

Memo

To: Dr. Brian Amy, State Health Officer
From: Kelly Riley, Policy Liaison
Date: September 9, 2003
Subject: Child Care Census

SB 2636, passed by the Legislature and signed by Governor Musgrove during the 2003 session, requires a comprehensive survey of child-care and early childhood education efforts within the state. The legislation also provides for an oversight committee to utilize data collected in the survey to develop recommendations to the Legislature regarding child care and early education in Mississippi.

Dr. Cathy Grace with Mississippi State University's Early Childhood Institute is co-chairing the oversight committee and has requested my assistance in obtaining the Department of Health's assistance in several matters discussed below. The oversight committee has recommended that the Stennis Institute conduct the survey, which the committee is calling the Child Care Census. The State Board of Education is expected to approve the Stennis Institute at its monthly meeting this week. Dr. Grace is seeking the following from the Department of Health in order to expedite the Child Care Census following the State Board's approval:

1. The attached letter to go out under your name on MDH letterhead to all child care center directors. The Stennis Institute will actually mail the letters, so MDH will not incur any expenses related to postage. The enclosures referred to in the letter will consist of one page listing the meeting dates and locations for the regional meetings and one page of bullet points taken from the legislation that will inform the center directors as to what information they will need to collect for the survey.
2. Mailing labels for all child care facilities so that the Stennis Institute may mail the above referenced letter to the center directors.
3. A meeting notice to be sent from you to all child care licensing inspectors requesting that they attend a meeting to be held sometime between September 23 and October 5. The purpose of the meeting will be to explain the Child Care Census process to the inspectors, especially to ensure that the inspectors understand that they will not be asked to collect any data. (NOTE: Dr. Grace will provide a date and draft letter to you at a later date.)

Dr. Grace and I serve together as the lead staff for our state's financing early education workgroup, a separate early childhood project initiated by Governor Musgrove that will also be able to utilize the results of the Child Care Census. I understand that you are out of town, but if you could authorize someone on your staff to initiate the above matters, it will greatly assist in expediting the process. You may reach Dr. Grace directly at 662-325-4954 (office) or 662-418-2844 (cell). Please do not hesitate to contact me at 359-2528 if you have any questions or require additional information. Thank you in advance for your assistance.