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OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** GOVERNOR  
**FROM:** RILEY  
**SUBJECT:** BRI EARLY CHILDHOOD INITIATIVE: 1) DHS FUNDING STATUS REPORT AND 2)  
MEETING AT BARKSDALE HOME WITH DR. RAMEY  
**DATE:** 10/9/2002  
**CC:** FILE

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BRI/Kagan Status Report

I spoke to Edna Watts in the Office of Children and Youth this past Monday afternoon. She said that the Barksdale Reading Institute (BRI) did not qualify to draw down Child Care Development Funds (CCDF) from the regional office in Atlanta, but that DHS is going to match BRI's \$125,000 with \$375,000 in CCDF funds that DHS already has in-house. So, the project is moving forward. I asked Edna when everything would be finalized and she said it would take a few weeks. I again expressed your interest in this project.

I attended an early childhood meeting at the home of Jim and Sally Barksdale Monday night on your behalf (see next page). Edna, Claiborne Barksdale and I discussed this at that time and Edna shared the above information with Claiborne.

Early childhood expert Dr. Craig Ramey was the featured speaker of the meeting. When addressing questions of how do we find funding for an early childhood program, he mentioned that he wished we could work with Dr. Kagan because she is a nationally-recognized expert in developing comprehensive early childhood plans, including funding sources. Claiborne then mentioned that BRI has enlisted the services of Dr. Kagan and he credited DHS for making this possible. Although I had no idea that he was going to make this announcement, he at least credited DHS.

We need to announce this ASAP, especially given Claiborne's announcement Monday night. Lee Ann and I have discussed preliminary ideas for a press conference. May I ask Bill to call Janice and tell her to put a rush on this so that we can get all of the paperwork finalized and make the official announcement?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

### Meeting at Barksdale Home

BRI flew in Dr. Ramey to discuss the research that supports the need for and effect of an early childhood program. The following were present:

Jim and Sally Barksdale, Claiborne and his wife, Dr. Henry Johnson, Mike Moore, John McCullough, Cathy Grace, Blake Wilson, Pete Johnson (and a staff member), Dr. and Mrs. Don Mitchell (Sally Barksdale's sister and husband), Edna Watts, Chancellor Khayat, William Winter, Mayor Susan Vincent, Charles Moore (Holly Springs Head Start), Rep. Eloise Scott (got there late), and Chairman Capps (got there late).

Claiborne distributed the attached timeline of the BRI's plans for enhancing quality child care to develop the cognitive stimulation of verbal and reading skills in children. Dr. Kagan's work is the 18-month needs assessment on the timeline.

Dr. Ramey then discussed early childhood research results. This was followed by a question and answer/discussion period. Claiborne mentioned that he has spoken to Chairman McCoy about the need for early childhood programs and McCoy said that we are going to have to have the data to prove the benefits. BRI's timeline provides for an assessment of the pilot programs, so Mississippi data will be available.

Chancellor Khayat and John McCullough then started asking if other states have funded early childhood via a reallocation of funds or via new funds. Ramey mentioned that some states, like North Carolina, have utilized TANF funds, at which point Mike Moore stated that 4% of our TANF funds could be used for child care. He continued to say, "we spend TANF funds without a total plan. We could use some block grant funds for childcare. It is a choice of the administration." I decided that I would address him one-on-one after the meeting, but he left while Representatives Scott and Capps stopped me. Dr. Ramey said that the states that have made the biggest strides in early childhood have funded programs via reallocations and new funding.

Dr. Ramey said that Mississippi has the opportunity to show that we can dramatically impact the lives of a significant number of people and that we can become a beacon of hope for the entire country. The Barksdales are ready to make early childhood happen. Blake told Claiborne that the business community is behind this.

We have got to take a lead on this before anyone else (Tuck or Moore) because it is going to have a dramatic impact on the lives of "real people." Mississippi will receive a lot of positive attention in the national early childhood arena. This is the implementation of the first recommendation of the Higher Education Leadership Summit. Our providing the matching funds from DHS for the Kagan project will give us that lead.