
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR GRANT
DATE: 8/7/03
CC: FILE

Connie Clay at USM's Institute for Disability Studies has requested the attached letter of support for funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support the development of an innovation and improvement project entitled **Inclusion: Fathers and Children Together (In Fact)** that addresses the President's Initiatives within Head Start programs. IDS is going to form a partnership with 3 Head Starts (Central Mississippi, Inc.(CMI); Gulf Coast Community Action Agency; and Pinebelt Association for Community Enhancement (PACE)) to foster optimal educational and developmental outcomes for young children living in poverty including those who have manifest or suspected disabilities.

The major purpose of **In Fact** is to develop training and supports for male involvement in the lives of young Head Start children with special needs with a focus on early literacy. The project will offer comprehensive resources and supports for males, promote the development of parenting skills through center based training and promote collaboration between fathers and other males, Head Start, and community agencies and organizations. The project will also offer training and resources for Head Start teaching staff to better enable them to use the educational curriculum selected by their agencies. The project will not introduce a new educational curriculum, but will provide training and technical assistance to enhance the curriculum from a research based perspective to meet the literacy and recreational needs of all Head Start children particularly those with special needs. Projected outcomes include:

- increased participation of fathers, older male youth, and significant males in the lives of Head Start children, including those with special needs
- improved classroom environments and teaching methods for early literacy
- increased developmental, educational, and health outcomes for children for **all** children
- increased parental access to technology, including parents with special needs
- reduction in grade retention
- reduction in youth violence
- reduction in reports of child abuse and neglect
- reduction in family stress and separation
- family preservation

I recommend that you sign the attached letter. Please either sign it or mark any changes that you want made. Thanks!

Abstract

In Fact - Inclusion: Fathers and Children Together

The Institute for Disability Studies (IDS) at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) is applying for funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to support the development of an innovation and improvement project entitled **Inclusion: Fathers and Children Together (In Fact)** that address the President's Initiatives within Head Start programs. IDS will seek to form a partnership with Central Mississippi, Inc.(CMI), Gulf Coast Community Action Agency, and Pinebelt Association for Community Enhancement (PACE) to foster optimal educational and developmental outcomes for young children living in poverty including those who have manifest or suspected disabilities. Optimal educational and developmental outcomes are best achieved when both parents are actively involved in the life of a young child. Mothers are critical to the social and emotional development of young children, but father involvement may be most important for academic achievement. Children whose fathers are involved in their schools are less likely to repeat a grade, be expelled or suspended, exhibit violent behavior, or be involved in acts of juvenile delinquency. Unfortunately in Mississippi, 35 percent of children live in a single parent home with 90 percent being single mothers. The proposed project will link with the Head Start programs to provide research-based, individualized, and cultural competent information, training, and recreational activities for fathers or other significant males in the child's life to increase involvement in the child's life. The project will especially seek to reach the fathers of children with special needs as well as fathers who have special needs by including them with other fathers and children in a variety of activities. Fathers and children with special needs face additional challenges in day to day living. The project will enhance the fatherhood initiative programs currently underway in the Head Start program. The project will also coordinate with existing programs in the state that provide resources for families including but not limited to YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy Scouts, 100 Black Men Organizations, Family Resource Centers, the Parent Information Center of the Arc, the State Urban League, community faith based organizations and churches, community colleges, public/private schools, social/civic organizations, and local businesses.

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