

MISSISSIPPI BUILDING BLOCKS

An Early Childhood Initiative



Mississippi Building Blocks...

- Is a 3-year pilot program
- Is designed to assist existing childcare centers in making improvements to their programs and to:
 - Improve teaching and learning in licensed child care centers
 - Strengthen parenting skills
 - Improve school-readiness among entering kindergartners
 - Increase the number of centers participating in the MCCQSS
- Will be privately funded
- Will serve approximately:
 - 50 child care centers
 - 150 early education classrooms
 - 1,500 children in the first year, 3,500 in the second year, and 5,500 in the third year (ages birth through 4)



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Promoting the statewide plan for early care and education

Mississippi Building Blocks will provide...

- Program facilitators
- On-site teacher mentors
- Classroom materials and resources
- The T.E.A.C.H. professional development training model
- Business advisors
- Parent advocates



Program facilitators will

- Recruit centers for participation in the Mississippi Building Blocks program
- Provide guidance and assistance to centers throughout the application process
- Assist center directors and teachers in scheduling required trainings and in on-going center participation
- Assist staff in meeting the requirements for the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential through small-group coaching



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On-site teacher mentors will

- Work in the classrooms of participating centers to assist teachers in implementation of:
 - Strategies learned through college courses, in the Child Development Associate credential training, and in the training provided under Mississippi Building Blocks
 - Strategies that are described through the indicators in the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS)
 - Standards learned in Teacher Education And Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.) training



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Classroom materials and resources

- Will be cognitively stimulating and age-appropriate
- Up to \$2,895 value per classroom
- Based upon the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R assessments and on in-classroom assessments
- Year 1
 - Infant and toddler classrooms
- Year 2
 - 3-year-old classrooms
- Year 3
 - 4-year-old classrooms



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T.E.A.C.H. professional development training model

- Provides scholarships and training model
- Enables teachers to obtain the Child Development Associate (CDA) certification and/or AS degree in child development technology
- CDA recipients will receive a \$2,000 bonus to be paid in \$500 installments over 2 years



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Business advisors

- Will counsel center directors and bookkeepers on best practices for financial management of the center
- Will enable centers to become more productive and profitable



Parent advocates

- Home visits
 - Each family will receive minimum of 2 home visits
 - Appropriate child development milestones
 - Methods to assist children in reaching milestones
 - Role of parents in pre-literacy and language development
 - Referrals to other resources for additional needs
 - Facilitate smooth transition to K-12 environment
 - Will coordinate with Parent Advocates in other programs to avoid duplication
- Center-based programs
 - Information about skills being taught children
 - Opportunities for in-center involvement
 - Activities and games that foster appropriate child development
 - Peer to peer interaction and support

Program evaluation

- Statistically valid sample of students will be tracked to determine outcomes
 - Tracked individually
 - Across multiple years
 - Using multiple instruments
- Program quality will be monitored through Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R
- Annual independent administrative audit of each Mississippi Building Blocks element will determine the success with which all parties are carrying out their responsibilities



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Funding required

- ▣ Private funding will be sought
- ▣ Annual cost of the pilot program will be \$3.5-million
- ▣ Over 3-year life of the pilot, \$10.5-million in funding will be required



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Short-term results expected of Mississippi Building Blocks

- Improved teaching and learning in licensed child care centers
- Strengthened parenting skills
- Better school-readiness among entering kindergartners
- An increase in the number of centers participating in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System



Long-term results expected of Mississippi Building Blocks

- Statewide implementation of the Mississippi Building Blocks model that will yield:
 - Reduced dropout rates
 - Improved graduation rates
 - Better job-readiness
 - Higher salaries
 - Fewer interactions with the criminal justice system
 - Reduced public assistance rolls
 - Brighter futures for Mississippi children
 - Increased prosperity for our state

