoption assistance automatically become eligible for the full range of Medicaid services (income is not considered). Children who receive non-Title IV-E special needs adoption assistance are also eligible for Medicaid coverage if they meet several eligibility requirements which can be found [here](#).

## *7.5 Foster, Kinship, and Short-Term Care*

### Transition Services

Transition services are offered to foster youth ages 14 and older by the Department of Human Services. Transitional Youth Services coordinators help youth develop a transitional plan for when they age out of foster care or leave the system. The plan focuses on all that goes into becoming independent such as finding a job, going to college, and finding healthcare and housing.

### Extended Foster Care

In Arkansas, those in foster care can remain in the system until they are 21 if they are in school, working, or have a medical condition that prevents them from working or going to school. Using federal funds, Arkansas provides those in extended foster care with money to go to college, get job training, and find housing.

### Foster Youth to Independence (FYI) Housing Choice Vouchers

The Department of Human Services has an agreement with local housing authorities to provide housing vouchers to former foster youth between the ages of 18-24 or those who are leaving foster care within 90 days with housing vouchers.

## [Education and Training Voucher \(ETV\) Program](#)

This federally funded program is a component of the state's Independent Living Program and provides those who are in foster care when they turn 18 and those in the state's kinship-guardianship program with college tuition waivers. Youth can receive up to \$5,000 a year for tuition or other qualified school-related expenses. Other eligibility requirements include:

- Youth must be enrolled in a Title IV, accredited college or vocational/technical training program and make progress toward completion of their degree.
- ETV funds can be accessed for a maximum of five years until the youth's 26<sup>th</sup> birthday and the youth must apply annually for the voucher.

## [Medicaid](#)

All children in the foster care system in Arkansas are [eligible for Medicaid](#). Former foster care children (until the age of 26) are also eligible for Arkansas Medicaid if they agree to remain in foster care when they age out and were enrolled in Medicaid when they aged out. Income is not considered for this eligibility group.

## *7.6 Safe Haven and/or Baby Boxes*

### [Safe Haven Baby Boxes](#)

Arkansas' Safe Haven law allows for the surrender of an infant within 30 days of birth. Babies may be anonymously left with emergency room staff, law enforcement agencies, 24-hour fire departments, or in the several baby boxes located throughout the state.

## [Miscellaneous](#)

### [Choose Life License Plate Program](#)

The Arkansas Right to Life Organization receives \$25 to support adoption assistance for each plate issued.

**This is a non-exhaustive list of programs, current as of January 2026, intended to make information easily accessible to moms and families. CLI does not take a position on the merits of any specific program.**

*This document was compiled by Mia Steupert, Elyse Gaitan, and Tessa Cox.*