

Two States



Mississippi Forum on Children & Families
September 2006



Forum on Children & Families

**Building on the *promise* of
Mississippi's children since 1992**

Solution Focused Advocacy

**Improving the lives of Mississippi's
children and families
with services that build the basic
infrastructure of economic development
– *strong families, strong schools,
strong communities.***

Community Resource Development

Information, education and training services for individuals, agencies and organizations statewide funded with grants and contracts from public agencies and private organizations.

Information•Education•Training

Not everyone has seen some of our work - *child care needs assessments for private businesses, local economic development organizations, and State government • parent education and parental assistance center development • family support services and family resource center development • child care quality improvement • school readiness • child health outreach* — **or read some of our publications** — *Community Classrooms • Healthy Measures Child Health Journal • The Child Care Compass • KIDS COUNT Data Books • The New Formula: Child Care in the Economic Development Equation • Food for Thought • Count the Kids • Curriculum Quality Counts* — **or heard of the recognition our work has earned** — *A Building Blocks Award from the National Governor's Association Certificate of Merit from the National Center for Medicare and Medicaid Management • Mississippi's participation in the American Business Collaboration for Quality Dependent Care • Designation as Mississippi's Parental Information and Resource Center* **but...**

Information•Education•Training

...the results are hard to miss.

From Petal to Picayune, Horn Lake to Hattiesburg, Clarksdale to Corinth, and Tupelo to Natchez and all points in between, the information, education, and training services provided by the Forum have been the *wind beneath the wings* of most of the early childhood and family support services put in place over the past 15 Years – **and we've only just begun.**

Solution Focused Advocacy

**Children do not belong to a political party
but their *early childhood education* is
becoming an increasingly partisan political
playground – and the needs of children and
their families don't count in this game.**

Early childhood education is the process of caring for, nurturing and educating young children – and no one part of the process exists separate from the other two.

The Paradox and Politics of Early Childhood Education *in* Mississippi

Mississippi is one of only 10 states that does not have a state funded pre-kindergarten program

76% of Mississippi's four-year-old children are enrolled in an early childhood education program

The Politics of Early Childhood Education for Mississippi

Although good early childhood programs can benefit all children, they are not a quick fix for all of society's ills—from crime in the streets to adolescent pregnancy, from school failure to unemployment.

Barbara Bowman, Erikson Institute

The Promise of Early Childhood Education for Mississippi

...but the *right* early childhood education strategy can meet some of Mississippi's most pressing needs.

The Promise of Early Childhood Education Right for Mississippi

- **Maximizes Existing Resources.**
- **Supports Economic Development.**
- **Promotes Safe and Stable Families and Communities.**
- **Provides for the Optimum Development of Children.**
- **Fuels On-going Improvement in the Quality of Public Education.**

Right for Mississippi: Maximizes Existing Resources

**Sustainable change occurs
when existing resources are
reallocated to a new and more
important purpose.**

Right for Mississippi: Maximizes Existing Resources

- Redirect State and Federal Funds.**
- Utilize Existing Licensed Child Care Facilities.**
- Convert and Lease Vacant Publicly Owned Buildings.**

Right for Mississippi: Supports Economic Development

Early childhood education that's *Right for Mississippi* makes it possible for families to **work** where jobs are available, and **live** where they have affordable housing and a network of supportive friends and family members.

Right for Mississippi: Supports Economic Development

- **Open 12 Months of the Year.**
- **Operate a Minimum of 10 Hours a Day on Weekdays.**
- **Extend Hours and Days of Operation When Needed to Support Local Employers or Allow for Travel Time When Available Employment is Distant.**

Right for Mississippi: Promotes Safe and Stable Families

- Keep Children Safe While Parents Work.**
- Provide Parents Access to Information on Any Needed Service.**
- Work with Parents as Partners in the Early Care and Education of Children.**

Right for Mississippi:

Provides the Optimum Development of Children

- **Establish Expectations Based on the Science of Child Development.**
- **Provide Learning Opportunities That Are Age and Stage Appropriate for Each Child's Level of Development.**
- **Train Caregivers in Child Development and the Practical Application of Knowledge to Practice.**

Right for Mississippi: Fuels Improvement in Public Education

School Readiness

**Children prepared to
successfully complete
the
Kindergarten curriculum.**

Learning Readiness

**Children supported in
reaching full
developmental potential
and prepared for
life-long learning.**

Right for Mississippi

Fuels Improvement in Public Education

- **Enter School with the Learning Readiness Needed to Raise the Bar of Academic Excellence as They Move Through the K-12 System.**
- **Benefit from Parents Who Have Been Partners in the Early Education of Their Children.**

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The Forum's Family-Centered Strategy The Right Strategy for Mississippi

- **Developed in 1992.**
- **Tested in 24 School-Community Partnerships Beginning in 1993.**
- **Required Community-wide Assessment and Planning Prior to Implementation of the Components.**
- **Ongoing Support 1993 – Present.**

The Promise of Early Childhood Education *Right for Mississippi*

- *The Right Strategy*
- *The Right Quality*
- *The Right Results*

The Forum's Family-Centered Strategy

The Right *Strategy* for Mississippi

- **Parent Education.**
- **Partnerships with Child Care Providers.**
- **Information and Referral.**
- **Learning Opportunities for Preschool-age Children.**
- **After School Care for School-age Children.**
- **Access to Health and Social Services.**

The Forum's Family-Centered Strategy

The Right *Quality* for Mississippi

- ***Parents as Teachers* and Other Proven Program Models That Withstand the Test of Time.**
- **Web-based *Child Care Resource and Referral* That Makes Any Home, Business, Agency or Public Library with Web Access a One-Stop Shop for Child Care:**
www.ms-childcareconnection.org
- ***Healthy Measures* Community Health Fairs and Developmental Screening.**
- **Job-specific Training for Child Care Providers to Support Immediate and On-Going Quality Improvement.**
- **Community-based Family Resource Centers to Build Home, School, Community Partnerships.**

The Forum's *Family-Centered* Strategy The Right *Results* for Mississippi

- **Strong Families**
- **Strong Schools**
- **Strong Communities**
- **Strong Economy**

The Promise of Early Childhood Education The Right *Leadership* for Mississippi

Non-partisan Leadership Sustainable System Change

Left to lead their own change, systems simply appear to change...

Sustainable change results from external pressure to reallocate existing resources to a new and more important purpose.

The Promise of Early Childhood Education
The Right *Leadership* for Mississippi



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