

Mississippi Early Childhood Initiatives

Leaders in Literacy - Eighteen month pilot project located in West Point and Greenville with the Barksdale Reading Institute (BRI) in partnership with The Early Childhood Institute at Mississippi State University and the W.K.Kellogg Foundation. This project's main objective centers on the language development of preschool children from birth to four years of age. Childcare centers are voluntarily participating in the initiative which features extensive on-site staff development for childcare staff and utilization of age appropriate literacy materials.

ChevronTexaco – Developing a community certification process to recognize early childhood programs and to develop standards for communities to address pre-K education, childcare, healthcare and parent training. This program, working with MSU's Early Childhood Institute and the Barksdale Reading Institute, and other childcare entities, will rely on public and private partnerships and existing state resources.

Mississippi Early Childhood Association - Provides a complimentary copy of the Rob Reiner produced video "I'm Your Child" to parents. Funding is provided via the Phil Harden Foundation.

ETV's "Right from Birth Series" - Targeted at parents and caregivers of young children to help prepare the foundation for children's future learning and success in school. The series currently airs on 118 PBS stations.

The Nurturing Homes Initiative - Provides educational information, training and technical assistance to non-licensed family home providers that offer full day, full year child care services to children of families falling below the 200% poverty level. A collaborative effort of the Department of Human Services, the Mississippi State University Extension Service and the Alcorn State University Cooperative Extension Program.

Mississippi State's Early Childhood Institute's *Partnerships for Quality Child Care Project* - Assesses nearly 174 childcare centers that receive quality enhancement funding from DHS and who serve low income children for the purpose of improving the quality of care provided at the centers. The Institute uses quality rating scales that are used across the country to guide the technical assistance provided by the project staff.

The Department of Human Services' Office of Children and Youth - Provides memberships in the Mississippi Early Childhood Association for over 450 childcare directors of centers who participate in the child care certificate program. The Office of Children and Youth also enables these same directors and one staff member to attend a continuing education class on early childhood development.

The Office of Children and Youth's Child Care Director's Credentialing Program - Provides a 130-hour curriculum on best practices in child care management for child care directors and staff. The child care workers' scholarship program provides scholarships to child care workers to obtain their two-year associate degree or a four-year bachelor's degree.

Mississippi Head Start Collaboration Office - A state-level office established for the purpose of building a collaborative partnership between federally-funded Head Start programs and state-funded early childhood programs to improve the quality of services to low-income children and their families in Mississippi.

Mississippi Department of Health's First Steps Early Intervention - Provides services to children 0-3 who have developmental delays. First Steps makes educational/developmental resources available to help families of infants from birth to age three recognize possible problems so that help can be obtained as early as possible.

The Mississippi Forum on Children and Families - Serves as Mississippi's affiliate to the Parents as Teachers program, which covers child development from birth to age 5 and suggests parent activities that encourage language and intellectual growth, curiosity and social skills. The Forum also operates a state-wide child care resource and referral service for businesses that assist employees in finding needed child care.