

THE MISSISSIPPI LIFT
NEEDS ASSESSMENT &
STRATEGIC PLAN

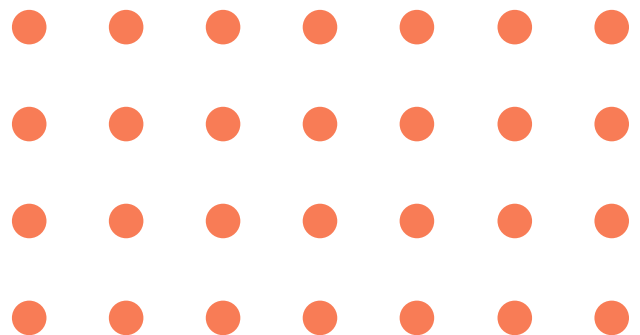
RESOURCE GUIDE

MISSISSIPPI



lift

2024



WELCOME

INTRODUCTION

The PDG B-5 Grant is based at the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and includes the following partners: Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center (MECIC), Mississippi State University Social Science Research Center (SSRC), Children's Foundation of Mississippi (CFM), and Elucidata.

Mississippi LIFT (Learning Investment For Tomorrow) invests in families, communities, and childcare providers with sound educational resources for our youngest Mississippians. By offering training, employment incentives, and support for early childcare teachers, Mississippi LIFT sustains families with free at-home learning and childcare services by providing safe, evidence-based educational and lifestyle resources from birth to age five.

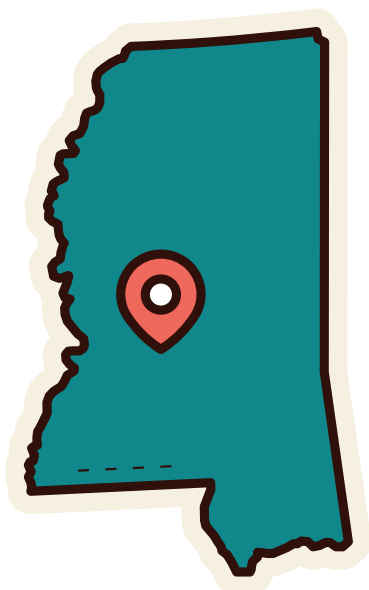
Early investment can transform the lives of underserved children living in poverty, rural areas, and/or with disabilities. Mississippi's future depends on sustained funding of these early childhood education and development programs.

As foundational steps for this project, in Year 1, Elucidata conducted a comprehensive Needs Assessment of the Early Childhood Education System in our state. Based on those findings, the Social Science Research Center developed a Strategic Plan to better support our Early Childhood workforce and the parents of children 0-5. This brief outlines the major findings from the Needs Assessment, the Strategies associated with those findings, and the contact information and timeline of the individual services offered by the Mississippi LIFT project.

MISSISSIPPI LIFT

GOALS FOR ENHANCING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN MISSISSIPPI

The goals outlined below are designed to ensure every child in Mississippi, regardless of their background, can thrive from the beginning of their educational journey.



Expand access to quality early education

Provide more opportunities for early education to children from low-income backgrounds, those living in rural areas, and children of color.



Build a unified early education system

Ensure that everyone involved in ECE, from families to educators, is connected and provided necessary resources.



Enhance training and support for early childhood educators

Develop training programs that help educators grow professionally, ensuring they can provide the best care and education.



Raise standards across early childhood programs

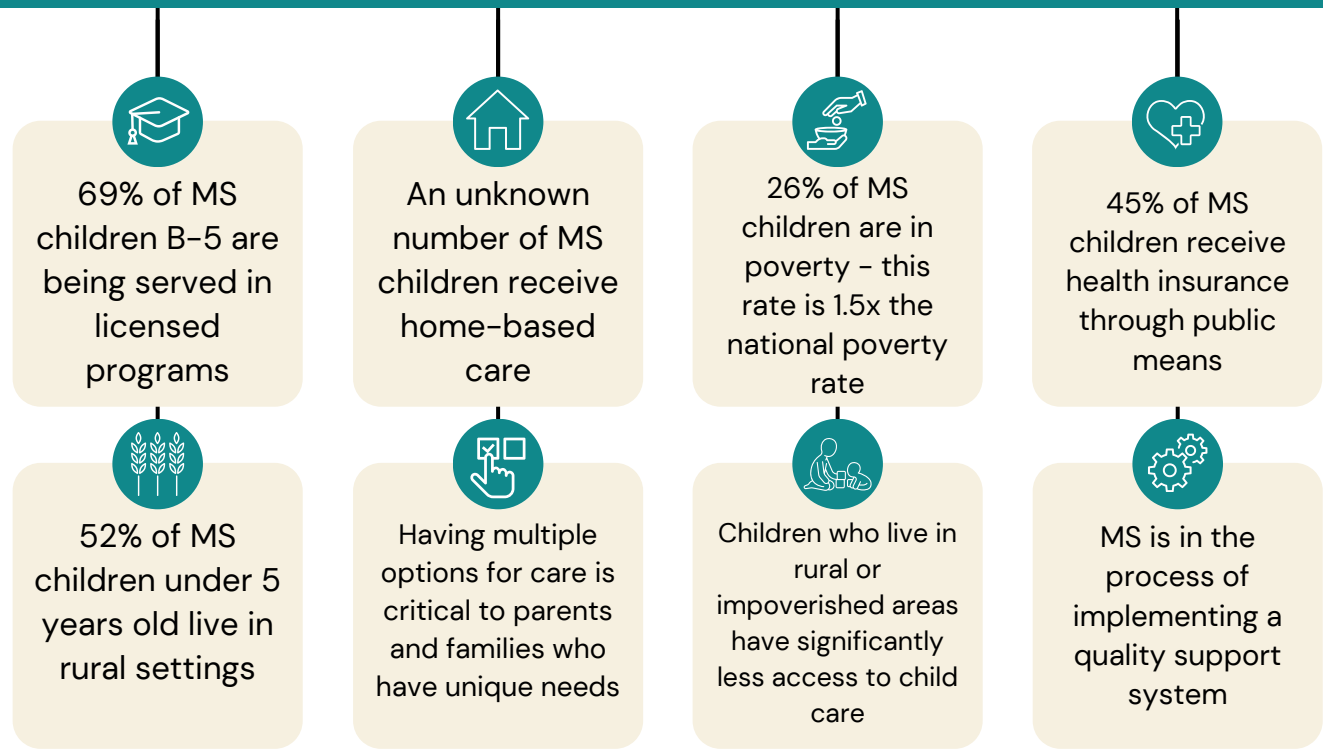
Work with stakeholders to set and achieve higher quality standards in early childhood education, informing families about the best options available.



Involve families in shaping education programs

Actively seek feedback from parents to tailor educational programs to better meet children's developmental needs and improve coordination of services at both state and local levels.

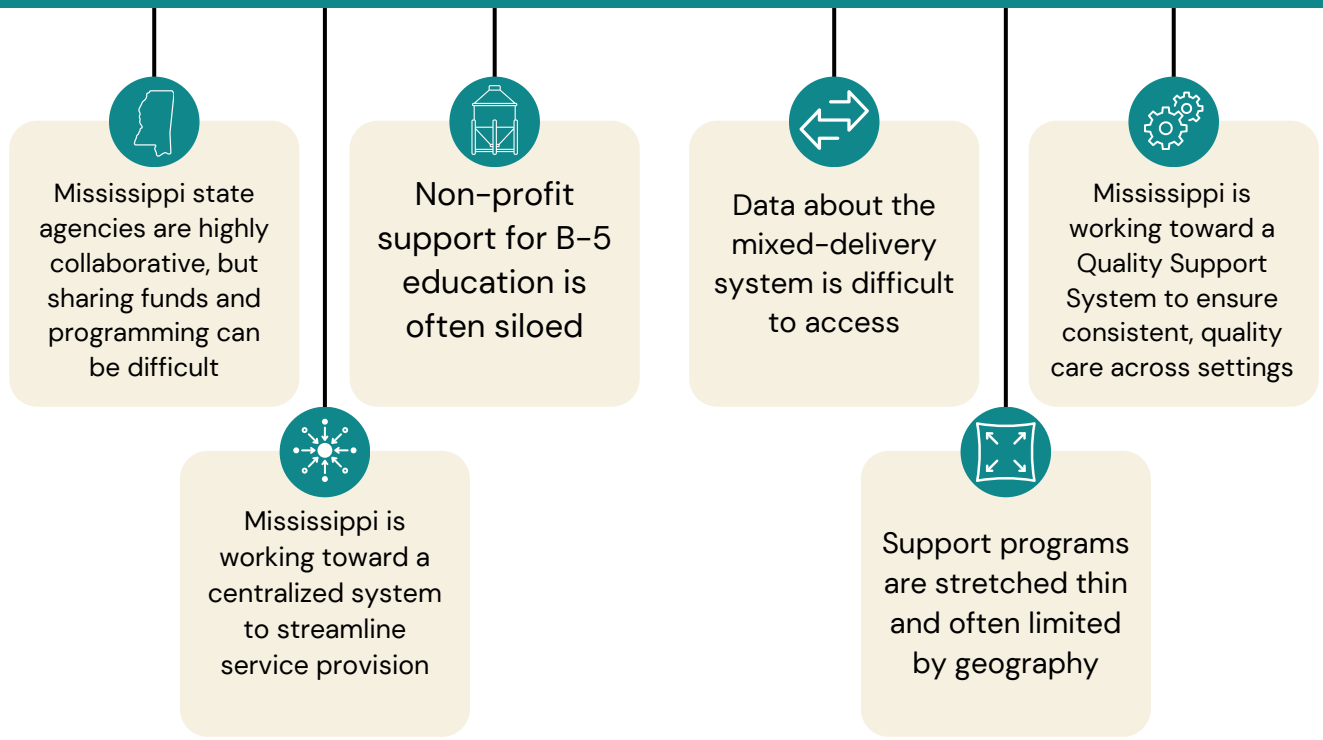
GOAL 1: INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY ECE EXPERIENCES TO UNDERSERVED CHILDREN



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN

CFM	CFM	MDHS	MDHS	NHI
ONGOING Communities	COMPLETED Early Childhood Councils	AVAILABLE Home and Center Based Providers	AVAILABLE Families	AVAILABLE Home-Based Providers
Identify funding opportunities to continue Mississippi LIFT efforts following the project period	Hire 2 Early Childhood Council (ECC) coordinators to support and extend ECCs across the state (Strategy 3.13)	Continue the Family Navigator Program (Strategy 3.11)	Support parents with disabilities to engage in their child's education (Strategy 3.12)	Develop warmline for home-based providers (Strategy 4.13)
MDE	MDE	MECIC	MECIC	MDE
AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers	IN PROGRESS Public Schools	PLANNING Early Learning Providers	IN PROGRESS Communities	IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers
Print MS Beginnings: Pre-K Programming (Strategy 5.5)	Expand the Blended Pre-K (Strategy 6.1)	Sponsor training for teachers in the mixed-delivery system (Strategy BP.2)	Form Community Inclusion Team to establish awareness of quality early childhood inclusion (Strategy BP.3)	Educate and provide coaching support to teachers that serve children with disabilities (Strategy BP.1)

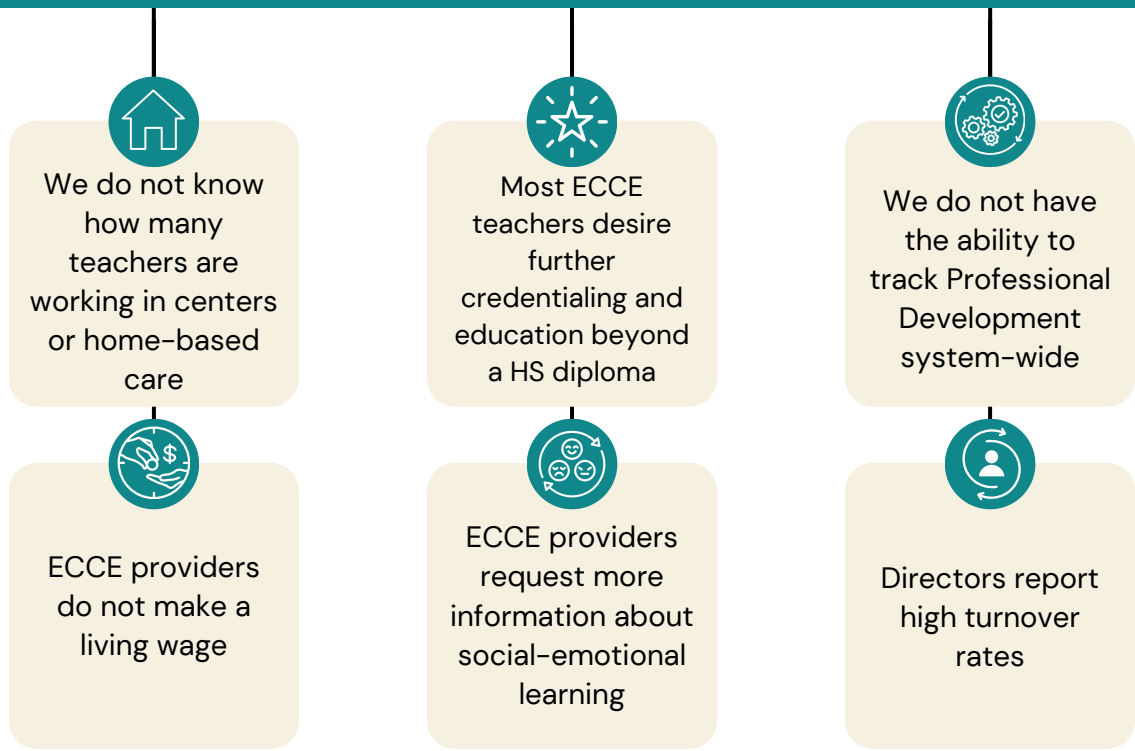
GOAL 2: CREATE AN INCLUSIVE, ALIGNED MIXED DELIVERY SYSTEM



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN

CFM	CFM	CFM	CFM	MDE	MDE
ONGOING Communities	IN PROGRESS Early Childhood Councils	ONGOING Early Childhood Councils	ONGOING Communities	IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers	January 11, 2025 Early Learning Providers
Develop 4 data-backed briefs about early childhood	Launch up to 10 new Early Childhood Councils (ECCs)	Provide continuous consultation to ECCs	Retain Scholar-in-Residence	Hire family engagement coaches to support family engagement and transition (Strategy 3.8)	Organize and hold family engagement fairs (Strategy 3.9)
MDHS	MDHS	MDE & MDHS	MDHS	MDHS	MDE
IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers	AVAILABLE Families & Early Learning Providers	IN PROGRESS (ONE HELD IN JUNE 2024) Early Learning Providers	IN PROGRESS & ONGOING Early Learning Providers	IN PROGRESS & ONGOING Early Learning Providers and Families	ONGOING Early Learning Providers
Incentivize ECEs to employ bilingual educators (Strategy 3.7)	Extend R&R services for non-English speaking families (Strategy 3.6)	Host 2 early learning conferences per year (Strategy 4.7)	Update Consumer Education platform (Strategy 3.10)	Update R&R Directory resources (Strategy 3.10)	Extend online series of lessons for students, parents, families, and teacher (Strategy 5.4)

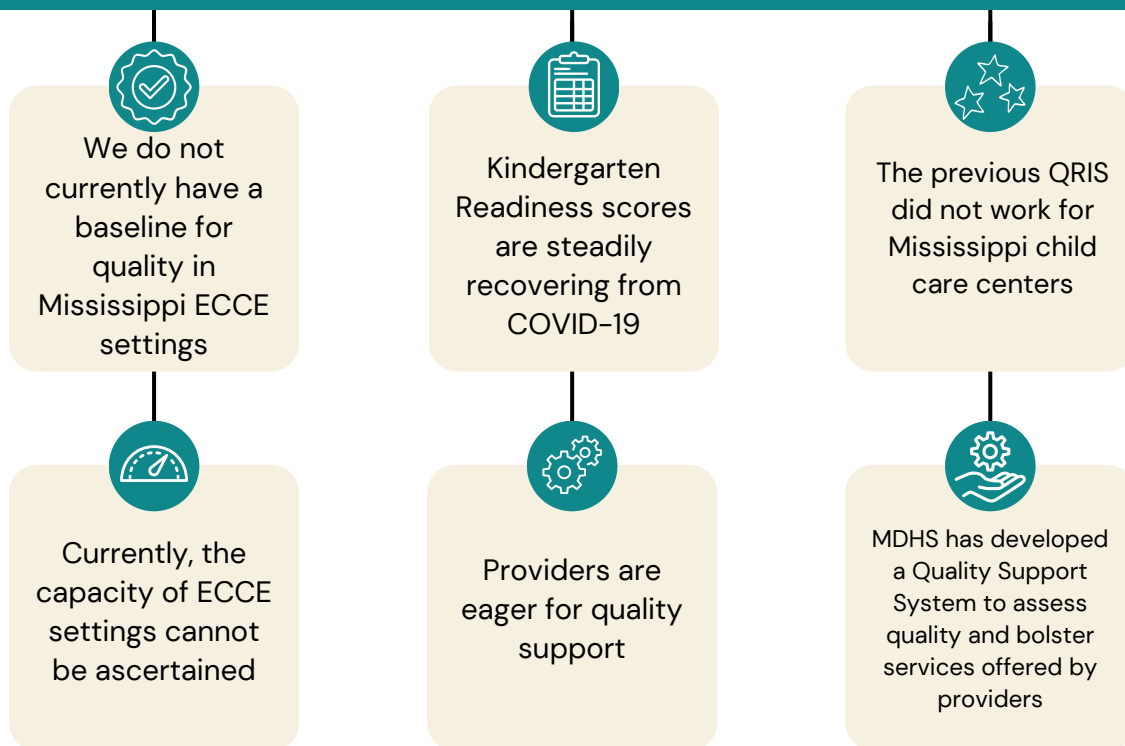
GOAL 3: PROMOTE ACTIVITIES TO RECRUIT, BUILD, & SUSTAIN A QUALIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN

MDE	MDE	MECIC	MDE	MDE
ONGOING Early Learning Providers	PLANNING Early Learning Providers & Students	IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers/Directors & Professional Workforce	IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers	PLANNING Pre-K & Kindergarten Teachers
Provide technical support subscription to encourage interactions and engagement (Strategy 3.5)	Increase participation in Child Development Associate Certificates (Strategy 4.2)	Extend program management training with MDE, R&R Coaches, & other early childhood care and education staff and providers (Strategy 4.1)	Provide job-embedded coaching (Strategy 4.3)	Expand the Coaching Community Consortium (CCC) (Strategy 4.4)
MDE	MDHS	MDE	MDE	MDE
ONGOING Early Learning Providers	PLANNING Early Learning Providers	IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers	COMPLETED Early Learning Providers	PLANNING Early Learning Providers
Expand access to LiftED to include all early learning professionals (Strategy 4.5)	Expand CCC to include infant/toddler providers (Strategy 4.6)	Expand inclusive practices training to increase awareness of all children (Strategy 4.8)	Hire CSPD Coordinator (Strategy 4.10)	Implement CHAD Project to provide intensive support that meets standards of quality (Strategy 4.9)

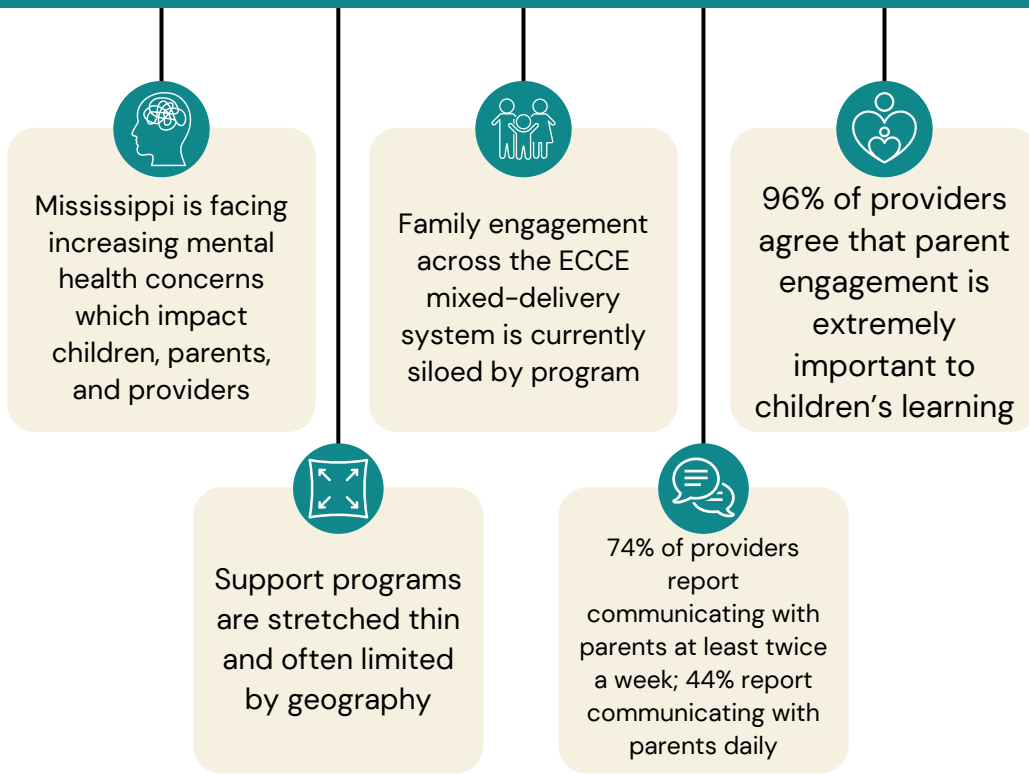
GOAL 4: DEVELOP A QUALITY SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN

Elucidata, SSRC, & MDHS	SSRC	Elucidata	Elucidata	Elucidata & MDHS
ONGOING Early Learning Providers and Families Host member checking meetings	ONGOING Communities Finalize Strategic Plan	ONGOING Communities Finalize Needs Assessment	IN PROGRESS MDHS Refine variables and intake form	IN PROGRESS All Systems Create Early Childhood Integrated Data System (Strategy 4.11)
MDE	MDE	MDE	MDHS	MECIC
PLANNING Early Learning Providers Extend Access to WestEd to bolster children's kindergarten readiness (Strategy 5.6)	PLANNING Early Learning Providers & Head Start Directors Extend MS Leading Innovative Teaching and Learning Environments in Early Childhood Institute (MS L.I.T.E. training) (Strategy 5.7)	IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers Train providers to implement MS-ELS (Strategy 5.2)	IN PROGRESS All Systems Implement a true QSS (Strategy 5.1)	PLANNING Professionals Extend Pyramid Model training with MDE, R&R, and others (Strategy 4.1)

GOAL 5: ENGAGE FAMILIES AND PROVIDERS



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN

MECIC & MDHS		MDHS		MECIC & MDHS		MDE & MDHS	
AVAILABLE & ONGOING Families		IN PROGRESS Families & Early Learning Providers		PLANNING Families		IN PROGRESS Families & Early Learning Providers	
Host Parent Engagement Coalitions (Strategy 3.2)		The state will develop a Communications Plan based on priorities on the Needs Assessment (Strategy 3.1)		Hold quarterly family engagement coalition meetings (Strategy 3.2)		Organize and hold family engagement fairs (Strategy 3.3)	
MDE				MDE			
IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers				IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers			
Update family engagement & toolkit (Strategy 5.3)				Reprint & offer trainings on Family Engagement Toolkit (Strategy 3.4)			

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GOAL 1: INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY ECE EXPERIENCES TO UNDERSERVED CHILDREN

AGENCY	STRATEGY	CONTACT INFORMATION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Children's Foundation of Mississippi (CFM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify funding opportunities Strategy 3.13 	<p>Linda Southward linda@childrensfoundationms.org</p>	<p>https://childrensfoundationms.org</p>
Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 3.11 Strategy 3.12 	<p>Steven Harper Steven.harper@mdhs.ms.gov</p>	
Mississippi Early Childhood Inclusion Center (MECIC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 3.12 Strategy BP.3 	<p>Alicia Westbrook aliciawestbrook@usm.edu</p>	
Mississippi Department of Education (MDE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 5.5 Strategy 6.1 Strategy BP.2 Strategy BP.1 	<p>Marisa Prewitt (Strategy 5.5) mprewitt@mdek12.org Jill Dent (Strategy BP.2 & BP.1) jdent@mdek12.org Candice Taylor (Strategy BP.2) ctaylor@mdek12.org</p>	<p>Strategy 6.1 Classes begin in January Strategy 5.5 https://www.mdek12.org/EC/Mississippi-Beginnings-Curriculum</p>
Nurturing Homes Initiative (NHI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 4.13 	<p>Resource and Referral (662)-325-2950</p>	<p>Strategy 4.13 https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/eccd/rrcenters/</p>

GOAL 2: CREATE AN INCLUSIVE, ALIGNED MIXED DELIVERY SYSTEM

MDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 3.8 Strategy 3.9 Strategy 4.7 Strategy 5.4 	<p>Jill Dent jdent@mdek12.org</p>	<p>Strategy 3.9 & 4.7 Sign up info will go out via listserv Strategy 5.4 https://www.mdek12.org/EC</p>
MDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 3.7 Strategy 3.6 Strategy 4.7 Strategy 3.10 Strategy 4.12 	<p>Pearl Bailey (Strategy 3.7, 4.7, 3.10, & 4.12) Joy Duncan (Strategy 3.10)</p>	<p>Strategy 3.6 https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/eccd/rrcenters/ Strategy 4.12 https://www.iecmhc.org/about/</p>
MECIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 4.12 	<p>Pearl Bailey (MDHS)</p>	<p>https://www.iecmhc.org/about/</p>

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GOAL 2: CREATE AN INCLUSIVE, ALIGNED MIXED DELIVERY SYSTEM, CONTINUED

AGENCY	STRATEGY	CONTACT INFORMATION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Children's Foundation of Mississippi (CFM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop 4 data-backed briefs Launch 10 new Early Childhood Councils Provide continuous consultations to ECCs Retain Scholar-In-Residence 	<p>Linda Southward linda@childrensfoundationms.org</p>	<p>https://childrensfoundationms.org</p>

GOAL 3: PROMOTE ACTIVITIES TO RECRUIT, BUILD, & SUSTAIN A QUALIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE

MDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 4.6 	Pearl Bailey	
MECIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 4.1 	Alicia Westbrook alicia.westbrook@usm.edu	
MDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 3.5 Strategy 4.2 Strategy 4.3 Strategy 4.4 Strategy 4.5 Strategy 4.8 Strategy 4.9 Strategy 4.10 	<p>Jill Dent (Strategy 3.5, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10) jdent@mdek12.org</p> <p>Candice Taylor (Strategy 4.8) ctaylor@mdek12.org</p>	<p>Strategy 3.5 Ready Rosie</p> <p>Strategy 4.9 Survey coming soon</p>

GOAL 4: DEVELOP A QUALITY SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS

MDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 5.2 Strategy 5.6 Strategy 5.7 	<p>Joyce Greer (Strategy 5.2) jgreer@mdek12.org</p> <p>Angela Towers (Strategy 5.6 & 5.7) atowers@mdek12.org</p>	<p>Strategy 5.2 EL Standards 8/20/24-Grenada 8/22/24-Virtual 8/27/24-Virtual 8/29/24-Hattiesburg</p>
MDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 5.1 Strategy 4.11 	<p>Chriscella Clay (Strategy 5.1) chriscella.clay@mdhs.ms.gov</p>	

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GOAL 4: DEVELOP A QUALITY SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS CONTINUED

AGENCY	STRATEGY	CONTACT INFORMATION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Elucidata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host member checking meetings • Finalize Needs Assessment • Refine variables and intake form • Strategy 4.11 	<p>Audrey Reid elucidatasolutions@gmail.com</p>	
Social Science Research Center at Mississippi State University (SSRC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host member checking meetings • Finalize Strategic Plan 	<p>Heather Hanna heather.hanna@msstate.edu</p>	
MECIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 5.1 • Strategy 4.11 	<p>Alicia Westbrook alicia.westbrook@usm.edu</p>	

GOAL 5: ENGAGE FAMILIES AND PROVIDERS

MECIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 3.2 	<p>Alicia Westbrook alicia.westbrook@usm.edu <i>Contact for Coalition Information</i></p>	
MDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 3.2 • Strategy 3.1 • Strategy 3.3 	<p>Steven Harper (Strategy 3.2) steven.harper@mdhs.ms.gov</p> <p>Joy Duncan (Strategy 3.1) joy.smith@mdhs.ms.gov</p>	
MDE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 5.3 • Strategy 3.3 • Strategy 3.4 	<p>Joyce Greer (Strategy 5.3) jgreer@mdek12.org</p> <p>Angela Towers (Strategy 3.3 & 3.4) atowers@mdek12.org</p>	<p>Strategy 5.3 https://www.mdek12.org/EC</p>

OUR THANKS



We thank you so much for your presence, time, and feedback. Your willingness to speak with us gives us insight into the current experiences of Mississippi's Early Childhood Providers, Directors, Parents, and Community Partners. Again, thank you for all you do for Mississippi's children. Together, we can lift Mississippi to a better tomorrow.

