

Arkansas Baptist Children & Family Ministries is the child and family services entity of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention and has been serving the vulnerable children of Arkansas since 1894, celebrating 130 years of ministry this year.

Arkansas Baptists most often know our ministry as Arkansas Baptist Children’s Homes, which began as a home for children in need of family at our Monticello campus. Today, the ministry that began 130 years ago has grown to 6 divisions of Christ-centered professional services across Arkansas whose mission is to build, strengthen, and restore Arkansas families for God’s glory. Those divisions include Connected Foster Care & Adoptions, Living Well Professional Counseling, Desired Haven Family Care, Explorers Academy, Arkansas Baptist Ranch, and Arkansas Baptist Homes for Children.

In 2022, Markham Street Baptist Church in Little Rock deeded ABCFM their campus, allowing the organization to have a central office that better serves its ever growing needs. The new ABCFM Central Office serves as the statewide hub for each of its divisions. Included at the headquarters is a Resource Center, Toy Store, and Birthday Party room serving foster, adoptive, and biological families. These spaces allow ABCFM to provide tangible support in addition to the case management services we provide through our foster care, adoption, and family care divisions, as well as families within the DCFS system.

When a passenger bus was donated to our ministry, the dreams of how it could be used to serve kids began forming. With the Toy Store at our new Central Office, we wanted more kids to have access to new toys for birthdays and Christmas. The two ideas merged with the concept of a toy bus. The Toy Express allows us to collect toys for kids and also have a fun way to deliver toys to kids around the state. This allows kids who are not able to shop at our Central Office Toy Store to have the opportunity to enjoy a new toy.

Often, kids from hard places have never experienced the excitement of birthday presents or presents under the Christmas tree. These are simple joys that every child deserves to experience. While a new toy cannot change their circumstances, it is a moment of happiness that every child should know. More importantly, it is an opportunity for children to feel seen and loved.

A Desired Haven mom shared in excitement and relief as she entered the Toy Store at the Markham Central office. She needed a birthday gift for her son and was able to find all she needed thanks to the generous donations from many churches and individuals that have contributed to make moments like this happen. Our moms work hard on budgeting and having this resource not only saves them money, but also allows them to choose what to gift their children.

You can help deliver joy to kids all year long by donating to the ABCFM Toy Express and Resource Center! Our top needed items include:

* toys and gifts for teens
* shave kits for teen boys and girls
* gift cards to Walmart & Kroger for initial placements
* VISA gifts cards for children's hair appointments & clothes
* weighted blankets and vests
* sensory sheets
* diapers and pullups
* formula
* laundry & dish detergent (pods only)
* trash bags

