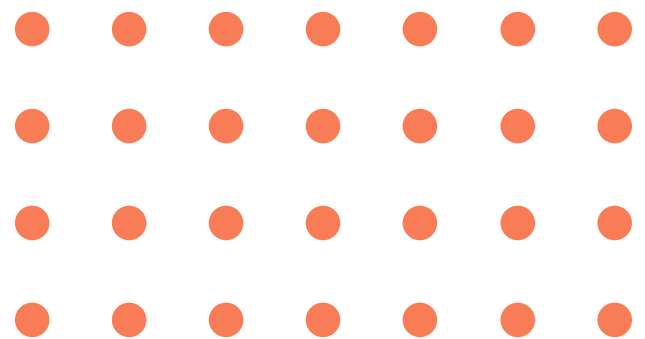


THE MISSISSIPPI LIFT
NEEDS ASSESSMENT &
STRATEGIC PLAN
RESOURCE GUIDE



2025



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 LIFT Resource & Referral at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM), 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.

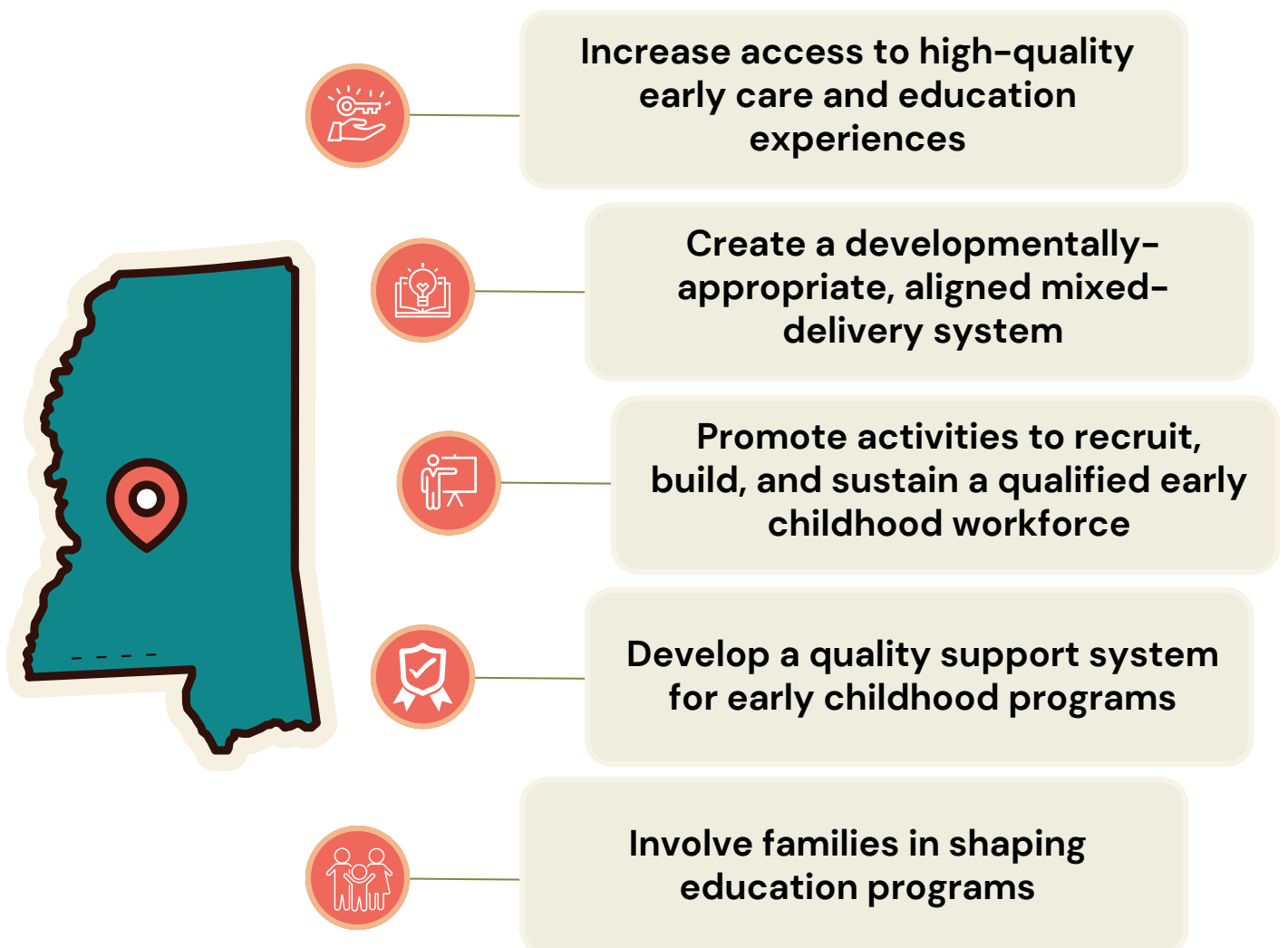
Early investment can transform the lives of children living in poverty, rural areas, and/or with disabilities. Mississippi's future depends on sustained funding of these early childhood education and development programs.

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.

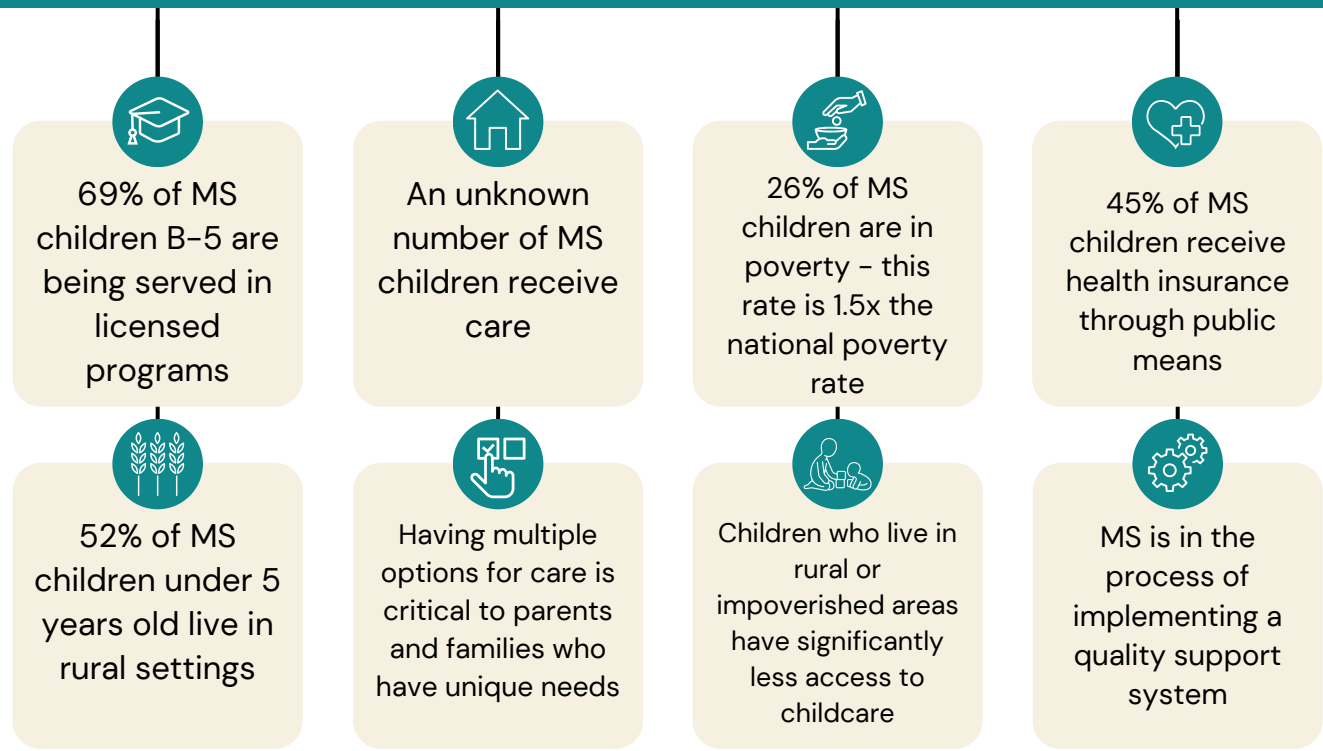
MISSISSIPPI LIFT

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.



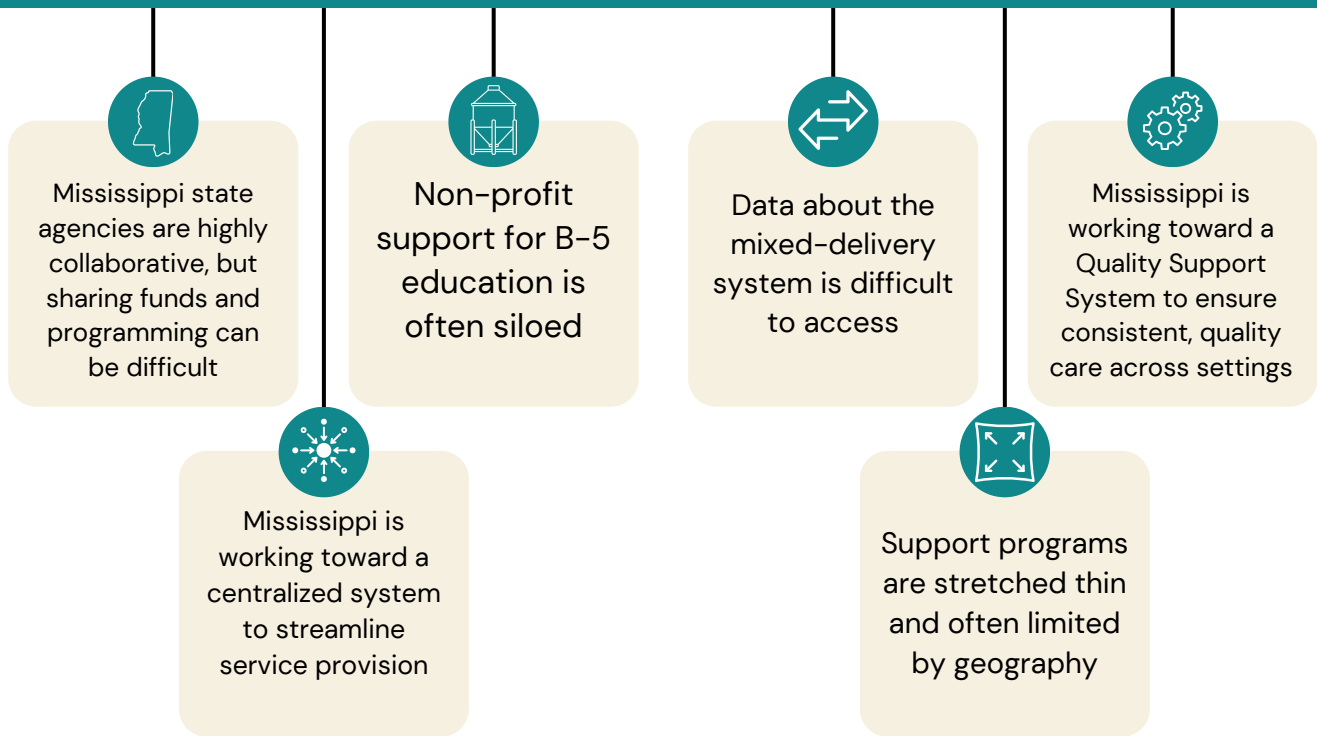
GOAL 1: INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION EXPERIENCES



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN

CFM	MDHS	MDHS	NHI	MDE
ONGOING Early Childhood Councils	AVAILABLE Center and Family Care Providers	AVAILABLE Families	AVAILABLE Family Care Providers	ONGOING Early Learning Providers
Support Early Childhood Councils and Parent Outreach Coordinators (Strategy 3.13)	Continue the <u>Family Navigator Program</u> (Strategy 3.11)	Engage with local orgs that support adults with chronic health conditions (Strategy 3.12)	Provide direct support services for <u>family-based providers</u> (Strategy 4.13)	Expand the Coaching Community Consortium for Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers (Strategy BP.2)
MDE	MDE	USM	MDE	
AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers	IN PROGRESS Public Schools	AVAILABLE Communities	AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers	
Print <u>MS Beginnings: Pre-K Programming</u> (Strategy 5.5)	Expand the Blended Pre-K Program (Strategy 6.1)	Form Community Team to establish awareness of quality early childhood experiences for young children with disabilities (Strategy BP.3)	Provide support to teachers in child care settings that serve children with disabilities (Strategy BP.1)	

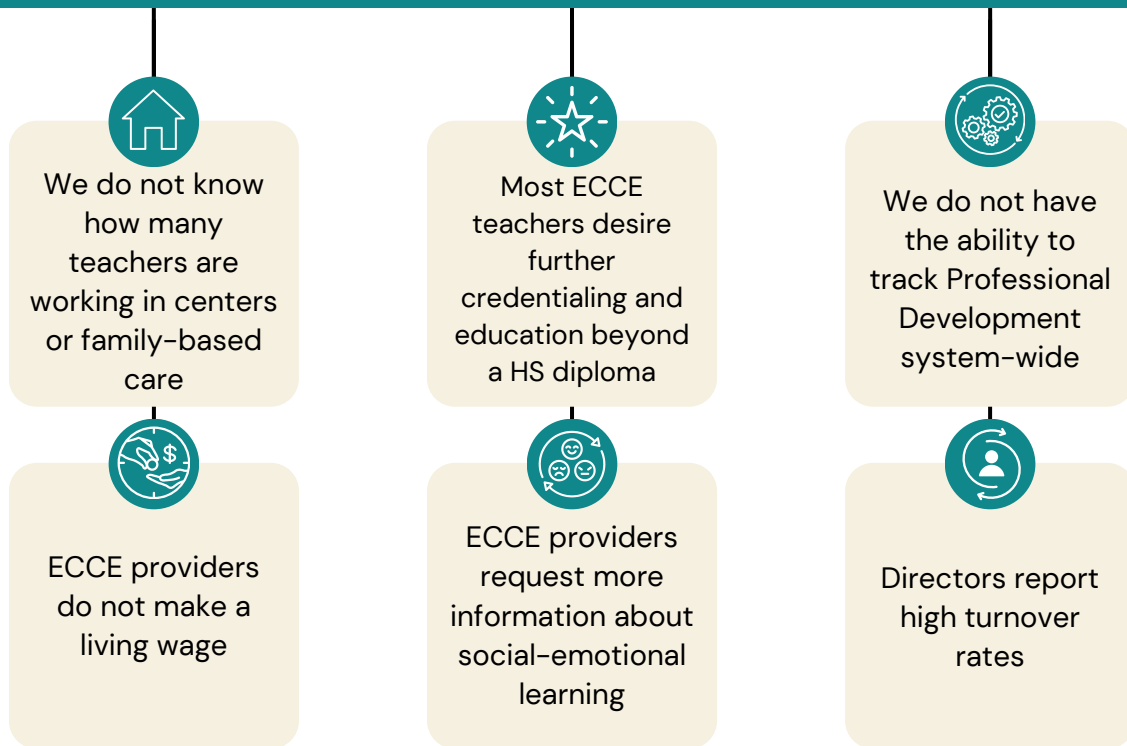
GOAL 2: CREATE A DEVELOPMENTALLY-APPROPRIATE, ALIGNED MIXED-DELIVERY SYSTEM



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN

MDE	MDE	MDHS	MDHS
<p>COMPLETED Early Learning Providers</p> <p>Hire family engagement coaches to support <u>family engagement and transition</u> (Strategy 3.8)</p>	<p>January 11, 2025 Early Learning Providers</p> <p>Organize and hold an annual statewide family engagement transition conference (Strategy 3.9)</p>	<p>IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers</p> <p>Expand support for multilingual-speaking families by providing books, learning activities, etc (Strategy 3.7)</p>	<p>AVAILABLE Families & Early Learning Providers</p> <p>Utilize <u>R&R locations</u> as community hubs for services available for multilingual-speaking families (Strategy 3.6)</p>
MDE & MDHS	MDHS	MDE	MDHS & USM
<p>AVAILABLE (1ST HELD IN JAN, 2ND HELD IN JUNE) Early Learning Providers</p> <p>Host two state Early Learning Conferences per year offered to child care programs, family care programs, and Head Start Centers (Strategy 4.7)</p>	<p>IN PROGRESS & ONGOING Early Learning Providers</p> <p>Update and leverage the Consumer Economic Platform and R&R directory resources (Strategy 3.10)</p>	<p>ONGOING Early Learning Providers</p> <p><u>Expand the online series of lessons for students, parents, families, and teachers</u> (Strategy 5.4)</p>	<p>IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers & Families</p> <p>Secure <u>Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Consultations</u> (Strategy 4.12)</p>

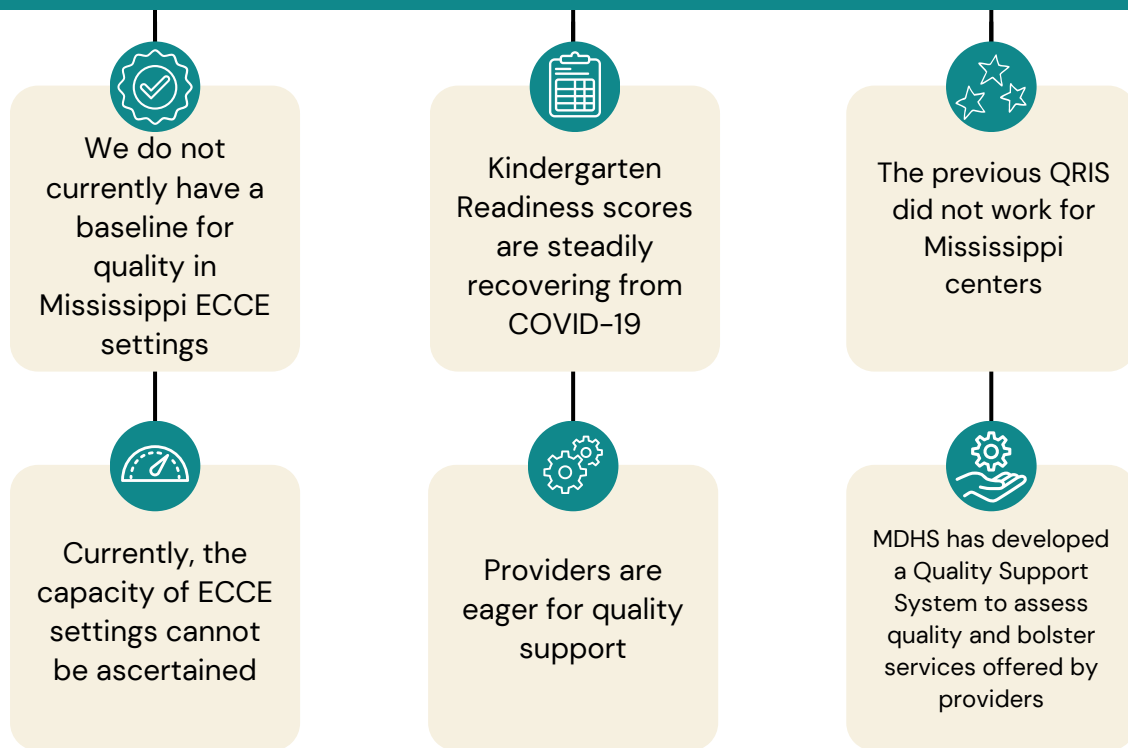
GOAL 3: PROMOTE ACTIVITIES TO RECRUIT, BUILD, AND SUSTAIN A QUALIFIED EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN

MDE		MDE		USM		MDE		MDE	
ONGOING Early Learning Providers		AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers & Students		AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers/Directors & Professional Workforce		AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers		AVAILABLE (JAN, APRIL, & JULY) Pre-K & Kindergarten Teachers	
Provide technical support subscription to encourage interactions and family engagement (Strategy 3.5)		Support and sustain the community of practice by increasing the number of students obtaining a CDA (Strategy 4.2)		Extend <u>program management training</u> with MDE, R&R Coaches, & other early childhood care and education staff and providers (Strategy 4.1)		Provide job-embedded coaching in a mixed-delivery system of settings (Strategy 4.3)		Expand the Coaching Community Consortium for Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers (Strategy 4.4)	
MDE		MDHS		MDE		MDE		MDE	
ONGOING Early Learning Providers		PLANNING Early Learning Providers		AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers		AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers		ONGOING Early Learning Providers	
Expand LMS to make <u>online professional learning convenient and accessible</u> (Strategy 4.5)		Expand Child Care Consortium to include infant/toddler family and center based providers (Strategy 4.6)		Expand <u>inclusive practices training to increase awareness of all children on the learning spectrum</u> (Strategy 4.8)		Hire a coordinator to ensure a high-quality Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (Strategy 4.10)		Implement a comprehensive coaching model known as ELEVATE+ (Strategy 4.9)	

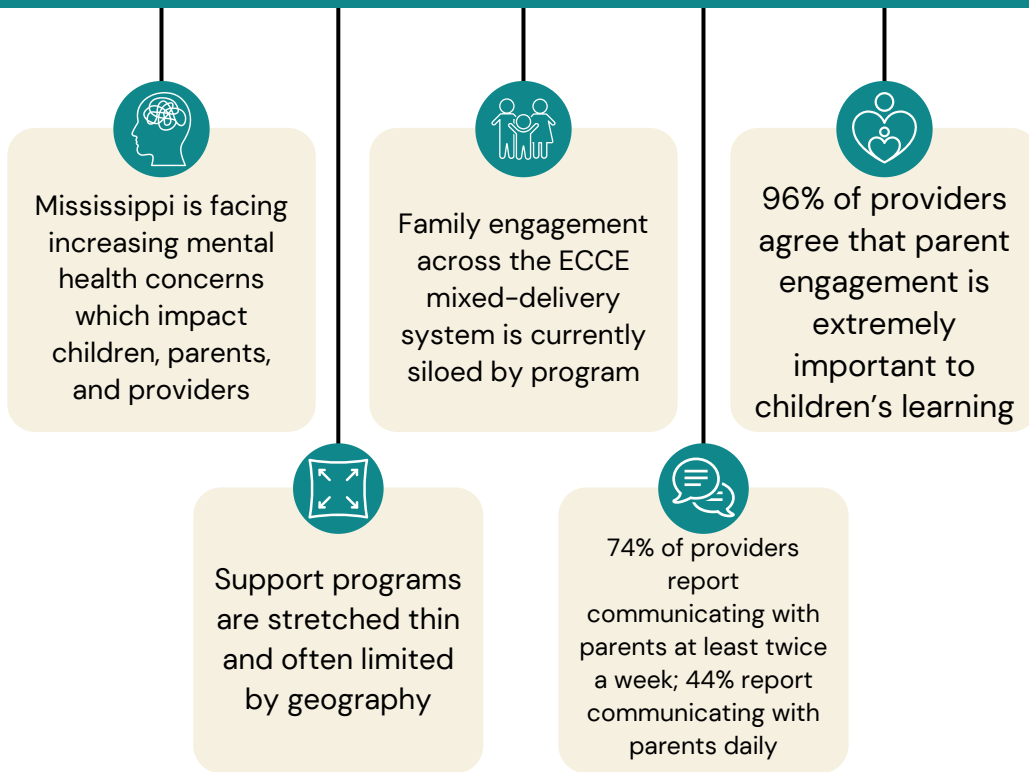
GOAL 4: DEVELOP A QUALITY SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN

MDE	Elucidata & MDHS	MDE	MDE	MDHS
AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers	IN PROGRESS All Systems	AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers & Head Start Directors	AVAILABLE Early Learning Providers	AVAILABLE All Systems
Develop and provide professional learning to administrators and teachers (Strategy 5.6)	Create Early Childhood Integrated Data System (Strategy 4.11)	Extend MS Leading Innovative Teaching and Learning Environments in Early Childhood Institute (MS L.I.T.E. training) (Strategy 5.7)	<u>Train early childhood educators to implement MS Early Learning Standards for classrooms serving children birth to four-year-olds</u> (Strategy 5.2)	<u>Implement a true Quality Support System known as ELEVATE</u> (Strategy 5.1)

GOAL 5: INVOLVE FAMILIES IN SHAPING EDUCATION PROGRAMS



ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WITH A STRATEGIC PLAN

USM & MDHS	MDHS	MDE & MDHS	MDE	MDE
AVAILABLE & ONGOING Families	IN PROGRESS Families & Early Learning Providers	AVAILABLE Families & Early Learning Providers	IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers	IN PROGRESS Early Learning Providers
Develop Parent Engagement Coalitions and host meetings at R&R Centers (Strategy 3.2)	The state will develop a Communications Plan based on priorities on the Needs Assessment (Strategy 3.1)	Host Family Engagement Fairs at up to twelve locations in the state per year (Strategy 3.3)	<u>Produce, update, and disseminate early childhood documents to support learning and family enrichment</u> (Strategy 5.3)	<u>Update and reprint the MDE Family Engagement Framework and Toolkit</u> (Strategy 3.4)

RESOURCE GUIDE

GOAL 1: INCREASE ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION EXPERIENCES TO ALL CHILDREN

AGENCY	STRATEGY	CONTACT INFORMATION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
Children's Foundation of Mississippi (CFM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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>	<p>Strategy 3.11 Offered through R&R sites</p> <p>Strategy 3.12 Connecting parents with Assistive Technology (601)-266-4745</p>
MS LIFT Resource & Referral at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 3.12 Strategy BP.3 	<p>Alicia Westbrook aliciawestbrook@usm.edu</p>	<p>Strategy 3.12 Connecting parents with Assistive Technology (601)-266-4745</p> <p>Strategy BP.3 Jackson CT meets monthly</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</p> <p>Candice Taylor (Strategy 6.1, BP.2, & BP.1) ctaylor@mdek12.org</p>	<p>Strategy 5.5 https://mdek12.org/MBC/</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/rcenters/</p>

GOAL 2: CREATE A DEVELOPMENTALLY-APPROPRIATE, 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 (Strategy 3.8) jdent@mdek12.org</p> <p>Angela Towers (Strategy 3.9) atowers@mdek12.org</p> <p>Joyce Greer (Strategy 4.7) jgreer@mdek12.org</p> <p>Marisa Prewitt (Strategy 5.4) mprewitt@mdek12.org</p>	<p>Strategy 3.8 https://mdek12.org/earlychildhood/transition-to-kindergarten/</p> <p>Strategy 3.9 & 4.7 Sign up info will go out via listserv</p> <p>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)</p> <p>Joy Duncan (Strategy 3.10)</p>	<p>Strategy 3.6 https://www.mdhs.ms.gov/eccd/rcenters/</p> <p>Strategy 4.12 https://www.iecmhc.org/about/</p>

RESOURCE GUIDE

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

AGENCY	STRATEGY	CONTACT INFORMATION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
MDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 4.6 	Pearl Bailey	
MS Lift Resource & Referral at the University of Southern Mississippi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 4.1 	Alicia Westbrook alicia.westbrook@usm.edu	Strategy 4.1 Professional development available through LiftED https://portal.lift-ed.ms/
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, 4.8, 4.10) jdent@mdek12.org</p> <p>Ericka Davis (Strategy 4.4 & 4.9) edavis@mdek12.org</p> <p>Vicki Gamble (Strategy 4.5) vgamble@mdek12.org</p> <p>Bettina McLin (Strategy 4.5) bmclin@mdek12.org</p> <p>Candice Taylor (Strategy 4.8) ctaylor@mdek12.org</p>	<p>Strategy 3.5 Ready Rosie subscriptions have been purchased. Training will be provided to teachers and directors in April</p> <p>Strategy 4.2 MDE will attend HS & community college job fairs in Spring 2025</p> <p>Strategy 4.4 CC Consortium held in Jan, Apr, & Jul 2025</p> <p>Strategy 4.5 LMS offering online, self-paced course for admin of Pre-K, assistant teachers, and child care Pre-K teachers Feb 24-April 4, 2025 https://gsmu.mdek12.org/Public/Course/Browse</p> <p>Strategy 4.8 Making Adjustments Training in April 2025 https://www.msresaservices.com/all-workshops/categories-mde/categories-early-childhood</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 ELS Trainings offered during Regional Saturdays: Oxford 3/29, Leland 4/5, Biloxi 4/12, Hattiesburg 6/21 https://nmec.msresaservices.com/s/event/calendar</p> <p>Strategy 5.7 M.S. L.I.T.E. accepting applications and will begin training in March 2025</p>
MDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 5.1 	Chriscella Clay (Strategy 5.1) chriscella.clay@mdhs.ms.gov	Strategy 5.1 https://mslift.org/elevate
Elucidata	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy 4.11 	Audrey Reid elucidatasolutions@gmail.com	

RESOURCE GUIDE

GOAL 5: ENGAGE FAMILIES AND PROVIDERS

AGENCY	STRATEGY	CONTACT INFORMATION	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
MS LIFT Resource & Referral at the University of Southern Mississippi (USM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 3.2 	<p>Alicia Westbrook alicia.westbrook@usm.edu <i>Contact for Coalition Information</i></p>	<p>Strategy 3.2 Family coalition meetings and activities happen quarterly</p>
MDHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy 3.2 • Strategy 3.1 • Strategy 3.3 	<p>Joy Duncan (Strategy 3.1) joy.smith@mdhs.ms.gov</p>	<p>Strategy 3.3 Family Engagement to be held in Starkville on 3/6/25</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> <p>Strategy 3.4 https://mdek12.org/earlychildhood/family-engagement/</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.

