

February 22, 2001

Ms. Deb Stahl
Executive Director
The Lucent Foundation
535 Mountain Avenue
Murray Hill, NJ 07974

Dear Ms. Stahl:

I am pleased to offer my support to the Mississippi Forum on Children and Families in securing a grant from the Lucent Foundation to expand Mississippi's Lucent Universal Preschool Initiative (LUPI) statewide. The Forum's DeSoto County LUPI site has enhanced preschool and early childhood resources in that area. The Forum's proposal will build upon existing resources to enhance preschool and early childhood services statewide.

The Forum's proposal focuses on the issues of capacity, quality, and financing – issues which are of great importance to early childhood care and education in Mississippi. The proposal enhances the Forum's KIDS COUNT data collection and utilizes successful community data products developed in Lucent's DeSoto County initiative. The Forum recognizes that successful development of an effective system of early childhood services must include all stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration of this grant application and for the investment that the Lucent Foundation has made in DeSoto County. I look forward to working with the Lucent Foundation to advance early childhood care and education in Mississippi.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:klr