

RACE TO THE TOP - EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE

APPLICATION FOR INITIAL FUNDING

CFDA NUMBER: 84.412

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED BY THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

OCTOBER 19, 2011



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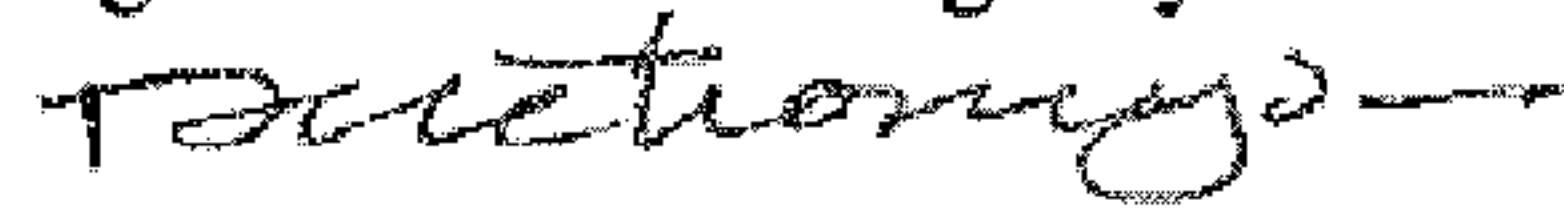
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APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS

IV. APPLICATION ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS
Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge
(CFDA No. 84.412)

Legal Name of Applicant Mississippi Department of Human Services	Applicant's Mailing Address: 750 N. State Street Jackson, MS, 39202
Employer Identification Number: 64-6000807	Organizational DUNS: 809399918
Lead Agency: MS Dept. of Human Services Contact Name: Don Thompson <i>(Single point of contact for communication)</i>	Lead Agency Contact Phone: 601-359-4557 Lead Agency Contact Email Address: Don.thompson@mdhs.ms.gov
<p>Required Applicant Signatures <i>(Must include signatures from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency. Insert additional signature blocks as needed below. To simplify the process, signatories may sign on separate Application Assurance forms.):</i></p> <p>To the best of my knowledge and belief, all of the information and data in this application are true and correct. I further certify that I have read the application, am fully committed to it, and will support its implementation:</p>	
Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): Paul Hurst	Telephone: 601-359-3150
Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor: 	Date: 10/14/11
Lead Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Don Thompson	Agency Name: MS Dept. of Human Services
Signature of Lead Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Dr. Tom Burnham	Agency Name: MS Dept. of Education
Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:

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Signature of Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor:	Date:
Lead Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Don Thompson	Agency Name: MS Dept. of Human Services
Signature of Lead Agency Authorized Representative: 	Date: 10-17-11
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Dr. Tom Burnham	Agency Name: MS Dept. of Education
Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:

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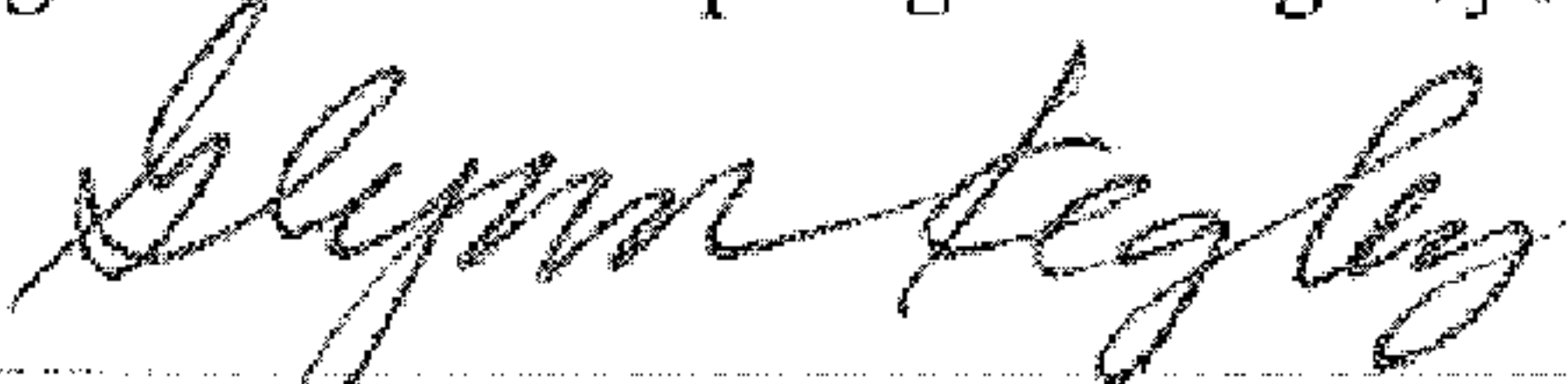
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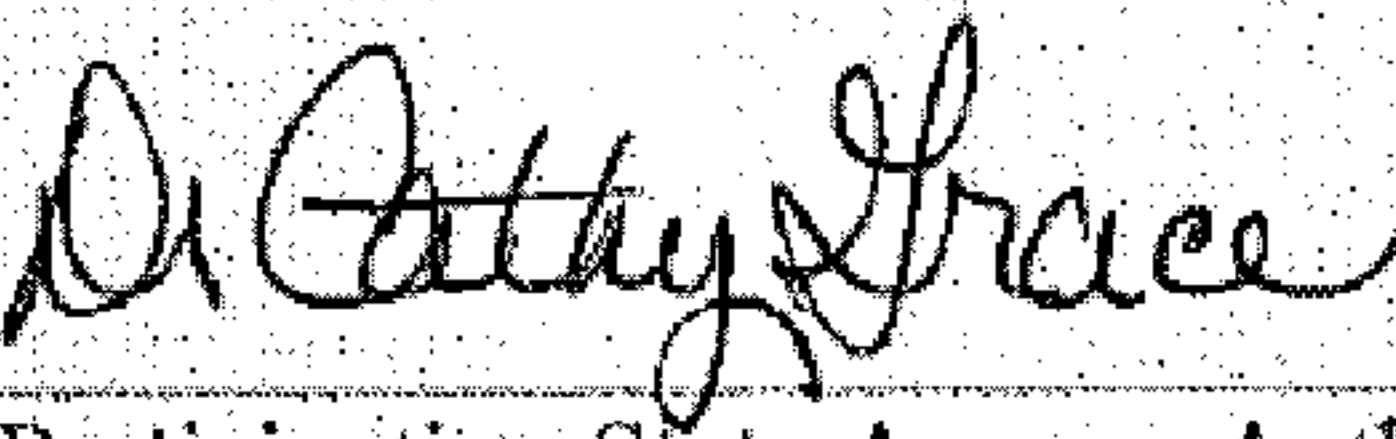
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Signature of Lead Agency Authorized Representative: <i>Don Thompson</i>	Date: 10-17-11
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Dr. Tom Burnham	Agency Name: MS Dept. of Education
Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative: <i>Tom Burnham</i>	Date: 10-17-11

Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Dr. Mary Carrier Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative: 	Agency Name: MS Dept. of Health Date: 10/14/11
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Glynn Keglev Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Agency Name: MS Dept. of Mental Health Date:
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Dr. Cathy Grace, Chair Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Agency Name: State Early Childhood Advisory Council Date:
Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Robert L. Robinson Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Agency Name: MS Dept. of Medicaid Date:

Participating State Agency Authorized Representative (Printed Name): Dr. Mary Currier	Agency Name: MS Dept. of Health
Signature of Participating State Agency Authorized Representative:	Date:
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STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL CERTIFICATION

State Attorney General Certification

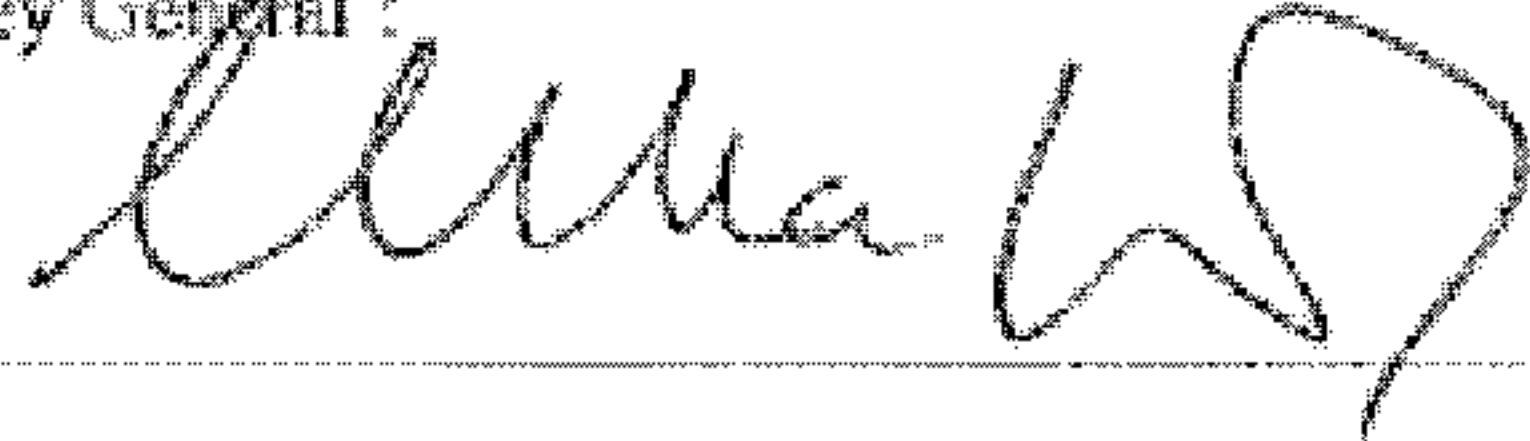
State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General Certification

I certify that the State's description of, and statements and conclusions in its application concerning, State law, statute, and regulation are complete and accurate, and constitute a reasonable interpretation of State law, statute and regulation:

State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General (Printed Name): MICHAEL LAWFORD

Telephone: 603 359 9671

Signature of the State Attorney General or Authorized Representative of the Attorney General:



Date: 10/14/11

Accountability, Transparency, and Reporting Assurances

The Governor or his/her authorized representative assures that the State will comply with all applicable assurances in OMB Standard Forms 424B and D (Assurances for Non-Construction and Construction Programs), including the assurances relating to the legal authority to apply for assistance; access to records; conflict of interest; merit systems; nondiscrimination; Hatch Act provisions; labor standards, including Davis-Bacon prevailing wages; flood hazards; historic preservation; protection of human subjects; animal welfare; lead-based paint; Single Audit Act; and the general agreement to comply with all applicable Federal laws, executive orders, and regulations.

- With respect to the certification regarding lobbying in Department Form 80-0013, no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making or renewal of Federal grants under this program; the State will complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," when required (34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix B); and the State will require the full certification, as set forth in 34 C.F.R. Part 82, Appendix A, in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers.
- The State and other entities will comply with the following provisions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR), as applicable: 34 CFR Part 74 -- Administration of Grants and Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-Profit Organizations; 34 CFR Part 76 -- State-Administered Programs, including the construction requirements in section 75.600 through 75.617 that are incorporated by reference in section 76.600; 34 CFR Part 77 -- Definitions that Apply to Department Regulations; 34 CFR Part 80 -- Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments, including the procurement provisions; 34 CFR Part 81 -- General Education Provisions Act—Enforcement; 34 CFR Part 82 -- New Restrictions on Lobbying; 34 CFR Part 85 -- Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement).

Governor or Authorized Representative of the Governor (Printed Name): <i>Paul Hurst</i>	
Signature: <i>Paul Hurst</i>	Date: <i>10/14/11</i>

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The State must meet the following requirements to be eligible to compete for funding under this program:

(a) The Lead Agency must have executed with each Participating State Agency a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or other binding agreement that the State must attach to its application, describing the Participating State Agency's level of participation in the grant. (See section XIII.) At a minimum, the MOU or other binding agreement must include an assurance that the Participating State Agency agrees to use, to the extent applicable--

- (1) A set of statewide Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A set of statewide Program Standards;
- (3) A statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and
- (4) A statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials.

List of Participating State Agencies:

The applicant should list below all Participating State Agencies that administer public funds related to early learning and development, including at a minimum: the agencies that administer or supervise the administration of CCDF, the section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA programs, State-funded preschool, home visiting, Title I of ESEA, the Head Start State Collaboration Grant, and the Title V Maternal and Child Care Block Grant, as well as the State Advisory Council on Early Childhood Education and Care, the State's Child Care Licensing Agency, and the State Education Agency.

For each Participating State Agency, the applicant should provide a cross-reference to the place within the application where the MOU or other binding agreement can be found. Insert additional rows if necessary. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Participating State Agency Name (* for Lead Agency)	MOU Location in Application	Funds/Program(s) administered by the Participating State Agency
Department of Human Services	Appendix A	CCDF- Child Care Development Funds TANF- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families SNAP- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program LIHEAP- Community Services, Fatherhood Initiative Child Support Enforcement Title IV-E- Foster Care Program

		Aging & Adult Services Youth Services State funds Social Services Block Grant
Division of Medicaid	Appendix A	State funds Title XIX, Social Security Act
Department of Education	Appendix A	Title I, Part A Title III- LEP & Immigrant Prek-619 allocation USDA food program Migrant Program Title X-C Homeless Children and Youth Title II Title III Title VI Title V- Innovative Programs EHA Special Education Title IV, Safe and Drug Free Schools state funds
Department of Mental Health	Appendix A	EIP funding Federal Funding
Department of Health	Appendix A	Federal Funding Burn Care General Funds Local Government & Rural Water

		Tobacco Control Health Care Expendable Fees and other
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(b) The State must have an operational State Advisory Council on Early Care and Education that meets the requirements described in section 642B(b) of the Head Start Act (42 U.S.C. 9837b).

The State certifies that it has an operational State Advisory Council that meets the above requirement. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Yes

No

(c) The State must have submitted in FY 2010 an updated MIECHV State plan and FY 2011 Application for formula funding under the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting program (see section 511 of Title V of the Social Security Act, as added by section 2951 of the Affordable Care Act of 2010 (P.L. 111-148)).

The State certifies that it submitted in FY 2010 an updated MIECHV State plan and FY 2011 Application for formula funding, consistent with the above requirement. The Departments will determine eligibility.

Yes

No

Mississippi's goal is to build a *collaborative, comprehensive system* of Early Learning and Development using the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant. As a result of this investment, Mississippi's Early Learning and Development system will serve 61% more Children with High Needs and their providers will significantly increase the quality of their service.

To accomplish this goal, Mississippi will build a high quality and effectively functioning system using as its foundation the strengths of its independent components including Head Start and Family First Resource Centers as well as several more recent components that were put into place over the past decade. Key proposed elements that will support this new system include the following:

- Established Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) which form the basis for an integrated TQRIS system called the Mississippi Child Care Quality Steps System (MCCQSS).
- A TQRIS system that addresses licensed centers, in-home providers and school-based pre-kindergarten programs.
- Establish a new division of early childhood services within the MDHS, called the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development. This division's responsibility is to coordinate childcare policy across the state.
- Establish a liaison structure that helps this new division interact with other state agencies and statewide organizations that contribute services to children and families in the state. This helps to integrate Health, Mental Health and Education services for needy families.
- Establish incentives for providers and parents to participate in the MCCQSS system.
- Expand support services for all classes of providers to move up the Quality Steps System.
- Expand support for screenings, referrals and services at the county level for families of high need children.
- Expand support for coordinating services among state agencies at the county level. This expansion of coordinating support will be facilitated by the Extension Service, part of Mississippi State University.

To enable this system work effectively and efficiently, it needs to be supported by a data system that is well-designed, comprehensive and efficient – a system that is already established in Mississippi called the National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center (nSPARC). In addition, the data system will be asked to create reports that will be used by policy makers,

agency staff, county based staff, providers and parents to help them understand what is happening across the system, in a particular agency, in the county and with the provider and allow them to make strategic decisions.

Mississippi's Early Education Leaders engaged in profound events leading to the development and submission of this grant application. These events are especially profound given the somewhat rocky road of state support for early care and education in the state. Historically state agencies serving children and families have worked to sustain their mission in the typical "silo" fashion that the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education are seeking to redefine. Through a series of discussions and planning sessions, state-level leaders made a commitment to conduct business differently and rethink the ways of the past to allow for space to embrace new ways of delivering services. Furthermore, the state will not have only agency goals, but collective goals that will have a significant positive impact on the young children across the state.

INTRODUCTION

The obvious rationale for Mississippi entering the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant competition is the state’s significant level of child poverty. Mississippi has the nation’s largest percentage of its children under 18 living at the poverty line: 33% in 2010, an increase of 2% from 2009.¹ The percentage of its children under 18 who are living at 200% of the poverty line is 57% (426,000). The percentage of its children under 5 who are living at the 200% of the poverty line is also the nation’s number one ranking: 44% (91,886).²

While these data present a sound rationale for economic need, Mississippi’s Early Education Leaders engaged in profound events leading to the development and submission of this grant application. These events are especially profound given the somewhat rocky road of state support for early care and education in the state. Historically state agencies serving children and families have worked to sustain their mission in the typical “silo” fashion that the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education are seeking to redefine. Through a series of discussions and planning sessions, state-level leaders made a commitment to conduct business differently and rethink the ways of the past to allow for space to embrace new ways of delivering services. Furthermore, the state will not have only agency goals, but collective goals that will have a significant positive impact on the young children across the state.

Furthermore, regardless of how business was conducted on the state level, Mississippi’s Early Education Leaders at the local level have created *pockets of innovation* throughout the state to improve the lives of Children with High Needs, which makes this application competitive in the race to create a *collaborative, comprehensive* statewide Early Learning Development System. For example, today a child at age 2 ½, who displays many characteristics of children on the autism spectrum, can enroll in Early Connections, an early intervention program developed through a collaborative partnership. It operates as part of the Lamar County School District in partnership with the Institute for Disability Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi. For a family in Lamar County who would have described success for their son as learning to say to “mamma,” now has the tools, resources, and framework to understand

¹ To add numbers to these percentages: 33% in 2010 (242,000), an increase of 2% (+9,000) from 2009 (233,000).

² The percent is of all children ages 0-5 (209,079).

all that an autistic child can accomplish. Just a decade earlier, this same child – born to a family living in a rural, agricultural state that has more mud than museums, more cotton fields than libraries, and more catfish farms than high quality early childhood options – would have had a very small chance at realizing positive outcomes.

Early Connections is just one innovation in Mississippi, an innovation that emerged in a story of a state that is full of contradictions and complexities. The state's story is drawn from the best and worst in people; it has many chapters. The chapters of the Mississippi story include the disenfranchising laws in early America, which over time led to the civil rights movement of the 1950's and 1960's, the implementation of laws passed as a result of the civil rights movement during the mid-1960's, 1970's and 1980's. More recently the state's story has been dominated by the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, a significant reconstruction effort in many state agencies and in many communities far beyond the Gulf Coast.

The consistent theme throughout the past chapters in the story of Mississippi is the public and private battles for human dignity and opportunity. Today, as illustrated with the profound commitments of state leaders and with innovative local-level programs like Early Connections, there is a turning point in the story: the present day's chapter is filled with hope and promise for the state's current population of children ages 0-5, their families and the communities in which they reside. Using the Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant application, a snapshot of the state's current systems will be provided, which will further demonstrate *pockets of innovation* throughout the state. More importantly, this application will outline the next steps the state will take to pull together these systems in order to create a *collaborative, comprehensive system* to support all of Mississippi's children aged 0-5, especially the over 40% of whom are Children with High Needs. Sid Gardner's essay called "Failure by Fragmentation" provides further rationale for the state to create a *collaborative, comprehensive system*:

"It is difficult to define ideal collaboration since no community has yet fully linked, counted and evaluated its youth services. But basically, genuine collaboration entails the creation of a community process to plan a service system for children, youth and families in which no new programs are created without the participation by existing programs; schools, public and private agencies (reflecting current management

philosophy) are linked horizontally in partnerships rather than stacked vertically or allowed to float separately...” (p. 21)

While poverty is an unrelenting enemy to Mississippi’s people, the state’s early childhood education leaders have taken significant steps to reach Gardner’s vision of a system, to link, to count and to evaluate its early childhood services; to link these programs horizontally, and to position the state to be a leader in educating its youngest children in high-quality centers. This vision is explained throughout this application.

A. SUCCESSFUL STATE SYSTEMS

(A)(1) Demonstrating past commitment to early learning and development.

The extent to which the State has demonstrated past commitment to and investment in high-quality, accessible Early Learning and Development Programs and services for Children with High Needs, as evidenced by the State's—

(a) Financial investment, from January 2007 to the present, in Early Learning and Development Programs, including the amount of these investments in relation to the size of the State's population of Children with High Needs during this time period;

(b) Increasing, from January 2007 to the present, the number of Children with High Needs participating in Early Learning and Development Programs;

(c) Existing early learning and development legislation, policies, or practices; and

(d) Current status in key areas that form the building blocks for a high quality early learning and development system, including Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, health promotion practices, family engagement strategies, the development of Early Childhood Educators, Kindergarten Entry Assessments, and effective data practices.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

(A)(1)(A) Financial Investment

Financial Investment in an Early Learning Development System by the state of Mississippi has doubled over the past five years, with \$12 million invested in 2007 and nearly \$25 million invested in 2011. The greatest increase was in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) spending on Early Learning and Development Programs. During this time, the state also invested in improving Early Learning programs by creating a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS).

In 2010, 93,000 of the child population³ in Mississippi lived in low-income families a 12% increase from 83,000 in 2007 according to Mississippi's Kids Count data. Relative to the High Need Population in the state, increase in the dollar investments on the state level surpass the increase in the population of children at the poverty line. In the next section, the early learning participation of these 93,000 low-income students will be presented.

(A)(1)(B) Increasing participation by Children with High Needs

As noted in Table (A)(1)-5, Mississippi has seen an increase of 26.9% of children served in state programs from 2007 to 2010 (89,341 to 113,360; data from 2011 is lagging). These programs include Head Start, Early Head Start, State-funded preschool, IDEA Part B & C programs, Title I programs and Programs receiving funds from CCDF. Again, these data show the biggest increase in children served through TANF and CCDF dollars to use on child care expenses (a 27.2% increase).

(A)(1)(C) Existing legislation, policies, and practices

Several state laws form the building blocks in Mississippi for a high quality early learning and development system. The cornerstone law, "The Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2007," enabled many departments within the state to join together in identifying necessary steps to "ensure that all children have access to quality early childhood education and development services" as stated in the statute (Senate Bill No. 2667, Regular Session 2007, to amend Section 37-21-51, Mississippi Code of 1972). This state legislation, along with federal legislation and funding, enabled the creation of:

- The State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC) – described further in **Section (A)(2)** of this application
- Certificates for families to subsidize attendance at an Early Learning Center – described further in **Section (B)(4)** of this application
- Early Learning Guidelines – described further in **Section (C)(1)** of this application

Furthermore, in 2006 the state mandated the creation of a **Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System** as a result of Senate Bill #2602 Regular Session 2006, with an act entitled

³ This is 38% of the total 0-5 population; in 2007, the low-income percentage was 33% of the total 0-5 population.

the "Mississippi Education Reform Act of 2006"; to amend Section 37-19-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, Section 16, which states the following:

“The Department of Human Services shall establish the **Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System** by requiring the Office for Children and Youth of the Department of Human Services, the lead agency for the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF), to develop and implement a pilot voluntary Quality Rating System (QRS). The purpose of the pilot system will be to improve the quality of all licensed early care and education and after school programs...using criteria will be the bases, at minimum, for the QRS, and shall address the following components: administrative policy, professional development, learning environment, and parental involvement and evaluation. In addition, the Office for Children and Youth shall develop and administer funds, based on appropriation, to create a Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) statewide system in collaboration with community and junior colleges, universities, Mississippi Public Broadcasting, state agencies and/or nonprofit community entities. The CCR&R agencies shall provide training specific to the QRS criteria to enable early care and education program quality to improve as measured by the QRS system; and offer parent education information and training on what a quality early care and education program comprises and how to identify one.”

The state also has addressed improving the early education workforce, setting a foundation for **Section D: Workforce development**: (House Bill #419 Regular Session 2000) An Act to amend Section 37-3-2, Mississippi Code of 1972, to authorize the State Board of Education to issue a standard license to teach in public prekindergarten through kindergarten classrooms to persons holding a Bachelor of Science degree with Child Development emphasis from a program accredited by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences.

Finally, the state has a strong data system that sets a foundation for **Section E: Measuring Outcomes and Progress**. The data system is called the National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center (nSPARC), and which received a grant recently from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) competition. nSPARC has an overarching mission of which education is one component, referred to as the Statewide Integrated Longitudinal Education

System.⁴ The goal of this component is to align the efforts of universities, community colleges, K-12 schools, and early childhood education in terms of academic standards and career expectations with the general intent of: (1) decreasing the number of high school dropouts; (2) increasing the number of high school students who graduate and enroll in and successfully complete a two- or four-year college degree; (3) increasing the number of students who successfully transfer from community colleges to universities; (4) increasing the number of four-year college graduates; (5) improving career-readiness at all levels of education; and (6) increasing the number of students who successfully gain employment. nSPARC coordinates activities for data sharing and reporting across all educational institutions in Mississippi.

State statutes are only as good as the implementation of them from an operational standpoint. Indeed, the appropriations need to align with the legislation. The implementation – from both the operational and fiscal standpoints – of this legislative framework has been guided by the State Early Childhood Advisory Council of Mississippi (SECAC-MS) since 2008, which sets a strong foundation for **Section (A)(3)** of this application. The *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-134)*, {42 USC 9801 et seq.}, required the governor of each state to designate or establish a council to serve as the State Early Childhood Advisory Council on early childhood education and care for children from birth to school entry, and to designate an individual to coordinate activities of the Council. The purpose of a State Early Childhood Advisory Council is to bring together administrators, policy advisors, and other key stakeholders to inform the development of a comprehensive system of coordinated services for young children in the state.

In April 2008, Governor Haley Barbour appointed Dr. Cathy Grace, Executive Director of the Mississippi State University—Early Childhood Institute, to serve as the Chair of SECAC-MS. The Governor appointed additional Council members from the Department of Human Services, the Mississippi Department of Education, the Institutions of Higher Learning, the Mississippi State Department of Health, the Department of Mental Health, and representatives of Head Start, local education agencies, and local providers of early childhood education and development services as well as leaders from the business community and child advocacy, as

⁴There are many more programs tracked by nSPARK, providing the state with a very comprehensive data set with which to make policy decision: <http://www.nsparc.msstate.edu/index.php?page=home>

described in the Head Start Act. A copy of the executive order establishing the Council is found in Section A Appendix. A complete roster of the SECAC-MS Membership is also included in the Section A Appendix.

SECAC-MS is committed to the vision of one coordinated system of quality care and education for Mississippi's children birth to five. Mississippi's young children and their families deserve a comprehensive system that provides equal access to quality care and education and quality services and supports needed for school success and lifelong learning. Through interagency collaboration SECAC-MS is committed to developing a stronger early childhood infrastructure built on existing early care and education systems and components to ensure coordinated service delivery at the community and state level for all of Mississippi's young children. By accounts from members of the committees who worked on this application, Mississippi would not have the infrastructure set up without the continuous work of SECAC-MS and the work of another group of Early Education Leaders in Mississippi who engaged in an effort organized by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation known as Learning Labs.

Learning Labs is a national movement to radically improve early learning (birth to age 5) for all children in the United States. Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the movement consists of a partnership of four innovative, diverse organizations across the country located in Florida, Hawai'i, Mississippi, and Washington State. When the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation's (MSCEI), a statewide non-profit organization, doors opened in July 2008, with significant funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, one of its first efforts was to coordinate state efforts for increased community engagement around the issue of early childhood education.

A number of key organizations have come together in collaboration and planning to send a clear and consistent message across the state regarding the critical need to improve and increase early learning opportunities for children. The Delta Promise Initiative beginning in six Mississippi Delta communities provides comprehensive services from MSCEI and its partners by bundling resources from the Center's four core program areas. Through this initiative, the coordinated work efforts of the Mississippi Department of Education, Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids (SPARK Mississippi), the Children's Defense Fund, Excel by 5, the Early Childhood Institute, the Mississippi Economic Council, Mississippi Building Blocks, and

MSCEI are moving the state steadily forward in transforming the education landscape the youngest children in Mississippi.

CHILD CARE AND EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMMING IN MISSISSIPPI

As recently as 1998, interest in and opportunity to participate in rated child care programming in Mississippi was limited. There was greater reliance on in-home providers, many of which were part of the family, friend and neighbor care segment. There were 1,542 licensed child care centers existed in 1998 compared to 1,740 today.

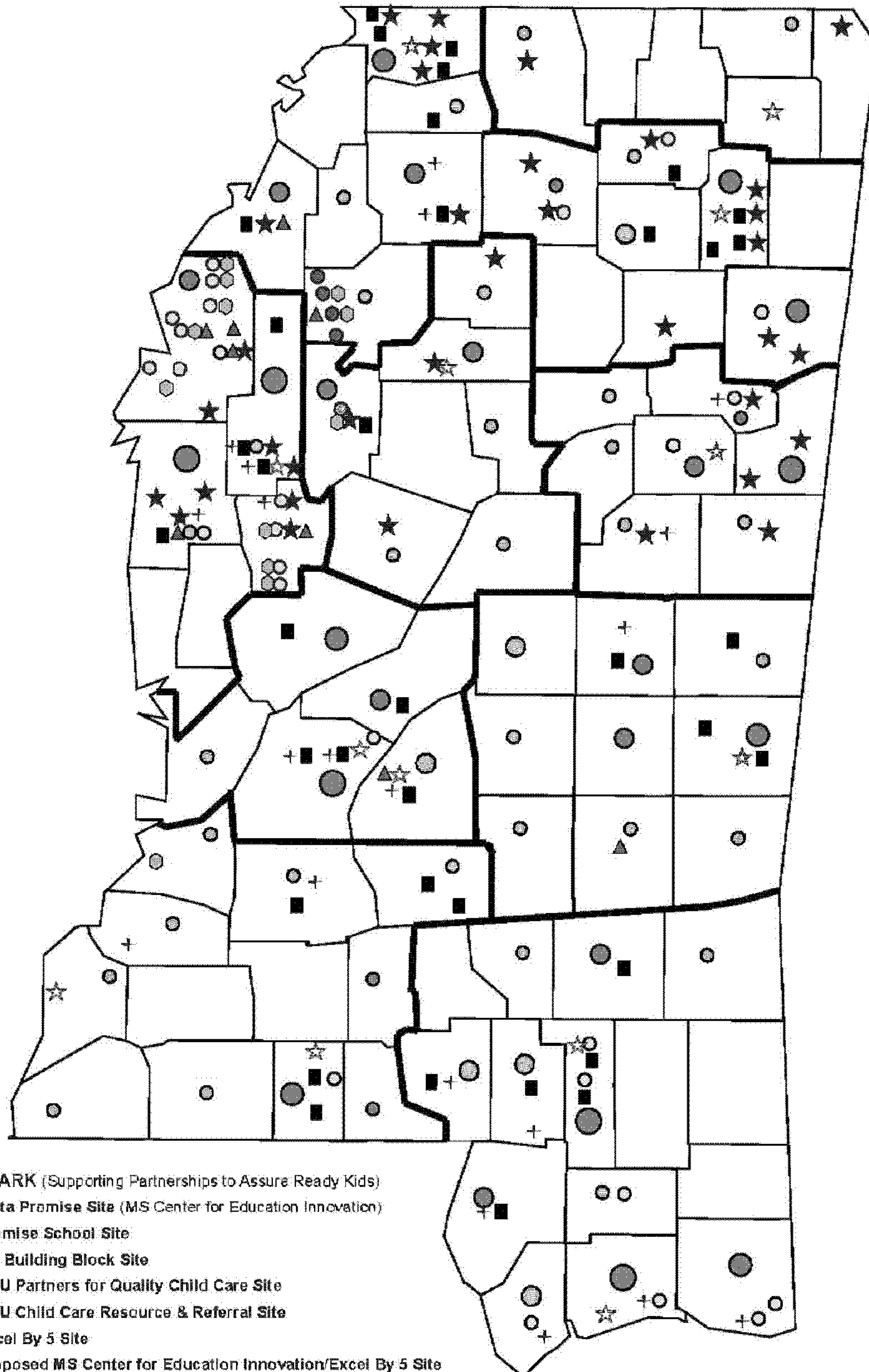
The Families First Resource Centers also existed in 1998. The program strengthens families of all backgrounds and life circumstances by providing parenting education and support through seminars, workshops, and consultations. The goals of Family First Resource centers were to help parents build positive, rewarding and satisfying relationships with their children. In 2009, 38 centers existed across the state, up from 15 in 1998.

Head Start, a comprehensive pre-school program supported by federal funds, has been a significant part of the early childhood landscape for more than four decades. This comprehensive child-development program serves pregnant women and families with children from birth to five years of age who meet the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Head Start is a child-focused program that involves parents to improve a child's readiness for kindergarten. The program provides a range of individualized educational services in the areas of language development, math, science, and social skills. Early childhood development, behavioral, health and nutrition awareness are also part of the program. Currently Mississippi is home to 21 grantees that operate more than 289 Head Start and Early Head Start centers serving all 82 counties in Mississippi. Mississippi is ranked 11th among states in the number of children served by Head Start.

The landscape of Child Care and Early Learning Programs and support organizations has added many elements to the early list described above in the almost fourteen years since 1998. Formal support structures from MDHS, MSCCR&R, and the Early Childhood Institute, combined with specific programs from the other state agencies like the Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Mental Health and the Division of Medicaid represent the contributions to early care and learning from the federal and state government. In addition to

government sponsored support and programming, foundations and the business community have supported efforts in this area as well. Efforts know as SPARK Mississippi, Mississippi Building Blocks (MBB), Excel by 5, the Mississippi Low Income Child Care Initiative (MLICCI) and the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation (MSCEI) have all contributed to the effort and lend significant depth in many communities. The map on the following page illustrates how these efforts are distributed across the state, further reinforcing the *pockets of innovation* that will shift to a *collaborative, comprehensive system*.

Mississippi's Early Education Initiatives (2011)



- ▲ SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids)
- Delta Promise Site (MS Center for Education Innovation)
- Promise School Site
- MS Building Block Site
- ★ MSU Partners for Quality Child Care Site
- ☆ MSU Child Care Resource & Referral Site
- Excel By 5 Site
- Proposed MS Center for Education Innovation/Excel By 5 Site
- + MS Low Income Child Care Initiative TA Site
- QRIS Locations - ○ 1-5, ● 6-10, ● 11-15, ● 16+

Map courtesy of Excel By 5, Inc.
Updated 10/04/2011

(A)(1)(D) Current status of Early Learning and Development System building blocks:

The Early Learning and Development System building blocks, as defined in this application, include Early Learning and Development Standards; Comprehensive Assessment Systems; Health promotion strategies; Family engagement strategies; Kindergarten Entry Assessments; and Effective Data practices. This list essentially aligns with Section C, Section D and Section E of this application and will be described in more detail in those sections. This section will give a brief overview of the status of the system's foundation.

Early Learning and Development Standards: As early as 2003, Mississippi was able to count itself among the states that had developed early learning standards and had those standards officially adopted. Today, the Early Learning Guidelines for children 3 and 4 years of age are housed at the Mississippi Department of Education⁵ and the Early Learning Guidelines for infants and toddlers are officially managed out of the Mississippi Head Start Collaboration Office located in the Office of the Governor.⁶

Comprehensive Assessment Systems: During the 2011-2012 school year, school districts were given the funding for self-selection of the screener to be used for kindergarten entry. The Mississippi Quality Child Care Step System (MCCQSS) has several core components tied to evaluation of the learning environment. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale and Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale are used to assess the learning environment. In addition, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), will be considered as an addition to the MSCCQSS assessment specifically to address the quality teacher/student interaction. More review of the population on which it was normed is needed to determine if it will address the early care and education providers in Mississippi.

Health promotion practices: Currently, screening is viewed as the Point of Entry into the healthcare system. The Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT)

5 Resources on the Guidelines can be found at <http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/acad/id/curriculum/laer/earlylearning.html>.

6 Resource materials explaining the Guidelines can be found at <http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/teacher-resources/MS-IT-ELGS.pdf>.

Program serves as a model. EPSDT includes a physical exam, hearing and vision screenings, immunization/shots, adolescent counseling, health education, blood/urine tests, blood lead levels, developmental screen, nutrition evaluation, and medical referral or referral to another health provider if needed.

Multidisciplinary Assessment and Planning teams (MAP teams) meet on a monthly basis to review children and youth in order to divert them from inappropriate placement by providing the necessary resources to keep them in their home and community. Current MAP teams serve school aged children; however, some children five and under have been served in the past.

In addition, Project PREPARE, operated by the University of Southern Mississippi, provides evaluation-based training and technical assistance to child care centers on the best practices to serve children with high risk factors related to disabilities, chronic health impairments and special needs. This is funded by the MS Department of Health.

Family engagement strategies: Training on the Mississippi Department of Education's *Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines for Three Year Old Children* and *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Four Year Old Children* is provided to child care providers/childhood educators through Project IMPACT. The training activities included within Project IMPACT are designed to develop professional skills of caregivers and to improve parent's knowledge of early childhood development. This project is funded through the MS Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD), this program is operated by Jackson State University.

Development of Early Childhood Educators: Mississippi is currently using the state's Tiered Quality Rating Improvement System (TQRIS) – known locally as the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System – as the initial framework for defining workplace knowledge and competencies. At each step of the 5 level system, there are additional training and educational requirements for the director and staff. The following describes the requirements at each step level.

- Step 1: Licensing (no staff credential or professional development requirements).
- Step 2: Additional director development of 5 hours annually; 15 hours of (outside) annual staff development for each full-time staff member.

- Step 3: The director or at least one staff member holds an Office for Children and Youth (OCY) Director's credential, credential approved by OCY, or the Mississippi Department of Human Services, or an AA or higher in child development, early childhood education, or related field; at least 1 staff member on-site has a Child Development Associate (CDA); all staff hold GED or high school diplomas; 18 hours of (outside) annual staff development for each full-time staff member; one monthly staff meeting.
- Step 4: The director holds an AA or higher; 15% of full-time teaching staff have current CDA or higher; 20 hours of annual staff development with 10 hours spent on teaching for all full-time teaching staff.
- Step 5: The director holds a BA/BS or higher; 25% of full-time teaching staff have current CDA or higher; 25 hours of annual staff development with 10 hours spent on teaching for all full-time teaching staff.

This step system provides the structure for Mississippi early childhood professionals and providers to plan their training and education. The Mississippi Child Care Resource and Referral Network (MSCCR&R) is offered through the Mississippi State University Extension Service. This network is located on supportive community colleges across the state and also offers training online. The network provides opportunities for community college coursework toward a Child Development Technology degree (AA) and/or the CDA credential. MSCCR&R is in the process of expanding to all community colleges.

Mississippi has recently partnered with the national T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ programs to offer these programs in the state. T.E.A.C.H. (Teacher Education and Compensation Helps) Early Childhood[®] is a comprehensive scholarship program that provides the early childhood workforce with access to educational opportunities. Scholarship recipients receive a raise or bonus at the end of the contract. Participating states have seen increased staff compensation, increased staff educational levels, and decreased turnover in the early childhood workforce.

Child Care WAGE\$[®] awards teachers, directors and family child care providers with salary supplements every six months based on education and continuity of care. WAGE\$ participants quickly see that going up the education ladder means larger supplements, which provide a real incentive for continuing education and remaining in the field. By increasing

teacher retention, this program gives young children more stable relationships with better-educated teachers.

Kindergarten Entry Assessments: Once the Early Learning standards were set, the state identified recommended curricula that aligned with the standards. Mississippi has demonstrated robust stakeholder participation in the selection and implementation of Kindergarten Entry Assessments. During the 2011-2012 school year, all school districts were given funding for self-selection of the screener to be used for kindergarten entry. The state also has a High Quality Plan to increase the use of these assessments over the four-year grant period.

Effective data practices: Mississippi's Longitudinal Data System, nSPARC is an effective organization and a tool for integrating the early childhood system into the broader education data structure. Section (E)(2) will describe how early childhood data can be integrated into the state data system. A brief description is provided for each data source in addition to information regarding the status of data transfer to the state data clearing house, the agency associated with the data source, status of signatures for executing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and the level of data provided by the data source (i.e. Child, Provider, Staff, etc.). It is important to note that all data structures described in Section (E)(2) exist today and can be leveraged collect, store and analyze data from the early childhood system.

Table (A)(1)-1: Children from Low-Income⁷ families, by age		
	Number of children from Low-Income families in the State	Children from Low-Income families as a percentage of all children* in the State (n=209,079)
Infants under age 1	17,426	8%
Toddlers ages 1 through 2	33,321	16%
Preschoolers ages 3 to kindergarten entry	41,139	20%
Total number of children, birth to kindergarten entry, from low-income families	91,886	44%
Source: Current Population Survey, 2010		
For the denominator, we used the birth to kindergarten entry total population (209,079); Source is American Community Survey, 2010		

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs		
<i>The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.</i>		
Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children[#] (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
Have disabilities or developmental delays⁸ MDE Pre-K data, 2010. This number (1,594) includes only those children in public school	1,594	0.76%

⁷ Low-Income is defined as having an income of up to 200% of the Federal poverty rate.

⁸ For purposes of this application, children with disabilities or developmental delays are defined as children birth through kindergarten entry that have an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) or an Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Table (A)(1)-2: Special populations of Children with High Needs

The State should use these data to guide its thinking about where specific activities may be required to address special populations' unique needs. The State will describe such activities throughout its application.

Special populations: Children who . . .	Number of children (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...	Percentage of children[#] (from birth to kindergarten entry) in the State who...
Pre-K programs.		
Have disabilities or developmental delays served by Head Start	2,700	1.29%
Are English learners⁹	7,303	3.49%
Reside on "Indian Lands" American Community Survey, 2009	1,040	0.50%
Are migrant¹⁰ Consolidated State Performance Report for Mississippi, U.S. Dept of Education 2011.	843	0.40%
Are homeless¹¹ National Center on Family Homelessness, McKinney-Vento program, 2010.	4,747	2.27%
Are in foster care MDHS Division of Family & Children's Services October, 2011.	843	0.40%

[#]For the denominator, we used the birth to kindergarten entry total population is 209,079; Source is American Community Survey, 2010

⁹ For purposes of this application, children who are English learners are children birth through kindergarten entry who have home languages other than English.

¹⁰ For purposes of this application, children who are migrant are children birth through kindergarten entry who meet the definition of "migratory child" in ESEA section 1309(2).

¹¹ The term "homeless children" has the meaning given the term "homeless children and youths" in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (425 U.S.C. 11434a(2)).

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
State-funded preschool <i>Specify:</i> <i>Data Source and Year:</i> MDE Pre-K data, 2010	0	0	3,254	3,254
Early Head Start and Head Start¹² <i>Data Source and Year:</i> Head Start Program Information Report, 2010	311	841	28,379	29,531 Actual children served
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>Data Source and Year: MDE 2010-11 and MDH, 2010-11</i>	475	2,211	2,740	5,426
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>Data Source and Year: MDE, 2010-11</i>			2,740	2,740
Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program <i>Data Source and Year:</i> Childcare Certificate Program 2010	1,540	5,115	6,465	13,120
Other <i>Specify: Even Start</i> <i>Data Source and Year: MDE, 2010-11</i>				182

¹² Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-3: Participation of Children with High Needs in different types of Early Learning and Development Programs, by age				
<i>Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.</i>				
Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program, by age			
	Infants under age 1	Toddlers ages 1 through 2	Preschoolers ages 3 until kindergarten entry	Total
Other <i>Specify:</i> <i>Data Source and Year:</i>				
<i>Add additional rows as needed.</i>				
*Source: Mississippi Department of Education Pre-K data, 2010				
**Source: Mississippi Department of Human Services Childcare Certificate Program, 2010				

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development					
Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Supplemental State spending on Early Head Start and Head Start¹³	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
State contributions to IDEA Part C & State contributions for special education and related services for children with disabilities, ages 3 through kindergarten entry	\$3,314,909	\$3,914,841	\$3,478,213	\$1,899,583	\$1,486,866

¹³ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

Table (A)(1)-4: Historical data on funding for Early Learning and Development					
Type of investment	Funding for each of the Past 5 Fiscal Years				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Total State contributions to CCDF¹⁴	\$5,840,498	\$5,840,498	\$8,840,498	\$7,422,938	\$7,340,000
State match to CCDF <i>Exceeded/Met/Not Met (if exceeded, indicate amount by which match was exceeded)</i>	Met	Met	Met	Met	Met
TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs¹⁵	\$2,210,340	\$4,808,108	\$9,608,842	\$13,614,532	\$15,607,809
Other State contributions <i>Specify: TQRIS Rating</i>	\$417,315	\$670,189	\$451,526	\$15,000	\$18,169
Other State contributions <i>Specify: TQRIS TA & Provider Support</i>	\$254,000	\$1,372,190	\$645,509	\$737,509	\$386,529
Total State contributions:	\$12,037,062	\$16,605,826	\$23,024,588	\$23,689,562	\$24,839,373
<i>[Enter text here to indicate data source and clarify or explain any of these data, including the State's fiscal year end date. Include 2011 if data are available.]</i>					

¹⁴ Total State contributions to CCDF must include Maintenance of Effort (MOE), State Match, and any State contributions exceeding State MOE or Match.

¹⁵ Include TANF transfers to CCDF as well as direct TANF spending on Early Learning and Development Programs.

Table (A)(1)-5: Historical data on the participation of Children with High Needs in Early Learning and Development Programs in the State

Note: A grand total is not included in this table since some children participate in multiple Early Learning and Development programs.

Type of Early Learning and Development Program	Total number of Children with High Needs participating in each type of Early Learning and Development Program for each of the past 5 years ¹⁶				
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
State-funded preschool ^{17*} <i>(annual census count; e.g., October 1 count)</i> <i>Specify:</i>	2,475	2,844	3,091	3,254	Not available
Early Head Start and Head Start ¹⁸ <i>(funded enrollment)</i>	25,000	25,000	25,000	29,531	Not available
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>(annual December 1 count): MDE, 2010-11</i>	16,844	17,936	19,298	20,382	Not Available
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>(total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report): MDE, Federal Programs Division</i>	0	2,519	2,644	2,740	Not available
Programs receiving CCDF funds ^{**} <i>(average monthly served)</i> ¹⁹	45,022	39,788	46,342	57,271	49,908
Other <i>Describe: Even Start</i>	-	-	-	182	
[Enter text here to indicate data source and clarify or explain any of these data if needed. Include 2011 if data are available. The final column of data should match that reported in Table (A)(1)-3.]					
*Source: Mississippi Department of Education Pre-K data.					
**CCDF Source: Child Care Certificate Program					

¹⁶ Include all Children with High Needs served with both Federal dollars and State supplemental dollars.

¹⁷ In 2008-09, 38 districts offered pre-k; 2009-10, 44 districts; 2010-11, 55 districts; 2011-12, 56 districts

¹⁸ Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.

¹⁹ Source: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/data/ccdf_data/08acf800/list.htm

Table (A)(1)-6 : Current status of the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards			
<i>Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards address the different age groups by Essential Domain of School Readiness</i>			
Essential Domains of School Readiness	Age Groups		
	Infants	Toddlers	Preschoolers
Language and literacy development	X	X	X
Cognition and general knowledge (including early math and early scientific development)	X	X	X
Approaches toward learning	X	X	X
Physical well-being and motor development	X	X	X
Social and emotional development	X	X	X
<i>[Enter text to explain or clarify information as needed]</i>			

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an “X” in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.</i>					
Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Public School District Pre-K</i>	X	X	X		
Early Head Start and Head Start²⁰	X	X	X	X	
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	X				

²⁰ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

Table (A)(1)-7: Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where an element of a Comprehensive Assessment System is currently required.

Types of programs or systems	Elements of a Comprehensive Assessment System				
	Screening Measures	Formative Assessments	Measures of Environmental Quality	Measures of the Quality of Adult-Child Interactions	Other
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X				
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	X	X	X		
Programs receiving CCDF funds					
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System Requirements	Tier 1:				
	Tier 2:		X		
	Tier 3:	X	X	X	
	Tier 4:	X	X	X	
	Tier 5:	X	X	X	
State licensing requirements					
Other					
<i>Out of School Quality Rating</i>		X	X	X	
<i>[Edit the labels on the above rows as needed, and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>					

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State

Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.

Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
State-funded preschool <i>Specify</i>	X	X	X		
Early Head Start and Head Start	X	X	X	X	
Programs funded under IDEA Part C	X	X			
Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619	X	X			
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	X	X	X		
Programs receiving CCDF funds	X	X	X		
Current Quality Rating and Improvement System Requirements	Tier 1: X				
	Tier 2: X				
	Tier 3: X				
	Tier 4: X	X			
	Tier 5: X	X			
State licensing requirements	X		X	X	
Other					

Table (A)(1)-8: Elements of high-quality health promotion practices currently required within the State					
<i>Please place an "X" in the boxes to indicate where the elements of high-quality health promotion practices are currently required.</i>					
Types of Programs or Systems	Elements of high-quality health promotion practices				
	Health and safety requirements	Developmental, behavioral, and sensory screening, referral, and follow-up	Health promotion, including physical activity and healthy eating habits	Health literacy	Other
<i>Describe: Out of School QRIS</i>	X		X		
<i>[Edit the labels on the above rows as needed, and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>					

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State	
<i>Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.</i>	
Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
State-funded preschool <i>Mississippi does not fund Pre-K, however, there is a system of Public school Pre-K</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governed by Mississippi's Quality Rating and Improvement System Piloted in 1 district, will be expanded to other 56 district in 2-5 years.
Early Head Start and Head Start	Head Start/Early Head Start agencies involve parents in all aspects of the program. Agencies build collaborative partnerships with parents in order to establish mutual trust, identify family strengths and family goal setting, and to ensure access to other community resources and support services. Grantees train parents in advocacy to they can continue to help their children more effectively and actively participate as they transition from Head Start to Elementary School. All EHS/HS programs are required to hold Parent Conferences and make home visits.

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<p>Early Head Start grantee agencies assist pregnant women in accessing comprehensive prenatal and postpartum care, through referrals, immediately after enrollment in the program. EHS/HS agencies offer parents the opportunity to participate in policy-making decisions and operations as well as opportunities to participate as employees or volunteers. Grantees ensure the parent involvement and education activities respond directly to the ongoing and expressed needs of the parents and provide opportunities to include parents in the development of the program's curriculum and approach to child development.</p>
<p>Programs funded under IDEA Part C</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract and work w/MS Parent Training and Information Center on parent training, provide support and linkage to other support groups (such a Down Syndrome Society, ARC, Coalition for Citizens w/Disabilities), • Provided stipends for families to attend workshops on transition/parent advocacy/etc., • Maintain a parent advisor in the districts to assist and support EI families, *Provide training sessions in collaboration w/MDE, Early/Head Starts, Zero to Three, ARC for EI knowledge and child find activities, • Hold SICC and Stakeholder meeting w/parent representatives and participation. • Must have Parent Conferences, Individual Education Plans
<p>Programs funded under IDEA Part B, section 619</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part B funds and collaborates with the Mississippi Parent Training and Information Center to provide webinars and regional trainings on issues surrounding disability, eligibility, evaluation, transition, individual education plans, 504 plans (disability services through Civil Rights legislation), procedural safeguards, and dispute resolution procedures (including the complaint process, mediation, due process hearings, and resolution).

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, Part B special education trainings are posted online in video format as well as in an iPad compatible format to allow parents to view them at their convenience. • Part B provides an annual parenting conference that encourages parents to learn about disability topics and how to advocate for their children. • Part B also provides an annual transition conference open to parents to learn about transitions across the life span. • The Part B Parent Outreach coordinator participates on various councils and boards to ensure policies and procedures are developed in ways that are responsive to the needs of families. Examples include the State Interagency Coordinating Council for Early Intervention (SICC), the Interagency Coordinating Council for Children & Youth (ICCCY), and the Interagency System of Care (ISOC).SPED
<p>Programs funded under Title I of ESEA</p>	<p>(Requirements are identical to Mississippi Public School Pre-K programs.)</p> <p>State 3 & 4 yr old guidelines:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each agency shall develop and distribute a parent handbook that addresses program philosophy, goals, and policies. • Teacher/parent conferences shall be conducted twice during the year to inform parents or guardians of the child's progress. If documented attempts to meet with parents or other responsible persons fail, telephone conferences can be substituted. It should be noted that parents/guardians should be encouraged to participate in various activities such as developing learning games for home or classroom use, sharing information with the class about their work skill or profession, and sharing their talents through conducting musical and/or art activities in conjunction with the teacher.
<p>Programs receiving CCDF funds</p>	<p>Beginning in 2012, all programs receiving CCDF funds will be required to enroll in Mississippi's Quality Rating and Improvement System.</p> <p>Licensing Requirements:</p>

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents must have “welcome access” to the licensed child care facility. • Daily reports must be provided to parents of infants and toddlers. • Parents and facility must communicate regarding parental concerns regarding the child’s growth and development, medical needs, allergies, toilet training and other information relevant to the child’s well-being. • A parent-caregiver consultation is required prior to toilet training. • Facilities must inform parents of the following: purpose, scope of service provided, philosophy and any religious affiliation, programs provided, age of children accepted, insurance coverage, discipline policies, transportation and safety policies and procedures, administering of medication, etc.
<p>Current Quality Rating and Improvement System requirements</p> <p><i>Specify by tier (add rows if needed):</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Star 1 – Meet licensing standards’ parent requirements • Star 2 - Provide monthly calendars and quarterly newsletters to parents; provide an information bulletin board for parents; conduct a parent teacher conference once a year. • Star 3 - In addition to the requirements listed above, provide weekly notes to parents; provide a parent workshop once a year; provide a lending library for parents. • Star 4 – In addition to the requirements listed above, provide volunteer opportunities for family members; provide a family resource center for parents by expanding the lending library; conduct a parent survey to evaluate the facility. • Star 5 – In addition to the requirements listed above, provide parents with a monthly newsletter; conduct parent teacher conferences twice a year.
<p>State licensing requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents must have “welcome access” to the licensed child care facility.

Table (A)(1)-9: Elements of a high-quality family engagement strategy currently required within the State

Please describe the types of high-quality family engagement strategies required in the State. Types of strategies may, for example, include parent access to the program, ongoing two-way communication with families, parent education in child development, outreach to fathers and other family members, training and support for families as children move to preschool and kindergarten, social networks of support, intergenerational activities, linkages with community supports and family literacy programs, parent involvement in decision making, and parent leadership development.

Types of Programs or Systems	Describe Family Engagement Strategies Required Today
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily reports must be provided to parents of infants and toddlers. • Parents and facility must communicate regarding parental concerns regarding the child’s growth and development, medical needs, allergies, toilet training and other information relevant to the child’s well-being. • A parent-caregiver consultation is required prior to toilet training. • Facilities must inform parents of the following: purpose, scope of service provided, philosophy and any religious affiliation, programs provided, age of children accepted, insurance coverage, discipline policies, transportation and safety policies and procedures, administering of medication, etc.
<p>Other</p> <p><i>Out of School Quality Rating System</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tier 1: • Tier 2: Bulletin board for parental communication • Tier 3: Weekly notes to parents, parent education training (offered annually), parental lending library. • Tier 4: Parent involvement program, parent resource center • Tier 5: Parent-Teacher conferences twice a year, monthly newsletters
<p><i>The Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) in Table (A)(1)-9 describe the current system requirements for School-Based programs. Centers, In-Home Providers, Public-School Pre-K, and Out of School Childcare Providers in Mississippi are governed by individual QRIS requirements. However, QRIS requirements are sufficiently similar across provider type for the QRIS standards in Table (A)(1)-9 to serve as a good example for all current QRIS standards in Mississippi. Please see Appendix for QRIS requirements for each provider type.</i></p>	

Table (A)(1)-10: Status of all early learning and development workforce credentials¹¹ currently available in the State

List the early learning and development workforce credentials in the State**	If State has a workforce knowledge and competency framework, is the credential aligned to it? (Yes/No/Not Available)	Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have the credential		Notes (if needed)
Credential 1 40 hr. Orientation	Yes	53 in phase-in cohort	N/A	These numbers represent the first year cohort only-Field testing NACCRRRA 40 hour curriculum
Credential 2 40 hr. Infant/Toddler	Yes	In development	N/A	40 hours of the CDA credential on-line curriculum specific to infants and toddlers
Credential 2 40 hr. Pre-K	Yes	In development	N/A	40 hours of the CDA credential on-line curriculum specific to pre-k
Credential 3 120 hr. Child Development Associate	Yes	883* *reported from on-line course manager		The credential path is defined starting with the orientation and moving through career benchmarks until reaching the CDA
Credential 4 AA Degree	Yes	271 earned the degree in 2011, from nSPARC CC Data 2011	N/A	
Credential 5 BA Degree	No	352 earned the degree in 2011 (estimated), from nSPARC IHL Data 2011	N/A	

(State Level Directors' Credential) 2,500 with the percentage being 75% (required by Child Care Licensing Regulations to be a director or director designee if the individual does not have a college /university degree in specific early childhood related field)

National Director's credential --in the implementation phase

Pre-K teaching certification issued by MS Department of Education-889

Special Education Birth – K teaching certification issued by MS Department of Education-60

**** MS Child Care Licensing Regulations allow for an assistant teacher to be employed without a high school or GED-87 in MCCQSS Centers (4%)/1246 teachers/asst teachers with high school degree in MCCQSS (59%) /320 teachers or directors with AA degree in MCCQSS center (8%)/248 teachers or directors in MCCQSS with BS degrees in MCCQSS Centers (12%) and 33 with MSE (2%)degrees in MCCQSS Centers.**

Table (A)(1)-11: Summary of current postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators		
List postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in the State that issue credentials or degrees to Early Childhood Educators	Number of Early Childhood Educators that received an early learning credential or degree from this entity in the previous year	Does the entity align its programs with the State's current Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and progression of credentials? <i>(Yes/No/Not Available)</i>
Coahoma Community College	4	Yes
Copiah-Lincoln Community College	19	Yes
East Central Community College	41	Yes
Hinds Community College	41	Yes
Jones Community College*	17	Yes
Meridian Community College*	12	Yes
Gulf Coast Community College*	57	Yes
Northeast Mississippi Community College*	13	Yes
Northwest Mississippi Community College*	28	Yes
Pearl River Community College*	14	Yes
Southwest Mississippi Community College*	25	Yes
Alcorn State University**	18	No
Jackson State University**	101	No
Mississippi University for Women**	4	No
Mississippi Valley State University**	46	No
University of Southern Mississippi**	51	No
MSCCR&R –all credentials before degree program and director's credential	254	Yes
<i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>		
*Source: Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Community College Data, 2011 **Source: Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, 2011; Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System, 2011		

Table (A)(1)-12: Current status of the State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment					
State’s Kindergarten Entry Assessment	Essential Domains of School Readiness				
	Language and literacy	Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development)	Approaches toward learning	Physical well-being and motor development	Social and emotional development
Domain covered? (Y/N)	Y	Y	N	N	N
Domain aligned to Early Learning and Development Standards? (Y/N)	Y	Y	N	N	N
Instrument(s) used? (Specify): AIMSweb, CPAA, MAP and DIBELS – a single instrument used statewide by 2014-15	Y	Y	N	N	N
Evidence of validity and reliability? (Y/N)	Y	Y			
Evidence of validity for English learners? (Y/N)	Y/CPAA only	CPAA only			
Evidence of validity for children with disabilities? (Y/N)	Y	Y			
How broadly administered? (If not administered statewide, include date for reaching statewide administration)	Most district administer 3 times a year*				
Results included in Statewide Longitudinal Data System? (Y/N)	By 2014				
<p>*AIMSweb is a benchmark and progress monitoring system based on direct, frequent and continuous student assessment. The results are reported to students, parents, teachers and administrators via a web-based data management and reporting system to determine response to intervention.</p> <p>CPAA- Children’s Progress Assessment-The Spanish-language version of our Mathematics and Language Arts assessment (CPAA - Spanish) for Pre Kindergarten - Grade 1 is an ideal tool that can help teachers determine whether a potential learning difficulty is simply a language acquisition issue. All questions, hints and feedback in the assessment are in Spanish. Reports and recommended activities are delivered in both Spanish and English for teachers, administrators and parents.</p> <p>MAP-Measure of Academic Progress- Early Assessments for Reading and Math-MAP® for Primary Grades are diagnostic and computerized adaptive assessments in reading and mathematics, specifically tailored to the needs of early learners.</p> <p>DIBELS-Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills- The Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) are a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills from kindergarten through sixth grade. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills.</p>					

Table (A)(1)-13: Profile of all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State

List each data system currently in use in the State that includes early learning and development data	Essential Data Elements						
	<i>Place an "X" for each Essential Data Element (refer to the definition) included in each of the State's data systems</i>						
	Unique child identifier	Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier	Unique program site identifier	Child and family demographic information	Early Childhood Educator demographic information	Data on program structure and quality	Child-level program participation and attendance
Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) *	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Childcare Information System (CCIS) **	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Child Plus ***	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
R&R MRS			X		X	X	
R&R PDTS			X		X		
Quality Step System (QRS)			X			X	
Allies for Quality Care			X		X		
CDA Credential			X		X		
Nurturing Homes				X		X	
OCY Credential			X		X		
Partners for Quality Care			X			X	
Project IMPACT			X			X	
Project PREPARE			X			X	
Family Wise****	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Prenatal Care				X			
Early Intervention	X			X			X
Children's Medical Program	X			X			X
Oral Health/Make a Child's Smile			X			X	
Vaccines for Children/ Immunizations	X						

Table (A)(1)-13: Profile of all early learning and development data systems currently used in the State

List each data system currently in use in the State that includes early learning and development data	Essential Data Elements						
	<i>Place an "X" for each Essential Data Element (refer to the definition) included in each of the State's data systems</i>						
	Unique child identifier	Unique Early Childhood Educator identifier	Unique program site identifier	Child and family demographic information	Early Childhood Educator demographic information	Data on program structure and quality	Child-level program participation and attendance
WIC	X		X	X		X	
PHRM/ISS	X			X			
Genetics/ Newborn Screening	X			X			
<p>*MSIS – The system utilized by MDE to manage data for the following early childhood programs: Part B Early Childhood Special Education, Pre-K, and Kindergarten</p> <p>**CCIS – This system is utilized by MDHS to manage the Mississippi Child Care Certificate Program</p> <p>***Child Plus – This system is utilized by many of the head start programs to manage their child level data.</p> <p>****The Family Wise system will be utilized by MDHS to manage data for the Home Visiting Program</p> <p>All other systems listed represent a single disconnected system utilized to collect and manage data for the specified program. A detailed description of each program may be found in section E(2).</p>							

(A)(2) ARTICULATING THE STATE'S RATIONALE FOR ITS EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT REFORM AGENDA AND GOALS.

The extent to which the State clearly articulates a comprehensive early learning and development reform agenda that is ambitious yet achievable, builds on the State's progress to date (as demonstrated in selection criterion (A)(1)), is most likely to result in improved school readiness for Children with High Needs, and includes--

(a) Ambitious yet achievable goals for improving program quality, improving outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers;

(b) An overall summary of the State Plan that clearly articulates how the High-Quality Plans proposed under each selection criterion, when taken together, constitute an effective reform agenda that establishes a clear and credible path toward achieving these goals; and

(c) A specific rationale that justifies the State's choice to address the selected criteria in each Focused Investment Area (C), (D), and (E), including why these selected criteria will best achieve these goals.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Mississippi's reform agenda outlined in this application is built on the notion that it has **pockets of innovation** throughout the state, and it has established building blocks to create a **collaborative, comprehensive system** for its youngest citizens. The rationale for this approach has its roots in one system already created at the state level, the State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC) a group that was created through the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Public Law 110-139) meets regularly and is housed in the Governor's Office.

This system will be grounded in systems theory, which as Peter Senge notes in the Fifth Discipline (1990), can be defined as: "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to see the whole together" (p. 3).

As noted in the introduction, and in Section (A)(1), early childhood education leaders have taken significant steps to reach Gardner’s (1989) vision of a system, to link, count and evaluate its early childhood services, which are linked horizontally, and that position Mississippi to be a leader in educating its youngest children in high-quality centers.

(A)(2)(A) AMBITIOUS YET ACHIEVABLE GOALS

Mississippi has one overarching goal, to increase the number of Children with High Needs being served by high quality early education providers by year 4 of this grant by 61%, which will occur with supporting providers and parents in new and different ways. Mississippi will continue to support the improvement of program quality throughout the state. By increasing the numbers of children served in High Quality centers, the state will see improved outcomes for Children with High Needs statewide, and closing the readiness gap between Children with High Needs and their peers. By year three, this goal will be measured to some extent (after the assessment is identified and then implemented). Furthermore, to reach this goal, a system of support will be established that can be sustained beyond this grant. These goals are presented in the summary of the State Plan in the next section.

(A)(2)(B) OVERALL SUMMARY OF HOW THE REST OF THE APPLICATION WILL ADDRESS THESE GOALS

The state of Mississippi will engage in systems development throughout the majority of the grant period. Its leaders will gather and analyze data in four major categories:

1. Infrastructure supports
2. Center supports
3. Family and Child supports
4. Professional supports

The table below illustrates each category, identifies the goal and shows the timeline for key activities to achieve the ambitious, yet achievable goals.

Overall Summary of State Plan:

Project	Infrastructure	Center Supports	Family and Child Services	Professional Supports
<p>Goal</p> <p>Create a collaborative, comprehensive Early Learning Development system at the state level.</p>	<p>(A)(3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire key leaders of units (7 in year 1) & liaisons (10) to serve in supporting Departments/Agencies (2012) Hire remainder of staff (2013) Hold monthly meetings of SECAC-M8, form committees for key areas of the grant (infrastructure, provider supports, family supports and professional supports) (Ongoing) Ensure each of the 82 counties in the state are visited by the SECAC-M8 members for a two-day visit to conduct a needs assessment. (2012) 	<p>(B)(1)</p> <p>Incentivize existing and enable new and High-Quality programs throughout the state of Mississippi.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review components of the MCCQSS, make additions in a strategic manner that will benefit High-Need children (Ongoing) 	<p>(C)(1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research on current programs in the state to determine the best practices to use in 2013 Present research-based information and strategies to state officials, including the SECAC-M8, to determine best practices to use in 2013 Adopt the curriculum framework alignment of ECCE by the Center for Early Childhood Education (2011) Align the content of the curriculum documents in the ECCE Strategic Investment, Supplemental Development and Physical Development to the National Curriculum (2012) 	<p>(D)(1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality rating systems have been developed. All centers will be required to participate by the end of 2011-12. Fifty in-home providers currently participate and the state plans to phase in an additional 300 in-home providers each year through 2015 The state has set up a committee to begin developing an early education curriculum from 4-year institutions. The state hopes to articulate the curriculum between 2-year and 4-year institutions. This articulation will be developed in 2012-13. The goal is to implement it by 2015.
<p>Timeline</p> <p>(C)(2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify common, statewide Kindergarten assessments along with other components of the Comprehensive Assessment System. (2012) 	<p>(B)(2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require all early learning centers to participate in MCCQSS (2012) Work closely with federal and state leaders, as well as selected providers, to maintain the subsidy reimbursement by providing incentives to low-rated centers already in the MCCQSS 	<p>(C)(2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue the rules for the Mississippi Quality Rating System (2012) Develop the rules for the Quality Rating System (2012) Issue the rules for the Quality Rating System (2012) Issue the rules for the Quality Rating System (2012) 	<p>(D)(2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The new licensing regulations for childcare directors are awaiting approval and can then be phased in starting immediately. The state has piloted the online CDA and will specifically target 50 in-home providers to participate in 2011-12 	

Project	Infrastructure	Center Supports	Home and Child Supports	Professional Supports
		<p>(Ongoing)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide rewards for centers and licensed in-home providers that have increased their ratings and serve High-Need children. (Ongoing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement pilot supports for centers and in-home providers by 2013 and then roll out to all in-home providers and all centers by 2015. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of T.E.A.C.H. and NACES will begin in 2012-13. A comprehensive technical assistance model will be available 2012 and expanded across the state by 2015. Technical assistance will be phased in over time, and fully implemented by 2014-15. <p>Collecting complete data on educator qualifications and professional development providers is a complex, on-going process, but is already in process and a first-round of data collection will be complete by 2013-14.</p>
<p>(B)(5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use assessment data to evaluate whether or not High Quality programs are enabling school readiness. (2013-2015) 	<p>(B)(3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement the FCC-QRIS and certification/regulation process with approximately 300 family child care providers (2012) Enroll 25% of the estimated 2,900 family child care providers (2013), 50% by 2014, and 80% by 2015. 	<p>(C)(3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase training for education and childcare providers to enable them to work more effectively with high needs children of various ages and abilities, including early childhood (Ongoing) Implement three outreach efforts to help support practitioners, those new to the field, and professionals in related fields. Professionals in early childhood of education will be encouraged to share their expertise and experiences with practitioners in the field and to assist in the development of training and professional development programs that meet the needs of children in appropriate settings (Ongoing) 		
<p>(EX1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link assessment to early elementary grades. (2014-2015) 		<p>(B)(5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hire outside evaluators to conduct a validation study of the MCCQSS (2012) 		

Project	Infrastructure	Center Supports	Professional Supports
	<p>(EX2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link longitudinal data system with vital records. (2012-2013) • Gather data from assessments, screenings, follow-up. (Ongoing) • Enable reports to be generated to inform annual reviews of system. (Ongoing) • Send monthly reports on the status of RTT-ELC to agency heads and governor. (Ongoing) 		

(A)(2)(C) SPECIFIC RATIONALE FOR ADDRESSING THE SPECIFIC SECTIONS IN C, D, AND E.

Mississippi's rationale for addressing all of the remaining areas of this application is addressed in paragraphs below the charts created by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services:

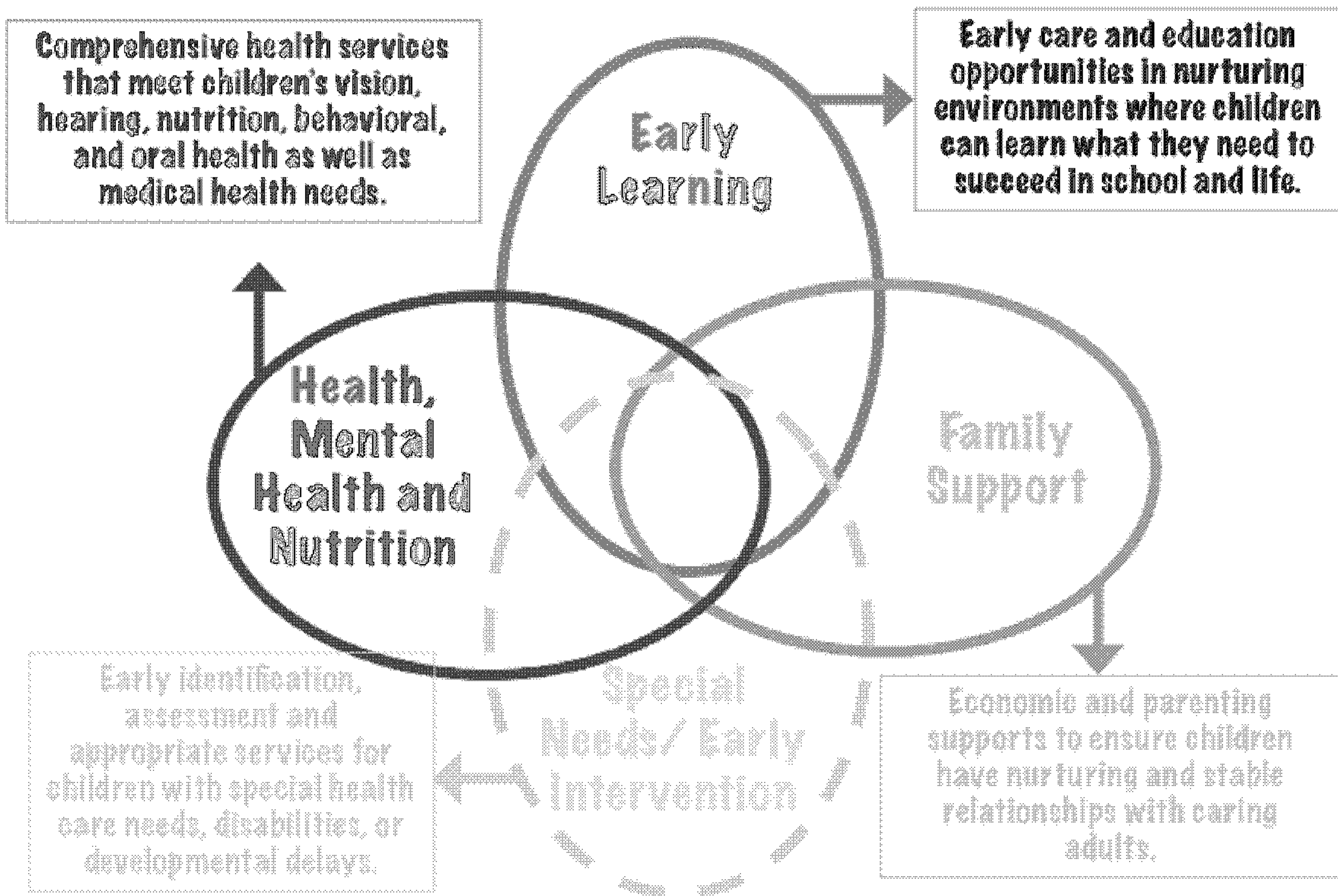
Identification of the two or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (C):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- (C)(1) Developing and using statewide, high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards.
- (C)(2) Supporting effective uses of Comprehensive Assessment Systems.
- (C)(3) Identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs to improve school readiness.
- (C)(4) Engaging and supporting families.

Mississippi's early education leaders consider these four sections represent the "4 ovals" identified by the Early Childhood Systems Working Group in 2006. As the document advises, Mississippi will work to insure that "each component/oval is developed in its own right and then ensure that it successful links with the services and supports in the other ovals" (BUILD, 2006, p.2). A picture of these ovals is posted below:

State Early Childhood Development System



While (C)(4) is an important component of the whole system, Mississippi's leaders have elected to embed engaging and supporting families throughout the application. Therefore, Mississippi will write to (C)(1-3).

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (D):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (D) the State is choosing to address

- (D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.
- (D)(2) Supporting Early Childhood Educators in improving their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

Developing its workforce is a significant focus of Mississippi because many of its early childhood workers are participants in the state's system of support because the wages are low. Yet, early education centers are the economic driver in many areas. A better supported workforce would benefit the entire state.

Identification of the one or more selection criteria that the State has chosen to address in Focused Investment Area (E):

Please check the box to indicate which selection criterion or criteria in Focused Investment Area (E) the State is choosing to address

- (E)(1) Understanding the status of children’s learning and development at kindergarten entry.
- (E)(2) Building or enhancing an early learning data system to improve instruction, practices, services, and policies.

The key method of understanding whether or not gaps are closing as a result of more children attending high-quality programs is by measuring a child’s readiness for school. Mississippi has significant motion in identifying a state system, which began with several districts across the state testing different assessments. This will be streamlined as a result of this grant.

Further, a central data system is necessary for tracking the goals that Mississippi has identified and for identifying the areas that need more support. Mississippi’s nSPARC system will be enhanced to enable regular reports to state-level leaders, which will be used to adjust the system as needed.

(A)(3) ALIGNING AND COORDINATING EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE STATE.

The extent to which the State has established, or has a High-Quality Plan to establish, strong participation and commitment in the State Plan by Participating State Agencies and other early learning and development stakeholders by--

(a) Demonstrating how the Participating State Agencies and other partners, if any, will identify a governance structure for working together that will facilitate interagency coordination, streamline decision making, effectively allocate resources, and create long-term sustainability and describing--

(1) The organizational structure for managing the grant and how it builds upon existing interagency governance structures such as children’s cabinets, councils, and commissions, if any already exist and are effective;

(2) The governance-related roles and responsibilities of the Lead Agency, the State Advisory Council, each Participating State Agency, the State’s Interagency Coordinating Council for part C of IDEA, and other partners, if any;

(3) The method and process for making different types of decisions (*e.g.*, policy, operational) and resolving disputes; and

(4) The plan for when and how the State will involve representatives from Participating Programs, Early Childhood Educators or their representatives, parents and families, including parents and families of Children with High Needs, and other key stakeholders in the planning and implementation of the activities carried out under the grant;

(b) Demonstrating that the Participating State Agencies are strongly committed to the State Plan, to the governance structure of the grant, and to effective implementation of the State Plan, by including in the MOU or other binding agreement between the State and each Participating State Agency--

(1) Terms and conditions that reflect a strong commitment to the State Plan by each Participating State Agency, including terms and conditions designed to align and leverage the Participating State Agencies' existing funding to support the State Plan;

(2) "Scope-of-work" descriptions that require each Participating State Agency to implement all applicable portions of the State Plan and a description of efforts to maximize the number of Early Learning and Development Programs that become Participating Programs; and

(3) A signature from an authorized representative of each Participating State Agency; and

(c) Demonstrating commitment to the State Plan from a broad group of stakeholders that will assist the State in reaching the ambitious yet achievable goals outlined in response to selection criterion (A)(2)(a), including by obtaining--

(1) Detailed and persuasive letters of intent or support from Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, and, if applicable, local early learning councils; and

(2) Letters of intent or support from such other stakeholders as Early Childhood Educators or their representatives; the State's legislators; local community leaders; State or local school boards; representatives of private and faith-based early learning programs; other State and local leaders (*e.g.*, business, community, tribal, civil rights, education association leaders); adult education and family literacy State and local leaders; family and community organizations (*e.g.*, parent councils, nonprofit organizations, local foundations, tribal organizations, and community-based organizations); libraries and children's museums; health providers; and postsecondary institutions.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included

relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

Moving from *pockets of innovation* to a *comprehensive system* in Mississippi will begin with significant investments of time and resources in reorienting state employees to support the goals of the RTT-ELC grant. Mississippi will begin to follow the lead of other states such as Georgia, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts who formed a state-level department dedicated to the Early Learning Development of children.

This will require a shift in framework of the state system, to move from a compliance orientation to a supportive framework. This goal will be operationalized at first with the state building relationships with early educators across the state. Mississippi will do this with a focus at first on how agencies, divisions and departments at the state level interact with each other, modeling how these interactions can take place within the state's 82 counties.

One lynchpin in this system design is the hiring of **Liaisons housed at DHS**. Liaisons will work with Medicaid, Health Department, Mental Health, & Department of Education across all Bureaus in each agency and across agencies such as in the case of Part C and B (IDEA), IHL, Community College, Work Force Investment Board, & TEACH and WAGE\$ site. Liaisons and possible staff **will be housed within each state agency** under the collaborative direction of both the "base" agency administration and the Director of the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and Office of School Readiness.

In the next section, the organizational structure will be described.

(A)(3)(A)(1): ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

As the first step in creating a *collaborative, comprehensive system* using funds from the RTT-ELC Grant, the State of Mississippi proposes to expand the current Division of Early Childhood Care and Development into the Mississippi Division of Early Childhood Care and Development, within the Department of Human Services.

The section below introduces and specifies the efforts needed for this *collaborative, comprehensive system*.

AN OVERVIEW: MISSISSIPPI'S DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

Mission: The mission of the Division is to coordinate policies, regulations and workforce preparation to:

(1) maximize access to high quality early care and education programs in all types of out-of-home settings for all children with specific attention to children from rural, low income and at-risk home environments;

(2) improve partner state agencies' abilities to coordinate services for eligible children and families with the goal of increased access to high quality programs and services in a timely and efficient manner; and

(3) maintain and utilize data on children 0 to 5 and their families that will assist in planning and executing high quality programs for children 0- to 5-years of age and their families.

DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR DIVISION:

The Division Director is the head of the project and will be ultimately responsible for the work of the RTT-ELC grant activities. There will also be a Deputy Director. The division will be split into two offices: The Office of Early Learning and the Office of Family Support.

Quality Initiatives Unit: Houses offices of (1) Quality Rating and Improvement System, (2) Workforce Development Including Child Care Resource and Referral Network which includes coordination of Partner Agencies and Special Programs including 4 percent (CCDF) grant funded programs through the division (other than QRIS) and those in the Early Childhood Innovations Unit (see below), agency coordination which is responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and: MDE, IHL, Community College, Directors of Part C and B (IDEA), Work Force Investment Board, TEACH and WAGES site, Medicaid, Mental Health and Health Departments, and Head Start Collaboration Office

Community and Family Engagement Unit: The Community and Family Engagement Unit consists of the Departments of Community Engagement and Family Engagement. The Department of Community Engagement oversees grants to programs that (1) promote community involvement specifically to address the well-being and education of children 0-8 years of age, (2) engages communities in aspects of high quality early care and education programs including, but not limited to: specific technical assistance to communities and/or early care and education programs based on geographic location/proximity to elementary schools most

at risk under MDE direction and (3) Public/Private Partnerships developed and implemented for the purpose of strengthening early care and education in and out of the home.

The Department of Parent Engagement promotes parent engagement through: (1) coordinating with the Secretary of State and the Mississippi Economic Council and Foundations to implement the MS IMPACT early childhood savings plan for child's college education starting in early childhood (2) coordinating with DHS protective services to cross train social workers and Families First Resource Centers incorporating state parent engagement standards and the state TQRIS model, (3) oversee and conduct on-going reviews and audits of existing programs' goals and systems of delivery for the purpose of improving outreach to parents and children of special populations such as migrant families, immigrants and children with special needs and reporting to the Division findings of needed improvements on a regular basis and (4) develop and implement outreach to families and other agencies through all types of media and technology concerning all aspects of high quality early childhood education and quality.

Early Childhood Innovation Unit: provides oversight to: (1) programs that develop and deliver cross-training among/ between different professions that provide auxiliary/medical services to infants through pre-schoolers and their families. Training content includes specific information on the negative impact of chronic poverty on the development of young children and their families, the relationship between negative mental health development in the early years and family dynamics when chronic poverty exists and the relationship between poverty and the quality of home and out of home educational environments for young children. Specific populations include, but are not limited to: medical professionals, social workers, medical professional educators, early childhood teacher educators, parent educators, social work educators, and professionals delivering services specific to IDEA Parts B and C such as speech therapists. Additional responsibilities include the monitoring and increased requirements for state credentials of various professionals involved in the medical and overall well-being of children 0 to 5 years of age, (2) the early childhood program incubator where ideas are developed and piloted that address the unique circumstances rural children and families in chronic poverty face with the goal of eliminating and/or minimizing the negative impacts.

Unit of School Readiness: The unit, in coordination with the Department of Community Engagement, Quality Initiatives and Data Units and MDE: (1) oversees the quality of programs

in public schools including teacher instruction for children prior to kindergarten entry, (2) coordinates the development and alignment of curriculum of learning standards (3) ensures teaching strategies and information to parents and teachers of children with special needs are embedded into programming and curriculum development, and (4) coordinates program transactions children and families make between early care and education programs and public school based programs.

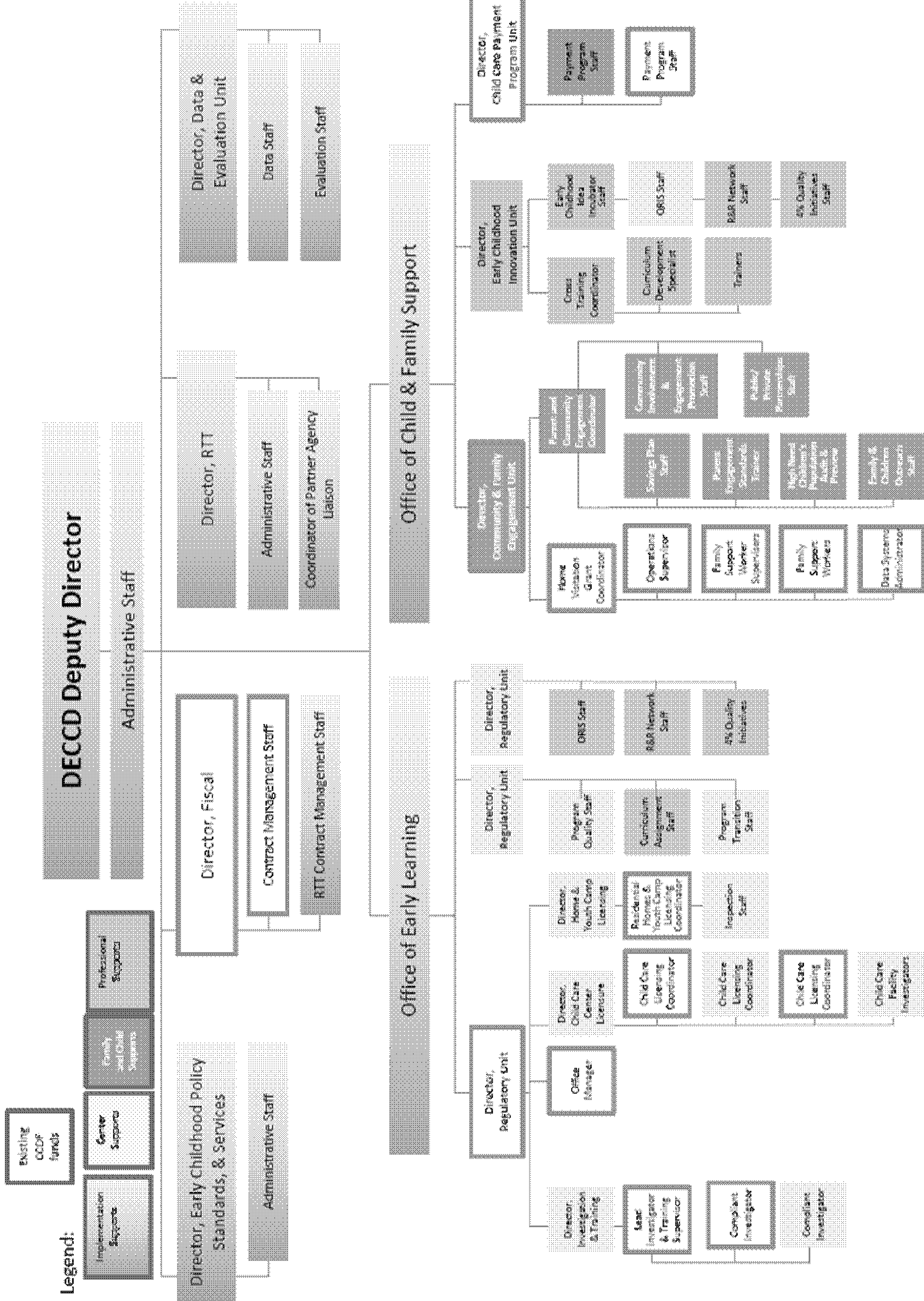
Child Care Subsidy Unit: Monitor the annual registration of children who are eligible to receive child care subsidy; coordinate with data unit to monitor monthly attendance of children and program status related to status and report to director/deputy director; monitor contact with designated agents for compliance; utilize payments to child care programs as a means to deliver important information related to quality environments

Regulatory Unit: Executes child care licensing monitoring for all out-of home settings; coordinate licensing data with data unit, quality unit, workforce development unit through deputy director's over site. The unit also works with the Division of Protective Services within DHS to monitor and provide information to foster care monitors regarding high quality care environments.

Data and Evaluation Unit: The data and evaluation unit is critical to the successful work of the division. All decisions will be based on data therefore the unit must have capacity and expertise to manage all incoming data, utilize it for evaluative purposes of all other units in the Division and to contribute to the interagency and intra-agency planning.

Fiscal Unit Director- Oversees all financial record keeping, contracts and reporting related to the work of the Division.

The following diagrams illustrate the structure of the Mississippi Division of Early Childhood Care and Development.



BENEFIT TO STAKEHOLDERS

The organizational structure of the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development presented in Mississippi's Race to the Top application aligns services for children and families in such a way as to support increased access to higher quality programs. Relocating child care licensure under the new organizational structure removes current roadblocks to adopting regulations that would increase the level of care offered in child care environments throughout the State. All children in licensed or regulated child care in Mississippi would be cared for in increasingly higher levels of care, offering a stronger foundation for development across domains. The new structure eliminates the need to navigate multiple agencies to access assistance and information. With all of these services housed at the Department of Human Services, families will not only contact one agency for the services identified in the re-organization, but also to other services such as TANF, SNAP, LiHEAP, CPS and Child Support. As the re-organization is implemented, existing policies and processes will be evaluated to eliminate duplication of services and remove barriers to access caused by conflicting program policies. A reduction in the duplication of services and streamlining of processes reduces confusion and increases a family's chance of accessing all needed supports. Finally, as processes and program operations are streamlined and redundancies eliminated, more funds become available for services so that higher numbers of families receive benefits.

HIGH-QUALITY PLAN – INFRASTRUCTURE (A)(3)

Key Goal(s)	Create a collaborative, comprehensive system at the state level.
-------------	------------------------------------------------------------------

Key activities and rationale ²¹	Expand the current Division of Early Childhood Care and Development into the Mississippi Division of Early Learning and Development, within the Department of Human Services. Continue the interagency work of the State Early Childhood Advisory Council of Mississippi (SECAC-MS).
Realistic timeline + key milestones	(A)(3) Hire key leaders of units (7 in year 1) & liaisons (10) to serve in supporting Departments/Agencies (2012) Hire remainder of staff (2013) Hold monthly meetings of SECAC-MS; form committees for key areas of the grant (infrastructure, provider supports, family supports and professional supports) (Ongoing) Ensure each of the 82 counties in the state are visited by the SECAC-MS members for a two-day visit to conduct a needs assessment. (2012) (C)(2) Identify common, statewide Kindergarten assessment along with other components of the Comprehensive Assessment System. (2012) (B)(5) Use assessment data to evaluate whether or not High Quality programs are enabling school readiness. (2013-2015) (E)(1) Link assessment to early elementary grades. (2014-2015) (E)(2) Link longitudinal data system with vital records. (2012-2013) Gather data from assessments, screenings, follow-up. (Ongoing) Enable reports to be generated to inform annual reviews of system. (Ongoing) Send monthly reports on the status of RTT-ELC to agency heads and governor (Ongoing)
Party(ies) responsible	Director, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development Chair, SECAC-MS
Project Budgets	\$17,447,614
Supporting evidence	(A)(3) tables + MOUs, letters of intent, etc (C)(1)(a) & (b) copy of ELD Standards; documentation of alignment

21 And if initially implemented, where and how the activities will be scaled up over time to eventually achieve statewide implementation

Performance measures	<p>Increased % & # of High Needs Children entering High Quality programs</p> <p>Increased % & # of programs entering TQRIS and increasing in quality ratings</p> <p>Attendance at SECAC meetings by <u>all</u> agencies serving High Needs children and their families.</p> <p>Number of visits to 82 counties</p> <p>% customer satisfaction survey (survey of families, providers, local agencies)</p>
How will State address different types of Early Learning and Development Programs	<p>Mississippi has developed TQRIS standards for four types of providers: Center-based, after school, Pre-K and Home-based providers. Over the grant period the state will work to understand how children who are cared for by kith and kin can experience a High-Quality setting, identify policies and implement those policies.</p>
How will State meet needs of Children with High Needs and the special populations	<p>Refining its data structures and pulling reports that summarize the services that families receive will be the first step in serving High Needs populations in the state better. Once these data are more fully understood, the state will then work to reallocate its funding to where it is most needed.</p>

(A)(3)(A)(2) GOVERNANCE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE EARLY LEARNING DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

SECAC-MS will be the governing body for the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development. SECAC-MS operates currently with five committees, which will be collapsed and refined to align with the four major categories:

1. Infrastructure supports
2. Center supports
3. Family and Child supports
4. Professional supports

Early in the grant period, SECAC-MS will work with this application, map out an implementation plan for the timelines that are in the High-Quality plans and begin the hard work of creating a comprehensive, collaborative system for Early Learning Development.

TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED AND DATA TO BE ANALYZED AT SECAC MEETINGS

Furthermore, the SECAC-MS will be guided by a series of evaluation questions, for which the data will be gathered by outside evaluators, the internal data team at nSPARK, data analysts in the Division. Some of the questions the SECAC-MS will grapple with are listed below.

- What types of support are needed by providers as they move from one level to another?
- Are the appropriate incentives in place to encourage providers to move up the steps of the quality rating system?
- Are the appropriate incentives in place to encourage parents to choose higher quality providers?
- Several provider support programs exist in the state today. How do they extend their reach to child care providers all across the state? Should these services be coordinated or directed in some way? What is the state's responsibility in terms of providing access to these support programs?
- How does the state learn from the work of provider support organizations and the program elements they offer? To what measures of success and quality should the state aspire?
- How do the finances work in this system? Do providers receive subsidies (seed funds) to purchase needed quality improvement support? Is support for quality paid for and delivered by state or local government? What level of support is needed? What level is affordable? If there is a difference, who is responsible?
- How does the new division of Early Childhood Care and Development manage and coordinate this support?
- What steps should be implemented to ensure a seamless re-assignment of the child care licensing division from the Mississippi Department of Health to the Division of Early Childhood Development and Education at the Mississippi Department of Human Services?

- How does this new state system work effectively and efficiently at the local level? How are services for individual children with needs more effective and more efficient under the proposed system?

As the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and its agency partners begin to implement the comprehensive TQRIS plan in Mississippi, the questions posed above, along with others that will inevitably emerge, will be addressed by the new Division, its unit managers, the liaisons, and local service providers.

(A)(3)(A)(4) THE PLAN FOR WHEN AND HOW THE STATE WILL INVOLVE EARLY LEARNING REPRESENTATIVES AND CONSTITUENTS FROM THROUGHOUT THE STATE

The implementation of this application has received significant support from the pockets of innovation that exist throughout the state. The organizations are explained in this section:

The Mississippi Child Care Resource and Referral Network (offered through the Mississippi State University Extension Service) (MSCCR&R) currently supports early care and education professionals, parents, children, and community members seeking information about quality child care. Our Resource & Referral sites, most of which are located on community college campuses, serve all eighty-two counties in Mississippi. By improving the quality of care for Mississippi's youngest and most vulnerable population, we will increase school readiness and thereby contribute to a more educated society and future workforce.

MSCCR&R offers the following in support of the MCCQSS.

Another program that supports the MCCQSS system is through **Mississippi State University's Early Childhood Institute (ECI)**. The mission of ECI is to develop and provide research-based practices and policy recommendations that promote high quality early childhood development and learning for all young children in Mississippi. Established in 1999, the institute is a program of the College of Education. ECI supports the MCCQSS system through **Partners for Quality Child Care** currently provides technical assistance to directors and teachers at licensed child care facilities in Mississippi to help improve the quality of centers and individual classrooms. Since its establishment in 2000, Partners for Quality Child Care has helped hundreds of licensed child care centers to improve classroom quality by providing one-on-one coaching

for teachers, sets of high-quality learning materials, and standardized ratings. Partners examines the learning environments at participating child care centers and uses standardized, nationally normed environment rating scales to pinpoint areas that need improvement. Minimum scores on environment rating scales are key criteria in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System. That means joining Partners can be the first step to earning Quality Step stars.

The Mississippi **Low-Income Child Care Initiative (MLICCI)** is a statewide, nonprofit organization of parents, providers, and community leaders working together to: *Enhance* the quality of child development experiences for all low-income children living in Mississippi; *Advocate* improved child care policies and greater public investment in child care subsidy programs for low-income families; and *Build* a strong, grassroots constituency.

MLICCI focuses on the following: child care financing; policy and subsidy reform, and quality enhancement. The Initiative provides technical assistance, training, and resources to help providers fund low-income child care and enhance its quality, so that all our children receive developmentally appropriate care. Workshops are offered throughout the state on child development, child care funding sources, business development, services for low-income families, and how government affects child care. Together with partners and community leaders, MLICCI also advocates for effective reforms, and educate the public and policymakers about the need to: increase public investment in child care to expand the supply; remove barriers facing poor working families looking for child care; and improve the quality of early childhood services for all families.

The overall goal of **Mississippi Building Blocks** is to improve school readiness of children being served in child care centers that participate in MCCQSS. Additionally, the program is designed to increase the number of centers that participate in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) program. Participating centers will receive a higher reimbursement rate by providing higher quality care. The program serves a sample of child care centers throughout Mississippi and includes centers who currently serve families with children who qualify for Child Care Development Fund and TANF child care certificates. To meet and achieve its goals, incentives will be offered to child care centers for participation.

Project PREPARE

Also funded through MDHS DECCD is Project PREPARE. Project PREPARE, operated by the University of Southern Mississippi, Institute of Disabilities Studies, provides evaluation-based training and technical assistance to child care centers on the best practices to serve children with high risk factors related to disabilities, chronic health impairments and special needs. Since 2008, 6,861 Childhood Educators have attended and successfully completed training provided through Project PREPARE.

COUNTY SPECIFIC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EXAMPLE

The **Allies for Quality Care** program is a quality initiative serving childcare centers located in Hinds and Rankin Counties. Allies has been implemented for one full year and the focus of this effort is to address the programmatic needs of child care centers through evaluation and intense technical assistance. This program will provide direct assistance to participating centers in an effort to (1) Improve the learning environment in each classroom, as evidenced by improved ITERS/ECERS scores (2) Improve the nutritional quality of food provided to children, as evidenced by menus and shopping plans approved by a nutrition specialist (3) Develop operating budget for the program, including the identification and implementation of available cost-saving measures.

The program is currently provided to 15 Child Care Centers in Hinds and Rankin Counties. Within these 15 centers, there are 74 infant, toddler and pre-k classrooms with a total enrollment of 661* children. These centers employ a total of 137 staff members and will be provided with a minimum of 6,030 total hours of technical assistance. The technical assistance is being provided by 8 Classroom Technical Assistants, 3 Nutrition Advisors and 1 Business Advisor over a 12 month period of time.

COMMUNITY-BASED EARLY CHILDHOOD MODELS FOR CULTURE CHANGE EXAMPLE

SPARK Mississippi is a community-based early education initiative that brings together parents, schools, child care and early education providers, child advocacy groups, Head Start providers and state and local government agencies and businesses for the purpose of ensuring school readiness and academic success for Mississippi children ages 3 to 8. SPARK MS

currently serves students residing in the catchment area of 10 Mississippi school districts – Cleveland, Hollandale, North Bolivar, Pearl, Mound Bayou, West Bolivar, West Tallahatchie, Humphreys County, East Jasper and Clarksdale.

SPARK Mississippi seeks to help children master the skills and receive the cognitive, physical, family, and community supports necessary for school success. SPARK Mississippi provides support for ready kids and ready schools that includes: Individual Learning Plans, Early Education/School Curriculum Alignment (Early Learning Guidelines and MS Common Core Standards), support for child and family basic and special needs, Learning Advocates, Local Children’s Partnerships and Parent Education.

Launched in the Fall of 2004, **Excel By 5** is an innovative community certification, that is designed to encourage and assist communities to become actively involved in supporting their young children. The first of its kind, this certification emphasizes the important roles parents, primary caregivers and the community play in educating children during their most formative years, birth to five.

This project identifies gaps in community resources, promotes community collaboration, volunteerism and economic development. On the whole, we expect children in Excel By 5 communities will be healthier and better prepared for kindergarten and first grade. Excel By 5 certification requirements are divided into four groups: Community Involvement; Family and Parent Support; Early Care and Education; and Health and vary according to community size and capacity. The certification process takes about two years to complete, and the certification is awarded for three years.

The work will be challenging, and the payoff for it will be a ***comprehensive, collaborative system*** that will outlast the four years of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge grant.

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Mississippi Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development	Lead Agency, Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council

Table (A)(3)-1: Governance-related roles and responsibilities	
Participating State Agency	Governance-related roles and responsibilities
Mississippi Department of Education	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Mississippi Department of Mental Health	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Mississippi State Department of Health	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Office of the Governor, Education Policy	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Mississippi State University, Extension Services	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Mississippi State University, Early Childhood Institute	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Other Entities	
State advisory council on early childhood education and care	Will convene monthly, organize committees aligned with RTT grant
Representative for Head Start Agencies	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Mississippi Center of Education Innovation	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Delta Health Alliance	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Business Representative	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
School District Representative	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Representative of Local Early Education and Developmental Services	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
State Interagency Coordinating Council for Part C of IDEA	Serves on State Early Education Advisory Council
Other	
<i>Specify:</i>	
Other	
<i>Specify:</i>	

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Mississippi State Board of Community Colleges	Y
Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning	Y
Excel By 5, Inc.	Y
MS Head Start Association	Y
Kellogg Foundation	Y
MS Early Childhood Association	Y
MS Association of Family and Consumer Sciences	Y
MS Professional Educators	Y
MS Center for Education Innovation	Y
MS Child Care Resource and Referral Network	Y
State Interagency Collaboration Council	Y
CED	Y
Chevron	Y
MS Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics	Y
MS Senator-Elect Brice Wiggins	Y
Children's Defense Fund Southern Region	Y
MS House of Representatives Education Chair, Cecil Brown	Y
CREATE Foundation	Y

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
Delta Council	Y
Delta Health Alliance	Y
First Regional Library Hernando MS	Y
Gilmore Foundation	Y
Phil Hardin Foundation	Y
Family Homelessness Association	Y
MS Head Start Collaboration Office	Y
Institute for Disabilities Study, University of Southern MS	Y
Mission Readiness	Y
MS Kids Count	Y
Mississippi Lt. Governor, Phil Byrant	Y
MS Department of Education	Y
MS Economic Council	Y
MS Economic Development Council	Y
MS Extension Service	Y
MS Department of Medicaid	Y
MS Band of Choctaw Indians	Y
MS United Methodist Church	Y
National Assoc. of Child Care Resource & Referral Association	Y
North MS Community Foundation	Y

Table (A)(3)-2: Early Learning Intermediary Organizations and local early learning councils (if applicable)	
List every Intermediary Organization and local early learning council (if applicable) in the State	Did this entity provide a letter of intent or support which is included in the Appendix (Y/N)?
nSPARC	Y
Petal School District	Y
MS Parents for Public Schools	Y
MS State Workforce Investment Board	Y
Teach for America	Y
MS State Treasurer, Tate Reeves	Y
University of MS Medical Center	Y
United Way of Southeast MS	Y
MS State Senate Education Chair, Videt Carmichael	Y
EB5 Petal	Y
EB5 Biloxi	Y
EB5 Oktibbeha County	Y
EB5 Pascagoula	Y
EB5 Moss Point	Y
<i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>	

(A)(4) DEVELOPING A BUDGET TO IMPLEMENT AND SUSTAIN THE WORK OF THIS GRANT.

The extent to which the State Plan--

(a) Demonstrates how the State will use existing funds that support early learning and development from Federal, State, private, and local sources (e.g., CCDF; Title I and II of ESEA; IDEA; Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Program; State preschool; Head Start Collaboration and State Advisory Council funding; Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home

Visiting Program; Title V MCH Block Grant; TANF; Medicaid; child welfare services under Title IV (B) and (E) of the Social Security Act; Statewide Longitudinal Data System; foundation; other private funding sources) for activities and services that help achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, including how the quality set-asides in CCDF will be used;

(b) Describes, in both the budget tables and budget narratives, how the State will effectively and efficiently use funding from this grant to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan, in a manner that--

(1) Is adequate to support the activities described in the State Plan;

(2) Includes costs that are reasonable and necessary in relation to the objectives, design, and significance of the activities described in the State Plan and the number of children to be served; and

(3) Details the amount of funds budgeted for Participating State Agencies, localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners, and the specific activities to be implemented with these funds consistent with the State Plan, and demonstrates that a significant amount of funding will be devoted to the local implementation of the State Plan; and

(c) Demonstrates that it can be sustained after the grant period ends to ensure that the number and percentage of Children with High Needs served by Early Learning and Development Programs in the State will be maintained or expanded.

The State's response to (A)(4)(b) will be addressed in the Budget Section (section VIII of the application) and reviewers will evaluate the State's Budget Section response when scoring (A)(4). In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to (A)(4)(a) and (A)(4)(c) and may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

(A)(4)(A) DEMONSTRATES HOW THE STATE WILL USE EXISTING FUNDS THAT SUPPORT EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FROM FEDERAL, STATE, PRIVATE, AND LOCAL SOURCES

As explained throughout this section, and will be explained further in the subsequent Sections B-E, Mississippi has a number of programs, departments, non-profit organizations, schools and other supports that will join together consciously to create a comprehensive Early Learning and Development System. The table below illustrates how current state-level programs are aligned with the four focus areas of this grant:

1. Infrastructure supports
2. Center supports
3. Family and Child supports
4. Professional supports

Participating State Agency Name (* for Lead Agency)	Funds/Program(s) administered by the Participating State Agency	Alignment with RTT State Plan
Department of Human Services*	CCDF- Child Care Development Funds	Family and Children Supports
	TANF- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families	Family and Children Supports
	SNAP- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	Family and Children Supports; Provider Supports
	LIHEAP- Community Services, Fatherhood Initiative	Family and Children Supports
	Child Support Enforcement	Family and Children Supports
	Title IV-E- Foster Care Program	Family and Children Supports
	Aging & Adult Services	Family and Children Supports
	Youth Services	Family and Children Supports
	State funds	Family and Children Supports
	Social Services Block Grant	Family and Children Supports
Division of Medicaid	State funds	Family and Children Supports
	Title XIX, Social Security Act	Family and Children Supports
Department of Education	Title I, Part A	Family and Children Supports
	Title III- LEP & Immigrant	Family and Children Supports
	Prek-619 allocation	Family and Children Supports
	USDA food program	Center Supports
	Migrant Program	Family and Children Supports
	Title X-C Homeless Children and Youth	Family and Children Supports

Participating State Agency Name (* for Lead Agency)	Funds/Program(s) administered by the Participating State Agency	Alignment with RTT State Plan
	Title II	Family and Children Supports
	Title III	Professional Supports
	Title VI	Family and Children Supports
	Title V- Innovative Programs	Center Supports
	EHA Special Education	Family and Children Supports
	Title IV, Safe and Drug Free Schools	Family and Children Supports
	State funds	All
Department of Mental Health	Early Intervention Program funding	Family and Children Supports
	Federal Funding	All

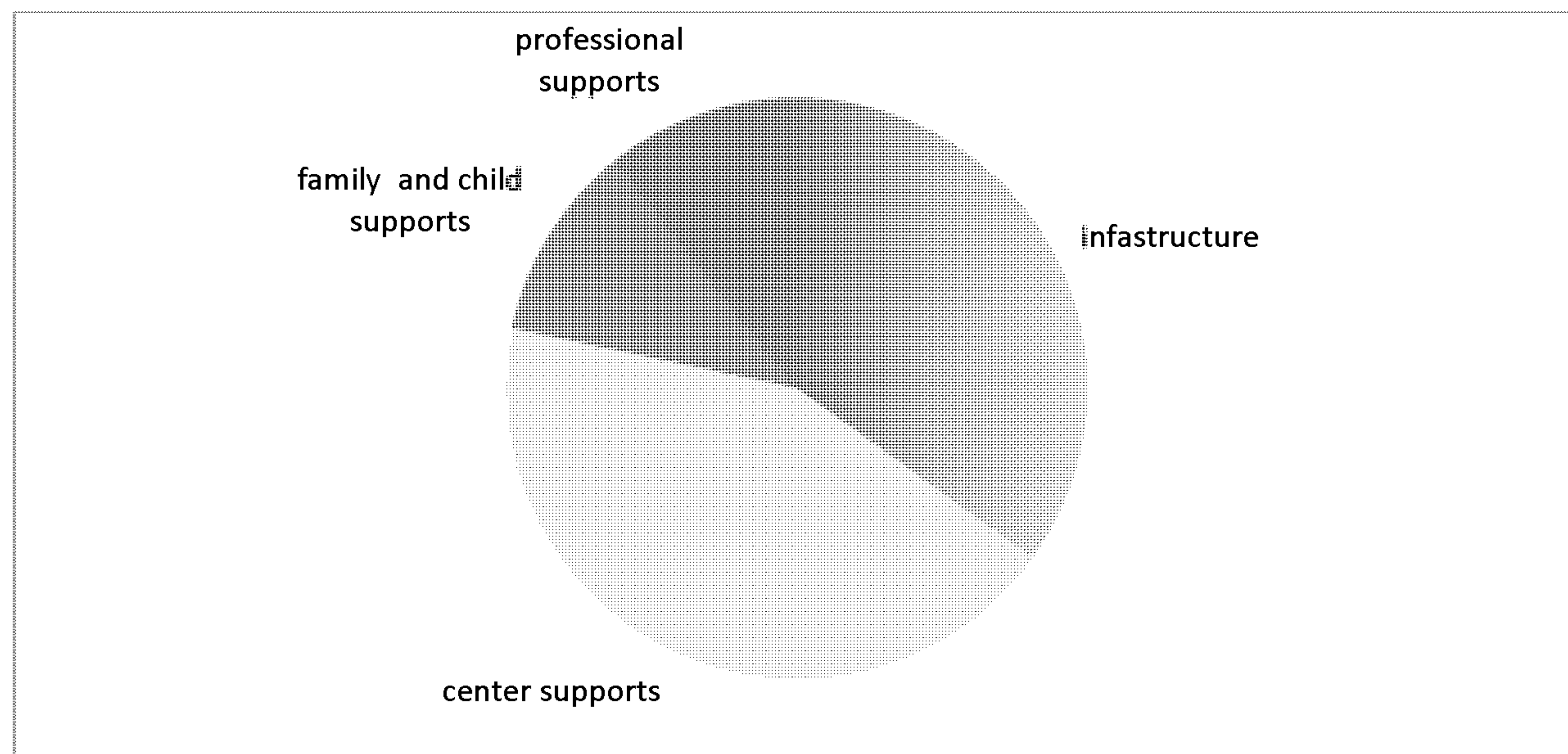
The table below illustrates how current local-level programs are aligned with the four focus areas of this grant:

Local or Private Funder; organization	Program	Location	Alignment with RTT State Plan	
Lynn Meadows Discovery Center	Children's Museum & Early Childhood Teacher Trainings	Gulf Coast	Family and Children Supports	Professional Supports
Delta State University	Mississippi Early Childhood Association	Delta	Center Supports	
Mississippi Low-Income Child Care Initiative	Advocacy Organization	Statewide – located in Biloxi	All	
Mississippi State University Extension Services	R&R Network	Statewide	Professional Supports	Center Supports
Rotary	Between the Lions Curriculum	Statewide via Mississippi Public Broadcasting	All	
Early Childhood Institute	Quality Improvement	Statewide	All	
W.K. Kellogg Foundation	Supporting Partnerships to	Select School District areas	All	

Local or Private Funder; organization	Program	Location	Alignment with RTT State Plan
	Assure Ready Kids (SPARK)		
Gilmore Foundation	Quality Improvement	Monroe County	All
Mississippi Building Blocks	Quality Improvement	Statewide	All
Community Foundation of North MS	Northwest R&R	Northwest	All
Phil Hardin Foundation	Professional Development	Meridian	Professional Supports
CREATE Foundation	Community Foundation	Northeast	Family and Children Supports
Excel By 5	Community involvement in 0-5 education	28 communities throughout MS	Family and Children Supports

(A)(4)(B) SEE SECTION VIII OF THE APPLICATION

To give an overview of the grant request, see the pie chart below, which illustrates the percentage of funds across the four focus areas:



More detail is provided in the Budget section (Section VII).

(A)(4)(C) SUSTAINABILITY OF THE SYSTEM

The events leading to the development and submission of this grant application were remarkable given the somewhat rocky road of state support for early care and education in the state. Historically state agencies have worked to sustain their mission in the typical “silo” fashion that this application is seeking to redefine. The state budget building process in which each agency presents its budget to a legislative budget committee in the fall preceding the general legislative session in January further reinforces the “every agency for itself” mindset.

Upon receipt of the Race to the Top Early Childhood Challenge application, the governor designated the State Early Childhood Council (SECAC) to develop and design the operational structure through which the goals and objectives would be accomplished. Prior to the development of the proposal a representative group of SECAC met with the agency directors of the Departments of Education, Health, Mental Health and Human Services to explain the objective of the process and how funds were to be allocated if Mississippi moved forward in the application process. It was also explained to them the importance for them to make a commitment for “conducting business” differently and rethinking the ways of the past to allow for space to embrace new ways of delivering services and meeting not only agency goals, but collective goals that will have a profound positive impact on the young children across the state. The decision they made to participate would at some level disrupt their current agency culture and move thinking out of the needs of the agency to the needs of the children and how those needs are met. After a frank discussion all agency directors agreed to move forward with the application process and to show their commitment to the opportunity directed funds to the Governor’s office to contract with a consultant to assist the SECAC team in writing the proposal.

The issue of sustainability of the services and the system through which they will be delivered was discussed with candor and honesty. The combined wisdom of the agency directors and their staff determined the strategy for sustainability that would be the most likely to succeed, given the economic conditions in the state as well as the historical manner in which the state legislators function is:

- In the fall of 2012 the agency directors present as a joint proposal to the legislative budget committee for the development of the state budget explaining the strategy with

which they want to proceed in sustaining the funding their agency received for services related to the grant award. The strategy is as follows: each agency budget reflects any increases in their budget the agency received as a result in their participation in the Race to the Top proposal during 2012. This increase would allow the services to continue and become embedded in their budgetary request in the future. By requesting the funds as part of their overall agency budget, state funds are utilized to support the work completed in year 1 so it can continue.

- The process described above will be repeated every year through year 4 at which time all the funding received through the grant will be institutionalized into the various agency budgets and the children and service providers will not have to contend with the “cliff effect” that so often occurs when a strategy such as this is not in place.

The SECAC chair and members of the Governor’s staff met with the education chairs in both Senate and House of the Mississippi Legislature to explain the proposal and the agency’s commitment. They were receptive and encouraged that this effort was one of a few real attempts across state agencies to collaborate and speak with one voice for children. Their endorsement of this approach is a very positive sign that the strategy proposed is the most informed and realistic.

Funding from outside foundations and business interests may be forthcoming to support various components of the overall system, but the institutionalization will be promoted through the strategy described.

In Table (A)(4)-1 below, the necessary funds are outlined, with anticipated funding categories identified. Some projected funds are indicated and there is a deeper explanation in the budget narrative.

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<i>TOTAL</i>	\$11,189,145	\$11,726,630	\$20,381,882	\$20,381,882	\$63,679,539
<i>SAC Head Start Funds</i>	\$2,132,011				
<i>Each state agency collective</i>		\$10,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$20,000,000	\$50,000,000

Table (A)(4) – 1 Existing other Federal, State, private, and local funds to be used to achieve the outcomes in the State Plan.					
Source of Funds	Fiscal Year 2012	Fiscal Year 2013	Fiscal Year 2014	Fiscal Year 2015	Total
<i>total</i>					
<i>W.K. Kellogg Foundation</i>	\$466,667				
<i>Data Systems (nSPARC)</i>					
<i>Coordinated Service Models</i>					
<i>Home Provider Registry</i>					
<i>Healthcare Access</i>					
<i>4% Quality CCDF</i>					
<i>CCDF administrative funds</i>					
<i>[Add additional rows as needed and enter text here to clarify or explain any of the data, if necessary.]</i>					

B. HIGH-QUALITY, ACCOUNTABLE PROGRAMS

(B)(1) DEVELOPING AND ADOPTING A COMMON, STATEWIDE TIERED QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM.

(10 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and adopted, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and adopt, a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System that--

(a) Is based on a statewide set of tiered Program Standards that include--

- (1) Early Learning and Development Standards;
- (2) A Comprehensive Assessment System;
- (3) Early Childhood Educator qualifications;

- (4) Family engagement strategies;
- (5) Health promotion practices; and
- (6) Effective data practices;

(b) Is clear and has standards that are measurable, meaningfully differentiate program quality levels, and reflect high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards²² that lead to improved learning outcomes for children; and

(c) Is linked to the State licensing system for Early Learning and Development Programs.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Evidence for (B)(1):

- The completed table that lists each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State and the elements that are included in those Program Standards (Early Learning and Development Standards, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, Qualified Workforce,

²² See such nationally recognized standards as:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Head Start Program Performance Standards. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. PDF retrieved from: 45 CFR Chapter XIII - 1301-1311 http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Head%20Start%20Program/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Requirements/45%20CFR%20Chapter%20XIII/45%20CFR%20Chap%20XIII_ENG.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. DoD Instruction 6060.2, Child Development Programs (CDPs), January 19, 1993, certified as current August 25, 1998 (to be updated Fall 2011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense. Retrieved from:

http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_1?section_id=20.60.500.100.0.0.0.0.¤t_id=20.60.500.100.500.60.60.0.0

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011) Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and education Programs. Elk Grove Village, IL; American Academy of Pediatrics.

Family Engagement, Health Promotion, Effective Data Practices, and Other), (see Table (B)(1)-1).

- To the extent the State has developed and adopted a Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System based on a common set of tiered Program Standards that meet the elements in criterion (B)(1)(a), submit--
 - A copy of the tiered Program Standards;
 - Documentation that the Program Standards address all areas outlined in the definition of Program Standards, demonstrate high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards, and are linked to the States licensing system;
 - Documentation of how the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality.

HIGH-QUALITY PLAN – CENTER SUPPORTS

Section B outlines much of how the state of Mississippi will implement the Center Supports project for which there is an overview in Section A. Below is the overview of the High Quality Plan. The remainder of this section provides more detail.

Key Goal(s)	Incentivize existing and enable new and High-Quality programs throughout the state of Mississippi.
Key activities and rationale ²³	Use grant resources to ensure that the MCCQSS meets the challenges of moving from a voluntary to a required participation system, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying support needed by providers who move from one level to another; • identifying appropriate incentives to encourage providers to increase quality; and • determining how finances work in the system. Maintain and expand the state's existing quality rating process, and to expand the quality system to incorporate family child care settings.
Realistic timeline + key milestones	(B)(1) Review components of the MCCQSS; make additions in a strategic manner that will benefit High-Need children (Ongoing) (B)(2) Require all early learning centers to participate in MCCQSS (2012) Work closely with federal and state leaders, as well as selected providers, to maintain the subsidy reimbursement by providing incentives to low-rated centers already in the MCCQSS (Ongoing) Provide rewards for centers and licensed in-home providers that have increased their ratings and serve High-Need children. (Ongoing) (B)(3)

²³ And if initially implemented, where and how the activities will be scaled up over time to eventually achieve statewide implementation

	<p>Implement the FCC-QRIS and certification /regulation process with approximately 300 family child care providers (2012)</p> <p>Enroll 25% of the estimated 2,900 family child care providers (2013); 50% by 2014; and 80% by 2015.</p> <p>(B)(5)</p> <p>Hire outside evaluators to conduct a validation study of the MCCQSS (2012)</p>
Party(ies) responsible	<p>Incentives and rewards policies will be instituted by the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development.</p> <p>The Early Childhood Institute will conduct QRIS ratings assessments on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Human Services.</p> <p>The Nurturing Homes Initiative will monitor family child care providers and enroll them in the MCCQSS program.</p> <p>The regulatory function of the NHI will be staffed independently from the provider support functions.</p>
Project Budgets	\$21,700,000
Supporting evidence	<p>Table (B)(1)-1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A copy of the tiered Program Standards; ○ Documentation that the Program Standards address all areas outlined in the definition of Program Standards, demonstrate high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards, and are linked to the States licensing system; ○ Documentation of how the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality.
Performance measures	<p>Increased % & # of programs entering TQRIS and increasing in quality ratings, at each class of the rating system, in each county of the state.</p> <p>% & # of subsidies provided to High-Need Families.</p>
How will State address different types of Early Learning and Development Programs	<p>Mississippi has developed TQRIS standards for four types of providers: Center-based, after school, Pre-K and Home-based providers. Over the grant period the state will work to understand how children who are cared for by kith and kin can experience a High-Quality setting, identify policies and implement those policies.</p>

How will State meet needs of Children with High Needs and the special populations	The state will increase the number of providers and slots for High-Needs children over the course of the grant. The MCCQSS will enable the state to understand how many providers and slots are available for children. It will also work with providers to insure they have access to high-quality materials and support for improvement.
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(B)(1)(A) IS BASED ON A STATEWIDE SET OF TIERED PROGRAM STANDARDS THAT INCLUDE: (1) EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS; (2) A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM; (3) EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR QUALIFICATIONS; (4) FAMILY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES; (5) HEALTH PROMOTION PRACTICES; AND (6) EFFECTIVE DATA PRACTICES.

Mississippi has in place the components required to have an excellent TQRIS. In Mississippi, the TQRIS is called the Mississippi Child Care Quality Steps System. The major components in place today include the following.

- The state’s Early Learning Guidelines for infants and toddlers, and for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old. The latter is maintained by the Mississippi Department of Education and is aligned with existing state K-12 standards. The infant and toddler guidelines are also aligned with the K-12 standards and are maintained by the Office of Head Start in the Governor’s office.
- The state has put in place the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) as a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in licensed early child care and education settings across the state.
- The Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) was developed for licensed child care centers. Since 2007, it has been adapted to use with child care settings run by in-home providers, pre-K early childhood education run by schools and out of school (before and afterschool) settings. As of 2012, the MCCQSS will cover all of birth to five child care in Mississippi, except family, friend and neighbor care.

- Beginning in 2012 licensure is the first level in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) for centers and for in-home providers. Accreditation is the first level in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) for pre-K programs provided by schools.
- Through 2010-11, participation in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) for any type of provider was voluntary. Beginning in 2011-12, participation in the system will be required for licensed centers. Beginning in 2013, pre-K programs offered through schools will also be required to participate. For licensed in-home providers receiving CCDF children, participation beginning in 2012 will also be required. For other in-home providers and out of school providers, participation in the MCCQSS will be encouraged but will not be required.

The state proposes to use grant resources to ensure that the MCCQSS system meets the challenges related to moving from a voluntary to a required participation system. Many of those challenges are described in the questions listed below.

- What types of support are needed by providers as they move from one level to another?
- Are the appropriate incentives in place to encourage providers to move up the steps of the quality rating system?
- Are the appropriate incentives in place to encourage parents to choose higher quality providers?
- Several provider support programs exist in the state today. How do they extend their reach to child care providers all across the state? Should these services be coordinated or directed in some way? What is the state's responsibility in terms of providing access to these support programs?
- How does the state learn from the work of provider support organizations and the program elements they offer? To what measures of success and quality should the state aspire?

- How do the finances work in this system? Do providers receive subsidies (seed funds) to purchase needed quality improvement support? Is support for quality paid for and delivered by state or local government? What level of support is needed? What level is affordable? If there is a difference, who is responsible?
- How does the new division of Early Learning and Development manage and coordinate this support?
- What steps should be implemented to ensure a seamless re-assignment of the child care licensing division from the Mississippi Department of Health to the Division of Early Childhood Development and Education at the Mississippi Department of Human Services?
- How does this new state system work effectively and efficiently at the local level? How are services for individual children with needs more effective and more efficient under the proposed system?

As the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and its agency partners begin to implement the comprehensive TQRIS plan in Mississippi, the questions posed above, along with others that will inevitably emerge, will be addressed by the new Division, its unit managers, the liaisons, and local service providers.

MISSISSIPPI CHILD CARE QUALITY STEP SYSTEM (MCCQSS)

The Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System is a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in licensed early child care and education settings across the state. The MCCQSS is the State's broader quality improvement continuum which offers incentives and has five components: Administrative Policy, Professional Development, Learning Environments, Parent Involvement and Evaluation. Financing incentives for providers will be linked to progress on the quality step system and incentives will be given to parents for sending their children to centers with higher star ratings. Mississippi has adopted the motto, "Step Up To Star Quality."

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Office for Children and Youth (OCY) coordinated the development of the MCCQSS. Development meetings convened on November 3-4, 2005 and November 30, 2005 in Jackson, Mississippi and included representatives of early childhood programs, children with special needs, licensed child care programs not serving low income children, Head Start, colleges, universities, MDHS early childhood program grantees, the Mississippi Department of Health (MDH), Local Education Agencies (LEA), Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), and the Office of the Governor. Julia Todd, Director of the Office for Children and Youth, Judy Collins, State Technical Assistance Specialists and Desiree Reddick-Head, State Technical Assistance Specialists with the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) facilitated the meetings and guided participants in tasks related to the development of a quality rating system.

The objectives of the MS Child Care Quality Step System are the following:

- Increase the quality of early childhood care and education as evidenced by improved ratings in components of the system: by providing learning environments that are built around high standards of result in access to healthier children in Mississippi; provide appropriate school readiness skills for all childcare; provide more childcare programs; and have consistent standards across all licensed child care settings and education.
- Increase training and compensation by increasing the rate of pay for subsidized children and rate of individual compensation for caregivers.
- Increase parental awareness through parental involvement, responsibility and providing information about the MCCQSS and quality child care.
- Increase and develop a support system and a resource and referral system that links professional development, training and technical assistance, parental education and assessment of the environment.

In addition to developing and implementing a TQRIS, in 2003, Mississippi was able to count itself among the few states that had developed early learning standards and had those standards officially adopted. The Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) serve as the basis for all program and child outcome expectations in Mississippi. For details on the ELGs, see Section B Appendix. These Guidelines apply whether the child receives care from a licensed center, an in-home

provider and a K-12 school district. They have driven the development of program standards which provide criteria for important program features such as adult to child ratios, group sizes, teaching strategies and curricula (all part of the MCCQSS).

Today, the Early Learning Guidelines for 3 and 4 year of age are housed at the Mississippi Department of Education. The guidelines cover competencies and objectives, suggested teaching strategies and developmental checklists in the following areas.

- Language, Vocabulary, and Early Literacy Development
- Mathematical Concepts Development
- Scientific Investigation
- Social/Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Similarly, the Early Learning Guidelines for infants and toddlers are officially managed out of the Mississippi Head Start Collaboration Office located in the Office of the Governor. The guidelines cover use, awareness, exploration and experimentation in the following areas.

- Language, Vocabulary, and Literacy Development
- Mathematical Development
- Scientific Development
- Social/Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Self-help Development

Table (B)(1) – 1 was modified to focus on the categories of providers recognized in Mississippi including licensed centers, in-home providers and pre-K programs provided by schools (includes

all public school programming). The vast majority of Head Start programs are currently run by independent grantees and are therefore part of the licensed center category.

Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State						
	Program Standards Elements					
	<i>If the Program Standards address the element, place an "X" in that box</i>					
List each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State; specify which programs in the State use the standards	Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment System	Qualified Workforce	Family Engagement	Health Promotion	Effective Data Practices
Child Care Center Rules and Regulations	X	X	X	X	X	X, partial
In-Home Provider Care Rules and Regulations	X	X	X	X	X	X, partial
Pre-K Guidelines for schools and Title 1 Programs	X	X	X	X	X	X, partial
Head Start and Early Head Start	X	X	X	X	X	X, partial

(B)(1)(B) IS CLEAR AND HAS STANDARDS THAT ARE MEASURABLE, MEANINGFULLY DIFFERENTIATE PROGRAM QUALITY LEVELS, AND REFLECT HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF PROGRAM EXCELLENCE COMMENSURATE WITH NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED STANDARDS²⁴ THAT LEAD TO IMPROVED LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

²⁴ See such nationally recognized standards as:

The criteria for the MCCQSS are developed on a system of upward progression. For example, for a facility to move to a Step 3 all criteria must be met in Steps 1, 2 and 3. This systematic approach to improving quality allows for gradual improvement that is acknowledged through public recognition of the stars found on the facility's licensing certificate. The list of steps, criteria and standards to be met are described on the following pages. The criteria in Mississippi are organized into the following five areas: administrative policy; professional development; learning environment; parent involvement; and evaluation. These grids are placed in the body of this proposal to illustrate the measures that are used, how they are used to differentiate program quality and the level of expected program excellence. The shortened version of the MCCQSS grid is presented for licensed centers and for in-home providers. A more detailed description is provided for pre-K programs provided by schools. Additional supporting materials and checklists for each of these three categories of providers are referenced in Section B Appendix.

LICENSED CENTERS

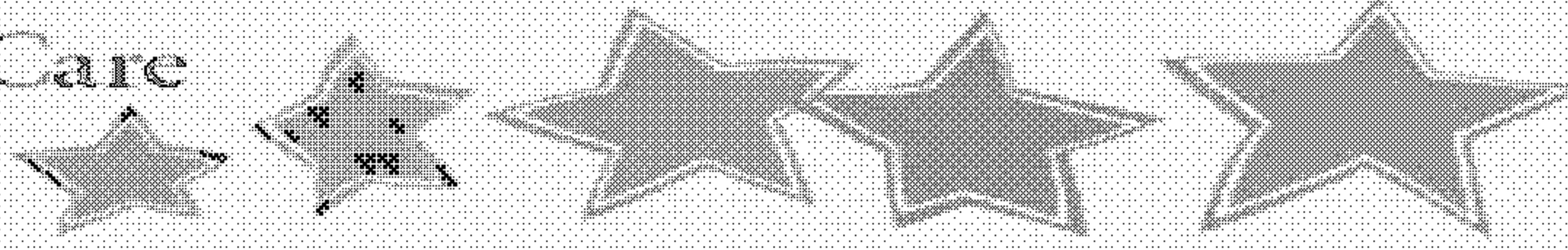
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Head Start Program Performance Standards. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. PDF retrieved from: 45 CFR Chapter XIII - 1301-1311 http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Head%20Start%20Program/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Requirements/45%20CFR%20Chapter%20XIII/45%20CFR%20Chap%20XIII_ENG.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. DoD Instruction 6060.2, Child Development Programs (CDPs), January 19, 1993, certified as current August 25, 1998 (to be updated Fall 2011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense. Retrieved from:

http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_1?section_id=20.60.500.100.0.0.0.0.0¤t_id=20.60.500.100.500.60.60.0.0

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The Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System



Section 100.04 - Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) Criteria for Licensed Centers

	Administrative Policy	Professional Development	Learning Environments	Parent Involvement	Evaluation
Step 5	Developmental check list for each child Implement Transition Plan for Kindergarten	Director: BA/BS or higher Staff: 25% of fulltime teaching staff w/current CDA or higher	MS ELG (fully implemented) On-going Child Assessment	Parent/Teacher conference (twice a year) Monthly Newsletter	ERS 5.1-7.0
	Mentoring-Director	25 hours Staff Development w/10 hours in area teaching for fulltime teaching staff	ERS 5.1-7.0		
Step 4	Annual supervisor and staff evaluation w/implementation of a Professional Development Plan	Director: AA or higher	MS ELG (all staff trained)	Parent Involvement Program	ERS 4.1-5.0
		Staff: 15% of fulltime teaching staff have current CDA or higher 20 hours Staff Development w/10 hours in are teaching for fulltime teaching staff	Trained in on-going Child Assessment	Parent Resource Center	Parent Staff Survey
		Director / child care staff member holds a current OCY Director's Credential, or a credential approved by MDHS/OCY, or an associate or higher degree in child development, early childhood	MS ELG (Director Trained)	Weekly Notes to Parents	ERS 3.6-4.0
Step 3	Director/Management in child care training		ERS 3.6-4.0	Parent Education Training (offered annually)	
	MOU with Mental Health (LEA,PHS)	Staff: 1 current CDA or higher on-site, GED or High School for all staff		Parental Lending Library	
		18 hours Staff Development for fulltime teaching staff (no in-house)			
		Monthly Staff Meeting			
		Director: Additional Staff Development by 5 hours annually	Weekly Lesson Plans	Bulletin Board	Self-Assessment
Step 2	Staff Handbook		Learning Centers	(for parent communication)	Annual Staff Evaluation
		Staff: 15 hours Staff Development for fulltime teaching staff (no in-house)		Quarterly Newsletter Calendar	ERS 3.0-3.5
			ERS 3.0-3.5	Annual Parent/Teacher Conference	
Step 1	Licensing		98		

The grid for licensed centers illustrates all of the criteria that need to be met as a center aspires to a higher star rating. The assessment of whether a center meets these expectations is monitored by the Early Childhood Institute on a contract from the DHS.

IN-HOME PROVIDERS

Mississippi In-Home Provider QRIS Standards	Star Level 1	Star Level 2	Star Level 3	Star Level 4	Star Level 5
Administrative Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registered in Good Standing-completed Intake Form with MSCR&R Works to complete all requirements of the Plan of Action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background Check 121 Form for care givers and children Center provides a Parent Handbook Weekly Lesson Plan. Establish a file for each child that includes all required enrollment and health documentation. Works to complete all requirements of the Plan of Action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adheres to USDA CACFP menu planning guidelines. Works to complete all requirements of the Plan of Action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregivers conduct an annual self assessment. Publishes menus for parents. Works to complete all requirements of the Plan of Action. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains developmental checklist for each child. Works to complete all requirements of the Plan of Action.
Professional Development		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 hours of training including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CPR/First Aid-6hrs 9 hour Orientation, including basic child development and creating a learning environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Child Care Business Practices course. Maintain CPR/First Aid certification. Enrolled in or completed CDA. Holds a provisional certificate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed CDA. Holds a regular certificate. 20 hours of approved training each year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 hours of approved training each year.
Parent Involvement		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are involved and have resources available in at least 2 ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are involved and have 3 resources available in at least 3 ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are involved and have 4 resources available in at least 4 ways. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families are involved and have 5 resources available in at least 5 ways.
Evaluation		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score between 3.0 and 3.5 on the FCCERS-R 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score between 3.6 and 4.0 on the FCCERS-R 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score between 4.1 and 5.0 on the FCCERS-R 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Score between 5.1 and 7.0 on the FCCERS-R

The grid for in-home providers illustrates all of the criteria that need to be met as a center aspires to a higher star rating. The assessment of whether a center meets these expectations is monitored by the MCCQSS Division for In-home Provider under a contract from the DHS. Support for in-home provider success in moving up the star ratings is provided by MSCCR&R and several other supporting organizations across the state.

PRE-K PROGRAMS OFFERED BY SCHOOLS

Criteria Overview for Mississippi Quality Step Ratings of School-Based Programs

CHART
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	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Accreditation	★ Current certificate of accreditation by an agency recognized by the Mississippi Department of Health	★ Current certificate of accreditation by an agency recognized by the Mississippi Department of Health	★ Current certificate of accreditation by an agency recognized by the Mississippi Department of Health	★ Current certificate of accreditation by an agency recognized by the Mississippi Department of Health	★ Current certificate of accreditation by an agency recognized by the Mississippi Department of Health
Continuing Education <i>These criteria are higher than comparable standards in the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines.</i>	★ Coordinator receives 15+ CEUs on early childhood topics	★ Coordinator receives 27+ CEUs on early childhood topics, including overview of MS ELGs (6 CEUs)	★ Coordinator receives 33+ CEUs on early childhood topics, including overview of MS ELGs (6 CEUs)	★ Coordinator receives 39+ CEUs on early childhood topics, including overview of MS ELGs (6 CEUs)	★ Coordinator receives 45+ CEUs on early childhood topics, including overview of MS ELGs (6 CEUs)
	★ 50%+ teachers and assistant teachers receive 15+ CEUs on early childhood topics	★ All teachers and assistant teachers receive 18+ CEUs on early childhood topics	★ All teachers and assistant teachers receive 21+ CEUs on early childhood topics	★ All teachers and assistant teachers receive 24+ CEUs on early childhood topics	★ All teachers and assistant teachers receive 27+ CEUs on early childhood topics
	★ At least 50% CEUs on early childhood topics delivered by authorized trainers who are not direct supervisors	★ At least 50% CEUs on early childhood topics delivered by authorized trainers who are not direct supervisors	★ At least 50% CEUs on early childhood topics delivered by authorized trainers who are not direct supervisors	★ All CEUs on early childhood topics delivered by authorized trainers who are not direct supervisors	★ All CEUs on early childhood topics delivered by authorized trainers who are not direct supervisors
		★ At least 25% of teachers and 25% of assistant teachers receive training on MS ELGs (20 CEUs)	★ At least 50% of teachers and 50% of assistant teachers receive training on MS ELGs (20 CEUs)	★ All teachers and assistant teachers receive training on MS ELGs (20 CEUs)	★ All teachers and assistant teachers receive training on MS ELGs (20 CEUs)
				★ Coordinator receives leadership training developed by MS Dept. of Education	★ Coordinator receives leadership training developed by MS Dept. of Education

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Criteria Overview for Mississippi Quality Step Ratings of School-Based Programs

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	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Professional Qualifications	★ Coordinator holds B.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education or Pre-K or K-1 certification or 12+ credit hours in early childhood education with K-3, K-8, or SPED certification	★ Coordinator holds B.S. or higher in child development or early childhood education or Pre-K or K-1 certification or 12+ credit hours in early childhood education with K-3, K-8, or SPED certification	★ Coordinator holds B.S. or higher in child development or early childhood education or Pre-K or K-1 certification or 12+ credit hours in early childhood education with K-3, K-8, or SPED certification	★ Coordinator holds B.S. or higher in child development or early childhood education or Pre-K or K-1 certification or 12+ credit hours in early childhood education with K-3, K-8, or SPED certification	★ Coordinator holds B.S. or higher in child development or early childhood education or Pre-K or K-1 certification or 12+ credit hours in early childhood education with K-3, K-8, or SPED certification
	★ 50%+ teachers hold B.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education or N-1 or K-1 certification or 9+ credit hours in early childhood with K-3, K-8, or SPED certification	★ 75%+ teachers hold B.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education or N-1 or K-1 certification or 9+ credit hours in early childhood with K-3, K-8, or SPED certification	★ 75%+ teachers hold B.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education or N-1 or K-1 certification or 9+ credit hours in early childhood with K-3, K-8, or SPED certification	★ 75%+ teachers hold B.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education or N-1 or K-1 certification or 9+ credit hours in early childhood with K-3, K-8, or SPED certification	★ 75%+ teachers hold B.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education or N-1 or K-1 certification or 9+ credit hours in early childhood with K-3, K-8, or SPED certification
	★ 50%+ assistant teachers hold A.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education	★ 75%+ assistant teachers hold A.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education	★ 75%+ assistant teachers hold A.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education	★ 75%+ assistant teachers hold A.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education	★ 75%+ assistant teachers hold A.S. or higher degree in child development or early childhood education

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Criteria Overview for Mississippi Quality Step Ratings of School-Based Programs

	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Professional Qualifications, Cont.			<p>★ 1+ teacher holds M.S. or higher degree in child development, early childhood education, or special education with emphasis in early childhood</p> <p>or certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards</p>	<p>★ 15%+ teachers hold M.S. or higher degree in child development, early childhood education, or special education with emphasis in early childhood</p> <p>or certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards</p>	<p>★ 25%+ teachers hold M.S. or higher degree in child development, early childhood education, or special education with emphasis in early childhood</p> <p>or certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards</p>

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Criteria Overview for Mississippi Quality Step Ratings of School-Based Programs

	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Professional Development		★ Coordinator performs annual self-assessment	★ Coordinator performs annual self-assessment	★ Coordinator receives annual performance evaluation	★ Coordinator receives annual performance evaluation
		★ Coordinator prepares annual personal professional development plan	★ Coordinator prepares annual personal professional development plan	★ Coordinator prepares annual personal professional development plan	★ Coordinator prepares annual personal professional development plan
		★ All teachers and assistant teachers receive annual performance evaluations	★ All teachers and assistant teachers receive annual performance evaluations	★ All teachers and assistant teachers receive annual performance evaluations	★ All teachers and assistant teachers receive annual performance evaluations
			★ All teachers and assistant teachers attend a monthly staff meeting	★ All teachers and assistant teachers attend a monthly staff meeting	★ All teachers and assistant teachers attend a monthly staff meeting
				★ Annual survey of teachers and assistant teachers <i>with</i> responses to all concerns revealed by survey	★ Annual survey of teachers and assistant teachers <i>with</i> responses to all concerns revealed by survey
					★ 1+ employees serve on community early childhood advisory board

Criteria Overview for Mississippi Quality Step Ratings of School-Based Programs

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	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
Learning Environment		★ All classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds have learning centers	★ All classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds have learning centers	★ All classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds have learning centers	★ All classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds have learning centers
		★ All classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds have weekly lesson plans	★ All classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds have weekly lesson plans	★ All classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds have weekly lesson plans	★ All classrooms for 3- and 4-year-olds have weekly lesson plans
		★ 2 classrooms receive ECERS-R and/or ITERS-R evaluations <i>and</i> earn average ECERS-R or ITERS-R score of 3.0+	★ 2 classrooms receive ECERS-R and/or ITERS-R evaluations <i>and</i> earn average ECERS-R or ITERS-R score of 3.6+	★ 2 classrooms receive ECERS-R and/or ITERS-R evaluations <i>and</i> earn average ECERS-R or ITERS-R score of 4.1+	★ 2+ classrooms receive ECERS-R and/or ITERS-R evaluations <i>and</i> earn average ECERS-R or ITERS-R scores of 5.1+
			★ Teachers in classrooms that receive ECERS evaluations also receive Caregiver Interaction Scale evaluations <i>and</i> earn Caregiver Interaction Scale scores of 2.5+	★ Teachers in classrooms that receive ECERS-R or ITERS-R evaluations also receive Caregiver Interaction Scale evaluations <i>and</i> earn Caregiver Interaction Scale scores of 3.0+	★ Teachers in classrooms that receive ECERS-R or ITERS-R evaluations also receive Caregiver Interaction Scale evaluations <i>and</i> earn Caregiver Interaction Scale scores of 3.3+
			★ All children receive on-going developmental assessment	★ All children receive on-going developmental assessment	★ All children receive on-going developmental assessment that is aligned with Response to Intervention
			★ Program has MOU with early childhood mental health or disability services agency	★ Program has MOU with early childhood mental health or disability services agency	★ Program has MOU with early childhood mental health or disability services agency
					★ All rising kindergarteners receive transition planning

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Criteria Overview for Mississippi Quality Step Ratings of School-Based Programs

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	★	★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★★★
<p align="center">Family Involvement</p> <p><i>The program provides these resources to all parents and guardians.</i></p>		★ Program handbook	★ Program handbook	★ Program handbook	★ Program handbook
		★ Monthly program calendar	★ Monthly program calendar	★ Monthly program calendar	★ Monthly program calendar
		★ Quarterly program newsletter	★ Quarterly program newsletter	★ Quarterly program newsletter	★ Quarterly program newsletter
		★ Bulletin board for parents	★ Bulletin board for parents	★ Bulletin board for parents	★ Bulletin board for parents
		★ 1+ parent-teacher conference during the program year	★ 1+ parent-teacher conference during the program year	★ 1+ parent-teacher conference during the program year	★ 2+ parent-teacher conferences during the program year
			★ Weekly classroom notes to parents	★ Weekly classroom notes to parents	★ Weekly classroom notes to parents
			★ 1+ parent education event	★ 1+ parent education event	★ 6+ parent education events
			★ Lending library of parenting resources	★ Lending library of parenting resources	★ Lending library of parenting resources
			★ 1+ free take-home book for each child	★ 2+ free take-home books for each child	★ 3+ free take-home books for each child
				★ Volunteer opportunities	★ Volunteer opportunities
				★ Family resource center	★ Family resource center
			★ Annual survey of parents	★ Annual survey of parents	

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The grid for pre-K programs offered by schools offers a detailed view of all the criteria school programs must meet in order to move up to a higher star rating. The assessment of whether a pre-K program offered by a school meets these expectations will be monitored by the Early Childhood Institute as part of a contractual arrangement with the DHS.

(B)(1)(C) IS LINKED TO THE STATE LICENSING SYSTEM FOR EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Yes, as noted in the grids provided above, the first step in the Quality Steps System is either licensure for centers, registration for in-home providers or accreditation for pre-K programs offered by schools. Each of these is related to the state licensure system.

(B)(2) PROMOTING PARTICIPATION IN THE STATE'S TIERED QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM.

(15 points)

The extent to which the State has maximized, or has a High-Quality Plan to maximize, program participation in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Implementing effective policies and practices to reach the goal of having all publicly funded Early Learning and Development Programs participate in such a system, including programs in each of the following categories--

(1) State-funded preschool programs;

(2) Early Head Start and Head Start programs;

(3) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and part C of IDEA;

(4) Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA; and

(5) Early Learning and Development Programs receiving funds from the State's CCDF program;

(b) Implementing effective policies and practices designed to help more families afford high-quality child care and maintain the supply of high-quality child care in areas with high concentrations of Children with High Needs (*e.g.*, maintaining or increasing subsidy reimbursement rates, taking actions to ensure affordable co-payments, providing incentives to high-quality providers to participate in the subsidy program); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for the numbers and percentages of Early Learning and Development Programs that will participate in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by type of Early Learning and Development Program (as listed in (B)(2)(a)(1) through (5) above).

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and

addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measure under (B)(2)(c).

(B)(2)(A) IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO REACH THE GOAL OF HAVING ALL PUBLICLY FUNDED EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A SYSTEM.

Mississippi has a high quality plan to maximize provider participation in the MCCQSS. This is made possible because the Mississippi SECAC has moved to make sure that there was a component of the MCCQSS in place for each of the major categories of providers: licensed centers; in-home providers; and pre-K programs provided by schools. The high quality plan contains the following elements:

- Though the state does not independently fund preschool programs, all childcare centers are licensed by the state and, beginning in 2012, will be required to participate in the state's TQRIS, called the Mississippi Child Care Quality Steps System (MCCQSS).
- Approximately Eighty percent of Head Start and Early Head Start Programs are currently licensed centers and therefore will participate in the MCCQSS system for licensed centers. The vast majority of remaining twenty percent of Head Start and Early Head Start Programs are housed in local school districts but are affiliated with non-public school head start grantees and are likely to participate in MCCQSS for licensed center. There is an agreement with the state Head Start Association that all Head Start and Early Head Start Programs will participate in the MCCQSS for licensed programs.
- Early learning and development programs run through local school districts, including those run with IDEA parts B and C funds as well as those funded by Title I funds will be covered by the requirements of the MCCQSS for pre-K programs. The MCCQSS for pre-K programs is in its first phase of implementation during 2011. The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development will work closely with the Mississippi Department of Education to enroll the 56 school districts that currently provide pre-K

services in the MCCQSS. During years two through four of the grant, the state expects to engage fifteen to twenty new school districts in the MCCQSS.

- There are approximately 2,900 early learning and development programs run by in-home providers that work with children subsidized by the state's CCDF program. The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development will require each of these in-home providers to participate in the In-Home Provider component of the MCCQSS. Fifty in-home providers have participated in the first phase of implementation for this system. Funds from this grant would be used to fund both the rating system and provide support for providers to successfully participate in that system. The goals for the In-Home Initiative is to expand their capacity to reach between 500 and 600 additional homes per year and to have approximately 90 percent of these in-home providers enrolled by the end of 2015.
- Helping more families to afford high-quality child care is reflected in a decision the Department of Human Services announced in early October 2011. Over the years policy analysis has revealed a need to revise the current enrollment policies from a 6 month to a 12 month eligibility enrollment period for families who qualify for CCDF funding for a child care certificate. In addition to the implementation of the annual enrollment policy, families will be allowed a five year certificate as long as they remain CCDF eligible during the time period. This will provide a stable early care and education home for the child and the family. Both of these policy changes have positive ramifications for not only the child and their family, but for the early care and education program the child attends. In some regions of Mississippi the poverty rate of children under 5 is so high early care and education centers have 75% or higher of children they serve on CCDF certificates.

The MCCQSS system for each of the major categories of providers is in place and is ready to use with additional providers within the category. The aggressive expansion of providers participating in this Quality Steps System effort is dependent on the effective management of funds provided in this grant, which will include the expansion of quality support programs and financial incentives to participate, which are described in the next section.

Recruiting and enrolling licensed early care and education centers to participate in the MCCQSS has been reviewed and refined over the past 5 years as the system has been implemented. The

following describes the current recruitment and enrollment process with licensed child care centers.

(a) Recruitment Process for Licensed Early Care and Education Centers

Early Head Start, Head Start, Early Learning part C of IDEA, Early Learning and Development Programs funded by CCDF

The current recruitment process is based on a voluntary enrollment model. Within 2 years of the grant award all licensed centers will be required as part of their license renewal to enroll. Any facilities that are newly licensed after January 2013 will automatically be enrolled. Early Head Start and Head Start Programs, programs under Part C and Early Learning Programs under the State's CCDF program are all licensed by the state. The following timeline depicts the movement from voluntary to required participation for those programs:

Currently participation is voluntary for licensed early care and education centers

Year 1 of the grant- Milestones

- Mississippi Child Care Regulations will be changed to reflect that all licensed child care centers as of January 2013 will enroll in the Child Care Quality Step Program as part of their license renewal process/or as part of obtaining a license if a newly operating center.
- All licensed centers are notified by the child care regulatory division that in January 2013 and thereafter on the anniversary of their license they will be enrolled in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System at a level 1 if they have not enrolled voluntarily before that time and received a rating other than the entry 1 step.

Year 2 of the grant-Milestones

- As of January 2014 all licensed centers will be enrolled in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS)

Years 3 and 4 of the grant-Milestones

- As of January 2015 all licensed centers will be actively participating the MCCQSS as evidenced by the 700 centers estimated at step level 2, 100 at step level 3, 75 at step level 4 and 35 at step level 5. (See graphic below.)

State-funded preschool programs, Early Learning and Development Programs Funded under section 619 of part B of IDEA and Early Learning and Development Programs funded under Title I of the ESEA are currently exempt from child care licensing. Any program housed in a school and under the school district's authority is considered part of the school and included in the school district's accreditation rating. For programs currently not subject to licensing the following will occur:

Year 1 of the grant milestones- A request will be made to the Mississippi State Board of Education to require any preschool program housed in a school district not already subject to licensing under the State Child Care Regulations be required to participate in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step Program for school-based programs.

Year 2 of the grant milestones- Upon the State Board's passage of the request, notification will be sent to all school districts that by school year 2013-2014 all preschool programs operating in a school district will participate in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System designed for school-based programs.

Years 3 and 4 of the grant milestones- All school-based preschool programs will participate in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System for programs in schools.

(b) Helping More Families to Afford High-Quality Child Care

Helping families to afford High-Quality Child Care is reflected in a decision the Department of Human Services announced in early October 2011. Over the years policy analysis has revealed a need to revise the current enrollment policies from a 6 month to a 12 month eligibility enrollment

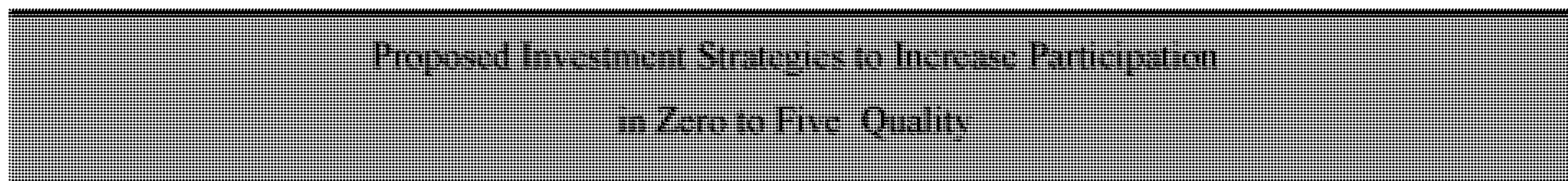
period for families who qualify for CCDF funding for a child care certificate. In the past the family had to produce documentation twice a year to prove their eligibility.

Starting in 2011 the enrollment process will be conducted annually. In addition to the implementation of the annual enrollment policy, families will be allowed a five year certificate as long as they remain CCDF eligible during the time period. This will provide a stable early care and education home for the child and the family. Both of the policy changes have positive ramifications for not only the child and their family, but for the early care and education program the child attends. In some regions of Mississippi the poverty rate of children under 5 is so high early care and education centers have 75% or higher of children they serve on CCDF certificates. Under the previous policies, the inability to plan and budget accordingly was a challenge and detriment to providing a high quality program. These new policies will add stability to their ability to provide a high quality experience for the children they serve.

(B)(2)(B) IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE POLICIES AND PRACTICES DESIGNED TO HELP MORE FAMILIES AFFORD HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE AND MAINTAIN THE SUPPLY OF HIGH-QUALITY CHILD CARE IN AREAS WITH HIGH CONCENTRATIONS OF CHILDREN WITH HIGH NEEDS

The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development will work closely with federal and state leaders, as well as selected providers to maintain the subsidy reimbursement. The MSCCR&R provides a significant portion of the training designed to help centers and in-home providers increase their quality ratings. See Section B Appendix for the course offerings of MSCCR&R.

The state proposes the following incentive structure to encourage parent and provider participation in the QRIS system. They are presented in the Table below. The first two incentives apply to providers while the third focuses on families and their long term plans.



Investment Strategy	Provider Seed Funds (Steppin' Up)	Provider Incentives for Increased in Quality	Parent Incentives for: Earned Hope Scholarships
Objective	Increase Provider Capacity and Interest in Participating in MCCQSS	Increase Provider Interest in higher Star Levels	Send Child(ren) to Higher Quality Preschools and to Focus on Opportunities Beyond High School
Year			
2012	Up to \$350 per child in a center, \$150 per child in a home, available through an application process,	Existing incentive (7% through 25% applied to the DHS certificate amount) for moving up the 2 through 5 TQRIS levels	Matching Postsecondary Savings Plan (for every dollar saved, matched by \$1.00)
2013	A task force will be set up in 2012 to review these levels and adjust the Investment Strategy levels and structure for 2014 and beyond. The mechanisms and data collection and verification structures will be put in place and tested during 2013.		
2014	Revised System is put in place in 2014.		
2015	Sustainability Plan implemented		

The Division will institute the “seed funds” policy to recruit providers into the MCCQSS, and will retain and revise a policy for rewarding licensed centers and in-home providers for moving up on the MCCQSS rating scales. The two provider policies are described below.

SUPPORT FOR CENTERS AND LICENSED IN- HOME PROVIDERS INTERESTED IN INCREASING THEIR RATING

Provide incentives for up to 300 licensed early care and education centers per year that are currently in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System rated at either a step 1 or 2 (the lowest rating), who are interested in increasing their rating. The funding per child would be up to \$350. For in-home providers, the incentive for up to 150 providers would be up to \$150 per child. These amounts would be reviewed by the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development each year of the grant to determine the effectiveness of this incentive program in attracting and supporting providers interested in stepping up their in the MCCQSS. The cash

equivalent allocated to a center or in-home provider could be spent on activities and materials in the following list.

- Educational Resources and Materials for classroom instruction would be offered as menu to providers. The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development has an identified list of suppliers for the following types of services to ensure that allocated funds are efficiently spent.

Other supports would include the following:

- Training on the use of the screening instrument and how to use the information gained from the screening in providing more specific instruction of the child.
- Salary payments in the form of a bonus to teachers who:
 - demonstrate professional behavior by maintaining daily attendance on the job for 4 consecutive months with 1 sick day per month allowed,(up to \$200 per quarter for a total of \$800 per year);
 - achieve a credential or degree in the early childhood education/development field (\$1,000 for a CDA, \$1,500 for an AA Degree, \$2,500 for a BA/BS degree) and remain employed at the program where they currently work for at least 4 months after completing their credential or degree; or
 - show measurable improvement in their instruction and classroom environment as measured by the observational rating scales in abbreviated form (\$300 for every total rating point they demonstrate the classroom gained from one observation to another). These first assessments serve as the baseline for the second, and then each assessment thereafter will serve as the next baseline.

In order to receive seed funding a licensed early care and education center and in-home provider will do the following:

1. Enroll or re-enroll in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) when the provider renews its child care license. This allows the provider 9-10 months to meet the staff training requirements associated with the MCCQSS at levels above step 1.
2. Attend new center orientation to MCCQSS and begin planning for staff training as required by the desired step.

3. Program review including work history of employees with a business technical assistant. Before significant resources are awarded, a business review of the center must be complete and if money management issues are identified, a business practices plan implemented.
4. Enroll the program in the Adult Child Food Program. The Adult Child Food Program will ensure nutritious meals can be served by the provider. In addition, providers participating in the program will generate additional income for centers to use for basic expenses such as utilities and salaries for cook and secretary.
5. Participate in an environmental observation using the Early Childhood Environment Scales will be done in all classrooms to determine the need for educational and hygiene resources. The partial classroom observations will provide the center director and the Division of Early Childhood Care and Education staff a baseline from which to work in determining the materials and training required to have an opportunity to address environmental elements that could be a hindrance to achieving a higher quality rating score.
6. Training plans for staff will be developed to coincide with the delivery of materials and requires the program working with the technical assistants assigned to ensure staff compliance. The purchase and placement of educational materials without staff training on how to best use the materials will not yield an improvement in the quality of the learning environment or student outcomes.

The goal of this incentive is to remove the financial barriers providers face when considering whether it is worth it or not to attempt to increase their rating. It is the provider's responsibility for deciding to move up in the Quality Steps System.

REWARDS FOR CENTERS AND LICENSED IN- HOME PROVIDERS THAT HAVE INCREASED THEIR RATING

Division of Early Childhood Care and Education has had in place for four years a reward structure for center providers that successfully increase their star rating on the MCCQSS. This incentive is based on the number of subsidized children a provider serves and average subsidy amount across the state. The incentive reward ranges from 7 percent for a two star rating to 25

percent for those at a five star rating. The provider receives this incentive as a cash payment. This incentive will continue as is in the first year of the grant.

There are several structural concerns about the strength and consistency of the incentive that would require changes in policy. They include the following:

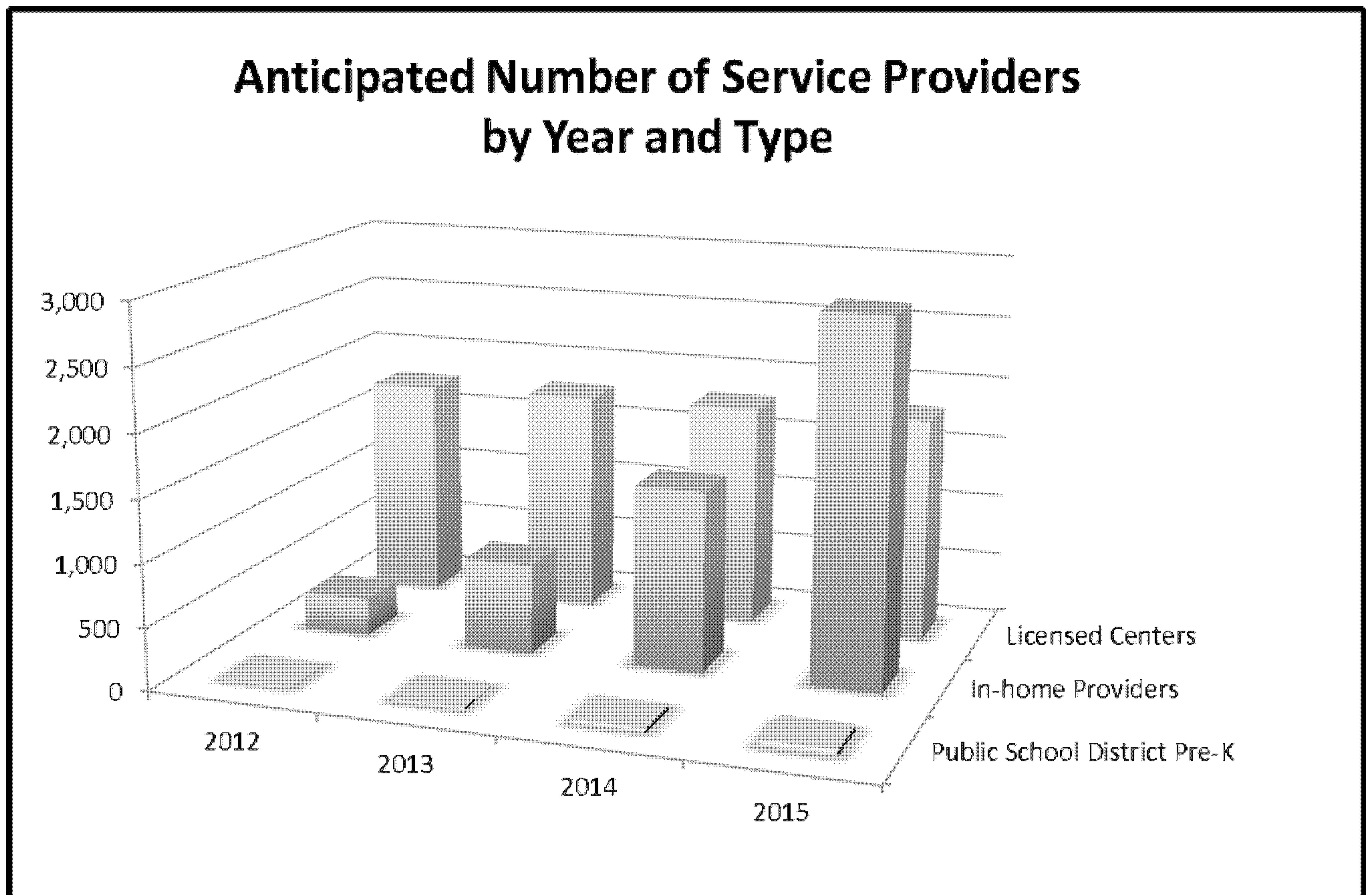
- The count of subsidy children can vary significantly from year to year.
- The average subsidy amount can be adjusted by factors independent of need.
- Both numbers are generated by the same system.
- No factor is tied to a level of quality associated with the MCCQSS.

There are several alternatives that would address these concerns. These will be reviewed by the Division of Early Childhood Care and Education in the first year of the grant and a revised incentive formula will be developed. After formal approval, the new formula will be used in years three of the grant and beyond.

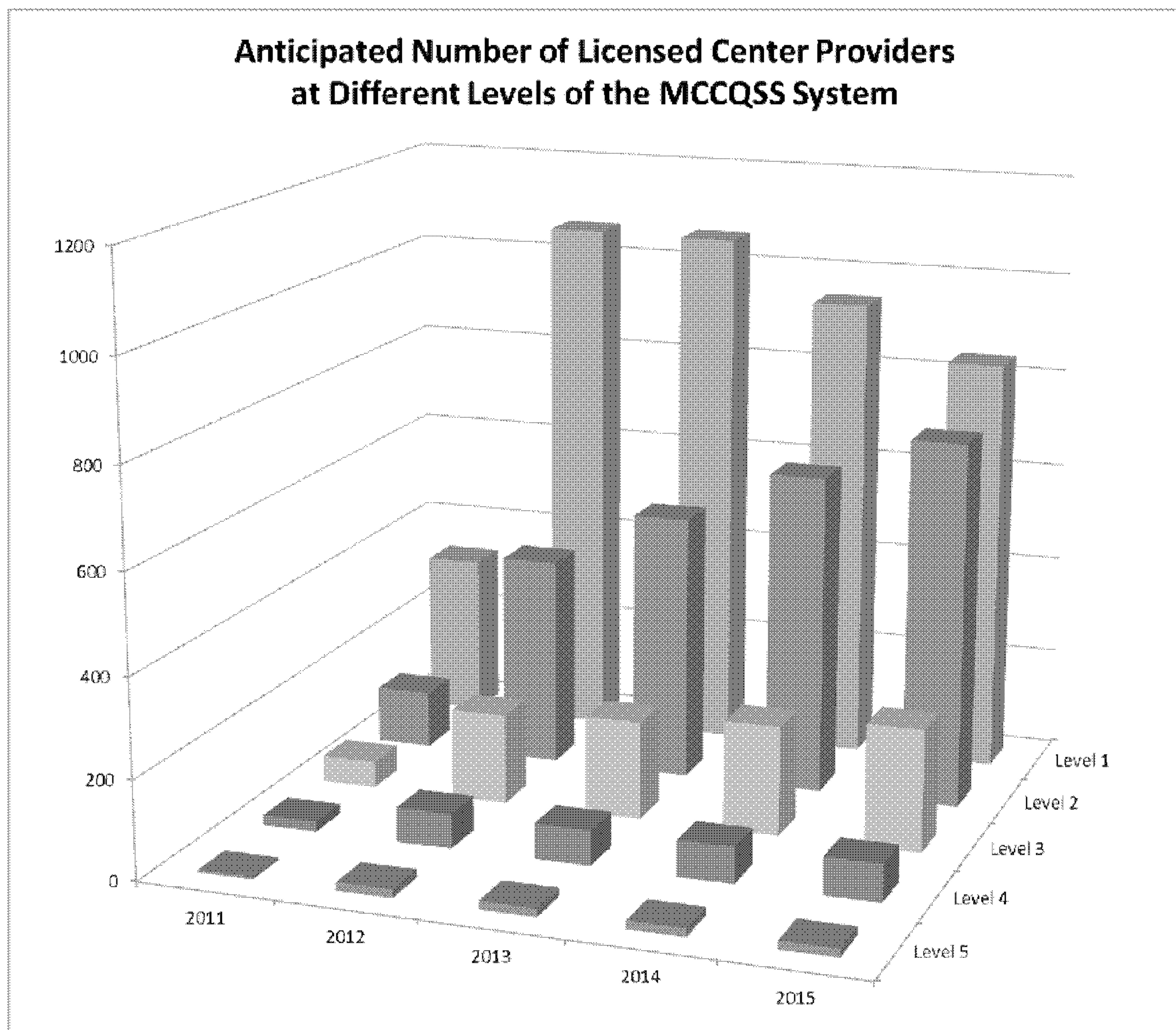
(B)(2)(C) SETTING AMBITIOUS YET ACHIEVABLE TARGETS FOR THE NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS THAT WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE TIERED QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM BY TYPE OF EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

To establish a baseline, the state estimates that child care providers in 2011 are distributed as follows: 1,740 centers; 2,900 in-home providers that serve children receiving subsidized care; and 56 local school districts that provide early childhood education services to 3 and 4 year old children. These numbers include 289 licensed Head Start Centers.

Over the course of the grant period, we anticipate the growth in each of these service provider categories to be modest, averaging 1 to 2 % growth. The figure below shows the projected change in the number of providers over the time period of the grant.



The figure below shows the projected number of licensed centers participating in the MCCQSS in 2011 through 2015 by the star level in the Quality Steps System. These projections are based on the average rate of movement in the pilot phase in 2009-10 and 2010-11. In addition, beginning in 2012, all licensed centers will be designated as star level 1 because they have successfully maintained their license. Between 100,000 and 115,000 children will be served by licensed centers each year. This covers approximately 45.5 percent of the zero to five population in Mississippi.



It is much more difficult to be as precise in projecting participation rates for in-home providers. In-home providers that are licensed and serve children that receive subsidized child care are the group that will be the target of recruitment into the MCCQSS for in-home providers. Current estimates are that approximately 2,900 of the 8,100 family child care providers across the state receive child care subsidy money. The state projects the following growth in the number of in-home providers that will participate through the Nurturing Homes Initiative in the MCCQSS.

Year 1 of the Grant. With current funding from MDHS and governor's office, Nurturing Homes Initiative will implement the FCC – QRIS and certification/regulation process with approximately 300 in-home providers. In addition, a needs assessment will be conducted to determine whether any of these 2,900 in-home provider providers receiving subsidy money are

‘relative care’ providers only. A separate designation for ‘relative care’ providers will be created in the registry.

Year 2 of the Grant. The state will have as its goal enrolling 25% of the estimated 2,900 family child care providers.

Year 3 of the Grant. The state will have as its goal enrolling 50% of the estimated 2,900 family child care providers.

Year 4 of the Grant. The state will have as its goal enrolling 100% of the estimated 2,900 family child care providers.

Assuming that the average number of children served by a “business oriented” in-home provider is seven, this would mean that approximately 20,300 additional children would be covered by the MCCQSS by 2015. Combining this figure with the number of children covered by license centers yields a figure of approximately 135,500 covered by the TQRIS. This figure represents approximately 60.1 percent of the birth to five population in Mississippi. These services are concentrated on low income families.

Family, friend and neighbor care is not regulated in Mississippi. MSCCR&R as well as several other organizations that support providers, however, regularly invite known Family Child Care providers to professional development sessions and do not charge a fee.

Performance Measures for (B)(2)(c): Increasing the number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Learning and Development Programs in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target - end of calendar year 2013		Target-end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
State-funded preschool <i>Specify:</i>											
Early Head Start and Head Start ²⁵	289	285	98	285	98	285	98	289	100	289	100
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (Child Care Centers, Head Start and Early HS)	9	9	100	9	100	9	100	9	100	9	100
Programs funded by IDEA, Part C	NA	NA									
Programs funded by IDEA, Part B, section 619	NA	NA									
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA	56	1	2	10	18	20	35	30	54	40	71
Programs receiving from CCDF funds	2,900	50	2	300	10	725	25	1,450	50	2,900	100
Other <i>Describe: Licensed Childcare Centers</i>	1,741	1,741	100	1,763	100	1,775	100	1,790	100	1,805	100
The definition of baseline is changing in 2011-12. All Licensed centers and in-home providers in good standing are being welcomed onto the lowest tier of the MCCQSS.											

²⁵ Including Migrant and Tribal Head Start located in the State.

(B)(3) RATING AND MONITORING EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

(15 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for rating and monitoring the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Using a valid and reliable tool for monitoring such programs, having trained monitors whose ratings have an acceptable level of inter-rater reliability, and monitoring and rating the Early Learning and Development Programs with appropriate frequency; and

(b) Providing quality rating and licensing information to parents with children enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs (e.g., displaying quality rating information at the program site) and making program quality rating data, information, and licensing history (including any health and safety violations) publicly available in formats that are easy to understand and use for decision making by families selecting Early Learning and Development Programs and families whose children are enrolled in such programs.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

MCCQSS's Step 1 is based on the licensing regulations as enforce by the Mississippi Department of Health. As part of the proposed high quality plan, the licensing division will be moved to the Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development. The move will bring all programs specific to early care and education of children 0-4 years of age into one Division in one agency. These steps are taken to increase the coordination of services so that a more efficient delivery system with result in more children with high needs have access to higher quality child care in centers and homes.

The National Association of Regulatory Agencies recently conducted a national review of child care licensing regulations and enforcement. The report for Mississippi in Section B Appendix will serve as a yardstick for assessing Mississippi's staffing needs. A review of the current licensing regulations in years 1 and 2 using information from the Head Start Program Performance Standards and *Caring for Our Children: National Health: Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs* developed by the Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association and the National Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education Programs will occur. The review will be conducted by DECCD staff, licensing monitors and early care and education providers. Once the plan is developed implementation will begin in year 3 with completion by year 4.

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) contracts with two organizations to rate and monitor early learning and development programs. For centers, MDHS contracts with the Early Childhood Institute at Mississippi State University to conduct its MCCQSS rating and monitoring services. For in-home providers, MDHS contracts with the Extension Service housed at Mississippi State University. The Technical Assistance Program, Nurturing Homes Initiatives, will continue to work with providers who need to be certified before accepting children who are at least partially supported by state subsidies (certificates). Under the new, expanded MCCQSS system, the In-home Division of MCCQSS becomes the organization that rates and monitors in-home providers interested in participating in the TQRIS system. The functions of these two organizations in this area are described below.

The Early Childhood Institute and the MCCQSS

The mission of **Early Childhood Institute (ECI)** is to develop and provide research-based practices and policy recommendations that promote high quality early childhood development and learning for all young children in Mississippi. ECI administers the MCCQSS system for child care centers on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Human Services. This means ECI conducts the QRIS rating assessments for the DHS. See description in Section B Appendix.

Under contract with the Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood Education and Development, the Early Childhood Institute (ECI) at Mississippi State University

administers the MCCQSS system for licensed programs. The rating process typically takes 6-9 months to complete. A summary of the current process licensed centers take in their preparation or their monitoring visit are listed below.

- (1) Recruitment notices mailed to all licensed early care and early childhood programs with information on regional information/sign-up meeting
- (2) Program director attends enrollment/information meeting and receives planning notebook, Earn Your Stars ! The Step by Step Workbook for Programs in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (see Section B Appendix).
- (3) Program enrolls and sets the rating step they are attempting to obtain; begins the process of addressing the criteria in the step
- (4) Program receives instructions to access a set of online forms to collect information for their rating. Forms include family partnerships questionnaires to be distributed to families, program and classroom information, training and education forms for each staff member, a self-assessment, and a program documentation checklist that identifies the information that will need to be collected to document a program's Family Partnerships activities. During this time, the program also collects formal training certificates and transcripts for each staff member.
- (5) During the observation window, a rating specialist conducts an Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R and Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R observation. The selection of the rooms is done on-site through a random selection. A 4-5 hour observation is done in each room by a trained to reliability MCCQSS member using the appropriate scale. In addition to the on-site observation, all staff records are reviewed and documentation gathered related to training hours, degrees and or current certification of staff, proof of family engagement practices and other documentation specific to the step level they are seeking. Verification of their licensing status is done to ensure the program is not on probation.
- (6) Reports are submitted to the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development.
- (7) A letter is sent by the DECCD to the director of the child care center informing them of the rating they received. Should the rating be lower or higher than the one the program attempted to

reach, the result will be reported and incentives awarded commiserate with the rating. (See Section B APPENDIX). Going forward, a short and condensed summary of the report will be available using the nSPARC data to parents, providers and others interested in the quality of early childhood care.

(8) If the center receives a 2 step or higher incentives are provided based on the number of children who receive subsidy certificates. The current amount of the incentive is 7% of the subsidy payment for step 2, 15% for step 3, 22 % of step 4 and 25% for step 5. A center at step 1 does not receive any monetary incentive.

(9) Every 6 months following a rating of 2 or higher, an unannounced TQRIS visit occurs to determine the continued level of quality is present. If it has not been maintained the rating is adjusted and the Division of ECDE is notified and the bonus payments adjusted accordingly. If a facility's unannounced visit proves to reveal an improved rating, the information is reported to the Division of ECDE and an adjustment made in the bonus payments.

(10) Programs re-enroll on an annual basis and may request a TQRIS monitoring to occur for review at a higher step than the one they previously hold.

Process for Maintaining Inter-rater Reliability Using the Environment Rating Scales

The importance of inter-rater reliability in the TQRIS process has been paramount in the development of the entire system. Mississippi is fortunate to have an extremely well-trained staff lead on TQRIS program integrity and monitoring. Her reliability on the scales has recognized by the authors and she has conducted training with them across the country. Lead staff members attend re-training with the authors or their staff at least every 18 months. This allows them to be familiar with any revisions in the use of the scales and to remain reliable with an individual more experienced. The diagram illustrates system through which evaluators stay reliable on the scale. Each evaluator must reestablish inter-rater reliability on every sixth scheduled evaluation. If an evaluator falls below the 85% level, they are removed from classroom evaluations until they return to the 85% of reliability.

Training of New Environment Evaluator Staff

TQRIS evaluators receive intensive, in-depth training on the ITERS-R and ECERS-R, using a combination of direct instruction and practice evaluations in the field. Following the completion of formal training, evaluators must establish inter-rater reliability at 85% with a supervisor on three concurrent evaluations before they can conduct independent evaluations.

Data Management

The environmental rating data management system used is through a contractual arrangement with Branagh Information Group, Inc. The reports generated through the use of their services as well as the timeliness of data entry on electronic tablets has streamlined the process of monitoring centers. An example of the data analysis that the program affords is found in Section B Appendix. The reports are helpful in determining the types of technical assistance needed to support programs in their “upward in the climb” to quality.

LIKELY CHANGES IN CRITERIA WITHIN YEARS 1 and 2: MILESTONES

Licensed Early Care and Education Centers:

- Show in the step progression the introduction and utilization of the Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) infants through four year olds and document their use through inclusion in lesson plans, assessment of children, staff evaluations and parent engagement. The increased training would also be reflected in the state-wide Child Care Resource and Referral Network (CCR&R) training content and menu.
- At Step 1 revision of child care licensing standards to reflect the addition of (at a minimum) staff training on the early learning standards.
- Revise Step 2 in MCCQSS to reflect additional documentation that ELGs are used in the development of weekly lesson plans for infants-four-year –olds and dissemination of ELG information to parents
- When the revision of ELGs occur utilizing the lens of Universal Design for Learning Guidelines (specific to children with special needs) changes that are reflected in teaching

strategies will be incorporated into existing curricula and in curricula developed in the future

- In utilizing the expertise of NAEYC in their audit of the MCCQSS and subsequent recommendations, specific review of all steps and accompanying training will occur in with the focus on cultural and linguistic diversity. Currently the population of ELL learners in the state is small as comparison to the population of infants -4 year olds. It is anticipated the percentage will change and more elements in these areas will become evident in all aspects of the ELGs and how children are engaged in classroom instruction.
- The young children of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians represent the largest group of ELL in the state. Many young children speak what is referred to as Choctish (a combined Choctaw and English) that presents problems in developing competency in one language since it is a hybrid native language. In the revision of the curriculum for infants-four-year olds representatives for the tribe will be involved in the modifications related to language and culture and parent engagement.

ELEMENTS OF CHANGE IN CRITERIA WITHIN YEARS 3 and 4: MILESTONES

- Develop crosswalk between Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) and the core standards in kindergarten for multiple domains as set forth by the Mississippi Department of Education with regard to curriculum alignment and assessments and develop training to reflect the changes in the curriculum and assessments.
- Revise the MCCQSS steps 3-5 to reflect more documentation of the use of ELGs in assessment and the use of data in the instructional strategies and content provided to children on an individual basis.

The In-Home Provider Rating and the MCCQSS

The In-Home Provider Division of MCCQSS will monitor the in-home setting as defined as two or more children not related to the provider who receives fees for the service. The new

definition will result in a change of the licensing code to extend registration to providers keeping two or more unrelated children for a fee.

In-home certification requires the following:

- Are at least 18 years of age;
- Are willing and able to complete the training required of in-home childcare providers
- Are willing to agree in writing to the requirements for in-home childcare providers
- Have auto insurance on file

No certificate will be issued to an individual as in-home child care providers or substitutes if:

- They or any of their household members have been arrested for or convicted of child abuse or neglect, a criminal act involving violence, or other acts which would make them unsuitable for caring for children.
- They or any of their household members have a history of domestic violence or mental or physical illness that would suggest they are not suitable for caring for children.
- If they or any of their household members have been the perpetrator in a substantiated case of child abuse or neglect.

The amount of space will be verified by field staff utilizing the Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scale-Revised (FCCERS-R) in each in-home setting so that each child can play, rest, and eat comfortably. If the provider limits the areas of the home that may be used by the children, ensure that there is at least 35 square feet of usable play space for each child in care. If the in-home setting uses the kitchen space as usable space for children, then there must be not only adequate supervision of the children.

During the hours in which the provider is offering care to children outside her own family, her own children under age 8 are considered in-home childcare children and the requirements for providing care must be followed with his/her own children. This includes the requirements related to child guidance and discipline, food service and nutrition, television viewing, etc. The provider's children are considered part of the in-home childcare regardless of whether the other

parent is present with the exception that the other parent may provide the direct supervision of their own child out of sight of the provider.

Individuals must make satisfactory progress toward completing the Child Development Associate credential (CDA). Satisfactory progress is defined as completing at least one module per month or no fewer than 15 modules in 18 months. The months when a provider is in inactive status should not be counted in determining whether the provider is making satisfactory progress. When a provider is more than 3 months behind in completing a module, the provider will be placed on probation. The field staff will determine the level of support that the provider needs in order to complete the credential. Field staff must review the training status of all providers at least quarterly and determine which providers must have their certificate placed on probation or which providers need additional assistance.

Field staff member will use the safety items on the current in-home childcare inspection checklist to conduct this inspection. A fire safety inspection of the home will be conducted by the fire department at the time of initial, annual certification, or re-certification.

An interview will be conducted of the applicant in the home with all family members present. Requirements for in-home childcare and the impact on the family will be discussed.

Monitoring after Certification

A pre-assessment will be conducted at the application stage. After the six month probationary period, a mid-point assessment will be conducted and a FCCERS-R score of 3.0 must be met and on file. If the in-home provider does not meet the 3.0 score, then additional technical assistance through the MSCCR&R Network will be offered to increase the score to a 3.0 minimal score. A post assessment will be performed at the end of 12 months. In-home settings that do not meet this minimal score at the end of this period will become inactive and not receive the NHI certification.

After approving providers are certified, they will be visited after the six month probationary period, and annually thereafter. Field staff will perform an informal assessment once a year after

certification. An annual fire safety inspection will be conducted annually. The certificate will be revoked if provider evades field staff monitoring visits three times.

In-home Inspection Checklist will be completed as part of each inspection. Areas where the provider is out of compliance will be identified. Follow-up on any deficiencies will be conducted by repeated home visits until deficiencies are corrected.

The provider will be given a copy of the completed checklist within 48 hours of completing the inspection; the deficiencies will be listed to be corrected and the deadline for correcting each. Providers will be required to post a copy of their most recent inspection report or give a copy to parents using their services.

The provider will be sent a letter from the DECCD notifying the provider of repeat deficiencies and the need to correct these deficiencies. If the same deficiencies are identified in a third inspection, the individual's compliance will be reviewed by the field staff and a recommendation made for retraining, probation, or revocation.

If life-threatening deficiencies are identified in these visits or in any inspections, the provider will correct immediately or the certificate will be revoked.

Suspensions and Revocations

The certification of in-home childcare can be placed on probationary status or revoked to protect the health, safety, and well-being of children.

A probationary certificate of in-home childcare providers will be issued to those who:

- Are under investigation for child abuse or neglect
- Have a household member who is under investigation for child abuse or neglect
- Are under investigation for a criminal act or have a household member under investigation for a criminal act
- Have life-threatening deficiencies in their homes

- Do not correct deficiencies identified in monthly inspections
- Have a long-term communicable illness that could affect the health of children

The certificate will be revoked of in-home childcare providers who:

- Have committed substantiated child abuse or neglect
- Have a household member who has committed substantiated child abuse or neglect
- Have been found to have a history of substantiated child abuse or neglect
- Exhibit a pattern of using inappropriate guidance techniques
- Have committed a criminal act or have a household member who has committed a criminal act that impacts on their ability to provide in-home child care
- Do not correct life-threatening deficiencies

A file on each in-home child care provider will be maintained. Included in the file is a copy of:

- Certificate Application
- Home Approval Record and backup documentation
- Copy of Certificate
- Summary of initial home interview
- Family Child Care Environmental Rating Scales-Revised Pre-Assessment scores
- Environmental Assessment Summary
- Plan of Action
- Technical Assistance forms
- Inspections completed in the last 24 months
- List of training completed in last 24 months

- Names of approved substitutes
- Use of substitutes
- Names and ages of household members
- Names of children in care each month for the last three years
- Correspondence to and from provider
- Other relevant materials

The state anticipates the following the following rollout for the in-home QRIS:

- **Year 1 of the Grant.** With current funding from MDHS and governor's office, implementation of the quality steps system for in-home providers including the certification/regulation process for 300 in-home providers. In addition, a needs assessment will be conducted to determine how many of the 2,900 FCC providers receiving subsidy money are only 'relative care' providers.
- **Year 2 of the Grant.** The state will have as its goal enrolling 25% of the estimated 2,900 family child care providers.
- **Year 3 of the Grant.** The state will have as its goal enrolling 50% of the estimated 2,900 family child care providers.
- **Year 4 of the Grant.** The state will have as its goal enrolling 100% of the estimated 2,900 family child care providers.

After the initial enrollment year, each family child care home will receive a yearly monitoring visit. During the monitoring visit the certification/regulation checklist will be conducted and every other year a FCCERS assessment will be conducted.

In 2010, the in-home QRIS worked with 70 in-home providers to pilot an effort to help these providers participate in the MCCQSS steps program. The effort to recruit additional in-home providers to join the Quality Steps system will continue under each year of the grant. We anticipate adding up to two hundred new in-home providers to the system each year, as well as monitoring those who have already joined the system.

Quality Rating System (QRS) in School District-based Pre-K

A pilot program to expand the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (QRS) into school-based pre-K classrooms was developed in the spring of 2010. A group of elementary school professionals, representing 5 school districts, developed a draft pre-K version of the QRS criteria, focusing primarily on changes to professional development requirements. Eight classrooms were selected for evaluation from the 5 school districts represented on the development committee. ECERS evaluations were completed in the fall of 2009 and spring of 2010. The average growth in the ECERS scores after one year was .61.

Five Pre-K classrooms in Monroe County public schools will begin the QRIS evaluation process in January 2012. Each classroom will receive an ECERS evaluation and the complete monitoring protocol. Each classroom will also participate in the “Coaching for CLASS Improvements” project. This project is a recommended addition to the QRIS protocol for pre-K classrooms. A pre-assessment will be conducted for each classroom and each teacher will then receive 40 hours of one-on-one coaching to improve specific teaching practices, as identified on the pre-assessment. Each teacher will receive a post-assessment. The state anticipates that the school-based Pre-K QRIS will be ready to fully integrate into the MCCQSS in 2014.

Data Sharing and transparency

As part of the increased effort to use data to drive quality improvement, reports and report cards will be designed for those participating at all levels of the system, from parent to providers to local assistance organization to system managers. These reports and report cards are described in more detail in Section E2.

(B)(4) PROMOTING ACCESS TO HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN WITH HIGH NEEDS

(20 points)

The extent to which the State and its Participating State Agencies have developed and implemented, or have a High-Quality Plan to develop and implement, a system for improving the quality of the Early Learning and Development Programs participating in the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System by--

(a) Developing and implementing policies and practices that provide support and incentives for Early Learning and Development Programs to continuously improve (e.g., through training, technical assistance, financial rewards or incentives, higher subsidy reimbursement rates, compensation);

(b) Providing supports to help working families who have Children with High Needs access high-quality Early Learning and Development Programs that meet those needs (e.g., providing full-day, full-year programs; transportation; meals; family support services); and

(c) Setting ambitious yet achievable targets for increasing--

(1) The number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System; and

(2) The number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, the State must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measures under (B)(4)(c)(1) and (B)(4)(c)(2).

As described in section (B) (2) above, the state proposes to create the following incentive structure by changing policy and practice to encourage parent and provider participation in the QRIS system. The incentives are presented in the Table below. The first two incentives apply to providers while the third focuses on families and their long term plans. In section (B) (2), the provider incentives were discussed. Here, we will discuss the parent incentive strategy.

Proposed Investment Strategies to Increase Participation in Zero to Five Quality			
Investment Strategy	Provider Seed Funds (Steppin' Up)	Provider Incentives for Increased in Quality	Parent Incentives for: Earned Hope Scholarships
Objective	Increase Provider Capacity and Interest in Participating in MCCQSS	Increase Provider Interest in higher Star Levels	Send Child(ren) to Higher Quality Preschools and to Focus on Opportunities Beyond High School
Year			
2012	Up to \$350 per child in a center, \$150 per child in a home, available through an application process,	Existing incentive (7% through 25% applied to the DHS certificate amount) for moving up the 2 through 5 TQRIS levels	Matching Postsecondary Savings Plan (for every dollar saved, matched by \$1.00)
2013	A task force will be set up in 2012 to review these levels and adjust the Investment Strategy levels and structure for 2014 and beyond. The mechanisms and data collection and verification structures will be put in place and tested during 2013.		
2014	Revised System is put in place in 2014.		
2015	Sustainability Plan implemented		

The state proposes the following incentive to encourage low income parents to enroll in centers and in-home providers participating in the QRIS system. **College Savings Accounts (CSAs)** are a promising way to expand opportunities for low-income children and their families to accumulate savings and increase college-going aspirations. In their ideal form, CSAs are:

- Established for children as early in life as possible.
- Seeded with an initial deposit and built by deposits from family, friends and children themselves as well as savings matches and other incentives. Family contributions will maximize the potential of the accounts.

- Boosted by savings matches and/or other incentives as available, along with age-appropriate financial education.
- Used for an asset-building purchase, such as higher education or certifications, at age 18.

CSAs help children and youth create a financial nest egg, increase economic opportunity, and transform their aspirations for their own futures, including plans for college. Research shows that savings are a key component for increasing economic mobility and life expectations:

- **Savings increases future expectations and college-going aspirations.** People who own assets – such as a savings account for college – are more likely to have a more positive outlook and higher expectations for their futures and those of their children.²⁶ In fact, students with college savings are nearly twice as likely to have higher expectations for attending college as students with no college savings.²⁷
- **Savings and assets contribute to increased academic achievement.** Several studies have shown that regardless of a family’s income level, the children of parents who own assets are more likely to have higher academic achievement and complete more years of education.²⁸ One study shows that children in families with as little as \$3,000 in savings had greater odds of graduating from high school than children in families without savings.²⁹
- **College savings accounts and assets are strong predictors of college success.** Among youth who expect to attend college, youth with a savings account in their names are about

26 Zhan, M., et al. (2007). *Perceived effects of participation in an asset-building program on construction of future possibilities.*

27 Mortenson, T. (December 2008). The Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in higher Education.

28 Campbell, M., et al. (2004). What does increased economic inequality imply about the future level and dispersion of human capital?; Orr, A. J. (2003). Black-White differences in achievement: The Importance of Wealth; and Williams, T. R. (2004). The impacts of household wealth on child development.

29 Zhan, M., & Sherraden, M. (2003). Assets, expectations, and children’s educational achievement in female-headed households.

seven times more likely to actually attend.³⁰ In general, savings are a consistent predictor of college graduation, regardless of income.³¹

Mississippi Low Income Children Savings Accounts

- Accounts will be offered to households with pre-school age children who qualify by income and enroll their child in an accredited high quality child care center.
- Accounts will be administered by the Mississippi Treasurer's office through the Mississippi Affordable College Savings (MACS) Program.
- Accounts will be seeded with an initial deposit and will be matched at an agreed upon ratio (1:1 or higher) up to a pre-determined annual cap, depending on available funding. These will be deposit-only accounts restricted for higher educational purposes only.
- Access to funds in the account is only possible at age 18 or upon enrollment in a 2- or 4-year college or another eligible higher education or certification program. Participants can withdraw their own savings at any time, but would lose access to the matching funds by doing so.

Specifically, the proposed program would be built around the following types of decisions that would be made as part of the initial review of the MCCQSS undertaken by staff and selected experts in the first year of the grant.

- Eligibility for an account would be based on income, either 100% or 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.
- Each eligible family that enrolls a child in a qualifying child care center (details to be determined) would receive a \$100 initial deposit in a Mississippi 529 account.

30 Elliot III, W. and S. Beverly (January 2010). The Role of Savings and Wealth in Reducing "Wilt" between Expectations and College Attendance.

31 Zhan, M. and M. Sherraden (2009). Assets and Liabilities, Educational Expectations, and Children's College Degree Attainment.

- In addition, savings in the account would be matched at least 1:1 up to \$250/year for the duration of the program for students who enroll with child care providers rated 2 stars or higher..

In a large scale demonstration of children’s savings accounts (the “SEED Initiative”³²) a total of 1,171 savers (half of whom with incomes below 100% of poverty; 84% with incomes below 200% of poverty) saved a total of almost \$1.8 million over a 3-4 year period. This total includes initial deposit, participant contributions and savings matches. The average accumulation per participant after 3+ years (including initial deposit, contributions and match) was \$1,518, with an average contribution of \$34/quarter. Of the 1,171 savers, a total of 57% made contributions to their account during an average length of participation of 11 quarters (almost 3 years). For those that made positive contributions, their average contribution was \$43 per quarter.

Ambitious yet Achievable Targets

Performance Measure for (B)(4)(c)(1): Increasing the number of Early Learning and Development Programs in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.					
	Baseline (Today)	Target- end of calendar year 2012	Target- end of calendar year 2013	Target- end of calendar year 2014	Target- end of calendar year 2015
Total number of programs covered by the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System	1,792	2,070	2,520	3,275	4,761
Number of programs in Step 1	780	2,070	2,520	3,275	4,761
Number of programs in Step 2	116	424	539	648	740
Number of programs in Step 3	53	182	199	221	247

³² Lisa Reyes Mason, Yunju Nam, Margaret Clancy, Vernon Loke, Yougmi Kim, *SEED Account Monitoring Research: Participants, Savings, and Accumulation*. Center for Social Development, Washington University, St. Louis. March 2009.

Number of programs in Step 4	20	40	65	80	100
Number of programs in Step 5 (Highest)	5	10	15	25	35
<i>Include a row for each tier in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System, customize the labeling of the tiers, and indicate the highest and lowest tier.</i>					

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target - end of calendar year 2013		Target-end of calendar year 2014		Target-end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Early Head Start and Head Start 1 <i>(funded enrollment)</i>	29,531	2067	7	5906	20	7383	25	8859	30	10336	35
Programs and services funded by IDEA Part C and Part B, section 619 <i>(annual December 1 count): MDE, 2010-11</i>	20,382	1427	7	4076	20	5096	25	6115	30	7134	35

Performance Measures for (B)(4)(c)(2): Increasing the number and percentage of Children with High Needs who are enrolled in Early Learning and Development Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System.											
Type of Early Learning and Development Program in the State	Number of Children with High Needs served by programs in the State	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percent of Children with High Needs Participating in Programs that are in the top tiers of the Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System</i>									
		Baseline (Today)		Target-end of calendar year 2012		Target - end of calendar year 2013		Target-end of calendar year 2014		Target-end of calendar year 2015	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Programs funded under Title I of ESEA <i>(total number of children who receive Title I services annually, as reported in the Consolidated State Performance Report): MDE, Federal Programs Division</i>	2,740	192	7	548	20	685	25	822	30	959	35
Programs receiving CCDF funds ** <i>(average monthly served)²</i>	57,271	4009	7	11454	20	14318	25	17181	30	20045	35
Other <i>Describe: Even Start</i>	182	13	7	36	20	46	25	55	30	64	35

Mississippi has designated Steps 3, 4 and 5 as the top tier of the MCCQSS.

- Including children participating in Migrant Head Start Programs and Tribal Head Start Programs.*
- Source: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/data/ccdf_data/08acf800/list.htm.*

(B)(5) VALIDATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STATE TIERED QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM.

(15 points)

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to design and implement evaluations--working with an independent evaluator and, when warranted, as part of a cross-State evaluation consortium--of the relationship between the ratings generated by the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System and the learning outcomes of children served by the State's Early Learning and Development Programs by--

(a) Validating, using research-based measures, as described in the State Plan (which also describes the criteria that the State used or will use to determine those measures), whether the tiers in the State's Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System accurately reflect differential levels of program quality; and

(b) Assessing, using appropriate research designs and measures of progress (as identified in the State Plan), the extent to which changes in quality ratings are related to progress in children's learning, development, and school readiness.

In the text box below, the State shall write its full response to this selection criterion. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(B)(5)(a) & (b) VALIDATING THE SYSTEM AND ASSESSING THE CHILD OUTCOMES

In order to validate its high-quality tiered rating and improvement system, Mississippi will need to engage in a number of planning steps that include a sophisticated program evaluation. MS-SECAC will create an evaluation committee who will review information collected by an outside evaluator. This process will help the state to refine its rating system so that is fair, accurate, and facilitates improvement among early education providers, so that they are insuring that Mississippi's children are prepared for school. The validation of the MCCQSS is a two-step process. In the first phase of the process, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in partnership with the staff in the Division of Early Childhood

Care and Development will conduct a structural audit of the MCCQSS as well as a process evaluation of the current delivery system.

The second phase is more focused on the results for providers, parents and children. Mississippi will use its standard procurement procedures to identify an outside evaluator of the Early Learning Development System. The evaluator will identify the tools and methods for a robust evaluation. The list below summarizes the program evaluation questions of the MCCQSS.

The second step in the validation process involving tracking child outcomes related to the child's participation in a MCCQSS rated system. The process for implementing a system which reviews child outcomes upon the child's entry into kindergarten relative to the child's previous early childhood experiences. The phase-in of the validation process will occur in year 3 and 4 of the grant year. The key elements include the following:

1. Establish a unique identifier for every child and early care and education learning program in the state
2. Provide training to the early care and education providers on how to enter data into the nSPARC system for data collection and analysis
3. Adoption of the state-wide kindergarten assessment that is administered by school districts across the state
4. Implement the attendance system that will record a child's date and time of their attendance in the program through a biometrics scanner (phase-in beginning with licensed programs).
5. Implementation of the policy change in 2012 regarding the move from a 6 month enrollment requirement for children to receive a CCDF subsidy child care certificate to annual enrollment and for a 5 year certificate if annual enrollment verifies they are income eligible.
6. Develop a report format with nSPARC to provide clear and concise information to all stakeholders

The steps listed reflect current issues in the stability of access for high need children in the early care and education system. The policy changes associated with the increased length of time for which a certificate for subsidy is valid will greatly improve the ability of a child to remain in one learning environment for at least a year. Also the use of biometrics to assist in taking attendance will provide a clear picture as to attendance patterns and the impact those have on child outcomes. When the state adopts a statewide kindergarten assessment that meets standards set by the National Research Council a universal baseline will be in place upon which to build a longitudinal evaluation of the impact of the MCCQSS on child outcomes.

Table (B)(5)-1: Early Learning Development System Evaluation Questions	
A. Validate Tiered Quality Improvement Rating System: Does the MCCQSS reflect differential levels of program quality at each class of provider?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do the current Environmental Scales ratings (ITERS & ECERS) differ by provider? b. How does parental engagement vary by provider? By rating? c. How do the workforce requirements relate to the rating? How should these requirements change? d. How do the nutritional requirements align across sites? What can be improved? e. To what extent are the MCCQSS levels aligned with the Early Learning guidelines? How can the alignment be improved?
B. Outreach: How do parents in Mississippi get information about early childhood education, about certificates and the focus on High Quality programs. What do they think about the information they receive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are parents informed about the existence of the certificates and about how to apply them? 2. Does the level of information vary by income level or language spoken by the parents? 3. From which sources do parents get their information about DPP - the internet, community meetings, public service announcements, advertising or other forums? 4. Do they get the information they need and want? 5. Does this information vary by income level or language spoken at home?
C. Ease of interaction: How do Parents and Providers describe their interactions with programs in the State Plan, its partners, and providers? Concerning Certificates? Concerning Quality improvement?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does the system make it easy for families and providers to participate? 2. Does the system deliver information and payments in a timely manner? 3. Does the system have an acceptable error rate in terms of family applications, student attendance and aid distribution? 4. Does the system work effectively across family income levels and/or the language spoken by the parent?
D. Certificates: Do certificates encourage parents from all income levels to send their children to	

high quality preschools? Does the incentive structure encourage preschool providers in Mississippi to increase the number and quality of preschool slots available?

- 1. Does the availability and size of the preschool tuition credits encourage families of four-year-olds to enroll in the program?**
- 2. Do families opt for higher quality programs because of the tuition credits? If not, why not?**
- 3. Is family behavior in these areas influenced by income level or the language spoken by the parent?**
- 4. Did the number of rated and/or accredited programs change as a result of the QI program?**
- 5. Did the quality of participating programs increase as a result of the system change?**

E. Child Development: What is the impact of the Early Learning Development System on student development.

- 1. Did children make progress in their development while in participating Mississippi centers (i.e., language, literacy, mathematics, social-emotional development, etc.)?**
- 2. To what extent and in what areas are students ready for Kindergarten?**
- 3. Do children from different income levels and with different primary languages make similar progress in their development while in early childhood environments?**
- 4. Do children participating in the system compare favorably to their demographic counterparts who did not participate in the system on subsequent assessments administered by Mississippi?**
- 5. Is attendance at higher-quality preschool programs associated with greater kindergarten readiness?**

C. PROMOTING EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

(C)(1) DEVELOPING AND USING STATEWIDE, HIGH-QUALITY EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to put in place high-quality Early Learning and Development Standards that are used statewide by Early Learning and Development Programs and that--

- (a) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate across each age group of infants, toddlers, and preschoolers, and that they cover all Essential Domains of School Readiness;
- (b) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are aligned with the State's K-3 academic standards in, at a minimum, early literacy and mathematics;
- (c) Includes evidence that the Early Learning and Development Standards are incorporated in Program Standards, curricula and activities, Comprehensive Assessment Systems, the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, and professional development activities; and

(d) The State has supports in place to promote understanding of and commitment to the Early Learning and Development Standards across Early Learning and Development Programs.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Section C outlines much of how the state of Mississippi will implement the Family and Children Supports projects for which there is an overview in Section A. Below is the overview of the High Quality Plan. The remainder of this section provides more detail.

HIGH-QUALITY PLAN – CENTER SUPPORTS

Section C outlines much of how the state of Mississippi will implement the Family and Children Supports projects for which there is an overview in Section A. Below is the overview of the High Quality Plan. The remainder of this section provides more detail.

Key Goal(s)	Incentivize existing and enable new and High-Quality programs throughout the state of Mississippi.
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Key activities and rationale ³³	<p>Use grant resources to ensure that the MCCQSS meets the challenges of moving from a voluntary to a required participation system, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying support needed by providers who move from one level to another; • identifying appropriate incentives to encourage providers to increase quality; and • determining how finances work in the system. <p>Maintain and expand the state's existing quality rating process, and to expand the quality system to incorporate family child care settings.</p>
Realistic timeline + key milestones	<p>(B)(1) Review components of the MCCQSS; make additions in a strategic manner that will benefit High-Need children (Ongoing)</p> <p>(B)(2) Require all early learning centers to participate in MCCQSS (2012) Work closely with federal and state leaders, as well as selected providers, to maintain the subsidy reimbursement by providing incentives to low-rated centers already in the MCCQSS (Ongoing) Provide rewards for centers and licensed in-home providers that have increased their ratings and serve High-Need children. (Ongoing)</p> <p>(B)(3) Implement the FCC-QRIS and certification /regulation process with approximately 300 family child care providers (2012) Enroll 25% of the estimated 2,900 family child care providers (2013); 50% by 2014; and 80% by 2015.</p> <p>(B)(5) Hire outside evaluators to conduct a validation study of the MCCQSS (2012)</p>
Party(ies) responsible	<p>Incentives and rewards policies will be instituted by the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development. The Early Childhood Institute will conduct QRIS ratings assessments on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Human Services. The Nurturing Homes Initiative will monitor family child care providers and enroll them in the MCCQSS program. The regulatory function of the NHI will be staffed independently from the provider support functions.</p>
Project Budgets	\$21,700,000
Supporting evidence	<p>Table (B)(1)-1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A copy of the tiered Program Standards; ○ Documentation that the Program Standards address all areas outlined in the definition of Program Standards, demonstrate high expectations of program excellence commensurate with nationally recognized standards, and are linked to the States licensing system; ○ Documentation of how the tiers meaningfully differentiate levels of quality.

33 And if initially implemented, where and how the activities will be scaled up over time to eventually achieve statewide implementation

Performance measures	Increased % & # of programs entering TQRIS and increasing in quality ratings, at each class of the rating system, in each county of the state. % & # of subsidies provided to High-Need Families.
How will State address different types of Early Learning and Development Programs	Mississippi has developed TQRIS standards for four types of providers: Center-based, after school, Pre-K and Home-based providers. Over the grant period the state will work to understand how children who are cared for by kith and kin can experience a High-Quality setting, identify policies and implement those policies.
How will State meet needs of Children with High Needs and the special populations	The state will increase the number of providers and slots for High-Needs children over the course of the grant. The MCCQSS will enable the state to understand how many providers and slots are available for children. It will also work with providers to insure they have access to high-quality materials and support for improvement.

C(1)(A): EVIDENCE THAT THE EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS ARE DEVELOPMENTALLY, CULTURALLY, AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE ACROSS EACH AGE GROUP OF INFANTS, TODDLERS, AND PRESCHOOLERS, AND STANDARDS COVER ALL ESSENTIAL DOMAINS OF SCHOOL READINESS

As early as 2003, Mississippi was able to count itself among the few states that had developed early learning standards and had those standards officially adopted. Today, the Early Learning Guidelines for 3 and 4 year of age are housed at the Mississippi Department of Education. The guidelines cover competencies and objectives, suggested teaching strategies and developmental checklists in the following areas.

Language, Vocabulary, and Early Literacy Development

Mathematical Concepts Development

Scientific Investigation

Social/Emotional Development

Physical Development

Similarly, the Early Learning Guidelines for infants and toddlers are officially managed out of the Mississippi Head Start Collaboration Office located in the Office of the Governor. The guidelines cover use, awareness, exploration and experimentation in the following areas.

Language, Vocabulary, and Literacy Development

Mathematical Development

Scientific Development

Social/Emotional Development

Physical Development

Self-help Development

These Early Learning Guidelines serve as the basis for all program and child outcome expectations in Mississippi. These Guidelines apply whether the child receives care from a licensed center, an in-home provider or K-12 schools. They have driven the development of program standards which provide criteria for important program features such as adult to child ratios, group sizes, teaching strategies and curricula. Although experts in the field may differ as to the specifics they recommend for program features, there is widespread agreement on the need for program standards and the general elements on which they are based.

Process for Developing Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs):

The development of all ELGs followed a standard process. First, a committee of stakeholders representing early care and education teachers and directors were selected by the sponsoring agency based on their experience and proven classroom success to work with early childhood teacher educators, expertise in children with special needs and ability to represent coordinating agencies. After the writing group completed their tasks, the draft was sent for review to an advisory panel of readers who have expertise in the content, age of child, and/or

curriculum design. After the reviewers completed their work, comments were collected by the sponsoring agency and adjustments were made.

Developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate ELGs

While demographics provide information indicating that the majority of ethnic and racial diversity is between African American and Caucasian children. According to 2009 Kid's Count data, 50% of children 18 and younger in Mississippi are white, 43% are Black, and 4% are Latino. The Hispanic child population is 3.5%, which has more than doubled in Mississippi according to a 2010 report by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The steps described below were or will be conducted through the lens of diversity as reflected in the communities and neighborhoods where children who attend the programs live.

1. With the latest review of the ELGs for three, four and kindergarten age children, the learning standards guidelines were compared to the Head Start the outcomes listed for Head Start students in the *Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework: Promoting Positive Outcomes in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children 3–5 Years Old* (See Section C Appendix). Given over 26,000 three and four-year old children attend Head Start state-wide, the reference was used to review not only the ELGs but accompanying curriculum as well. In addition to the review of the performance framework, there are numerous items listed in the ECERS and ITERS related to cultural diversity as evidenced by the presence of classroom materials that licensed programs are expected to meet in the MCCQSS.
2. During year 1 and 2 of the grant a review and revision of the curriculum accompanying the ELGs for three and four year-olds expected to be approved by the Mississippi Board of Education will be done to align the curricula with the new ELGs for that age group. Using the Head Start checklist for cultural diversity as a guide the curriculum will be reviewed and adjusted when necessary. Training for teachers on the revised curriculum will include how teaching strategies and lesson planning builds on the culture and diversity in the classroom. Additional checklists develop by the Cultural & Linguistically Appropriate Services Division of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Early

Childhood and Parenting Collaboration (See Section C Appendix) will be used by curriculum reviewers to determine if elements specific to cultural and linguistic diversity are included. Any indicators not met will be addressed through curriculum revisions and teacher and director training.

3. Given the reports recently released by Annie E. Casey Foundation and others on the large number of African American and Latino boys failing to meet proficiency standards on national reading assessments at third grade and the large number of African American children in the state, The Mississippi Center for Education Innovation and MSCCR&R Network in partnership with the state's Historically Black Colleges and Universities will convene in years 2 and 3 of the grant, a series of symposia addressing this issue. Research-based information and strategies for using the ELGs will be presented to teacher educators as well as early childhood teachers in pre-k classrooms and early care and education learning environments.
4. The Mississippi Center for Education Innovation, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians the MSCCR&R Network will convene in years 2 and 3 of the grant, a series of symposia addressing the issue of native American achievement by third grade. Research-based information and strategies for using the ELGs will be presented to teacher educators as well as early childhood teachers in pre-k classrooms and early care and education learning environments.

C(1)(B): INCLUDES EVIDENCE THAT THE EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS ARE ALIGNED WITH THE STATE'S K-3 ACADEMIC STANDARDS IN, AT A MINIMUM, EARLY LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS

The Mississippi Prekindergarten Common Core standards in English Language Arts & Literacy and Mathematics are aligned with the Kindergarten Common Core standards, and include specific cognitive outcomes for young children. However, the early childhood classroom does not limit its focus on cognitive development, but provides children with learning opportunities that address a wide variety of developmental domains. Education and brain research conducted

over the last few decades supports a play-based classroom environment for 4-year-olds, providing children with a classroom that supports the following.

- Young children learn best when they are actively engaged with relevant, meaningful materials. Early care and education teachers facilitate learning by carefully selecting materials and activities that give children opportunities to explore, question, reason, and experiment in order to develop an understanding of the world around them.
- Young children learn best through social interaction. They need the opportunity to interact with adults and peers in a respectful environment where their feelings and ideas are valued.
- Young children learn best when their emotional needs are met.
- Young children learn best when their physical development is supported. In order to develop fine motor skills, they need daily experimentation with a variety of fine motor materials throughout the learning environment.

How the Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) in literacy and math align with Mississippi's K-3 standards for 3 and 4 year old children have been reviewed in detail in Mississippi. The results of the analysis, including recommendations for adoption are being considered by the Mississippi State Board of Education but have not yet been adopted. The crosswalk analyses under consideration for 3 and 4 year old children for both English language Arts and Math are provided in Section C Appendix. It is anticipated that the State Board of Education will certify these standards as aligned by December, 2011.

After these revisions are adopted, the content of the other domains in the ELGs (Scientific Investigation, Social/Emotional Development and Physical Development) will be aligned to the kindergarten ELGs following the same process as was used in the development of the three and four guidelines. This is projected to be completed by December 2013.

A related process will need to be repeated in the future for the common core standards in which Mississippi is a participant.

C(1)(C): INCLUDES EVIDENCE THAT THE EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS ARE INCORPORATED IN PROGRAM STANDARDS, CURRICULA AND ACTIVITIES,

Statewide Expansion of the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS)

The **Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS)** is a rating system offered through the Mississippi Division of Early Childhood Care and Development. It is a system which was designed to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in a licensed child care setting in five areas: 1) Administrative Policy; 2) Professional Development/Qualifications of Staff; 3) Child Learning Environments; 4) Parent/Family Involvement; and, 5) Program Evaluation. Depending upon compliance with established standards/criteria, child care centers may earn a rating ranging from 1-Star to 5-Star (5-Star being the highest rating). The progression of standards established for this program by OCY requires participating child care centers to meeting an ever increasing higher level of standards in order to move up the levels. Certificates are awarded to each child care program as they progress to each new level.

The MCCQSS system includes use of the Mississippi Department of Education's *Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines for Three Year Old Children* and *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Four Year Old Children*. These guidelines include the curricula categories of Language/Vocabulary/Literacy Development, Mathematical Concepts Development, Scientific Investigation, Social/Emotional Development and Physical Development which promote learning in areas such as health, safety, nutrition, physical activity, social/emotional development, etc. In addition, the MCCQSS system incorporates a progressive, incremental strategy to address parental involvement and communication, including curricula topics being currently addressed. Both curricula promote an inclusive learning environment and a special focus on meeting the needs of diverse learners. Implementation of the curricula will promote healthy eating habits, improved nutrition, and expand physical activity in children.

Inclusion of the Infant/Toddler Guidelines and Accompanying Curriculum in the MCCQSS

The recent development of the ELGs for infants and toddlers and accompanying curriculum is scheduled to be included in the review and revision of the MCCQSS criteria in year 1 of the grant. Training on the ELGs and curriculum is already being conducted through the MSCCR&R network as part of their training menu. The criterion in steps 3-5 relative to the training of teaching staff receiving hours specific to the age of the child they teach is currently how the guidelines are offered. When MCCQSS criteria are revised this will be a required element.

Another progressive standard incorporated within the MCCQSS system involves the professional credentialing and ongoing development of the child care center's director and staff. The MDHS offers a professional credential for child care center directors and another for Child Care Development Associates (CDA Program). In addition, MCCQSS incorporates the use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS). A higher total environment rating scale score is required for a child care center to achieve each new rating level. As the In-home and Pre-K elements of the MCCQSS are built and revised as part of the phase-in process, step levels of quality will correspond to staff training on ELGs and the corresponding curriculum. Including the Early Learning Guidelines in the MCCQSS for In-home providers

As the MCCQSS was built for the in-home providers supporting curriculum materials to specifically guide their success in meeting high quality criteria were developed and/or modified. Currently training protocols used with in-home providers by the Nurturing Homes technical assistance program relate specifically to items on the Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale. In years 1 and 2 of the grant these lessons will be expanded to include a corresponding curriculum for the ELGs specific to in-home programs. As the expanded lessons are developed checklists will be used to ensure all activities and teaching strategies are culturally and linguistically appropriate. Training for in-home providers will begin in year 2 and continue in years 3 and 4 and beyond.

Coordination between Mississippi's Early Learning Guidelines, the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System and Mississippi Child Care and Resource and Referral Network

The Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) for licensed early care and education centers at levels three, four and five (out of five) requires licensed program staff to be trained on the Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) and at levels 4 and 5 to show evidence that the guidelines are taught through the curriculum. Level five requires on-going assessments of three and four year olds and the implementation of the information gathered in the instruction of the children. During 2012-13 a review/audit of the current MCCQSS will be conducted utilizing a contractual arrangement with the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (See letter of support from NAEYC in Section C Appendix). The process developed by NAEYC will be critical to the audit as well as inform changes as a result of the revision in ELGs and related curriculum. Implementation of the new criteria for the system will occur during 2013-2014. The CCR&R also provides training to all licensed child care providers on the Infant Toddler ELGs and on corresponding curriculum. As curriculum materials are developed for in-home providers (year 2 of the grant), training will be provided on how the ELGs will help providers meet MCCQSS guidelines. Training for the Pre-K program staff will be conducted through the sponsorship of the Mississippi Department of Education.

Coordination of ELGs and Early Childhood Teacher Preparation

In 12 community colleges where AA degrees are awarded in early childhood technology, courses are taught using the ELGs and related curriculum. The curriculum and guidelines are also included in undergraduate course syllabi in university course work for individuals pursuing a 4-year degree in child development.

C(1)(D): THE STATE HAS SUPPORTS IN PLACE TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING OF AND COMMITMENT TO THE EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS ACROSS EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.

Training on the Mississippi Department of Education's *Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines for Three Year Old Children* and *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Four Year Old Children* is provided to child care providers/childhood educators through

Project IMPACT and the CCR&R network. Project IMPACT is funded through the MS Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD), this program is operated by Jackson State University. The training activities included within Project IMPACT are designed to develop professional skills of caregivers and to improve parent's knowledge of early childhood development.

Also funded through MDHS DECCD is Project PREPARE. Project PREPARE, operated by the University of Southern Mississippi, Institute of Disabilities Studies, provides evaluation-based training and technical assistance to child care centers on the best practices to serve children with high risk factors related to disabilities, chronic health impairments and special needs. Since 2008, Project PREPARE trained 6,861 participants through mini conferences and professional learning communities. An additional 438 technical assistance visits were made.

(C)(2) SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE USES OF A COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to support the effective implementation of developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment Systems by--

(a) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to select assessment instruments and approaches that are appropriate for the target populations and purposes;

(b) Working with Early Learning and Development Programs to strengthen Early Childhood Educators' understanding of the purposes and uses of each type of assessment included in the Comprehensive Assessment Systems;

(c) Articulating an approach for aligning and integrating assessments and sharing assessment results, as appropriate, in order to avoid duplication of assessments and to coordinate services for Children with High Needs who are served by multiple Early Learning and Development Programs; and

(d) Training Early Childhood Educators to appropriately administer assessments and interpret and use assessment data in order to inform and improve instruction, programs, and services.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these

should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

The purpose of this section is to describe the extent to which the State of Mississippi will support the effective implementation of a developmentally appropriate Comprehensive Assessment System. By working with Early Learning Programs and Early Childhood Educators to create and implement this system, the State of Mississippi will expand upon currently-existing efforts while restructuring initiatives to ensure the resulting Assessment System is comprehensive, responsive to individual children's needs, and sustainable.

Before beginning any of the sections, it is important to examine the current systems Mississippi has in place, in order to fully describe the initiatives included in this proposal. First, the current state of Kindergarten Assessments in Mississippi will be introduced.

Current State of Kindergarten Assessments

The following Request for Proposals was issued by the Mississippi Department of Education on August 27th, 2008. The following section details the current status of Kindergarten Entrance Assessments in Mississippi to date.

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) through the Office of Student Assessment (OSA) is soliciting competitive written proposals from qualified contractors to provide technical services and products for the Mississippi Statewide K-3 Assessments in Literacy and Mathematics. Revised state frameworks for language arts and for mathematics were piloted in school year 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, respectively, and implemented in 2007-2008; therefore, the MDE developed new criterion-referenced tests aligned with the 2006

Mississippi Language Arts Framework – Revised and the 2007 Mississippi Mathematics Framework– Revised for grades 3 through 8 and high school to allow the state to be in compliance with the requirements of NCLB and state accountability models. The tests provided under this Request for Proposals (RFP) will complement the assessment system currently being used for state and federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) accountability purposes.

The assessment system will be targeted to the appropriate age/grade range (kindergarten, first, second, and third grades) and demonstrated to be aligned with the current Mississippi Language Arts and Mathematics Frameworks. Additionally, the successful proposal will establish that the proposed products are designed for universal screening and formative evaluation and can be administered at least three times throughout the course of each school year, with timely provision of report following each administration. The successful proposal will provide appropriate technical documentation and research foundations to support the use of test results to make such inferences about student mastery and targeting instructional improvement. Reports of results must be available at all levels: student, class, school, district, and state. This element of a comprehensive assessment system should minimize the burden on teachers and students and require minimal demands for support including but not limited to teacher/administrator training, scoring and production of reports, infrastructure demands, and technology requirements.

The K-3 assessment system should be compatible with the Mississippi frameworks without requiring additional product-specific curriculum packages. An online or computer-based environment for testing, scoring, and reporting is strongly preferred. Proposals who wish to propose a traditional paper/pencil delivery system must specify how their product will meet or exceed the requirements outlined in this RFP and must fully describe all additional considerations needed for print materials such as ordering, printing, shipping, scoring, and any other unique requirements specific to the product.

In 2011: Last year (2010-2011) the enrollment for Kindergarten was 40,342. In 1986 full-day kindergarten was mandated to be offered in all districts and funded through the educational formula. Because of budget constraints, districts that had previously used the Children's Progress universal screener, Children's Progress Academic Assessment (CPAA),

were given the option to use it again; but the state was only able to pay for 42 districts that participated last year. (Less than ½ of districts)

According to Jan Hogue with the Mississippi Department of Education's Assessment Office," This year (2011-2012) each district will receive \$3.25 per student from the number of students who were enrolled in the district on either October 2010 or May 2011 – whichever is greater. The money received will be used to pay a portion of a Universal Screener (reading/language arts and math) that each district chooses that will best meet the needs of the district's students in grades K-3". (Jan Hogue, MSE Assessment Office, September 2011).

(C)(2)(A): WORKING WITH EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO SELECT ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS AND APPROACHES THAT ARE APPROPRIATE FOR THE TARGET POPULATIONS AND PURPOSES.

Comprehensive Assessment System: High Quality Kindergarten Entry Assessments

Building on Work to Date: How the State of Mississippi will expand and refine the use of kindergarten assessments to ensure outcomes and targeted service.

Mississippi has already demonstrated robust stakeholder participation in the selection of Kindergarten Entry Assessments. During the 2011-2012 school year, school districts were given the opportunity for self-selection of the screener to be used for kindergarten entry. At the conclusion of the school year each district will be surveyed to determine the following:

- Teacher satisfaction with the clarity of the instructions to the students
- Teacher satisfaction with the teacher support materials which provide guidance to teachers on interpreting the information from the screening process
- The design of the screener as it relates to providing opportunities for the student to demonstrate knowledge/skills as outlined in state standards for kindergarten students
- The construction of the screening instrument with regard to norming on a similar population as, internal validity and psychometric properties

- The ability of the teacher to use the data in adjusting content and strategies for instruction on an individual child basis
- The ease in which the data is transferred to the state wide longitudinal data system

The screening tool is constructed in a universal design format so children with special needs will not be penalized in any way due to the difficulty in demonstrating their knowledge/skills per biased instructions or terminology

The Mississippi Department of Education is proposing for the 2012-2013 school year, the top two-four district selected screeners. At least two administrations of the instrument will be required, one at the beginning of the kindergarten year, the other within the last 4 weeks of school. School districts will be strongly encouraged to administer an additional assessment at the mid-point of the year to gauge student progress.

During 2012-13 school year a committee of assessment specialists, kindergarten and pre-kindergarten, early care and education providers, school principals, and parents will be convened by the Mississippi Department of Education to review standards set forth by the National Research Council's Committee on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children. The standards, along with the Mississippi ELGs for three-kindergarten children, will be used to guide the development of a rubric to assess the current screening instruments being used in school districts and in writing the RFP for vendors who choose to submit a bid for the contract for the statewide assessment. The scoring rubric will include a component regarding the compatibility with other assessment tools in the state's system.

The Committee on Developmental Outcomes and Assessments for Young Children will gather and integrate information from the district surveys and the kindergarten core standards in multiple domains. Using the information from the Kindergarten Assessment, the committee will develop a scoring rubric to assess the current screening instruments being used along with others recommended by national experts in meeting the standards as set by the Council and through an RFP process as required by state procurement law. The scoring rubric will include a component regarding the compatibility of the instrument with other assessments in the state's system. The

MDE procurement guidelines will be followed for conducting the review of the instruments using the scoring rubric.

Partial funding through the grant will off-set costs of screening in 2012-13 and 2013-14. The Mississippi Department of Education will include this cost in the state's proposed budget for 2014-15. At the conclusion of the 2013-2014 school year, one assessment instrument will be selected that will be used across the state for kindergarten entry and continuous assessment throughout the year.

C(2)(B) WORKING WITH EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO STRENGTHEN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT SYSTEM.

Using the NAEYC Workforce Competency Blueprint as a rubric, representatives from community colleges and universities will review current course syllabi in years 3 and 4 of the grant to determine the elements listed in the blueprint that are not covered in their courses. A special emphasis will be placed on increasing student exposure to cultural and linguistic diversity and improving educator awareness of the impact of poverty on child development and family engagement. By year 4 of the grant, course syllabi will reflect the inclusion of the workforce competency elements.

Using the NAEYC Workforce Competency Blueprint as a rubric, training sessions provided by the MSCCR&R will be reviewed in years 3 and 4 of the grant to determine the elements listed in the blueprint that are not covered in the training. A special emphasis will be placed on increasing student exposure to cultural and linguistic diversity and improving educator awareness of the impact of poverty on child development and family engagement. By year 4 of the grant, course training modules will reflect inclusion of the workforce competency elements.

In years 2-3 of the grant, a review of current requirements of those who provide professional development opportunities will be conducted and evaluated to determine if revisions are needed. Their contact information and credentials will be included in the registry to promote opportunities for directors and teachers to make informed decisions about where and how to

obtain their help for their training needs. The understanding of the comprehensive assessment system is critical to being included in the registry system for the trainers of early childcare educators.

C(2)(C) ARTICULATING AN APPROACH FOR ALIGNING AND INTEGRATING ASSESSMENTS AND SHARING ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO AVOID DUPLICATION OF ASSESSMENTS AND TO COORDINATE SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH HIGH NEEDS

Alignment of State Standards, Curriculum and Teacher Observation Checklists

In 2000 Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) for three and four year old children were developed under the direction of the Mississippi Department of Education. They include the following domains: Language, Vocabulary, Literacy Development, Math Concepts, Scientific Investigation, Social/Emotional Development and Physical Development. Teacher observation checklists for each domain are provided with guidance for teachers to use at least three times during the year. The three-year old ELGs were revised in 2004 and the ELGs for four year-olds revised in 2006.

ELGs for infants and toddlers were developed in 2010 under the direction of the Mississippi Head Start Collaboration Office. The developmental domains addressed are Language, Vocabulary and Literacy Development, Mathematical Development, Scientific Development, Social Emotional Development, Physical Development and Self Help Development. Teacher observation checklists are included after each domain with guidance to teachers to use at least three times during the year. These checklists are designed to provide teachers with guidance in developing individual student progress plans and to be administered at least three times a year.

Building on Work to Date: Upcoming Work on ELGs, Curriculum and Teacher Observation Checklists:

In 2011, the ELGs were revised to align with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) for kindergarten in English/Language Arts and Mathematics. The CCSS have already been adopted by Mississippi. The processes for approving the revised three and four-year-old guidelines are underway. The ELGs for three and four year olds will be presented to the Mississippi Board of Education in November 2011 for approval to begin the public comment process. A committee will review the public comments to determine additional revisions. The final ELGs will be presented to the Mississippi State Board of Education in January 2012 for final approval. Plans for the revision of the other domains in both the three and four-year-old ELGs as well as an addition of learning dispositions for all domains will begin in January 2012 with a projected end date of May 2012. As the ELGS are revised, the teacher observation checklists will be modified as well to capture the child's progress in meeting the expectations outlined in the revised ELGs. In 2013, the ELGs for infants and toddlers will be reviewed and revised based on any changes in the three year old ELGs.

Additional components will be added to all ELGs to include approaches to learning, parent engagement, an expanded glossary and additional guidance on instruction of children with special needs, English Learners, children in foster care and those considered homeless. During the development, updating and review process experts representing special education Parts B and C, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, English Learners, children in foster care, individuals working with homeless families and family (in-home) providers will be involved to ensure additions reflect universal design for teachers of children with special needs, considerations for different types of learning environments and cultural and linguistic sensitivity. All of these additions will be made as each set of ELGs are revised.

Curricula for each ELG age has been already developed and disseminated to all licensed early care and education programs through child care licensing, the Childcare Resource and Referral Network and online at the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi Department of Human Services and The Early Childhood Institute at Mississippi State University will be revised to reflect changes in the ELGs. A sample unit for each age is found in the Appendices. The curriculum specifically designed for each age is developed with a strong developmental focus and the curriculum for three and four-year old children uses a thematic

approach and highlights each ELG that is taught in the activity and evaluated by the teacher when using the observational checklist. Taking into account the current low educational level of the majority of early care and education providers in the state, the curriculum format has been designed to be simplistic, easy to read and specific in tying an ELG to a specific skill that is taught through instruction of the activity. Materials and resources are also listed so planning in advance can occur. As the ELGs are revised, the curriculum will be revised as well. Throughout the process of revision, a checks and balance system is imposed so the curriculum alignment reflects that of the alignment of the ELGs. Curriculum revisions are expected to occur within 4-6 months after approval of any revisions in the ELGs.

Training and Alignment of Assessments with Early Learning Guidelines

The development and revisions of all ELGs and corresponding curriculum involved a revision of the teacher observational checklists that accompany each domain and area of development. As new elements of the MCCQSS are added (in-home providers and pre-k teachers) a training plan will be developed and implemented through the MSCCR&R network.

In-home Providers

- Years 1 and 2: Development of curriculum for in-home providers that is keyed to ELGs for infants-four-year old children
- Year 2: Develop and implement training for in-home providers on the ELGs and assessment strategies for children in multi-age in-home settings. Two primary delivery systems will be used in the design and implementation of the training for in-home providers: on-site training and place-based group settings. This will be determined by the number of providers and availability of transportation and training site. Web-based training will also be considered as a strategy for addressing various sections and topics.
- Years 2-4: Training of providers on ELG curriculum and assessment tools as to correspond with MCCQSS criteria for in-home programs.

- During years 2-3: A process will be developed through which the annual assessment data on the children served through in-home providers will be added into the nSPARC data base .
- As of year 4 children in the care of an in-home provider will have assessment data added into the nSPARC data base.

Licensed Center Programs (During Year 1 of the grant, the MCCQSS for licensed centers will be in revision and could affect the levels in the MCCQSS that will require training on the ELGs and classroom use of the assessment.

- Year 1. The curriculum and teacher assessments accompanying the ELGs will be revised to align with the revisions in the ELGS for three and four year –olds.
- Year 2. The training for teachers and directors will be developed on the ELGs for three and four year-olds and with the possibility of various training systems explored for group and individual instruction. Revisions begin on the ELGs for infants and toddlers and accompanying curriculum and assessment.
- Year 3. Training developed and delivered for teachers and directors on revised ELGs for infants and toddlers and accompanying curriculum. A process will be developed through which the annual assessment data on the children served through licensed centers will be added into the nSPARC data base.
- As of year 4 children in licensed centers will have assessment data added into the nSPARC data base.

Pre-K Programs in Public Schools:

The pre-k programs in public schools will follow the same course as licensed centers with regard to the ELGs and child assessments. Training for teachers and principals will be conducted in the same manner with the same materials through the Mississippi Department of Education. CEUs will be offered to staff seeking them toward meeting their teacher certification updating.

Approved Curriculum and Assessment Options for Three and Four Year Old Programs for Selection by School Districts (or other programs serving three and four year-olds):

In May 2010, the Mississippi Department of Education issued a call for bids for vendors interested in submitting a bid for state adopted curriculum materials for three and four year old children. The ELGs for each age were provided as part of the information to vendors and as part of the evaluation of proposals used by reviewers. After a lengthy process that involved a review team of early childhood providers and state experts, a decision was made and statewide caravans for stakeholders to review those curricula selected was conducted. Federal or local funds may be expended if the district chooses to use any of those listed.

Approved curricula are:

1. Frog Street Press Pre-K Program – Frog Street Press, Inc.
2. HMH Pre-K Mississippi Program with Earobics – Houghton Mifflin School Publishers
3. Scholastic Big Day for Pre-K Program – Scholastic, Inc.
4. English Package Pre-K – School Education Group, a division of the McGraw-Hill Companies
5. The Teaching Strategies Systems for Pre-K Volume Set - Teaching Strategies, Inc.
6. Zaner-Bloser Pre-K Classroom Package Set – Zaner-Bloser, Inc.
Pre-Kindergarten Social Emotional Development Program (3 and 4 year old children)
7. My Place Pre-K Kit – Houghton Mifflin School Publishers

Pre-Kindergarten Comprehensive Programs (4 year old children)

1. Let's Begin with the Letter People – Abrams Learning Trends
2. Opening the World of Learning (OWL) – Pearson Scott Foresman
3. We Can! – Sopris West Educational Services DBA Cambium Learning
Pre-Kindergarten Language, Vocabulary and Early Literacy Program (4 year old children)
4. Scott Foresman Reading Street Pre-K Program Kit – Pearson Scott Foresman

Pre-Kindergarten Mathematical Concepts Development Program (4 year old children)

1. Scott Foresman – Addison Wesley Mathematics Pre-K Core Program – Pearson Scott Foresman

Pre-Kindergarten Scientific Investigations Program (4 year old children)

1. Scott Foresman Science Pre-K Core Package – Pearson Scott Foresman

The criteria for selection of the curricula included the attention to the relevance of materials as compared to the population that will use the materials, alignment to the ELGs, provisions for English Learners and children with special needs, teacher guidance materials and assessment materials, online technology and support, and the multi-domain base upon which other curriculum materials can be infused.

Revisions of the Kindergarten Early Learning Standards

After revision of the remaining domains in the three and four year old guidelines, the content of the domains in the ELGs will be used to develop the remaining domains (Scientific Investigation, Social/Emotional Development and Physical Development) in the kindergarten ELGs following the same process as was used in the development of the three and four guidelines. This is projected to be completed by December 2013.

Measuring and Evaluation: Assessment Data on Learning Environments and Teacher Instructional Skills

The Mississippi Quality Child Care Step System (MCCQSS) has several core components tied to evaluation of the learning environment. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale and Infant-Toddler Environment Rating Scale are used to assess the learning environment. The quality step a licensed center is awarded is specifically tied to the average of scores from the environment scale ratings. The Caregiver Interaction Scale Assessment was a part of the assessment process in the first three years of the implementation of the MQCCSS. A review of the information collected revealed the assessment was not beneficial to informing the teacher as to way to improve instruction. This was discontinued. As part of the MQCCSS

review/audit a study will be conducted to determine what can be used as part of the assessment system to better assess teacher/child interactions. In addition, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) will be considered as an addition to the MSCCQSS assessment specifically to address the quality teacher/student interaction. More review of the population on which it was normed is needed to determine if it will address the early care and education providers in Mississippi.

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System™ (CLASS™) is an observational tool that provides a common lens and language focused on what matters—the classroom interactions that boost student learning. Data from CLASS™ observations are used to support teachers’ unique professional development needs, set school-wide goals, and shape system-wide reform at the local, state, and national levels. Based on research from the University of Virginia’s Curry School of Education and studied in thousands of classrooms nationwide, the CLASS™ tool:

- Focuses on effective teaching
- Helps teachers recognize and understand the power of their interactions with students
- Aligns with professional development tools
- Works across age levels and subjects

At every age level, the CLASS™ tool focuses on interactions that support learning.

Interactions are organized into three broad domains:

- Emotional Support
- Classroom Organization
- Instructional Support

Each CLASS™ domain is then organized into developmentally appropriate dimensions.

Below, these divisions are given for toddlers and Pre-K.

Age/Grade	Emotional Support	Classroom	Instructional Support
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Level		Organization	
Toddler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Climate • Negative Climate • Teacher Sensitivity • Regard for Child Perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior Guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitation of Learning and Development • Quality of Feedback • Language Modeling
Pre-K	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Climate • Negative Climate • Teacher Sensitivity • Regard for Student Perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavior Management • Productivity • Instructional Learning Formats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Development • Quality of Feedback • Language Modeling

Mississippi's new Quality Rating Scale uses the ECERS (Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale) and the ITERS (Infant Toddler Environmental Rating Scale) as one measure to ascribe which step—and therefore which reimbursement rate—a center can achieve on the new five-step scale. (See Appendix C for further information on ECERS and ITERS).

The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) is a thorough revision of the ECERS, designed to assess group programs for preschool-kindergarten aged children, from 2 through 5 years of age. The ECER-s Scale consists of 43 items organized into 7 subscales: Space and Furnishings; Personal Care Routines; Language-Reasoning; Activities; Interactions; Program Structure; and Parents and Staff.

The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ITERS-R) is a revision of the ITERS, designed to assess group programs for children from birth to 2 ½ years of age. In order to define and measure quality, the ITERS-R draws from three main sources: research evidence from a number of relevant fields (health, development, and education), professional views of best practice, and the practical constraints of real life in a child care setting. The ITERS-R scale

consists of 39 items organized into 7 subscales: Space and Furnishings; Personal Care Routines; Listening and Talking; Activities; Interaction; Program Structure; and Parents and Staff.

The scales are designed to assess process quality in an early childhood or school age care group. Process quality consists of the various interactions that go on in a classroom between staff and children, staff, parents, and other adults, among the children themselves, and the interactions children have with the many materials and activities in the environment, as well as those features, such as space, schedule and materials that support these interactions. Process quality is assessed primarily through observation and has been found to be more predictive of child outcomes than structural indicators such as staff to child ratio, group size, cost of care, and even type of care, for example child care center or family child care home (Whitebook, Howes & Phillips, 1995).

CHANGES IN YEARS 1 AND 2: MILESTONES

- Requirements in the MCCQSS will be reviewed by nutritionists from the Mississippi State Extension Service and/or Mississippi Department of Health to determine how the basic dietary requirements in the child care licensing regulations can be expanded without putting a cost burden on licensed centers. Given that information adjustments will be considered in the current MCCQSS criteria to increase the nutrition information required by centers to be disseminated to parents and how meal menus at centers reflect a healthier approach to foods provided.
- Possible changes in the criteria in the MCCQSS at Step level 2-3 that would require the center director to provide a free flu shot to any employee who wishes to take one at the local health department and to provide an annual health department visit to employees for the purpose of getting their blood pressure taken and blood checked for diabetes. This is in response to the high number of Mississippians who are obese and suffer from diabetes and are at risk for a heart attack or stroke.
- Possible changes in criteria in the MCCQSS at level 2-5 is the addition of training specific to the engagement of children in physical activities on a daily basis that exceeds licensing requirements on the type of outside play.

- The emotional health of children in center care is a growing concern that is not specifically addressed in the current MCCQSS criteria. Division of Early Childhood Care and Development staff joined by MCCQSS and MCCR&R staff and representatives from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and Head Start who work with ELL learners will attend a series of meetings with program consultants in the field of developmental pediatrics and child psychology from the University of Mississippi Medical Center to develop a sequential and appropriate approach for inclusion of measurable and appropriate documents and/or events in the MCCQSS to address issues surrounding social/emotional development. Specifically the following will be addressed in the meetings: screening of children, training for teachers and parents/grandparents on elements of healthy social /emotional development, how poverty and stress disrupts brain development and especially emotional/social development in young children.
- As a result of additions to the MCCQSS that require the development of training content to address healthy social/emotional development will be phased-in over years 3 and 4. The content will be reviewed using information developed by Zero to Three and The Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning to ensure its appropriateness and fundamental pedagogy. The approach developed will be implemented in selected counties in years 2.5-3.0 to determine any areas of change that should be addressed related to content or delivery of the training.

CRITERIA CHANGES IN YEARS 3 AND 4: MILESTONES

- Additions to existing training content or the development of new content on developing socially/emotionally healthy children will be phased in during year 3 which will promote a review of the professional development and assessment sections of the MCCQSS to increase the role of the teacher in providing a learning environment that promotes health social/emotional development.
- Determination of the type of assessment(s) that are: (1) culturally and linguistically sensitive for use in the MCCQSS to determine an improvement in teacher-child

interaction around social/emotional development and the child's progressive development in the domain.

Assessments and the State-Wide Data System

Information on the following will be routinely provided to the nSPARC staff that will then generate reports for the purposes of planning and evaluating the success of the quality initiative and specific progress at the program level:

- Environmental rating scores by program.
- Overall MSCCQSS score.
- Using student unique identifier, the child's assessment information can be entered and progress tracked.
- Using a unique identifier for teachers, information on teacher performance over time can be tracked.

Example of the type of data reports that will be generated: Data compiled from the MCCQSS can reveal the level of early care and education in general or by program within a community that currently has a school in state conservatorship or that is in the bottom quartile in school performance to determine the types of targeted professional development for teachers and directors of programs that is needed and ways to best implement a process by which children enter school at a progressively higher level of readiness as measured by the kindergarten entry assessment results and to track the progress they make in the kindergarten year and beyond.

C(2)(D) TRAINING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS TO APPROPRIATELY ADMINISTER ASSESSMENTS AND INTERPRET AND USE ASSESSMENT DATA

Process for Statewide Screening: Current and Future Implementation

The MCCQSS developed for pre-kindergarten programs in public schools is being phased-in with sites volunteering to participate. Data is being collected related to how best

implement the system in a school district given a different staff dynamic than a licensed program, documentation of professional development, and use of RTI as criteria in defining quality steps. The same process for revision as described for licensed centers will take place after the information collected in phase-in process is reviewed.

The Mississippi Child Care Resource and Referral Network is used for training of early care and education providers on the ELGs as part of the training required to successfully move up the quality step ladder. The content of the training will be revised contingent upon the review and revision of the ELGs and the MCCQSS criteria. Technical assistant tools such as “Quick Peeks” and other resources found at the Child Care Resource and Referral Network web site allow teachers to view best practice ideas and vignettes so they can study teaching strategies that will support their professional growth.

Schools in State Conservatorship and Schools Classified as being at High Risk

When schools are taken into state conservatorship due to poor performance around student outcomes the following will transpire related to early care and education:

- Other funding or a minimum of .25 of the 1 % in Title I funding to be set aside for parent engagement is to be used to provide services and engagement activities for children’s parents who are 0 to 5;
- Every district must have at least 1 pre-k class funded through Title I funding;
- Teachers in the pre-k and kindergarten must participate in a CLASS observation and attend professional development to support them in raising their scores; and
- Every district must have a summer program for children who graduated from Head Start and is entering kindergarten in the fall funded through federal funds.

(C)(3) IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING THE HEALTH, BEHAVIORAL, AND DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN WITH HIGH NEEDS TO IMPROVE SCHOOL READINESS.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to identify and address the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by--

(a) Establishing a progression of standards for ensuring children's health and safety; ensuring that health and behavioral screening and follow-up occur; and promoting children's physical, social, and emotional development across the levels of its Program Standards;

(b) Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards;

(c) Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity; and

(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who--

(1) Are screened using Screening Measures that align with the Medicaid Early Periodic Screening, Diagnostic and Treatment benefit (see section 1905(r)(5) of the Social Security Act) or the well-baby and well-child services available through the Children's Health Insurance Program (42 CFR 457.520), and that, as appropriate, are consistent with the Child Find provisions in IDEA (see sections 612(a)(3) and 635(a)(5) of IDEA);

(2) Are referred for services based on the results of those screenings, and where appropriate, received follow-up; and

(3) Participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well-child care, including the number of children who are up to date in a schedule of well-child care.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Additionally, States must provide baseline data and set targets for the performance measures under (C)(3)(d).

To effectively meet the needs of Children in Mississippi with High Needs to improve school readiness, the following must be addressed: 1) State and local structures, 2) Collaboration between existing programs, 3) Establishing a system for reaching providers and families, and 4) Establishing a feedback loop to determine effectiveness. Funds from the Race to the Top: Early Learning Challenge grant will aid the State of Mississippi in addressing these four criteria, providing an opportunity for Mississippi to establish a sustainable and comprehensive approach to improving school readiness for Children with High Needs. First, the State of Mississippi will develop the necessary Early Learning and Development *structure* through the creation of the Mississippi Division of Early Learning and Development and Office of School Readiness. Second, Mississippi will increase collaboration between existing programs by supporting liaisons to develop inter-agency information and task sharing. Third, Mississippi will create effective local structures in order to establish a system to reach providers and families, which will in turn drive the creation of a feedback loop to determine effectiveness.

It is estimated that there are currently 220,800 children under age five in the state of Mississippi, and this is our target population. Consider the following risk factors, each of which potentially impacts early brain development of Mississippi's children:

- In 2009, 55% of Mississippi children lived below 200% of the federal poverty level, 27% of who are below 50% of federal poverty level (2000 Census data).
- Of the approximate 46,000 live births per year, the low birth weight rate is 12.3% (2009 Kids Count data).
- 44% of Mississippi children live in single parent families (2007 Kids Count data).
- Of the state's nine public health districts, six of these districts have children (ages birth to 3) enrolled in the state's early intervention program at a rate greater than the state's average, indicating a higher percentage of children with identified developmental delays or disabilities.

- According to the National Survey of Children's Health (2007), 32.8 percent of Mississippi children are at moderate or high risk for developmental or behavioral problems versus a national rate of 26.4%.
- Also according to the same survey, on an average weekday, 62.1% of MS children (ages 1-5) usually spend more than 1 hour a day watching television or videos.

The most recent poverty data reported by the U.S. Census Bureau show more poor children reside in Mississippi than any other state in the country. A breakdown of the statistics reveals in 2009 86,033 children under 6 years of age lived in poverty. In 2010 the number rose to over 93,290 with an increase of 7,257 children. The percentage of children in poverty is 37.77% an increase of 8.44% from 2009-2010. Children living in extreme poverty in 2009 numbered 41,237 increasing to 47,366 in 2010.³⁴ With regard to family dynamics 15.9% of all children under 18 live in homes where grandparents or other relatives are primary caregivers.

Approximately one half of those children live in homes where no parent is present. Thirty percent of the grandparents are living in poverty, 44% are White and 54% Black. According to information from the National Center on Family Homelessness 4,747 children under 6 are homeless in Mississippi. The latest KIDS COUNT data ranks Mississippi at 50th in the nation on the percentage of children living with one parent who is not employed and 50th in the number of births to teen mothers (15-19).

Historically, Mississippi's track record of preparing children early in life for success is also lacking:

- 21% of our state's children ages 6 to 17 have repeated at least one grade since kindergarten,
- In 2009, 45% of Mississippi's fourth graders scored "below basic" on 4th grade reading assessments

34 Children's Defense Fund state fact sheets. <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/state-data-repository/state-child-poverty-fact-sheets/child-poverty-fact-sheets-2010-under-six.pdf>

- 2007 data shows that 23% of Mississippi children ages 1-5 were read to less than 3 days a week.

On many indicators, Mississippi is ranked at the bottom of all fifty states. While this distinction is negative on all points, it does indicate the need for assistance and intervention in our state. It is therefore imperative that additional attention to be placed on early brain development in Mississippi and how families, communities, and health care professionals can positively impact children's achievement.

C(3)(A): ESTABLISHING A PROGRESSION OF STANDARDS FOR ENSURING CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) is a rating system offered through the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Office for Children and Youth (OCY). It is a system which was designed to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in a licensed child care setting in five areas: 1) Administrative Policy; 2) Professional Development/Qualifications of Staff; 3) Child Learning Environments; 4) Parent/Family Involvement; and, 5) Program Evaluation. Depending upon compliance with established standards/criteria, child care centers may earn a rating ranging from 1-Star to 5-Star (5-Star being the highest rating). The progression of standards established for this program by OCY requires participating child care centers to meeting an ever increasing higher level of standards in order to move up the levels. Certificates are awarded to each child care program as they progress to each new level.

The MCCQSS system is based on the Mississippi Department of Education's *Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines for Three Year Old Children*, as well as *the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers* and *Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Three and Four Year Old Children*. These guidelines include the curricula categories of Language/Vocabulary/Literacy Development, Mathematical Concepts Development, Scientific Investigation, Social/Emotional Development and Physical Development which promote learning in areas such as health, safety, nutrition, physical activity, social/emotional

development, etc. In addition, the MCCQSS system incorporates a progressive, incremental strategy to address parental involvement and communication, including curricula topics being currently addressed. Both curricula promote an inclusive learning environment and a special focus on meeting the needs of diverse learners. Implementation of the curricula will promote healthy eating habits, improved nutrition, and expand physical activity in children.

Another progressive standard incorporated within the MCCQSS system involves the professional credentialing and ongoing development of the child care center's director and staff. The MDHS offers a professional credential for child care center directors and another for Child Care Development Associates (CDA Program). In addition, MCCQS incorporates the use of the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS) and the Infant Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS). A higher total environment rating scale score is required for a child care center to achieve each new rating level.

Training on the Mississippi Department of Education's *Mississippi Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines for Three Year Old Children*, as well as *the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers and Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines for Three and Four Year Old Children* is provided to child care providers/childhood educators through Project IMPACT. Funded through the MS Department of Human Services, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development (DECCD), this program is operated by Jackson State University. The training activities included within Project IMPACT are designed to develop professional skills of caregivers and to improve parent's knowledge of early childhood development.

Also funded through MDHS DECCD is Project PREPARE. Project PREPARE, operated by the University of Southern Mississippi, provides evaluation-based training and technical assistance to child care centers on the best practices to serve children with high risk factors related to disabilities, chronic health impairments and special needs.

Statewide utilization of the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System will help to improve the quality of child care for all Mississippi's children, especially children with High Needs.

C(3)(b): Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators who are trained and supported on an on-going basis in meeting the health standards

Strategy 1:

When examining factors related to premature births, infant mortality, teen pregnancy, low birth weight, poverty, unemployment and high school dropouts the targeted areas are worse than the statewide average on almost all indicators. There are two organizations in Mississippi that can work with educators to fill this need. (1) The Healthy Homes Mississippi (HHM) program serves low income families with small children and low education levels with a need for support services. (2) Healthy Families America (HFA) works within the family structure to help parents identify their own needs which increases family functioning and well-being, and reducing teen pregnancy, which is strongly correlated with teens not completing high school.

HHM will be developed and implemented with consideration and advisement of community stakeholders. The community involvement plan calls for various levels of engagement: a community level advisory team, a collaborative of service providers and listening sessions with community residents.

HHM works with community partners to develop a plan for the identification and recruitment of eligible families. Healthy Homes Mississippi is being developed and implemented with consideration and advisement of community stakeholders including community/civic leaders, faith-based community organizations, business leaders, consumer representatives, Head Start representatives, mental health and alcohol treatment programs, public assistance workers, domestic violence victim advocates, local schools and government agencies including the health departments and children and family services.

The HHM program serves low income families with small children and low education levels. Family risks in areas of low income with small children and low education levels require support services. Selected counties are in serious need of HHM services and resources to meet needs of at-risk families. HHM will begin in Copiah, Claiborne, Jefferson, and Wilkinson counties and continue into Tunica and Coahoma counties. After initial implementation, HHM will expand to other areas of the state to create a state wide program. Home visiting staff will

receive training and professional development from both the model developers, Partners for a Healthy Baby, and local MS Department of Human Services (MDHS)/HHM staff.

HHM will provide assistance to targeted families to create safe home environments, improved parent-child interactions, increased parenting knowledge and skills, improve areas of child development, family self-sufficiency, improved pre-conception/prenatal/postnatal care, and increase effective use of local and state community resources.

HHM is currently active in engaging county level leaders as well as the bringing on board team members including field supervisors and support workers, developing training and curriculum materials, providing hand-out materials for families, purchasing electronics for implementation staff, and conducting interagency collaborations with Early Head Start, county health departments, and other available social service programs. HHM will participate in national evaluation activities.

Strategy 2:

Priority: Increase training for educators and childcare providers to enable them to serve children with high needs effectively and meet state standards for early childhood including health standards. This training will be coordinated through the MSCCR&R.

Outcome: Early childcare providers/educators will be better prepared to address the needs of children with disabilities from various racial and ethnic backgrounds.

By increasing training opportunities for early childhood educators and child care providers, these individuals will be further enabled to better serve Children with High Needs. Early childhood educators, who are well-trained, use best practices, and implement Universal Design guidelines in their instruction, will afford children with high needs greater opportunities for learning.

This initiative will begin by collaborating with Mississippi Community Colleges and Institutions of Higher Learning to expand hours of course work on serving Children with High Needs within their child development programs. This will be accomplished by increasing the

number of semester hours of required courses from 9 to 12, expanding the availability of training in rural areas, and determining gaps and needs for additional course work.

In addition, a review will be conducted of available training opportunities for Mississippi's early childhood child care workforce, determining the need for expansion of training opportunities on meeting health standards and working with children with high needs. This will be accomplished by an in-depth review of currently-available and relevant training opportunities, identifying gaps in training on a state level including geographic considerations, and reviewing needs surveys. Existing training includes Project PREPARE (**PRE**school **P**ersonnel **A**ssistance, **R**esources and **E**ducation) that is funded by the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Office for Children and Youth and is coordinated by The University of Southern Mississippi, Institute of Disability Studies. The primary goal of Project PREPARE is to improve the quality of care for children in licensed child care settings by enhancing the professional development opportunities needed for centers to successfully include high risk children and children with special needs. It provides professional development opportunities, support and resources to enable licensed child care programs to better serve children with special needs.

Training opportunities supporting the MDE's Early Learning Guideline's training topic "Meeting the Needs of Diverse Learners" will be provided by the Mississippi Child Care Resource and Referral Network (MSCCR&R) available through the Mississippi State University Extension Service. MSCCR&R supports early childcare and education professionals, parents, children and anyone seeking information about quality child care in Mississippi. MSCCR&R seeks to increase school readiness by improving the quality of care for Mississippi's youngest and most vulnerable population. There are twelve (12) Resource & Referral sites located statewide, most located on community college campuses, serving all eighty-two (82) Mississippi counties. The MSCCR&R emphasizes training on the state's *Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers as well as Three and Four Year Old Children*, which includes material on pre-kindergarten curriculum guidelines, meeting the needs of diverse learners, Universal Design for Learning, linguistic and cultural diversity, etc. MSCCR&R also provides resource centers where individuals can check out children's literature, education media, curriculum and other

learning resources. In addition, MSCCR&R maintains a database of information on licensed child care centers which can help families locate child care providers who meet their families' needs and interests.

Finally, cultural and linguistic competence training for early child care providers will be increased to occur on an annual basis. Once available training opportunities have been reviewed and analyzed, cultural and linguistic competency trainings will be included. Funding will be needed for development of training, additional trainers, and overall increased training opportunities on an annual basis. This will also require local level programs providing services to young children to develop and implement a cultural/linguistic plan.

C(3)(c): Promoting healthy eating habits, improving nutrition, expanding physical activity
Health, nutrition, and oral health training for childhood educators will be expanded. After available training opportunities have been reviewed and analyzed, training on general health topics, oral health and nutritional

education will be included. As community health centers collaborate with schools that provide training, topic-based presentations can accommodate this dialogue and informational exchange between students and providers.

The accompanying story illustrates the need for greater access for both health and early education services for children in Mississippi.

Support for Physicians Serving Rural Communities

Mississippi is a largely rural state with a diverse population and significant

A 6-year old dies from an oral abscess

In the local Gulfport Mississippi newspaper, the Associated Press reported on the death of a 6-year old boy. The article reports that the boy collapsed on a school bus after having two-teeth removed previously. According to the coroner's autopsy report, the child went into shock from the infection and his body shut down. He was a kindergartner and lived in a rural area near Pass Christian.

Access to care is often an issue in rural areas, increasing the potential for fatal incidences such as the death of this child. This unfortunate incident also illustrates that oral health is an integral part of overall health. Furthermore that oral health screening should be a part of a school readiness assessment.

disparities in the areas of child health, dental, education and child mental/ behavioral health. The child population in Mississippi from 3 to 21 years is approximately 800,000. Data has shown that approximately 10-16% of children have at least one developmental disability. That means that around 80,000 to 128,000 children are in need of services at any time period. This data includes children with ADHD, autism spectrum disorder, speech/language disorders, motor delays, cognitive delays, learning disabilities, behavioral disorders and other developmental issues such as cerebral palsy, Tourette's syndrome and children with a combination of issues. Evidence is clear that the earlier a disability is discovered and intervention is begun, the more likely children will have good academic outcome and the less likely need special services as adults. Though all children with developmental disabilities do not need an extensive evaluation, many do to be able to fully identify the specific needs of the child. Often pediatricians are in need of developmental evaluations for their patients by individuals with expertise in the area of developmental disabilities and behavioral health.

The University of Mississippi Medical Center houses the only multi-disciplinary center in the state which is available to all children across the state. The Child Development Center presently has 1.5FTE board certified developmental-behavioral pediatricians, 4 psychologists, one social worker, one behavioral therapist (who works with children with autism) and a part-time speech therapist. This team receives referrals from across the state and surrounding states. Patients are seen not only for evaluation but also for ongoing follow-up. The center receives approximately 80 new referrals per week. The center needs to expand to better serve children in our state with developmental needs. The current wait time for children to be seen by the Child Development Center is approximately 9 months, which reduces the window of opportunity for interventions to be initiated and optimize developmental outcomes.

In addition, many pediatricians in our state do not feel adequately equipped to evaluate and plan for a child's developmental, educational or behavioral needs. Additionally, due to the fact that Mississippi is a large, rural state, the distance that patients may be up to 200 miles to be seen at UMMC.

The state and the UMMC propose three outreach efforts to help equip pediatricians, nurse practitioners, family practitioners and allied health professionals in early recognition of children

with learning or developmental problems and understanding the appropriate evaluation and referral of children to appropriate services that are needed. The first effort will be a telecommunications set up between UMMC's Child Development Center and 4 remote sites in the state. The proposed cities would be Tupelo, Greenwood, Meridian and Gulfport. These areas are chosen as sites to cover all areas of the state. The second effort will be a travel team comprised of Dr. Susan Buttross, a psychologist, and a project coordinator. This team will have regularly scheduled visits to the above sites and will conduct evaluations on specific patients who are a difficult puzzle for local physicians. The third effort will offer visits to pediatrician offices (who are not at the above sites) around the state to conduct in depth teaching conferences on developmental screening and identification.

C(3)(d): Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual targets to increase the number of Children with High Needs who are screened

Strategy 1: Improving Effectiveness, Referrals, Coordinated Services, and Training

The State of Mississippi is dedicated to the goal of identifying and addressing the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs, and recognizes the challenges of both identifying and serving this population. Therefore, Mississippi has chosen to place emphasis on developing a high-quality screening and referral system, to identify all Children with High Needs within the state at the earliest time possible, and provide a seamless referral system to provide necessary services quickly and efficiently.

The State proposes to use Race to the Top- Early Learning Challenge grant funds for the following priorities identified as crucial to achieving the above goal: 1) Screening, 2) Referrals, 3) Coordinated services, and 4) Training (Training will be introduced in Section C(3)(b)). First, the State will seek to maximize the use of existing screening programs such as the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program, the CHIP program, and well baby checks as the entry point into the **coordinated system** for children with high needs. Second, a uniform referral process will be promoted among providers providing screening to increase the number of appropriate referrals made based on a child's needs and facilitate access to services.

Third, services will be provided on the local level that uses best practices are coordinated and collaborative and wrap around the child and his/her needs. Finally, training for educators and childcare providers will be increased to enable them to serve children with high needs effectively. Mississippi is well positioned to use existing resources matched with grant funds to accomplish the above goals. Existing standards and structures within the State will provide a good platform to build from, and the end outcome will be improved outcomes for Children with High Needs.

The physical infrastructure exists within the State needed to accomplish the above goals. Numerous providers provide screening. In the case of EPSDT administered by the Division of Medicaid (DOM), there are currently 1,343 providers throughout the state such as Local County Health Departments, Limited School Systems, Private and Public Provider Clinics, Federally Qualified Health Clinics (FQHCs) and Rural Health Clinics (RHCs). The Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) Program, a mandatory service under Medicaid, provides preventive and comprehensive health services for Medicaid-eligible children and youth up to age 21. The service ends on the last day of the 21st birthday month. Medicaid only reimburses for services that are medically necessary for Medicaid beneficiaries. Currently, the EPSDT Program includes a physical exam, hearing and vision screenings, immunization/shots, adolescent counseling, health education, blood/urine tests, blood lead levels, developmental screening, nutrition evaluation, oral health screening, and medical referral or referral to another health provider, if needed. EPSDT will serve as the model for other screening.

The acronym EPSDT combines to make the program unique:

- **Early:** Assessing health care in early life so that potential disease and disabilities can be prevented or detected in their preliminary states, when they are most effectively treated.
- **Periodic:** Assessing a child's health at regular, recommended intervals in the child's life to assure continued healthy development.
- **Screening:** The use of tests and procedures to determine if children being examined have conditions warranting closer medical or dental attention.

- **Diagnosis:** The determination of the nature or cause of conditions identified by the screening.
- **Treatment:** The provision of services needed to control, correct or lessen health problems.

A specific example of an EPSDT provider is the Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) organizations. There are twenty-one Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHC) organizations strategically positioned throughout the State of Mississippi. As such, the FQHCs are uniquely organized, arranged, and postured to best accommodate and provide EPSDT services to the population. This network of FQHCs is the vehicle that can economically and efficiently influence healthy progress in Mississippi. With over 150 delivery sites including approximately 50 school-based clinics, FQHCs can effectively champion the EPSDT program and efficiently administer services throughout the state. This can be accommodated with little financial impact with only marginal increases in nursing staffing. Accordingly, the financial burden will be minimized and the EPSDT service impact will be maximized.

Another specific example of an EPSDT provider would be the Rural Health Clinics (RHCs) program operated through the Mississippi State Department of Health, Office of Rural Health. The RHC program is intended to increase primary care services for Medicaid and Medicare patients in rural communities and RHCs receive enhanced reimbursement rates for providing these services. RHCs can be public, private or non-profit and must be located in rural, underserved areas. RHCs are certified through the Mississippi State Department of Health, Division of Health Facilities Licensure and Certification. Mississippi ranks within the top ten states in the United States for the total number of rural health clinics. Populations served by the community health centers and rural health clinics include children with high need (who are low-income, English learners, children with disabilities or developmental delays, who live on Indian lands, who are migrant, homeless, or in foster care).

The Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) is administered jointly by the Mississippi Division of Medicaid and the Department of Finance and Administration, Office of Insurance. DOM is responsible for eligibility determination and as such certifies applicants for participation

in the program based upon household income, the age of each child, and the insured status of each child. The Health Insurance Management Board, acting administratively through the Department of Finance and Administration, administers CHIP which is a separate insurance plan. CHIP is designed to provide health care insurance for children in families without health insurance or with inadequate health insurance coverage. CHIP does not replace Medicaid. In fact, a child must be determined ineligible for Medicaid before eligibility for CHIP can be considered. Application must be made in person at the Medicaid Regional Office that covers the family's county of residence. CHIP covers children from birth to age 19 and eligibility is continuous for one year. Services include health screenings (including vision and hearing exams), preventive health care such as immunizations, inpatient and outpatient hospital care, doctor's or clinic visits for well-child check ups and sick-child care, lab services, prescription medications, eyeglasses and hearing aids, dental care, and mental health services. There are no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

Furthermore, the necessary human capital exists within the state to effectively and efficiently accomplish the above identified goals. A range of existing organizations and entities are present in the State of Mississippi, engaging in highly-regarded work but often serving different populations and geographic areas. Therefore, we will propose using Race to the Top funds to coordinate these services in order to provide a system of comprehensive care for every child in Mississippi regardless of demographic or geographic differences.

Finally, the necessary organizational structure exists in the State of Mississippi to effectively pursue these identified goals. One example of such services are MAP Teams, local Multidisciplinary Assessment and Planning Teams, meeting on a monthly basis to review children/youth in order to divert them from inappropriate placement by providing the necessary resources to keep them in their home and community. The MAP teams are required to have participation from local representatives such as education, mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, health, rehabilitation and parents/caregivers. MAP teams can serve children, birth to age 5, but have focused on serving school aged children. In the following sections, a detailed plan to expand MAP teams to include children birth to 5 will be introduced, using Race to the Top grant funds for this effort.

In the following sections, the priorities of screening, referrals, coordinates services, and trainings will be explained in further detail, and necessary steps to accomplishing these goals will be identified.

1. Screening:

Priority: To maximize screening of young children as the point of entry into a coordinated system using the Early Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) Program as the model.

Outcome: More children would be identified who may need special services/supports to increase their ability to learn.

Overall, the screening priority is one that will leverage existing resources so that children with high needs are identified and appropriately referred to services based on their needs. Currently, the EPSDT includes a physical exam, hearing and vision screenings, immunization/shots, blood/urine tests, blood lead levels, developmental screen, nutrition evaluation, oral health screening, and medical referral or referral to another health provider if needed. Due to the DOM's history of success with the EPSDT program, this initiative proposes to promote the EPSDT Program as the model for screening.

As the model screening program, the initiative will seek to increase public awareness regarding the EPSDT through the efforts of DOM and participating agencies. A social marketing campaign promoting Mississippi Cool Kids will be conducted, thereby increasing the exposure of the public to information on EPSDT. Outreach efforts will include educational materials such as flyers and Public Service Announcements. Increasing the public's awareness of the availability of the program and the location and choice of providers across the state will thereby increase the number of children screened at the earliest age possible and identified with need for referral to other services/treatment. See Table for C3(d) performance measures for more information on EPSDT.

The federal EPSDT reports that in 2010 approximately 64% of all kids eligible for EPSDT screens received one. Promoting EPSDT among agencies and providers of services to

young children in collaboration with DOM will help those children covered by Medicaid access needed screening.

For a specific example, during its existence of over 40 years, the Jackson-Hinds Comprehensive Health Center, a Federally Qualified Community Health Center, has provided EPSDT services to the eligible patient population. Through the Mississippi Medicaid program, EPSDT services are available to children ages 0-21. In 2010, there were 15,291 children in this age group in JHCHC's patient population.

Another activity involving EPSDT as a screening tool to identify special needs in children will be to conduct a review to determine the need for an updated developmental screening tool that may be more sensitive to identifying special needs. If such a tool is found and approved for use, training will be provided by DOM for providers administering the screen.

Periodicity schedules are published by the Division of Medicaid for EPSDT screening services based on American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, but adherence to these schedules by those eligible for the screening is inconsistent. Eligible families do not always take advantage of these services. This creates a barrier to discovery of services for which children may have a need at the earliest possible time. Determining the reasons on-going screening is not being used and helping families access periodic screens will help alleviate delay in services.

Finally, as the purpose of this initiative fits with the broader goal of inter-agency data sharing, the submission of data from EPSDT data into nSPARC statewide longitudinal data will be explored. Funds will be needed for hardware additions needed for data submission. This will result from collaboration agreements between DOM and Mississippi State University to provide initial and subsequent data from EPSDT screenings. By merging this data, a better understanding of children's needs can be obtained.

2. Referrals:

Priority: Implement a uniform referral process to increase the number of appropriate referrals made based on a child's needs and facilitate access to services (everyone working together to get children to the right place quickly).

Outcome: Children will be referred to the service/supports the need based on the results of the EPSDT screenings/assessments and additional referrals can be made if a child's condition changes.

This priority allows the State to maximize appropriate referrals so that supports can begin in a timely manner as well as to avoid unnecessary assessments and cost. This process will begin by bringing together all partners, including the Mississippi State Department of Health, EPSDT providers, and referral programs to discuss utilization of a uniform referral process. This uniform referral process will be developed and adopted by all community service agencies, that will be based on identification of the need level addressed by each provider/program. This implementation of the referral protocol will be achieved by revised and integrated regulations and policies among participating agencies.

It is expected that the referral protocol will be finalized during the first year. The referral process will begin with screenings. The screens will cover medical as well as developmental areas. Screening is available through a variety of providers at sites across the state. It is our intention that these screenings serve as an entry point into the system for children with High Needs

Once screening has taken place, however, there is a need for a uniform and standardized referral process (protocol) so that a child is referred to services/supports based on his/her intensity of need. Making appropriate referrals would reduce the time a child has to wait before receiving services, as well as reducing expenditures for unnecessary assessments. Providing services as soon as possible will create more positive strides for a child in reaching school readiness. The referral protocol to be developed in year one needs to take into account the individual child's needs identified during screening. A continuum of services from a high level of need to a low level of need will be created. Each provider will be then be appropriately placed along the continuum according to the services they provide. Using this continuum, referrals to specific providers will be made based upon matching the child's level of need to the programs level of available services. For example, using the screening results, children with high medical needs could be referred to a "medical home" where the child could be located at one of the community health clinics that would then determine the need for a Level 2 assessment

that could lead to further evaluation at a diagnostic center and subsequent specialized services. Another child whose screening indicates possible developmental delay would be referred to First Steps if under 3 years of age and to Education if between 3-5 years of age and if behavioral problems exist. Referral could also be made to a community mental health center. Other children with less intensity of need could be referred to Early Head Start, Head Start, a Child Care Center or no referral may be needed. Parents could also be referred to family education programs along the continuum, as needed. After referral, information will be reported back to the referral source on the outcome of the referral to a specific provider (the child enrolled in the program, the family, etc.).

In addition, providers will be trained on the uniform referral process and feedback from providers on the uniform referral process will be gathered for future revisions, if necessary. Policies for follow-up and obtaining disposition data on children referred for specialized services will be developed, primarily by including follow-up regulations in the Uniform Referral Process.

As the result of better identifying Children with High Needs, families can be encouraged to use a medical home to assist the parent in raising a high-needs child. This will be accomplished by providing education materials to families on local medical homes.

Finally, as with other data-sharing initiatives, data will be collected and analyzed on disposition of referrals, which can then be used in making informed decisions on continuous quality improvement of the referral process.

3. Coordinated Services:

Priority: Provide services on the local level that use best practices, which are coordinated and collaborative, and wraparound the child and his/her needs and family.

Outcome: Children and their families receive the services needed allowing the child to maximize learning opportunities.

A school counselor referred a 5 year old male to the local MAP Team who was in a Pre-Kindergarten class for Intellectual/Developmental disabilities. The school had completed various assessments and evaluations, along with interventions for the child with little success. The MAP Team consisted of representatives from vocational rehabilitation services, mental health center, school system, youth services, child welfare and the local health clinic.

The MAP Team recommended an evaluation at the Child Development Clinic at the University of MS Medical Center in Jackson, MS. A case manager was assigned to the child and family who assisted them in getting to Jackson for the evaluation. The following recommendations and referrals were made: speech pathologist, ENT doctor and behavioral interventions. The case manager and social worker from the local health department assisted the mother in making the appointments. It was found from the ENT that the child needed his tonsils removed and that he had significant fluid in his ears causing him to not hear well. The child was also enrolled in speech therapy through the school system and received an updated Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

He was held back into Pre-K an additional year, but moved from a special education class to a regular class after there were major improvements in his behavior and learning. The child is enrolled in a day treatment program this year (Kindergarten) provided by the local Community Mental Health Center and the mother is getting assistance in implementing a behavior modification plan at home.

This priority ensures that the services and supports provided will be coordinated through local interagency agreements and teams between the local level child serving agencies. For

example, these include the Mississippi Department of Health, mental health centers, Head Start, Child care providers, among other entities. By providing coordinated care that wraps around the child and his/her needs, information between departments will be shared in order to better identify needed services and ensure the child receives these services in a timely and effective manner. By changing the structure of how information is shared and service is provided between entities, the health, behavioral, and developmental needs of Children with High Needs will be better addressed, thereby increasing the likelihood of school readiness among this vulnerable population.

Mississippi's MAP teams have a demonstrated record of identifying and following through with the needs of children. The below example is an illustration of how one child was served by a local MAP team.

This initiative will begin by developing and implementing collaborative plans among members of the Children's MAP teams, such as Head Start and Community Mental Health Centers. Next, the current local children's MAP Team program for school-aged children will be expanded to include children birth to five, and will cover all 82 counties. The number of MAP Teams and number of children served have been increasing since FY 2007.

Federal Fiscal Year (October 1 – Sept. 30)	Number of MAP Teams	Number of children/youth served
FY 2007	32	805
FY 2008	35	1,286
FY 2009	37 serving 43 counties	1,084
FY 2010	39 MAP Teams serving 50 counties	1,163* (*of which 5% were children birth to 5 years of age)
FY 2011	42 MAP Teams serving 54 counties	Between Oct. 1, 2010 – April 1, 2011; 549 children were served

It is expected that by Year 3, all counties in Mississippi will have access to a local MAP Team and more than 2000 children will be served.

To accomplish this, current agreements and policies will require matching changes in areas such as redefining scope of work. MAP teams are local Multidisciplinary Assessment and Planning teams that meet on a monthly basis to review children and youth in order to divert them from inappropriate placement by providing the necessary resources to keep them in their home and community. MAP Teams are based on the premise that children/youth are better served when multiple agencies collaborate and pool resources. MAP Teams operate based on the System of Care principles and values which include family-driven and youth-guided care, strengths based planning, individualized service planning, early identification and intervention for high need children/youth and services that are cultural/linguistically appropriate and community-based with access to a comprehensive array of services. The teams identify what has been tried and the services used; recommend modifications that are possible to obtain services and supports; develop an individualized service plan; and monitor the service plan on an ongoing basis to ensure follow-through.

Current MAP teams serve school aged children; however, some children five and under have been served in the past. This initiative will seek to build on MAP teams' past success by expanding MAP teams' scope to include children between the ages of 0 and five. In addition, this initiative will provide training to the Early Childhood MAP team representatives on the Wraparound model, infrastructure building, cultural and linguistic competence as teams are phased in during year 1 (5 teams) and year 2 (6 teams). Finally, to increase the use of mental health pre-school programs at the Community Mental Health Centers, a Coordinator will assist with referral of eligible children.

This initiative will also seek to maximize use of the limited number of specialized early childhood staff in rural areas. This will be accomplished by developing a directory of available specialists across the state to determine possible opportunities for sharing of resources.

Ongoing with these efforts, the State of Mississippi will work to maximize participation in on-going health care as part of well child care, including nutrition and oral health. By

increasing access to existing service providers such as the Federally Qualified Health Centers and Rural Health Clinics, these centers will continue to fill the primary care gaps to ensure that screening services like EPSDT are available. Specifically, FQHCs coordinate and collaborate with community organizations to increase the provision of early screenings and referrals for support services. FQHC providers are uniquely qualified not only to diagnose but can also treat conditions that have an impact on patient development. In addition, providers have hospital privileges that allow them to refer and tract patients as necessary.

Finally, this initiative will revise current policies and regulations to require certified childhood centers to implement Universally Designed Learning environments for childcare centers qualified as 2-5 stars. Universally Designed Learning environments provide consideration for the widest diversity of learners possible so that all children benefit including children with varying disabilities, linguistic diversities and varied learning styles. This will be accomplished by providing training to teachers on serving children with various cultural and linguistic backgrounds, including immigrants.

IDEA Funds Serving Special-Needs Children

The following plan details how RTT-ELC funds will be dedicated to an assessment of current IDEA fund allocation. A successful state system is expected to improve the quality of early learning and development programs, as well as access to those programs for children with high needs. Mississippi has identified the Part C system of services and supports to infants and toddlers with developmental delays or disabilities as one area that needs reform. The following outlines a 2-year approach to creating and sustaining higher quality yet accountable Part C early intervention programs in Mississippi. The plan addresses specific issues in the Part C system, but it is intended to be carried out in the broader context of reforming the overall early learning and development system in Mississippi as outlined in the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge.

“The Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities Program (Part C) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was created in 1986 to enhance the development of infants and toddlers with disabilities, minimize potential developmental delay, and reduce educational

costs to our society by minimizing the need for special education services as children with disabilities reach school age. Part C is not intended to be a stand-alone program. The intent is to build interagency partnerships among state agencies and programs in health, education, human services and developmental disabilities” (The Outcomes of Early Intervention for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities and their Families, NECTAC July 2011).

Mississippi has a number of foundational components that support an approach to early intervention that values interagency partnerships. Existing strengths identified include early intervention principles, a State Early Childhood Advisory Council, established early intervention competencies, and relationships with the National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center (NECTAC), Zero to Three, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Strengthening Families, and the Regional Resource Center (RRC), the Early Child Outcomes Center (ECO), and the Data Accountability Center (DAC).

The proposed plan includes a Comprehensive Evaluation/Assessment of the Strengths/Needs of Mississippi’s Current Part C System, the development of an implementation plan and process for establishing ongoing evaluation, monitoring, and accountability. The comprehensive evaluation and assessment will be completed in 2012. Decisions concerning how to implement the recommendations will be made in 2013, with expected changes fully implemented in 2014.

Strategy 2: Offering Physician Training for Extended Health Services in Rural Communities

Community pediatrician Ed Ivancic, MD will work in conjunction with the Mississippi Chapter AAP and the MS Early Childhood Institute to develop a protocol to train residents as well as practicing physicians on the need for early identification of normal and atypical development in early childhood. The MS Early Childhood Institute will serve as content developers and trainers. The training could have longitudinal points of insertion in residency rotations, as well as being used to deliver training at state AAP chapter and MS Academy of Family Physicians' continuing medical education meetings. In addition, it could be distributed to other statewide or community-based meetings. Finally, this training module could potentially be

replicable across other specialties, (e.g. nurse practitioners). In addition, the project will distribute early brain development materials to parents and caregivers through pediatric and other clinics and the media.

The immediate, short term impact of this training could potentially impact thousands of children in our state as pediatricians and others begin to more optimally address developmental issues of young children. This method of physician training addresses sustainability of the project. In the long term, benefits will be seen in public health as well as fiscally as early intervention occurs.

Community Served: The community to be served by the educational training/protocol includes the Chapter's 320+ pediatrician members and the 48 pediatrics and internal medicine/pediatrics residents at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, MS. There are also approximately fifty-one Family Physician residents to whom the project will reach out, as well as to the more than 600 members of the MS Academy of Family Physicians.

Barriers to Entry: Based on the currently available information, there exist very few resources to augment traditional services available to young children. A July 2010 report entitled "Selected Indicators of Early Childhood Services and Needs in Mississippi: A Preliminary Assessment of Data Sources", published by the Early Childhood Institute at MS State University, listed only five non-governmental initiatives in the state available to our 82 counties to enhance early care and education. As such, a lack of available resources is a major barrier to achieving HP 2020 objectives.

Limited also is the exposure physicians and physicians-in-training, whether in pediatrics or family medicine, receive in regard to typical and atypical child development. Community physicians are on the front line in assisting with optimal development of children both in their clinics and in the community. Unfortunately, there is limited exposure to all of the exciting new information about early brain development and pediatricians have few, if any, strategies to use in clinics or the community to promote maximum brain development. Currently, exposure to child development is limited to the brief rotation residents make through the child development clinic

during their residency, and exposure to recent learnings and applications related to early brain development is even less intentional and less frequent.

This project will increase the proportion of children who are ready for school in all four domains of health development: physical development, social-emotional development, approaches to learning, language, and cognitive development. It will do so by increasing physicians' and physicians-in-training knowledge and understanding of early brain development and how it can be impacted. This education will then be shared with parents, potential parents, caregivers, and the public, which will positively impact how young children are nurtured and taught.

North Mississippi Pediatrics and the MS Chapter AAP will develop a contractual relationship with the MSU Early Childhood Institute to develop (or potentially revise) a training curriculum for physician education about early brain development findings, along with typical and atypical child development. The project will be initiated by hosting a meeting of collaborators to discuss project goals and content of the training curriculum. Content will be reviewed by project partners. Once content is finalized, the training curriculum will be developed in print and electronic formats (potentially a CD and website posts). While the curriculum is under development, the project will work on streamlining the process for the training to be disseminated to Pediatrics, Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, Family Physician, and potentially Obstetrics and Gynecology residency programs in MS, as well as will reach out to medical societies (e.g. MS Academy of Family Physicians, MS Osteopathic Medical Association, MS ACOG, others) for inclusion in continuing medical education meetings. The project already has inroads into the Pediatrics and Medicine/Pediatrics residency programs through current Chapter leadership, and anticipates that adoption of this training into residency programs will be easily accomplished.

To assure that there is public knowledge and recognition of early brain development issues, this project will develop simple, targeted materials for dissemination to parents and caregivers through medical clinics. In addition, a project spokesperson will be identified and will expose the general public to the issue of early brain development through media interviews,

newspaper articles, and potentially the development of other media tools to disseminate the message.

Measurement of Progress: This project will be evaluated through follow-ups with pediatricians and others who have been recipients of the early childhood education training provided through the MS Early Childhood Institute. Throughout the project, we will collect data on the numbers of physicians participating in this training. The Institute (via sub-contract with this project) will conduct pre- and post-education evaluation of their target audiences, and this information will be summarized in project reports. In addition, formal assessments with physicians across the state who have received training and educational materials, as well as of parents who have been recipients of educational materials, will occur through the chapter. Following receipt of information from these assessments, changes will be made in the content and/or mode of distribution of materials as needed. Finally, parents and caregivers who have received educational materials will be asked about the impact of this information on their families/children, and physicians will be asked to provide information on the impact of the training on their practices.

Long-Range Goals, Plans for Sustainability and Replication in Other Communities for each of these Strategies: Ultimately, these projects hope to increase the amount of information and services that are offered parents and children by health professionals. Our long range goals include:

1. Creating a systems-based change in the delivery of anticipatory guidance to patients and families by pediatricians and other physicians.
2. Make early childhood development information readily available to parents and caregivers through physicians' offices.

In terms of sustainability, the effects of this project are intended to have a ripple effect throughout our state as pediatric and medicine/pediatrics residents go into practice in areas across our state, and its impact will continue as the training curricula is made available to physicians, professional associations, and CME meetings beyond the end of this project. Additionally, these efforts could be replicated with other professionals, as well, potentially

including nurse practitioners and nurses and the training curriculum will be made available electronically for ease of distribution and sharing with others. Also, the educational materials that will be developed for distribution to families are intended to be used well after the end of the project and as such will create project sustainability.

Potential sources for future funding include the Office of the Governor's State Early Childhood Advisory Council, MS State Department of Health's Early Intervention Program, The Barksdale Reading Institute (foundation focused on early literacy), UMMC and the Reach Out and Read Program.

c. Working with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians as Part of Parent and Community Engagement and Capacity Building

The Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians has been federally recognized since 1947. The reservation consists of 35,000 acres of land scattered across seven counties in east central Mississippi. The nearly 10,000 members of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians live in eight reservation communities. The tribe is governed by a Tribal Council with an elected chief. All governance decisions are made by the Council. Over 90% of tribal members are full-blooded Choctaw and 95% of Choctaw families speak Choctaw in the home with 53% speaking no English at home. Among adults, only 49% (according to the 1990 Choctaw Demographic Survey) indicate that they speak English well and 30% indicate that they can hardly read English. This continued dominance of Choctaw language use is indicative of the strength and extent of Choctaw cultural practices among tribal members.

The young children of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians represent the largest group of ELL in the state. Many young children speak what is referred to as Choclish (a combined Choctaw and English) which presents problems in developing competency in one language since it is a hybrid native language. In the revision of the curriculum for infants-four-year olds representatives for the tribe will be involved in the modifications related to language and culture and parent engagement.

Over seventy-six percent of households remain at poverty level according to the most recent federal poverty guidelines. Major contributing factors to such low family incomes are those of

large numbers of young children in households, a fairly small number of employable adults, and moderate wage jobs.

Each year, from 2007-08 through 2010-11 between 550 and 600 children per year received child care services in ten centers on the reservation. On average across these years, approximately 50 percent received services in Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

Years ago a decision was made by the tribe to use the Child Care Regulations as currently enforced by the Mississippi Department of Health as the standards for tribal child care. Since centers are regulated by the state approved licensing standards, all licensed centers will be required to enroll in the MCCQSS in 2012. In-home providers on the reservation will be expected to register through the MCCQSS and participate as well. Due to the need to increase the capacity on the reservation for Choctaw technical assistants supporting the improvement in quality learning environments. In year 1, a new resource and referral center will be located on the reservation and MCCR&R technical assistant staff will be employed from Choctaw applicants to support the early care and education programs increase the quality of their programs. Additional MCCQSS monitors will be employed from Choctaw applicants to monitor the programs to determine their quality step rating.

The culture and language of tribes across the country is being threatened by the passing of the tribal elders who have kept the cultural practices and language alive through stories, songs and traditional food preparation and dance. The National Center for Rural Early Childhood Learning Initiatives at the Early Childhood Institute at MSU developed, in partnership with the Tribal Child Care Training and Technical Assistance Center (TriTAC) of the Child Care Bureau, materials for tribes to use to determine their needs in teaching cultural values and native language to young children. This training will be provided during year 1 to tribal child care leaders and others who may be interested. A plan for implementing elements of the training will be based on the results of an interest survey disseminated to parents and reactions from the participants who completed the training. Training content will also be determined through survey responses and the feedback from who attended the leader training. The plan will be implemented in years 2-3 with the evaluation to be conducted in year 4.

As part of the RTT ELC grant, an award through the Innovation Unit at the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development will be given to the Early Childhood Division and Education System of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. The grant will be dedicated to supporting the following:

- A liaison to support tribal staff on the activities outlined below in the following bullets and to monitor progress.
- A Resource & Referral Center on the reservation that is staffed by Choctaw early childhood educators trained by the MS Child Care R&R Network to provide training to all tribal early care and education providers while maintaining the native culture and language of the Choctaw tribe.
- An initiative to enroll families on the reservation in a savings account program by employing a tribal member to enroll and monitor participation.
- Employ technical assistants that are Choctaw and trained by ECI and MSU to provide technical assistance in family homes and QRIS centers.
- In school pre-K programs, train a school employee to administer the CLASS and provide two tribal members as staff who are trained in CLASS T/A.

By approaching this as an employment program for tribal members staff will be more likely to respond to the tribe than non-tribal people. The agreement would state that the tribe would support the partnership with funding of positions by year 3 and 4 with a 100% support by the end of the contract.

Performance Measures for (C)(3)(d) Leveraging existing resources to meet ambitious yet achievable annual statewide targets.					
	<i>Baseline and annual targets</i>				
	Baseline (Today, if known)	Target for end of calendar year 2012	Target for end of calendar year 2013	Target for end of calendar year 2014	Target for end of calendar year 2015

Number of Children with High Needs screened	149,581 41%	164,539 51%	180,993 61%	199,092 71%	219,002 81%
Number of Children with High Needs referred for services who received follow-up/treatment	71,200	91,066	111,628	132,909	154,935
Number of Children with High Needs who participate in ongoing health care as part of a schedule of well child care	145,439	187,029	230,075	274,628	320,740
Of these participating children, the number or percentage of children who are up-to-date in a schedule of well child care	116,351	149,623	184,060	219,702	256,592
<p>The above figures are estimated by summing the current CHIP (Medicaid Child's Health Insurance Plan) and EPSDT (Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment Program) figures. It is estimated there is a 25% overlap in children ages 0-5 participating in these programs.</p> <p>The EPSDT baseline data noted above was located in the CMS Annual EPSDT Participation Report for FY 2010 (Form CMS-416). It reports <u>actual</u> numbers, not estimates.</p> <p>The Report did not include any explanation as to collection methodology. There was no error or data quality information provided.</p>					

(C)(4) ENGAGING AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to provide culturally and linguistically appropriate information and support to families of Children with High Needs in order to promote school readiness for their children by--

(a) Establishing a progression of culturally and linguistically appropriate standards for family engagement across the levels of its Program Standards, including activities that enhance the capacity of families to support their children's education and development;

(b) Increasing the number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators trained and supported on an on-going basis to implement the family engagement strategies included in the Program Standards; and

(c) Promoting family support and engagement statewide, including by leveraging other existing resources such as through home visiting programs, other family-serving agencies, and through outreach to family, friend, and neighbor caregivers.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

Mississippi elected to not write to this Investment Area, rather it has embedded the Family Engagement activities throughout the rest of the application.

D. A GREAT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE

Note: The total available points for (D)(1) and (D)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (D), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (D).

(D)(1) Developing a Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and a progression of credentials.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to--

(a) Develop a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework designed to promote children's learning and development and improve child outcomes;

(b) Develop a common, statewide progression of credentials and degrees aligned with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework; and

(c) Engage postsecondary institutions and other professional development providers in aligning professional development opportunities with the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State shall include the evidence listed below and describe in its narrative how each piece of evidence demonstrates the State's success in meeting the criterion; the State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

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Evidence for (D)(1):

- To the extent the State has developed a common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework that meets the elements in criterion (D)(1), submit:
 - The Workforce Knowledge and Competencies;
 - Documentation that the State's Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework addresses the elements outlined in the definition of Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework in Definitions (section III) and is designed to promote children's learning and development and improve outcomes.

D. A GREAT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION WORKFORCE

HIGH-QUALITY PLAN – PROFESSIONAL SUPPORTS

Key Goal(s)	Improve the Early Learning workforce throughout the state of Mississippi.
Key activities and rationale ³⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate preschools into the quality rating systems. Since quality ratings are tied to staff qualifications, this provides motivation for preschools to improve those staff qualifications. • Develop a seamless early education curriculum progressing from 2- through 4-year colleges/universities. This creates a clear pathway for early educator candidates to prepare for a career in early education. • Implement new licensing regulations for child care directors. These recommendations would require those directors who are currently below the minimum thresholds to attain higher standards, presumably improving their knowledge, skills, and their ability to be effective directors. • Encourage participation in the online Child Development Associate credential, particularly for in-home providers. The online option and stipends will make it more convenient and financially rewarding for educators to improve their qualifications. • Mississippi has recently partnered with T.E.A.C.H. and WAGES to offer these programs in the state. The programs will support early childhood educators who might now otherwise be able to afford it, in their efforts to complete educational coursework by providing scholarships, salary supplements, and sponsoring childcare programs to share these educational costs. • In 2010, a comprehensive model of intervention (called Allies for Quality Child Care) that includes professional development was implemented in certain communities. The state hopes to use Race to the Top funds to continue and expand this program beyond 2013. • The Mississippi Child Care Research & Referral (MSCCR&R) Network has found that intensive technical assistance has proven to be the most effective way to improve the child development trajectory of low-income children in communities that have few resources due to economy and lack of educational opportunities. Therefore, the MSCCR&R Network plans to expand the technical assistance across the state in order to serve more licensed centers especially since the QRIS will become mandatory. This will involve hiring new advisors to assist preschool centers. • Recently, the MSCCR&R Network began to collect data on the training and education of early educators to include in the registry database. This registry data will allow parents to make decisions about where to send their child and enable educators to make more informed decisions about where to work based on opportunities for professional growth or staff turnover rates. It will also help policymakers determine the areas in the greatest need of more opportunities. Expanding the registry to include those who provide professional development will allow directors and child care workers to make informed decisions about where and how to obtain their help for their training needs.

35 And if initially implemented, where and how the activities will be scaled up over time to eventually achieve statewide implementation

<p>Realistic timeline + key milestones</p>	<p>(D)(1)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality rating systems have been developed. All centers will be required to participate by the end of 2011-12. Fifty in-home providers currently participate and the state plans to phase in an additional 300 in-home providers each year through 2015. • The state has set up a committee to begin developing an early education curriculum from 4 year institutions. The state hopes to articulate the curriculum between 2 year and 4 year institutions. This articulation will be developed in 2012-13. The goal is to implement it by 2015. <p>(D)(2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new licensing regulations for childcare directors are awaiting approval and can then be phased in starting immediately. • The state has piloted the online CDA and will specifically target 50 in-home providers to participate in 2011-12. • Implementation of T.E.A.C.H and WAGES will begin in 2012-13. • A comprehensive technical assistance model will be available 2012 and expanded across the state by 2015. • Technical assistance will be phased in over time, and fully implemented by 2014-15. • Collecting complete data on educator qualifications and professional development providers is a complex on-going process, but is already in process and a first-round of data collection will be complete by 2013-14.
<p>Party(ies) responsible</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Division of Early Childhood Care and Development will collaborate with the Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute to effectively implement the quality rating systems. • The State Early Childhood Advisory Council's Workforce Committee will be responsible for forming the task force that will align the curriculum. • The Childcare Advisory Council will approve the new director qualifications. • Birth to five credential to be approved by MDE by 2014. • Mississippi Child Care Research & Referral (MSCCR&R) Network offers an online CDA as of 2012. Financial incentives will be provided through a variety of means in 2012-13. • T.E.A.C.H. and WAGES will be housed in the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation (MSCEI). • The MSCCR&R Network in partnership with the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation (MSCEI) will continue to implement the Allies for Quality Child Care Program. • The MSCCR&R Network will be responsible for managing the technical assistance. • MSCCR&R will collect and maintain the database on staff and provider qualifications.
<p>Project Budgets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEACH • R&R • MS R&R – approximately \$2 million • MSCEI ALLIES – approximately \$1 million

Supporting evidence	<p>The common, statewide Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework developed with the Mississippi Community College System with the DECCD and the R&R</p> <p>TEACH and WagesS has track record in several state</p> <p>Retention rate Studies</p>
Performance measures	<p>Community College System has developed and implemented the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework</p> <p>The percentage of early childhood educators that have the CDA or have progressed higher on the career ladder.</p>
How will State address different types of Early Learning and Development Programs	<p>The Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework and the CDA credential works for every type of provider.</p> <p>The MSCCR&R technical assistance teams will be located in high risk areas of the state such as the Delta. High-risk would be defined using poverty indicators and academic at-risk indicators.</p>
How will State meet needs of Children with High Needs and the special populations	<p>CDA has a special focus on serving high needs children</p> <p>Also Project PREPARE</p> <p>The MSCCR&R Network offers English-as-a-Second-Language materials at its 12 centers and mobile units, including curricula, audio resources and cultural educational toys to support parents and teachers of language minority students.</p>

(D)(1) DEVELOPING A WORKFORCE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK AND A PROGRESSION OF CREDENTIALS.

(D)(1) (A) DEVELOP A COMMON, STATEWIDE WORKFORCE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK DESIGNED TO PROMOTE CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVE CHILD OUTCOMES.

The State Early Childhood Advisory Council's (SECAC) workforce committee has been working for the past several years on the development of a seamless career ladder with compensation tied to credentials. A field trial for entry level early care and education teachers was conducted in two counties (52) using the 40 hour on-line orientation curriculum developed by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies leading to a Child Development Associate Credential. The field trial has energized the committee's work and has resulted in an ongoing analysis of the entire workforce competency framework using the Workforce Blueprint document developed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (Section D Appendix). To date, the analysis has revealed the following details on existing programs or activities that are designed to promote workforce competencies:

1. PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS: common workforce competencies

The following describes the current state of professional standards:

- Currently the 12 community colleges that offer an A.A. Degree in Early Childhood Technology utilize a set of common workforce competencies developed by community college early childhood technology instructors (Section D Appendix). These competencies are outlined for use in the development of course syllabi and student assessments (Section D Appendix). Community colleges require the student to complete an exit exam entitled the C-PASS in order to gain feedback for program evaluation and improvement.
- In 2010, the Mississippi Department of Education approved an add-on certification for anyone seeking a pre-k-k teaching certification if they already hold a current K-6 certification. Courses that are required are: SPED for Early Childhood Development, Early Language in Literature, Early Childhood Methods and Introduction to Early Childhood.
- Currently Child Care Regulations allow for an individual without a high school degree to be employed as an assistant teacher. The Workforce Committee will seek a regulatory change to address this concern in year 1 of the grant.

In the first 2 years of the grant, the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and the SECAC Workforce Committee plan to accomplish the following:

- In years 1 and 2, utilize the Workforce Competency Blueprint to fully develop the NAEYC standards related to professional standards.
- In year 1 of the grant, SECAC will reconvene the workforce committee and additional four-year university faculty to review the community college workforce competencies as a basis for comparison of competencies outlined in the NCATE and NAEYC standards for early childhood for four year degree programs. After conducting a cross walk between standards, the committee will develop a plan to improve curriculum alignment between the 2 year community colleges and 4 year universities.
- In year 1 of the grant, the SECAC workforce committee will identify new content that should be included in all early education preparation programs. In year 2, the SECAC workforce committee will develop strategies for including this content in the courses required of students in an early childhood /child development degree program and present a report to the Council by the end of year 2 of the grant.

2. CAREER PATHWAYS: routes of continuous educational progress for early childhood professionals, so that professionals can plan for the achievement of increased qualifications, understand the professional possibilities, and be appropriately compensated.

The following describes the current state of career pathways:

- Embedded in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) is a career advancement pathway (defined by the quality step standards) for staff. The pathway is linked to a higher quality rating for the participating centers (Section D Appendix).
- Currently the Mississippi Child Care Resource and Referral network is working with the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation to phase-in the T.E.A.C.H. and WAGES\$ programs in two counties with a phase-in plan for continuation in years 1-4 of the grant.
- The Early Childhood Institute in conjunction with the MCCQSS program and the CCR&R network provide information for early childhood teachers employed in the MCCQSS on how they can move through a career pathway (Section D Appendix).

In the first 2 years of the grant, the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and the SECAC Workforce Committee plan to accomplish the following:

- In years 1 and 2, they will utilize the Workforce Competency Blueprint to fully develop the NAEYC standards related to career pathways.
- In year 1, they will establish a procedure with nSPARK that will allow the SECAC Workforce Committee and the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development to access reports and analyze data to make informed program and policy decisions and planning.

3. **ARTICULATION:** the transfer of professional development credentials, courses, credits, degrees, and student performance-based competencies from one program or institution to another, ideally without a loss of credits. In the first 2 years of the grant, the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and the SECAC Workforce Committee plan to accomplish the following:

- In years 1 and 2, they will utilize the Workforce Competency Blueprint to fully develop the NAEYC standards related to articulation.
- In year 1 of the grant, SECAC will reconvene the workforce committee and additional four-year university faculty to review the community college workforce competencies as a basis for comparison of competencies outlined in the NCATE and NAEYC standards for early childhood for four year degree programs. After conducting a cross walk between standards, the committee will develop a plan to improve curriculum alignment between the 2 year community colleges and 4 year universities.
- In year 1 of the grant, the SECAC workforce committee will identify new content that should be included in all early education preparation programs. In year 2, the SECAC workforce committee will develop strategies for including this content in the courses required of students in an early childhood /child development degree program and present a report to the Council by the end of year 2 of the grant.
- In years 3 and 4, a plan will be developed to implement an Early Childhood Technology A.A. Degree/Child Development B.S. Degree. This plan will result from

a collaborative effort among the SECAC Workforce chair, a designee from the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development, the Institutions of Higher Learning Board, and the Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges.

4. **ADVISORY STRUCTURE:** the coordination mechanism for an integrated early childhood professional development system, which should be free standing and have some authority or direct link to authority in the state's governance structure.

The coordination of the early childhood professional development system is currently shared between the MS Department of Human Services (DHS) Division of Early Childhood Care and Development, the entity responsible for the contractual arrangement with the CCR&R network, the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation (MSCEI) which houses the T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ programs, and the State Early Childhood Advisory Council (SECAC).

In the first 2 years of the grant, the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and the SECAC Workforce Committee plan to accomplish the following:

- In years 1 and 2 of the grant, they will utilize the Workforce Competency Blueprint to fully develop the NAEYC standards related to articulation.
- In years 1 and 2 of the grant, they will develop a committee of early childhood educators representing community colleges and universities and other organizations that certify teachers in the state. The purpose of the quarterly meetings is to review new trends and information specific to the early education field for the purpose of determining the appropriateness of any additions or deletions in course content and to determine how programs can be more efficient in the use of shared faculty across colleges and universities.
- In years 3 and 4, they will determine the most effective and efficient means for utilizing nSPARK's capacity for analysis of data to plan for career advancement for the majority of the early childhood workforce.

5. **DATA ANALYSIS:** the process of gauging impacts and systems change, as well as informing planning, evaluation, quality assurance, and accountability.

Currently, the state longitudinal data system is being utilized to collect baseline data and data analysts are developing easy-to-read reports for a variety of audiences. There are memorandums of understanding between a number of state agencies to share data in some areas of workforce development and job placement.

In the first 2 years of the grant, the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and the SECAC Workforce Committee plan to accomplish the following:

- In years 1 and 2 of the grant, they will utilize the Workforce Competency Blueprint to fully develop the NAEYC standards related to data analysis.
- In years 1 and 2 of the grant, they will assign unique identifiers for early childhood teachers and other staff. Additionally, they will develop and implement a mechanism for inputting career related information into the nSPARK system.
- In years 3-4 of the grant, a template will be developed to collect data on the changing early childhood workforce with regard to the increase in professional development relating to credentials and/or degrees. This template will be used annual reports generated through nSPARK.

(D)(1) (B) DEVELOP A COMMON, STATEWIDE PROGRESSION OF CREDENTIALS AND DEGREES ALIGNED WITH THE WORKFORCE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

As part of participation in the QRIS, the licensed centers and in-home providers that are not currently involved in the QRIS will receive an automatic base rating of ‘1’ on the 1-5 point Mississippi Childcare and In-Home Quality Step Systems scale. At each step of the 5-level system, there are additional professional development and educational requirements for the director and staff. The following describes the requirements at each step level for center-based care.

- Step 1: Licensing (15 staff development hours).
- Step 2: Additional director development of 5 hours annually; 15 hours of (outside) annual staff development for each full-time staff member.

- Step 3: The director or at least one staff member holds a Mississippi Department of Human Services Division of Early Childhood Care and Development credential, or a credential approved by the division, or a two-year degree or higher in child development, early childhood education, or related field; at least 1 staff member on-site has a Child Development Associate (CDA); all staff hold GED or high school diplomas; 18 hours of (outside) annual staff development for each full-time staff member; and one monthly staff meeting is held.
- Step 4: The director holds an A.A. or higher; 15% of full-time teaching staff have current CDA or higher; 20 hours of annual staff development with 10 hours spent on teaching for all full-time teaching staff.
- Step 5: The director holds a BA/B.S. or higher; 25% of full-time teaching staff have current CDA or higher; 25 hours of annual staff development with 10 hours spent on teaching for all full-time teaching staff.

The In-Home QRIS system requires the following:

- Step 2: 15 hours of staff development each year
- Step 3: Enrolled in the first 40 hours of CDA or have completed CDA
- Step 4: Completed CDA and additional 20 hours of staff development
- Step 5: 25 hours of staff development each year

This step system provides the structure for Mississippi early childhood professionals and providers to plan their training and education. While this system has not been tied to compensation in the past, the state has a plan to implement a career ladder structure with specific recommended compensation levels that will be phased in over the next four years.

The workforce subcommittee of the SECAC worked together with representatives of the Choctaw Tribal Nation to initiate a career ladder complete with bonus stipends in 2010 and implementation planned for 2011-12. This committee was comprised of representatives from the

community colleges, four year institutions, child care directors, and the Choctaw Tribal Nation. The results of this effort will inform the rollout of the statewide career ladder.

In addition, the T.E.A.C.H. AND WAGES programs will also be implemented in 2011-12. These programs are being funded by a grant that SECAC received which is matched with W.K. Kellogg Foundation funding. During 2011, 70 early care and education teachers with only a GED or high school diploma have been/are being recruited to pilot the program. These teachers are a part of a comprehensive project showcasing intensive technical assistance and other unique approaches.

In addition, 72 directors will also be able to participate in a leadership development program that will offer a national credential and a stipend upon completion. The credentials and any fees associated with them will be funded out of existing grant dollars awarded to MSCCR&R Network. By utilizing the Federal RTT ELC funding, this will be phased in over the next four years.

After successful completion of the first 40 hours of the career ladder, teachers and teacher candidates will receive a bonus stipend of \$100 (See a list of courses in Section D Appendix). The teachers and teacher candidates will then proceed to the next level of the career ladder. The second level of the career ladder is the completion of a 40 hour age-specific credential which is either an Infant/Toddler or Pre-K credential. Upon completion of the age-specific credential, they will receive an additional bonus of \$300. The third level of the ladder is completion of the overall Child Development Associate (CDA) credential that comes with a bonus of \$600, bringing the total bonus for completing all three levels of the career ladder to \$1,000. This CDA credential is offered online with technical assistance available as needed. Participating community colleges will award the equivalent of three credits for completion of the CDA credential. Additional monetary incentives will be offered to staff as part of the “seed” funding provided to up to 300 licensed centers and 150 in-home providers per year for quality improvements in preparation for MSCCQSS participation.

In the first 2 years of the grant, the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and the SECAC Workforce Committee will coordinate the following activities:

- In year 1 of the grant, they will develop and implement a compensation scale for individuals who move from a CDA to an A.A.; A.A. to B.S. and B.S. to Master's degree.
- In years 1-2 of the grant, they will develop a means for evaluating the quality rating reports in years 2-4 from the MCCQSS Division to determine the correlation between the environmental rating scores and specific teacher data. They will provide the technical assistance division and the CCR&R staff with information on each teacher's educational level, region of the state, age range, classroom score on the environmental rating and other pertinent data. The reports will be used for the purpose of determining if the incentives for career advancement are reducing the under-skilled and unstable workforce that is currently an issue.
- During year 1 of the grant, they will explore the possibility of requiring 15 pre-service education hours before teachers enter the classroom and an additional 25 hours after they enter the classroom (including on-site technical assistance). The 40 hours are based on a national recommendation from NACCRRA. These 40 hours will be offered as online courses which are a part of the overall CDA.
- During years 3 and 4 of the grant, they will review the compensation schedule and determine if adjustments should be made. This decision will be based on the number of individuals who are increasing their educational credentials, the level(s) that the majority of individuals stop at in their educational pursuit, and the reasons why they stop. The team will develop a plan for implementing additional bonuses or increasing the amounts if the study indicates they are warranted.

(D)(1) (C) ENGAGE POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDERS IN ALIGNING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH THE STATE'S WORKFORCE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK.

Currently, twelve out of 15 community colleges offer an Early Childhood Education Technology A.A. degree which is considered a terminal degree. Only 15 of the credit hours earned toward the degree can currently be applied to a four-year degree in most of the state universities. However, there are memorandums of understanding in place at several of the institutions to allow the easy

transfer of credits. As previously stated, the SECAC's workforce committee is charged with working on creating a universal articulation agreement between the 2-year and 4-year degree programs.

Over one-half of Mississippi's universities currently have a child development program approved by the Mississippi State Department of Education. These universities have programs accredited by either the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences or the National Association of Young Children. Students who complete a bachelor's degree program or higher from one of these programs may qualify for a pre-K-K license (endorsement) once they take the Praxis I (Reading, Writing, and Math) and Praxis II for child development. On July 8, 2011, the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification, Licensure and Development approved a motion to allow the pre-K-K endorsement to be added to a standard elementary license with an approved program of twelve hours or by taking an approved Praxis test.

Aligning Professional Development with the State's Workforce and Competency Framework

The community college system has a common core of standards and workforce competencies embedded within their curriculum, (Section D Appendix) whereas the 4 year universities do not have such an alignment. The steps below outline a plan to better align all postsecondary course offerings and other training offered as part of the MCCQSS to the workforce and competency framework.

- One of the goals of the SECAC workforce committee in years 1-4 will be to align workforce standards and competencies taught at the community colleges with the course offerings in 4 year degree programs in child development and early childhood education. This will require a memorandum of understanding between the universities to develop core competencies for cross-discipline early childhood courses and align these with workforce competencies defined by the community colleges. By year 4 of the grant, the alignment and necessary course adjustments will have occurred.
- The state will implement a birth to 5 teaching certificate through an add-on endorsement similar to the one recently approved for pre-K-K. The SECAC workforce committee will

work with the teacher certification office at the Mississippi Department of Education to integrate the add-on requirements into current university courses. The needs of infants and toddlers are unique and require skills specific to that age. The teaching certificate specific to birth to 5 will allow more focus on infant and toddler ages in teacher preparation than is currently afforded.

- Using the NAEYC Workforce Competency Blueprint as a rubric, representatives from community colleges and universities will review current course syllabi in years 3 and 4 of the grant to determine the elements listed in the blueprint that are not covered in their courses. A special emphasis will be placed on increasing student exposure to cultural and linguistic diversity and improving educator awareness of the impact of poverty on child development and family engagement. By year 4 of the grant, course syllabi will reflect the inclusion of the workforce competency elements.
- Using the NAEYC Workforce Competency Blueprint as a rubric, training sessions provided by the MSCCR&R will be reviewed in years 3 and 4 of the grant to determine the elements listed in the blueprint that are not covered in the training. A special emphasis will be placed on increasing student exposure to cultural and linguistic diversity and improving educator awareness of the impact of poverty on child development and family engagement. By year 4 of the grant, course training modules will reflect inclusion of the workforce competency elements.

(D)(2) SUPPORTING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS IN IMPROVING THEIR KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND ABILITIES.

Several of the initiatives currently underway and in the planning stages will increase opportunities and provide better access to professional development. Specifically, the new requirement that centers must participate in the MCCQSS (the state's QRIS) and the implementation of T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ initiatives will likely create an incentive for providers to participate in professional development and training in order to improve their quality rating. When programs' quality ratings are tied to the credentials of their workforce,

centers will have more motivation to ensure that their workforce attains the required training and credentials and is compensated accordingly.

In addition to the rating system, the Mississippi RTT workforce committee has recommended the following as licensing changes by 2015:

- (1) Define effective and ineffective performance in the position of child care director
- (2) Propose changes in licensing regulations for child care directors to define the consequences of receiving a rating of ineffective
- (3) Develop a career intervention for directors who are evaluated as ineffective with standards to reflect effective behaviors as the director
- (4) Require directors who are currently below the minimum thresholds (as determined by an assessment conducted by the regulatory staff) to attain higher standards, presumably improving their knowledge, skills, and their ability to be effective directors.

These changes are examples of requiring more education/training to align with the responsibilities of the position, and offering compensation to reward the additional (and required) education if attained. The following is an example that is under consideration.

Child Care Director Qualifications: A child care director shall be least 21 years of age and shall have at a minimum:

1. A bachelor's degree in early childhood education, child development, elementary education (with endorsement in birth-kindergarten), child care, special education (with endorsement in birth-kindergarten), psychology (with emphasis on child psychology), or family and consumer sciences (with emphasis on child development), or equivalent degree from another child-related field or course of study and three years paid experience in a licensed child care facility.

OR

2. A two-year associate degree from an accredited community or junior college in early childhood education technology or child care and six years paid experience in a licensed child care facility.

AND

3. A verified certificate from the licensing agency certifying that the individual was qualified to be the director of a licensed child care facility prior to January 1, 2012 in the State of Mississippi. To maintain this qualification, the director must earn a director's credential approved by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) or offered by the Mississippi Department of Human Services Division of Early Childhood Care and Development by January 1, 2015.

It is further proposed that the director credentialing program offered by the Mississippi Department of Human Services Division of Early Childhood Care and Development be made available in an online option which would be more accessible to directors currently working in the field. The content of this program should focus on the leadership and management aspects related to the director position and reflect the workforce competencies developed in year 1 of the grant.

Improving curriculum alignment and developing articulation agreements between departments and institutions will help to improve the educational pathways for those educators who wish to improve their knowledge and skills (see D (1)(c)) and reduce tuition costs being incurred by students who currently participate in an early education curriculum that does not articulate smoothly between educational levels.

Finally, Mississippi is in the process of implementing T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ programs, (described in D (2)(b)) that will provide financial assistance for early childhood educators to receive important training and education that they might not otherwise be able to afford. To pilot the program, The MSCCR&R Network worked in partnership with the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation (MSCEI) implemented a comprehensive model of intervention and support for childcare centers in 2010. This comprehensive program approach is proving to be successful in moving staff from one educational credential to another. This model will be offered to interested childcare providers throughout the state.

The model also includes a career ladder that will be part of the implementation of the T.E.A.C.H. and WAGE\$ programs. The professional development career ladder within this program is being

funded through the 4% quality funding set aside in the State's CCDF grant and also in part from a grant through SECAC.

(D)(2) (A) PROVIDING AND EXPANDING ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT ARE ALIGNED WITH THE STATE'S WORKFORCE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Currently, the MSCCR&R Network has 12 sites across the state with 14 trainers and 12 resource technicians and resource centers. The Network partners with community colleges and is housed on 6 campuses. Five network centers partner with a library system or parent resource centers in school districts, and one network center has an independent location. The network is housed within the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Therefore, the network covers all 82 counties. All of the professional development for early care and education that is funded through 4% quality dollars is delivered through this system. In addition, there are 4 technical assistants providing coaching and mentoring when and where needed. The network maintains a professional development tracking database for the teachers and directors. The purpose of this network is to provide intensive technical assistance for centers. Based on data collected from projects that The Early Childhood Institute and the MSCCR&R Network has conducted, intensive technical assistance has proven to be the most effective way to improve the child development trajectory of low-income children in communities that have few resources due to economy and lack of educational opportunities. The MSCCR&R technical assistance model and the plans to expand the model are described in the next section.

Plans for Expansion of Training Opportunities and Training Curriculum Review

In years 1 and 2, staff will work to develop the workforce competency skills and evaluate all training conducted through the CCR&R to determine areas where gaps in training exist. When identified, adjustments to training content will be made.

In years 1 and 2 of the grant, the CCR&R network will implement additional teams to provide technical assistance to licensed centers across the state. The proposed changes are based on the

successful model that was field tested in 2011. The expansion of the model is especially important since the QRIS will become mandatory and support services to early care and education programs will increase. Teams currently consist of the following members: 10 technical assistance field staff; a nutrition advisor, an assessment coordinator, and a business advisor. Teams with this composition have worked in two counties with measurable success in improving quality in the programs and will be used as a model for expanding quality support services.

Going forward, MSCCR&R proposes to make the following changes: (1) a business advisor who will work with centers across the state (but are not part of every team) to offer basic support to directors/owners in how best to manage the weekly and monthly budget, (2) a parent educator for each team who will specifically help center staff in addressing criteria in the MCCQSS related to parent engagement and support, and (3) up to 10 technical assistants on every team will have specializations in either Infant/Toddler or Pre-K to provide support to teachers on how to improve classroom quality as defined by indicators specific to the environmental rating scales. The areas of specialization of technical assistance staff will be defined by a combination of work experience and completed course work. An assessment coordinator and nutrition advisor will continue to be a part of every team.

Each team will have a minimum caseload of 15 centers to work with at a time and will serve all classrooms within a center. Pre-assessments utilizing the environmental rating scales will determine the number of hours of technical assistance needed. A business inventory assessment with each center will determine the number of hours and support that the director will need in business management. The teams will be located in high risk areas of the state such as the Delta. At-risk would be defined using poverty indicators and academic at-risk indicators. Given the high number of teaching staff with only a high school degree, the team approach has been especially effective when the majority of teachers in a program have little or no post secondary education. Additional assessments of the teams' effectiveness will be completed every six months to determine how to improve the service. All technical assistance that staff receive will be counted toward the training hours required in the MCCQSS.

In years 1 and 2 of the grant, MSCCR&R Network will also add 2 resource centers, 2 trainers, and 2 resource technicians. With these additions, the network will be strategically placed to support more centers and in-home providers and families in rural areas of the state and on the reservation of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians. Currently, the MSCCR&R Network has two mobile units that are utilized as resource centers and travel to child care centers in rural Mississippi areas.

In year 1 of the grant, strategies will be developed by the staff of the University of Southern Mississippi's Preschool Personnel Assistance, Resources and Education (Project PREPARE) and CCR&R staff to better coordinate the special support Project PREPARE can provide to programs with the services provided by the CCR&R network. The program enables Mississippi child care centers to better serve high-risk children and children with special needs and to increase overall program quality. Currently Project PREPARE's training opportunities are placed on the MSCCR&R Network calendar and made available to all licensed centers.

The MSCCR&R Network also offers English-as-a-Second-Language materials at its 12 centers and mobile units, including curricula, audio resources, and cultural educational toys to support parents and teachers of language minority students. In year 1 of the grant, a review of the materials the training provided to early care and education staff will be conducted using information from NAEYC and Head Start on cultural and linguistic diversity to determine if modifications and updates should occur.

(D)(2) (B) IMPLEMENTING POLICIES AND INCENTIVES (E.G., SCHOLARSHIPS, COMPENSATION AND WAGE SUPPLEMENTS, TIERED REIMBURSEMENT RATES, OTHER FINANCIAL INCENTIVES, MANAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES) THAT PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT ALONG AN ARTICULATED CAREER PATHWAY THAT IS ALIGNED WITH THE WORKFORCE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK, AND THAT ARE DESIGNED TO INCREASE RETENTION;

SECAC has recently partnered with T.E.A.C.H. and WAGES to offer these programs in the state. The T.E.A.C.H. program will support early childhood educators in their efforts to complete

educational coursework by providing scholarships and sponsoring childcare programs to share these educational costs. Scholarship recipients receive a raise or bonus at the end of the contract. Participating states have seen increased staff compensation, increased staff educational levels, and decreased turnover in the early childhood workforce.

The WAGES program provides education-based salary supplements to teachers, directors, and family child care providers working with children between the ages of birth and 5. The program is designed to provide preschool children more stable relationships with better educated teachers by rewarding teacher education and continuity of care. Both programs are housed in the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation (MSCEI).

In 2012, all early care and education programs will be required to participate in the MCCQSS, which will provide opportunities to the licensed centers to receive quality rating incentives from 7% to 25% (depending on their quality rating) in additional funds. The amount the center receives for quality improvements is dependent on the number of children attending that are enrolled through the child care subsidy program. In-home providers will also receive bonuses in an amount yet to be determined.

(D)(2) (C) PUBLICLY REPORTING AGGREGATED DATA ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT, ADVANCEMENT, AND RETENTION; AND

The MSCCR&R Network maintains a database with information on licensed (center and home) providers. Recently, the network began to collect data on a voluntary basis on the training and education of early educators to include in the registry database. This registry data, which will be posted on the CCR&R website will allow parents to make decisions about where to send their child and enable educators to make more informed decisions about where to work based on opportunities for professional growth or staff turnover rates. It will also help policymakers determine the areas in the greatest need of more training opportunities.

In years 2-3 of the grant, a review of current requirements of those who provide professional development opportunities will be conducted and evaluated to determine if revisions are needed.

Their contact information and credentials will be included in the registry to promote opportunities for directors and teachers to make informed decisions about where and how to obtain their help for their training needs.

The longitudinal statewide database, nSPARC, will provide access to all early educator data collected and this data will be used to help determine the best ways to communicate information on the developing career pathways and workforce competencies. The information can also be used in setting statewide policies and educational goals for the early care and education field in the state.

(D)(2) (D) SETTING AMBITIOUS YET ACHIEVABLE TARGETS

In 2012, the state will require all center-based providers to participate in the QRIS, thereby including the educators in the first step of the career ladder. The state believes that providers will make an effort to provide more training and educational opportunities in order to improve their quality rating.

Fifty unlicensed in-home providers have been participating in the QRIS and a certification process as part of a current project that was recommended by the SECAC group in 2009. With grant funding supporting this project for 2011-12, Nurturing Homes technical assistance initiative will be targeting 300 providers. The state plans to phase in 300 additional in-home providers each year through 2015.

The state also currently offers preschool for 3- and 4-year olds in 56 out of 152 school districts. The goal is to expand the number of districts where preschool is offered to 90 or more and include all of them in the QRIS by 2015.

Currently, there are 2,644 children attending programs that have received accreditation from the National Association on Education for Young Children (NAEYC). The goal is to expand that number to 4,000 by 2015.

Also, currently only one higher education institution has child development or early childhood education program accreditation from the NAEYC and none have this accreditation from the National Council of Accreditation of Teacher Educators (NCATE). The goal is to have all the higher education programs that offer early childhood degrees receive NAEYC accredited and/or NCATE accredited by 2015.

(1) INCREASING THE NUMBER OF POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDERS WITH PROGRAMS THAT ARE ALIGNED TO THE WORKFORCE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK AND THE NUMBER OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS WHO RECEIVE CREDENTIALS FROM POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROVIDERS THAT ARE ALIGNED TO THE WORKFORCE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK;

Currently, individual 4 year and 2 year higher education institutions have negotiated articulation agreements. The 4 year institutions are only able to engage in these agreements when the community college program hires faculty meeting Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) requirements. This includes the faculty member holding a masters degree with 18 hours of early childhood coursework. The majority of community colleges meet these requirements. In years 1-3 of the grant, the SECAC workforce committee will work with community college faculty in locating stipends and or other supports to assist them in completing additional graduate study to meet these qualifications.

Years 2-4 will be spent working with representatives from the Institutions of Higher Learning to establish a core of courses that will automatically articulate with community college courses. Using the workforce and knowledge framework, universities and community colleges will continue to work in years 2-4 of the grant toward strengthening articulation agreements that frame the career ladder for early childhood professionals. Specifically the work will focus on helping all instructors at community colleges to meet SACS accreditation standards. Proposals to encourage community college instructors to pursue graduate degrees will be initiated to ensure more community college programs are eligible for articulation agreements. With more

community college instructors meeting SACS accreditation requirements, the academic career ladder for early childhood students will be stronger and more seamless.

(2) INCREASING THE NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS WHO ARE PROGRESSING TO HIGHER LEVELS OF CREDENTIALS THAT ALIGN WITH THE WORKFORCE KNOWLEDGE AND COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK.

By the end of year 1 of the grant, the statewide database will have all staff data from the MCCQSS licensed centers that was collected by monitors as part of the MCCQSS process. Within another year, the database will have data collected from monitoring visits in in-home provider settings. This will allow a reliable baseline of early care and education provider data to be used in comparison studies by year 3. The work on developing the workforce competencies will be completed by year 2 as well, allowing the work in years 3-4 to focus on using data to increase the numbers of teachers and directors who are progressing up the career pathway. Data use includes but is not limited to:

- Determining the high need regions of the state for more training in specific content areas tied to the MCCQSS criteria
- Determining the needs of providers in specific career areas that are proving to be barriers to career advancement
- Determining the utility of phasing the CDA credential on-line work, since the state data currently reflects the majority of early care and education teachers have a high school degree with no other staff training prior to being employed.

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(1): Increasing the number of Early Childhood Educators receiving credentials from postsecondary institutions and professional development providers with programs that are aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework					
	Baseline (Today)	Target - end of calendar year 2012	Target - end of calendar year 2013	Target - end of calendar year 2014	Target – end of calendar year 2015
Total number of “aligned” institutions and providers	15	16	18	21	24

Total number of Early Childhood Educators credentialed by an “aligned” institution or provider (Community College or R&R)	525 per year	625 per year	725 per year	825 per year	850 per year
<i>*Source: Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Community College Data, 2011, Source: Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, 2011; Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System, 2011</i>					

Performance Measures for (D)(2)(d)(2): Increasing number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who are progressing to higher levels of credentials that align with the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework.

Progression of credentials (Aligned to Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework)	<i>Baseline and Annual Targets -- Number and percentage of Early Childhood Educators who have moved up the progression of credentials, aligned to the Workforce Knowledge and Competency Framework, in the prior year</i>									
	Baseline (Today)		Target- end of calendar year 2012		Target- end of calendar year 2013		Target- end of calendar year 2014		Target- end of calendar year 2015	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
less than HS	87	4	75	4%	60	3%	45	2%	20	1%
HS diploma	1240	59	1100	52%	950	45%	700	36%	450	24%
Credential 1 (orientation) and Credential 2 (IT or Pre-K)	0	0	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
CDA	170	8	250	12%	335	16%	450	21%	525	25%
AA	320	15	375	18%	410	20%	450	21%	550	26%
Bachelor's degree	248	12	275	13%	300	14%	350	17%	425	20%
Master's degree	33	2	33	2%	45	2%	55	3%	75	4%
*Source: Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System Community College Data, 2011, Source: Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, 2011; Mississippi State Longitudinal Data System, 2011										

E. MEASURING OUTCOMES AND PROGRESS

The overarching theme for Section E is “Infrastructure Supports,” which is guided by the High-Quality Plan illustrated in the chart below. The overlap of these Infrastructure Supports with Family and Child Supports, and Provider Supports, is described in more detail in the subsections of Section (E)(1).

HIGH-QUALITY PLAN – INFRASTRUCTURE (INTRODUCED IN (A)(3))

Key Goal(s)	Create a collaborative, comprehensive system at the state level.
Key activities and rationale ³⁶	Expand the current Division of Early Childhood Care and Development into the Mississippi Division of Early Learning and Development, within the Department of Human Services. Continue the interagency work of the State Early Childhood Advisory Council of Mississippi (SECAC-MS).
Realistic timeline + key milestones	(A)(3) Hire key leaders of units (7 in year 1) & liaisons (10) to serve in supporting Departments/Agencies (2012) Hire remainder of staff (2013) Hold monthly meetings of SECAC-MS; form committees for key areas of the grant (infrastructure, provider supports, family supports and professional supports) (Ongoing) Ensure each of the 82 counties in the state are visited by the SECAC-MS members for a two-day visit to conduct a needs assessment. (2012) (C)(2) Identify common, statewide Kindergarten assessment along with other components of the Comprehensive Assessment System. (2012) (B)(5) Use assessment data to evaluate whether or not High Quality programs are enabling school readiness. (2013-2015) (E)(1) Link assessment to early elementary grades. (2014-2015) (E)(2) Link longitudinal data system with vital records. (2012-2013) Gather data from assessments, screenings, follow-up. (Ongoing) Enable reports to be generated to inform annual reviews of system. (Ongoing) Send monthly reports on the status of RTT-ELC to agency heads and governor (Ongoing)
Party(ies) responsible	Director, Division of Early Childhood Care and Development Chair, SECAC-MS
Project Budgets	\$17,447,614

36 And if initially implemented, where and how the activities will be scaled up over time to eventually achieve statewide implementation

Supporting evidence	(A)(3) tables + MOUs, letters of intent, etc (C)(1)(a) & (b) copy of ELD Standards; documentation of alignment
Performance measures	Increased % & # of High Needs Children entering High Quality programs Increased % & # of programs entering TQRIS and increasing in quality ratings Attendance at SECAC meetings by <u>all</u> agencies serving High Needs children and their families. Number of visits to 82 counties % customer satisfaction survey (survey of families, providers, local agencies)
How will State address different types of Early Learning and Development Programs	Mississippi has developed TQRIS standards for four types of providers: Center-based, after school, Pre-K and Home-based providers. Over the grant period the state will work to understand how children who are cared for by kith and kin can experience a High-Quality setting, identify policies and implement those policies.
How will State meet needs of Children with High Needs and the special populations	Refining its data structures and pulling reports that summarize the services that families receive will be the first step in serving High Needs populations in the state better. Once these data are more fully understood, the state will then work to reallocate its funding to where it is most needed.

Note: The total available points for (E)(1) and (E)(2) = 40. The 40 available points will be divided by the number of selection criteria that the applicant chooses to address so that each selection criterion is worth the same number of points. For example, if the applicant chooses to address both selection criteria in Focused Investment Area (E), each criterion will be worth up to 20 points.

The applicant must address one or more selection criteria within Focused Investment Area (E).

(E)(1) UNDERSTANDING THE STATUS OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AT KINDERGARTEN ENTRY.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to implement, independently or as part of a cross-State consortium, a common, statewide Kindergarten Entry Assessment that informs instruction and services in the early elementary grades and that--

- (a) Is aligned with the State’s Early Learning and Development Standards and covers all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Is valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities;

(c) Is administered beginning no later than the start of school year 2014-2015 to children entering a public school kindergarten; States may propose a phased implementation plan that forms the basis for broader statewide implementation;

(d) Is reported to the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and to the early learning data system, if it is separate from the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, as permitted under and consistent with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws; and

(e) Is funded, in significant part, with Federal or State resources other than those available under this grant, (e.g., with funds available under section 6111 or 6112 of the ESEA).

If the State chooses to respond to this selection criterion, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

(E)(1)(A) ALIGNMENT OF ASSESSMENT TO STANDARDS

As discussed in Sections A-C, the state's Early Learning Guidelines for 3-year olds and 4-year olds are both aligned to the Essential Domains of School Readiness, as indicated in the chart below (the Guidelines are included in Appendix B).

Essential Domains of School Readiness (defined on page 16 of this application)	Mississippi's Early Learning Guidelines
Language and literacy development,	Language, Vocabulary, and Literacy Development
Cognition and general knowledge (including early mathematics and early scientific development),	Mathematical Concepts Development and Scientific Investigation
Approaches toward learning,	Embedded within each standard

**Physical well-being and motor development
(including adaptive skills), and
Social and emotional development.**

Physical Development

Social and Emotional Development

(E)(1)(B) VALID, RELIABLE AND APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENTS

Districts were allotted funding for the 2011-12 school year to implement an assessment they could choose from a list. This list included options that were valid, reliable, and appropriate for the target population and for the purpose for which it will be used, including for English learners and children with disabilities.

(E)(1)(C) ADMINISTERED BEFORE THE 2014-15 SCHOOL YEAR

For the 2012-13 school year, the will continue to operate in a decentralized manner with the assessments. Meanwhile the state will convene a task force that will identify a statewide assessment that is aligned with the upcoming common core standards. The common, statewide assessment will be used in the 2013-14 school year.

(E)(1)(D) DATA WILL BE CONNECTED TO THE SLDS

As noted in the next section, the state has a robust longitudinal database called nSPARC, which is prepared to collect the Kindergarten Entry assessment data.

(E)(1)(E) MISSISSIPPI WILL LEVERAGE EXISTING FUNDING

As noted in section (E)(1)(b), the state allocated funding on a per pupil basis to implement a Kindergarten Entry assessment. These funds will remain, with approximately \$320,000 in supplemental funding from this grant in 2012 and 2013.

(E)(2) BUILDING OR ENHANCING AN EARLY LEARNING DATA SYSTEM TO IMPROVE INSTRUCTION, PRACTICES, SERVICES, AND POLICIES.

The extent to which the State has a High-Quality Plan to enhance the State's existing Statewide Longitudinal Data System or to build or enhance a separate, coordinated, early learning data

system that aligns and is interoperable with the Statewide Longitudinal Data System, and that either data system--

- (a) Has all of the Essential Data Elements;
- (b) Enables uniform data collection and easy entry of the Essential Data Elements by Participating State Agencies and Participating Programs;
- (c) Facilitates the exchange of data among Participating State Agencies by using standard data structures, data formats, and data definitions such as Common Education Data Standards to ensure interoperability among the various levels and types of data;
- (d) Generates information that is timely, relevant, accessible, and easy for Early Learning and Development Programs and Early Childhood Educators to use for continuous improvement and decision making; and
- (e) Meets the Data System Oversight Requirements and complies with the requirements of Federal, State, and local privacy laws.

In scoring the selection criterion, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the selection criterion is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed; and the extent to which the unique needs of the State's special populations of Children with High Needs are considered and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

As described in previous sections, Mississippi's goal is to build a high quality and effectively functioning system building on the strengths of its independent components including Head Start and Family First Resource Centers as well as several more recent components that were put into

place over the past decade or so. Key proposed elements that will support this new system include the following,

- Established Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) which form the basis for an integrated TQRIS system called the Mississippi Child Care Quality Steps System (MCCQSS).
- A TQRIS system that addresses licensed centers, in-home providers and school-based pre-kindergarten programs.
- Establish a new division of early childhood services within the MDHS, called the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development. This division's responsibility is to coordinate childcare policy across the state.
- Establish a liaison structure that helps this new division interact with other state agencies and statewide organizations that contribute services to children and families in the state. This helps to integrate Health, Mental Health and Education services for needy families.
- Establish incentives for providers and parents to participate in the MCCQSS system.
- Expand support services for all classes of providers to move up the Quality Steps System.
- Expand support for screenings, referrals and services at the county level for families of high need children.
- Expand support for coordinating services among state agencies at the county level. This expansion of coordinating support will be facilitated by the Extension Service, part of Mississippi State University.

To make this system work effectively and efficiently, it needs to be supported by a data system that is well-designed, comprehensive and efficient. In addition, the data system will be asked to create reports that will be used by policy makers, agency staff, county based staff, providers and parents to help them understand what is

There is so much information available at the touch of a button that distilling relevant knowledge in a timely manner is an ever-growing challenge. This is where nSPARC excels. Combining state-of-the-art technology and analytical procedures with solid old-fashioned teamwork, we contextualize information to produce customized and practical solutions for real-world problems.

- Dr. Dominico "Mimmo" Parisi,
Director, nSPARC

happening across the system, in a particular agency, in the county and with the provider and allow them to make strategic decisions.

The National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center (nSPARC) seeks to align university, industry, and government expertise and resources to maintain and increase economic competitiveness. Using the latest computer technology, the multidisciplinary staff of the center manages multiple sources of data to transmit information that public and private entities can use to properly allocate resources and identify viable strategic plans. Today, it manages the state's education longitudinal data system which includes all of the state's essential data elements. The building blocks of the systems described below are up and running today and have a proven track record.

In this section, we assert that nSPARC is the organization to manage the early childhood system's data collection, storage and distribution needs. Further, we describe some of the other data that is part of the state's SLDS, how the early childhood system data will be collected and integrated into the SLDS, and describe some of the projected routine reports that will be generated by the data system for descriptive and strategic use by actors across the emerging early childhood system.

Early Childhood Data Sources

The description that follows describes the status of critical pieces of early childhood data and how they can be integrated into the state data system. A brief description is provided for each data source in addition to information regarding the status of data transfer to the state data clearing house, the agency associated with the data source, status of signatures for executing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and the level of data provided by the data source (i.e. Child, Provider, Staff, etc.). It is important to note that all data structures described in this section exist today and can be leveraged to collect, store and analyze data from the early childhood system.

This section details the information gathered by nSPARC for all data sources that relate to early childhood (children 0-5 years of age). Below is a summary table of EC data sources and their associated information.

Agency	Program	Data Time Period	Data Transferred	MOU
MDHS	R&R MRS	May-Nov 2010	Y	Y
MDH	R&R PDTS	Jan-August 10, 2010	Y	Y
MDHS	CCIS	2006-2009	Y	Y
MDHS	Quality Step System (QRS)	Oct 2006-April 2011	Y	Y
MDHS	Allies for Quality Care	none available-new program	--	Y
MDHS	CDA Credential	Jan-April 2011	Y	Y
MDHS	Nurturing Homes	2002- Present	Y	Y
MDHS	OCY Credential			Y
MDHS	Partners for Quality Care	FY 2010-FY 2011	Y	Y
MDHS	Project Impact	July 1, 2010-June 30, 2011	Y	Y
MDHS	Project Prepare	Oct 2010-July 2011	Y	Y
MDHS	Home Visiting Program*		--	Y
Head Start	PRVO	1999	Y	Y
Head Start	PACE	2008-2009	Y	Y
Head Start	ICS	2010-2011 (assessment)	Y	Y

MSDH	Prenatal Care		N	Y
MSDH	Early Intervention		N	Y
MSDH	Children's Medical Program		N	Y
MSDH	Oral Health/Make a Child's Smile		N	Y
MSDH	Vaccines for Children/Immunizations		N	Y
MSDH	WIC		N	Y
MSDH	PHRM/ISS		N	Y
MSDH	Genetics/Newborn Screening		N	Y
MDE	Part B Early Childhood SPED	2003-2010	Y	Y
MDE	LEA Pre-K	2003-2010	Y	Y
MDE	Kindergarten	2003-2010	Y	Y

* Home Visiting Program will use software called Family Wise. All other DHS data will be entered using WELS beginning Jan 2012

Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS)

Twelve EC programs have been identified for this agency. All MOUs have been executed. Data for nine of the programs have been transferred to the state clearing house. Beginning in January 2012, all DHS data will be collected using the software package WELS.

Resource & Referral Network Market Rate Survey (R&R MRS)

This program is affiliated with the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Only licensed child care facilities may participate in the survey. The market rate survey is a volunteer-based survey given to child care providers. Questions on the survey are related to curriculum type,

assessments, and basic demographics of the center. Data for this program have been transferred to the state data clearing house.

Resource & Referral Network Professional Development Tracking System (R&R PDTS)

This program is affiliated with the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Participants must be a child care director or staff member. This program provides training for the three and four-year-old Mississippi Early Guidelines (ELG) in addition to providing training in other appropriate curriculum topics, administration issues and business issues relating to child care. This initiative offers face-to-face training and distance-training through a centralized location via satellite. Data for this program have been transferred to the state data clearing house.

Mississippi Child Care Certificate Program

Data for this program is collected in the Child Care Information System (CCIS). This program provides child care subsidy funds to families with children ages birth to 15 years of age and are served in order of priority: (1) families receiving TANF; (2) families transitioning off of TANF; (3) families with foster children, teen mothers, National Guard deployment, special needs or at/below 50% of the state median income; (4) parents who work less than 25 hours weekly and attend an educational center; and (5) unemployed parents who attend an educational center.

In order to be eligible for these programs, participants must fall into one of the following priority groups: receiving TANF; receiving Transitional Child Care referral from TANF (TCC); in Protective Services or Foster Care; be a child with Special Needs; be a child of deployed military; be a child of teen parent(s); have an income at or below 50% of the State Median Income (SMI); working parents 25 hours a week with an income in between 50-85% of the SMI; working parents enrolled full time in an educational program with an income below 85% of the SMI; and Unemployed parents enrolled full time in an educational program. Data for this program have been transferred to the state data clearing house.

Mississippi Childcare Quality Step System (QRS)

The goal of this program is to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in licensed child care and educational settings across the state. Enrollees must be a licensed child care

facility. This program is affiliated with the Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute. Data for this program have been transferred to the state data clearing house.

Allies for Quality Care

This program provides on-site technical assistance to all classrooms in a child care center, and also includes a business advisor and a nutrition specialist. Enrollees must be a licensed child care facility operating full time, not be participating in a technical assistance program, and must not have earned above a 1 star rating on the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System. Participants must also provide proof of viability of business. Data collection began in 2011 and will be transferred to the state clearinghouse beginning in 2012.

Child Care Development Associate (CDA) Credential

This program provides training and support to child care workers in licensed child care settings statewide so they may obtain the Child Development Associate Credential (CDA) through the National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC) for Professional Recognition. Participants may receive assistance for the cost of training, applications and assessments. Enrollees must be currently employed by a licensed child care facility. This program is affiliated with the Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute. Data for this program have been transferred to the state data clearing house.

Nurturing Homes

This program provides educational training and technical assistance to licensed and unlicensed in-home childcare providers that offer full-day, full-year child care services to eligible families. This initiative is a statewide effort to improve the quality of care being provided within “In-Home” child care settings. Participants of this program must operate an in-home child care setting. This program is affiliated with the Mississippi State University Extension Service. Data for this program have been transferred to the state data clearing house.

OCY Credential

This program provides child care center directors and staff 120 staff hours of module training designed to evaluate their knowledge and a wide range of skills required by child care professionals for successful completion of the Child Care Management Best Practices. The program also offers professional development training on quality age-appropriate developmental activities in child care settings. Participants must be employed by a licensed child care facility and be otherwise eligible to serve as a facility director, as established by the Mississippi Department of Health. This program is affiliated with the Mississippi Forum on Children and Families. Data transfer for this program to the state data clearing house is in progress.

Partners for Quality Care

This program provides quality technical assistance and assessments to caregivers in licensed child care settings throughout the state that identify the high level of quality child care through the use of nationally recognized environmental rating scales. Participants in this program must operate a licensed child care facility operating a full time program. This program is associated with the Mississippi State Early Childhood Institute. Data for this program have been transferred to the state data clearing house.

Project Impact

This program provides state approved professional development training on the Mississippi Early Learning Guidelines to childcare providers/educators. Participants must be employed by a licensed child care facility as a classroom teacher. This program is affiliated with Jackson State University. Data for this program have been transferred to the state data clearing house.

Project Prepare

This program provides an evaluation-based training and technical assistance initiative for licensed child care centers on the use of best practices to serve all children, including those with high risk factors related to disabilities, chronic health impairments, and special needs due to environmental factors. Participants must operate a licensed or licensed-exempt child care facility. This program is affiliated with the University of Southern Mississippi. Data for this program have been transferred to the state data clearing house.

Home Visiting Program

This program is a new program beginning in late 2011. This program will use the software package Family Wise to collect data.

Head Start (HS)

Mississippi has twenty-one HS programs in the state. Currently, there are three pilot HS programs that are sharing data with the state data clearing house. Other HS programs have expressed interest in participating.

Each HS program provides education, nutrition, developmental screenings, special education and related services for children with special needs, mental health services, medical, dental, and vision screenings, and parent education and family support services. HS serves children and pregnant women who are in the following circumstances: homeless; receiving TANF or SSI; in foster care; family income is at or below federal poverty level; and from Indian and non-Indian families living on a reservation that meet the low-income guidelines.

The three programs listed below are providing data to the state data clearing house as a pilot program that will eventually include all HS programs in the state.

- Pinebelt Association for Community Enhancement (PACE) Head Start/Early Head Start.
- Pearl River Valley Opportunity (PRVO) Community Action Agency Head Start/Early Head Start.
- Institute of Community Services (ICS), Inc. Head Start/Early Head Start.

Mississippi Department of Health (MSDH)

Eight programs have been identified for this agency. All MOUs have been executed. No data have been transferred to the state data clearing house. However, execution of the MOU emphasizes cooperation from MSDH in the Early Childhood and SLDS efforts of the state.

Parental Care

This program provides medical check-ups, lab work, counseling and education, Women, Infants and Children's Nutrition Program (WIC) enrollment, some assistance with Medicaid applications, post-partum care, family planning services, and baby health care. This program serves pregnant women with incomes at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

Early Intervention (First Steps)

This program provides an Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP) including educational, health, mental health, speech/language, occupational/physical therapy, and other services. This program serves children from birth to 3 years who qualify for a disability as defined in IDEA, Part C.

Children's Medical Program

This program provides medical or surgical care including hospitalization, physician's services, appliances, and medications to children with chronic or disabling conditions (birth to 20 years) based on family income, family size, and estimated cost of treatment.

Oral Health/Make a Child's Smile

This program provides dental screening with preventive fluoride varnish to children enrolled in a Mississippi Head Start Program.

Vaccines for Children/Immunizations

This program provides vaccines and immunizations for children 0-18 who receive Medicaid, for Native Americans or Alaskan Natives, and for children who have health insurance but whose immunizations are not covered.

Women, Infants and Children's Nutrition Program (WIC)

This program provides a monthly package of nutritious foods, advice on healthy eating, health care referrals, breastfeeding support for pregnant, breastfeeding, and post-partum women, and for women with infants and children under five years of age who meet income guidelines and are at medical or nutritional risk.

Perinatal High Risk Management/Infant Support Services (PHRM/ISS)

This program provides help with finding a doctor for pregnancy and for infant medical referrals, delivery planning, health information, diet advice, family planning, and home visits for pregnant mothers and/or infants less than a year old who have been categorized as "high-risk".

Genetics/Newborn Screening

This program provides a blood test that identifies the 40 most common genetic disorders for all newborns (preferably at least 24 hours old). Services of this program are provided by the local hospitals.

Mississippi Department of Education (MDE)

Three programs have been identified for this agency. All MOUs have been executed and data from 2003-2010 have been transferred to the state data clearing house.

Part B Early Childhood Special Education

This program provides Individual Educational Plans including educational, behavioral, speech/language, occupational/physical therapy, and other necessary services to children ages 3-5 years who qualify for a disability as defined in IDEA, Part B.

Pre-K

This program provides educational services to locally determined children typically ages 3-4 years old. This program is provided by the LEAs.

Kindergarten

This program provides full-day educational services to all children that are 5 years of age by September 1st of the enrollment year.

Local Education Agencies (LEA)

Head start and other early childhood programs have expressed the need to collect additional assessment and student data from LEAs that are currently not sent to MDE. For example, a school may give an assessment to kindergarten children; however the LEA is not required by

MDE to transfer such data. Additional work is ongoing with LEAs and early childhood programs to identify and secure additional data that are not transferred to MDE.

Statewide Longitudinal Data System (SLDS)

The early childhood system data described above will be or will continue to be entered into the SLDS. This section provides detailed information already part of the SLDS and briefly describes the data sources that feed the SLDS. All early childhood data sources will be linked to the SLDS to provide a holistic view of the impact that early childhood programs have on individuals throughout their life.

Below is a summary table of data currently in the SLDS.

Agency	Program	Data Time Period	Data Transferred	MOU
MDE	PK-12	2003-2010	Y	Y
IHL	Post-Secondary Academic	2000-Present	Y	Y
SBCJC	Post-Secondary Academic	2005-Present	Y	Y
SBCJC	Quarterly Workforce Training	2007-Present	Y	Y
SBCJC	Career and Technical Education	2005-Present	Y	Y
SBCJC	Adult Basic Education	2005-Present	Y	Y
MDES	Wage Records Database	2001-Present	Y	Y
MDES	Business Tax Database	2001-Present	Y	Y
MDES	Mississippi Covered Employment System	2001-Present	Y	Y
MDES	Wagner-Peyser	2005-Present	Y	Y
MDES	Workforce Investment Act	2000-Present	Y	Y

MDES	Trade	2000-Present	Y	Y
MDES	Summer Youth	2009-Present	Y	Y
MDHS	TANF	1996-Present	Y	Y
MDHS	SNAP	1996-Present	Y	Y
MDRS	Disabled Training and Educational Services	2005-Present	Y	Y
MDOC	Offender-Level Demographics	2000-Present	Y	Y
MDOC	Offender-Level Training and Education Programs	2007-Present	Y	Y

Today, student-level data can be linked to teachers, and teachers can be linked to information on certification and preparation programs. PK-12 student data can also be linked to examine transitions from high school to post-secondary education. PK-20 data, in turn, can be linked to examine participation in workforce programs and transitions into the labor market. Finally, the state has the data necessary to generate progress reports on the metrics established by the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund and reporting requirements included in the ED Facts data collection reporting system. The SLDS contains all data elements to satisfy the America COMPETES Act. (An additional set of reports will be designed and generated for leaders of the early childhood system. Those reports will be described in the following section.)

Each education and workforce entity involved in the establishment of the SLDS has its own distinct management information system. These systems were originally designed to meet annual reporting requirements, not to track progress over time. However, they all collect relevant data that can be linked to build a longitudinal data system that examines student progress and outcomes over time and determines if students are college and workforce ready.

Currently, the Mississippi SLDS uses a data warehouse model. Data from each entity are transferred to the data clearing house at the National Strategic Planning & Analysis research

Center (nSPARC) at Mississippi State University. Each file is independently managed and stored. nSPARC protects information in all forms, for which it is the custodian, and maintains a robust, proactive, and evolving information security program. This program protects information from a variety of threats and stresses the importance of multi-layer protection. Through staff orientation, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) certification, university information security certification, and regular staff meetings, each nSPARC staff member is aware of, committed to, and accountable for his or her role in the overall protection of critical and sensitive information.

In addition to personal accountability, nSPARC identifies best practices to ensure ongoing protection of information and timely and appropriate responses in the event of an information security breach. In the interest of ongoing security, specific details regarding steps taken to ensure data and system integrity are not disclosed. nSPARC does, however, operate in a restricted access environment and maintains a “clean room” for all management and analysis of sensitive data. Random security audits are conducted to maintain data and system integrity.

K-12

Currently, all K-12 data in the SLDS comes from the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE).

MDE currently maintains and facilitates several statewide databases that collect information at the student, teacher, administrator, school, district, and state levels. The backbone of this system is referred to as MSIS (Mississippi Student Information System). Other databases maintained by MDE include those for Teacher Licensure, Mississippi Online Technology Evaluation, Migrant Information System, special education, English language learners, homeless, and student assessment.

As the backbone of the MDE data system, MSIS provides for the electronic collection and storage of comprehensive data on public school teachers, administrators, students (PK-12), and school board members, going back as far as the 2001-2002 academic year. MSIS also allows for the electronic transfer of student records from one school district to another. Data are collected on a daily and monthly basis. MSIS is designed to accept an XML file submission of specific

student and personnel data elements from a district. On a monthly basis, each district builds an XML file that is submitted to a holding area where MSIS runs a series of checks. Upon completion of all checks, a report is produced for each district to review and approve. When the report is approved, MSIS automatically moves the data from the virtual holding area to the MSIS final database.

Post-Secondary

Post-secondary data is comprised of data from the eight public universities managed by the Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) and fifteen community and junior colleges managed by the State Board of Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC).

Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL)

In Mississippi, there are eight public universities, and each university collects its own data. The data files within the IHL system originate with the individual institutions. Institutions generate these files according to mutually agreed-upon data definitions and submit them according to predetermined file layouts and reporting deadlines. The IHL office edits these data files, ensuring the data are both accurate and historically consistent. Any data file found to be unsatisfactory is returned to the reporting institution for revision. In some cases this back-and-forth process can occur several times. Institutions typically have twenty (20) working days to finalize their data. Data are considered to be preliminary during this cycle and become final once the institution and IHL deem the data to be acceptable. The IHL database includes files on students, enrollment, courses, outcomes, remedial education, and degrees. IHL also has a database on faculty and staff of every university and data on the GEAR UP Mississippi program, which is designed to address alignment and adequate preparation of high school students for success in postsecondary education. Over the last five years, data have been inventoried and mapped, and data dictionaries have been created for each database of this agency.

State Board of Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC)

SBCJC is the coordinating agency for the 15 community and junior colleges of Mississippi. Each college has its own management information system and collects its own data. Colleges

submit the following files to the SBCJC at the end of each semester (summer, fall, and spring): (1) student, (2) course, (3) student schedule, and (4) instructor. Each college also submits an annual graduation file. In addition to the files reported to the SBCJC, the community colleges report quarterly workforce training data to the Workforce Performance Management System mandated by the State Workforce Investment Board. They also submit annual reports on career and technical students to the Mississippi Department of Education, as required by the federal Perkins Act. Finally, SBCJC administers the Adult Basic Education program. Over the past five years, data have been inventoried and mapped, and data dictionaries have been created for each database of this agency.

Workforce

Workforce data is transferred to the SLDS from the following agencies:

Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES)

MDES is the primary agency for the delivery of employment and workforce services in the state. The agency provides eight databases containing more than 100 files for all the employment training and service programs it administers. The backbone of this system is the Wage Records Database, which contains quarterly wage and employment information on all covered employees in Mississippi, and the Business Tax Database, which contains information on industry classifications, number of employees, geographic location, and taxes for all businesses in the Mississippi Covered Employment System. An additional six databases provide detailed demographic, economic, geographic, and payment information for all individuals applying for and receiving unemployment insurance benefits, as well as for individuals receiving employment training and job services through the Wagner-Peyser, Workforce Investment Act, Summer Youth, Trade, and Rapid Response programs. Over the last five years, data have been inventoried and mapped, and data dictionaries have been created for each database of this agency.

Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS)

MDHS provides data from its public assistance database, which contains information on all individuals participating in the agency's TANF and SNAP programs. The database is comprised of seven files, which contain detailed information on the demographic, economic, and geographic characteristics of clients and cases, level of benefits received, and reasons for case closures.

Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS)

MDRS provides information on training and education services for disabled individuals. One individual-level file comprises the MDRS training database and includes demographic, economic, geographic, and disability characteristics of individuals, as well as type of training, education, and technology assistance provided.

Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC)

MDOC provides information on all offenders housed in state, regional, county, and private prisons in Mississippi and on paroled and probated offenders. Five offender-level files comprise the MDOC database: (1) offender demographics, occupational characteristics, and location of conviction; (2) type of offense committed and sentencing; (3) location of incarceration; (4) expected time of release and release status; and (5) training and education programs in which offenders enroll.

Unified Early Childhood Data Collection System

Due to the disparate nature of the early childhood program structure within the state there exists a need for a consolidated early childhood data collection system. This task will be accomplished by initially building a data warehouse that will contain data for all EC programs. A data warehouse will allow for easy integration and consolidation of early childhood data collection efforts in the short term and will eventually lead to the creation of a single unified early childhood data collection system for all EC programs in the state. This system will allow for a single point of entry into the early childhood system. Both the data warehouse system and the unified early childhood data collection system will have the capability to be linked to the SLDS.

The following diagram demonstrates the data warehouse model proposed for the initial warehousing of all EC data.

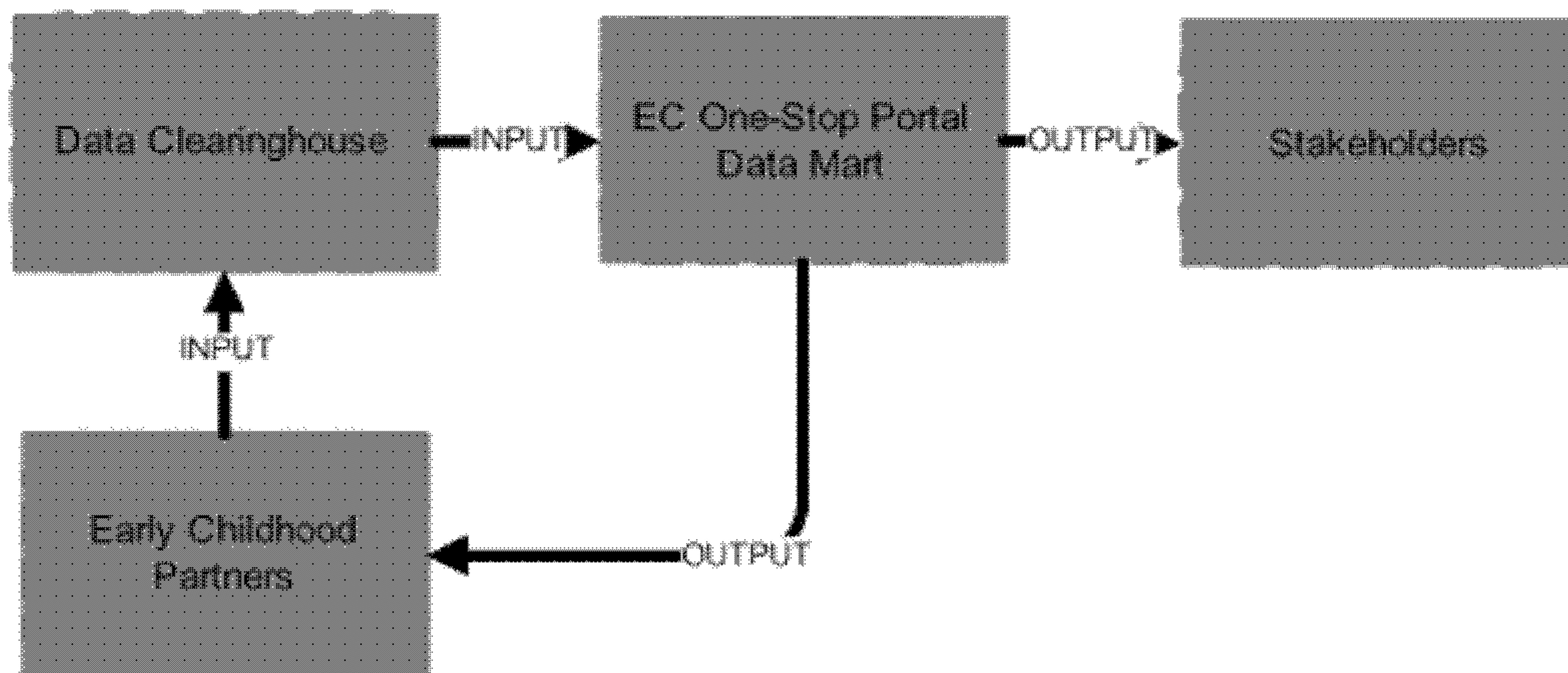


Figure 1: EC Data warehouse

The EC data warehouse will be linked to the SLDS by utilizing the unique identifier system (ID10) already present within the SLDS. The ID10 system assigns a unique ten-digit identifier to an individual that will remain linked to the individual as their data moves within the SLDS. The following diagram shows how the EC data warehouse will be linked to the SLDS.

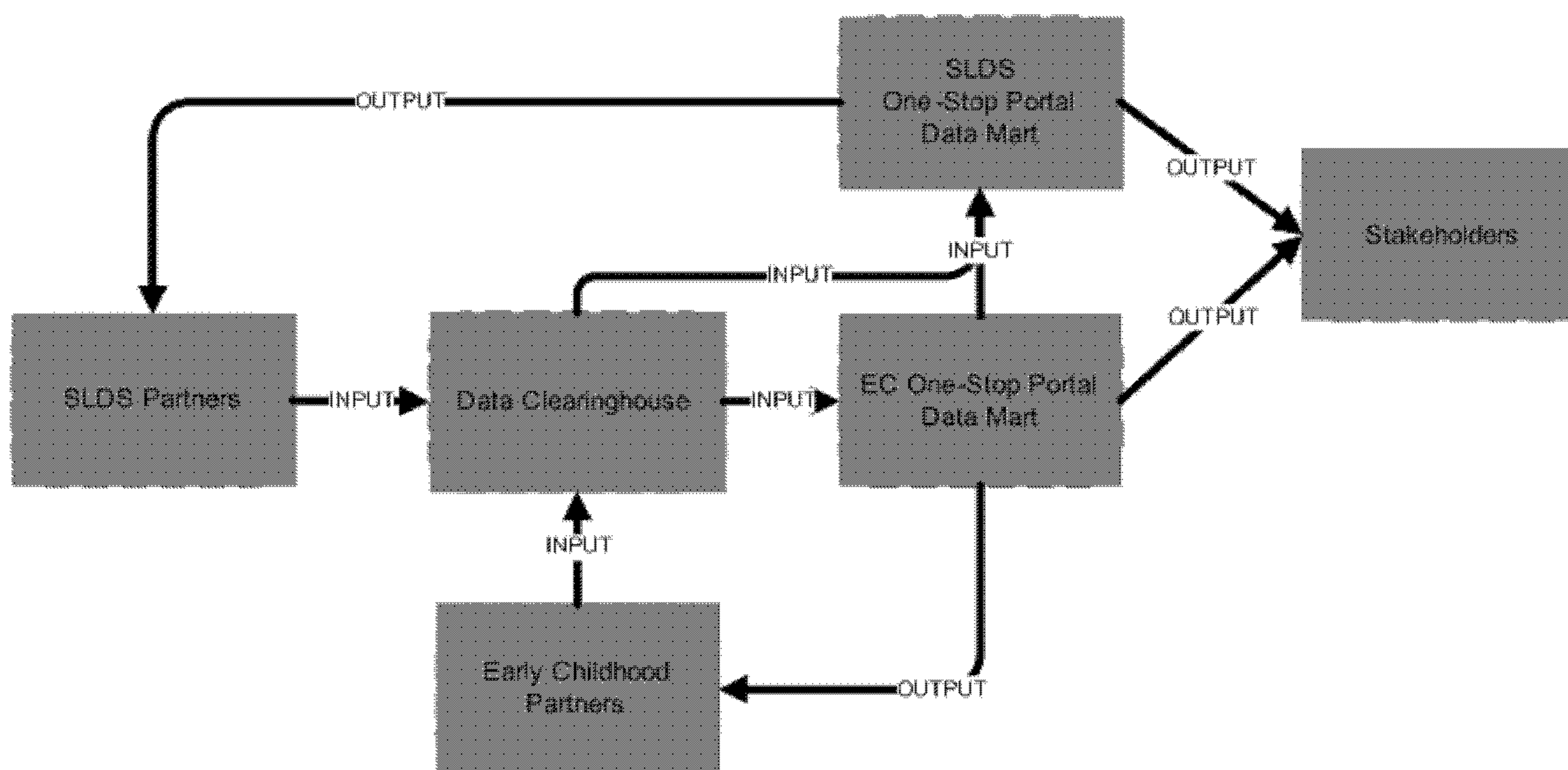
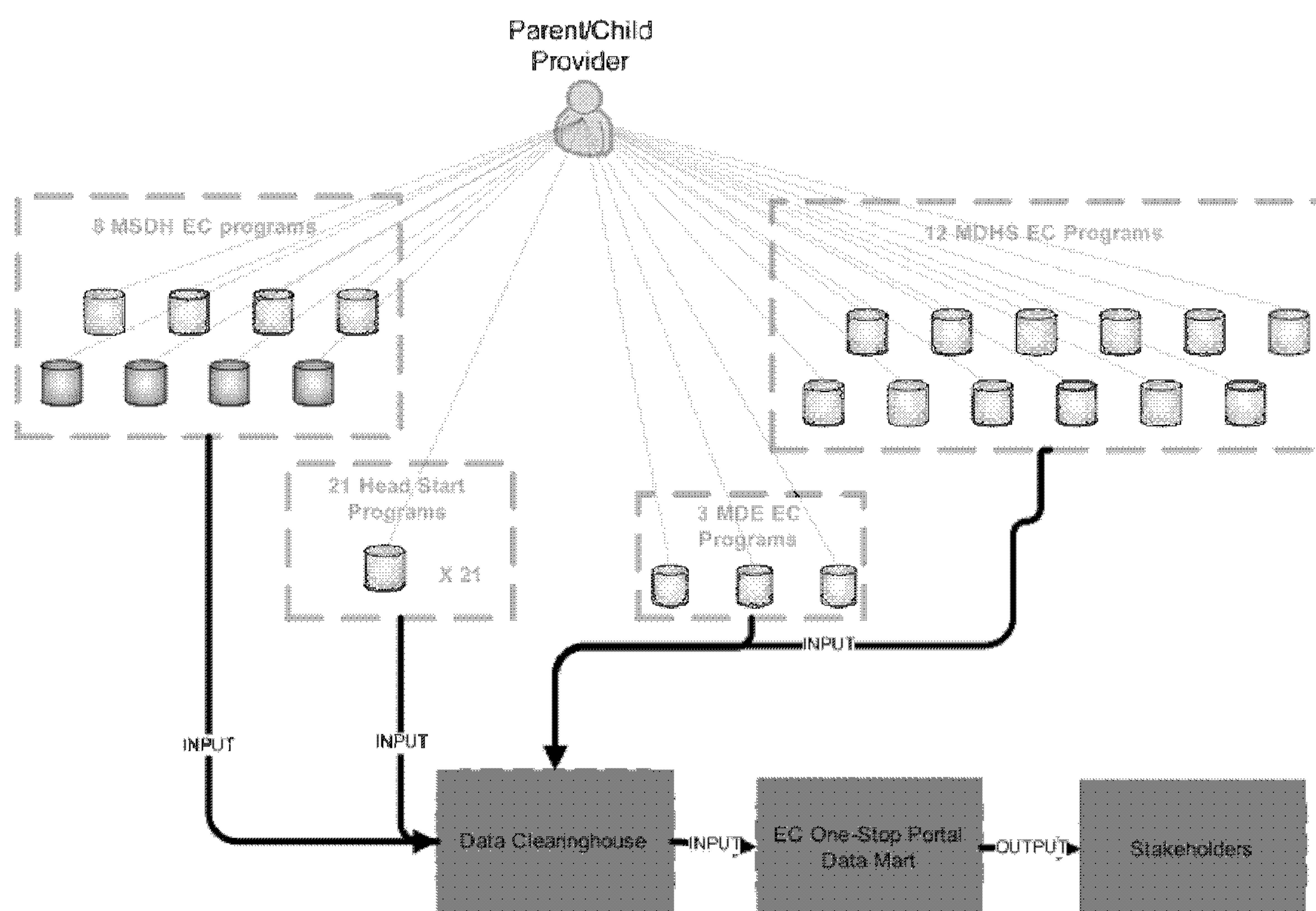


Figure 2: EC Data warehouse /SLDS Integration

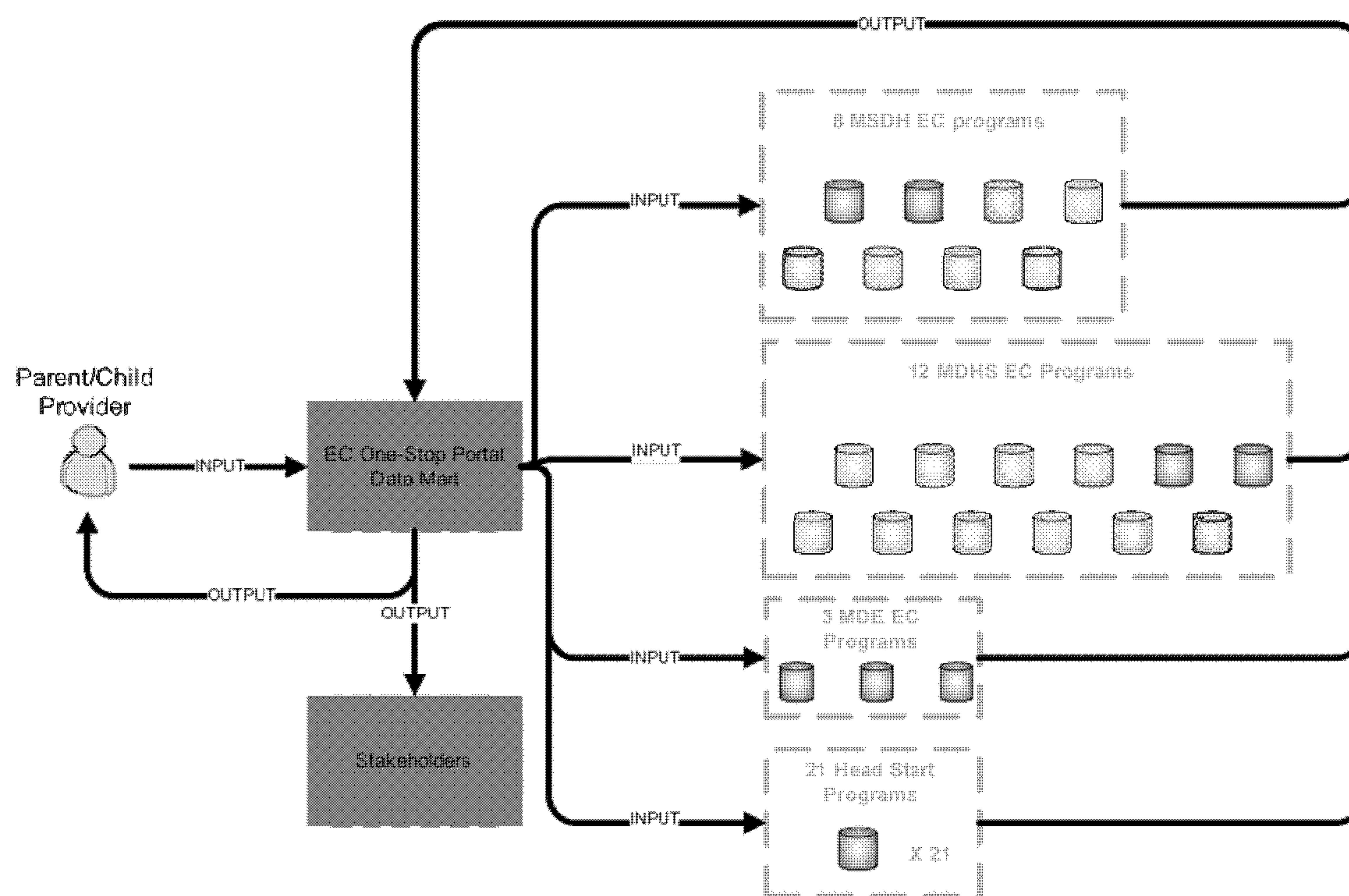
The above diagrams assume that the data clearinghouse is the same for both the SLDS and the EC data warehouse.

The following diagram shows the current state of data collection for EC programs. Initially, all programs will feed into the EC data warehouse which is housed at the state data clearinghouse. This diagram demonstrates the very difficult task individuals must undertake to apply for all services that they may qualify for. Under the current system, an individual will have to visit with a program representative and fill out a separate intake form for every service they wish to apply for. In the worst case, an individual will have to interact with up to 24 different people, and fill out up to 24 different intake forms just to see which programs they qualify for. The number 24 comes from 8 MSDH programs, 12 MDHS programs, 3 MDE programs, and 1 Head Start program. It is assumed that a person will only enroll in one Head Start program at a time.



The ideal system that will eventually be built from the data warehouse model will consist of a single point of entry into the unified EC system for a parent, child, or provider. The following

diagram shows the streamlined application process individuals will have with the unified EC system. From this new model the single point of entry will feed all of the separate EC systems housed within the various agencies which allows for streamlined and standardized data collection efforts across the entire EC system within the state. While it may be determined that some services cannot be part of the single point of entry, this demonstrates the ideal situation with cooperation from all EC partners.



Early Childhood Data Strategic Reporting System

As discussed at the beginning of E2, this well-designed, comprehensive and efficient data system will be asked to create reports that will be used by policy makers, agency staff, county based staff, providers and parents to help them understand what is happening within and across the system, in a particular agency, in a particular county and with a particular provider. Further,

beyond descriptive information, the state will include a set of strategic analyses that can be generated for each county, for each agency and for the new division director and the liaisons for each partnering agency and organization.

These reports will require vetting in their design and to assure that the information shared is aligned with adopted core performance indicators and maintains the appropriate levels of confidentiality. These reports do not exist today in the early childhood arena in Mississippi and will have to be designed in the first year of the project. Once created and generated, these reports will greatly contribute to the effective management of the early childcare system in the state.

Descriptive and strategic reports will be generated for several different actors in the early childcare system. The following lists the particular actors in the system and the type of information likely to be included in the report designed for them. The content of these reports will be developed in the first year of the grant.

- Parents

- What providers exist in your community?
- What MCCQSS rating do they have?
- What additional services are available in your community?
- How do you contact them?

- Providers

- What other providers exist in your community?
- What MCCQSS rating do they have?
- What additional services are available for children and families in your community? How do you contact them?

- What additional services are available to help you as a child care provider? How do you contact them?
- County Coordinators
 - What providers exist in your county?
 - What MCCQSS rating do they have?
 - What additional services are available to your county? How do you contact them?
 - What services have been provided in your county? How do these figures compare with your neighboring counties?
- Agency / Partner Organizations
 - What services have been provided by your agency?
 - How do these counts compare with services from other agencies? How similar are the services provided?
 - What additional services should be available for children and families?
 - Is your agency doing a good job of following with families that need services? Are there partner organizations that could assist with the follow-up?
 - How can services become more efficient?
- Division Director and Liaisons
 - What services have been provided by all agencies?
 - How do these counts compare across all agencies? How similar are the services provided?
 - Are certain services more effective than others? How could services be combined to be even more effective?

- Are all counties adequately covered? If not, why not?
- What additional services should be available for children and families?
- How can services become more effective and efficient?

These are examples of the types of questions that information from the early childhood data system should be able to address. The design of routine reports from the data system will be undertaken in the first year of the grant and incorporated into routine reporting functions in the last three years of the grant.

COMPETITION PRIORITIES

Note about the Absolute Priority: The absolute priority describes items that a State must address in its application in order to receive a grant. Applicants do not write a separate response to this priority. Rather, they address this priority throughout their responses to the selection criteria. Applications must meet the absolute priority to be considered for funding. A State meets the absolute priority if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the absolute priority

PRIORITY 1: ABSOLUTE PRIORITY – PROMOTING SCHOOL READINESS FOR CHILDREN WITH HIGH NEEDS.

To meet this priority, the State’s application must comprehensively and coherently address how the State will build a system that increases the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs for Children with High Needs so that they enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The State’s application must demonstrate how it will improve the quality of Early Learning and Development Programs by integrating and aligning resources and policies across Participating State Agencies and by designing and implementing a common, statewide Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System. In addition, to achieve the necessary reforms, the State must make strategic improvements in those specific reform areas that will most significantly improve program quality and outcomes for Children with High Needs. Therefore, the State must address those criteria from within each of the Focused Investment Areas (sections (C) Promoting Early Learning and Development Outcomes for Children, (D) A Great Early Childhood Education Workforce, and (E) Measuring Outcomes and Progress) that it believes will best prepare its Children with High Needs for kindergarten success.

Note about Competitive Preference Priorities: Competitive preference priorities can earn the applicant extra or “competitive preference” points.

PRIORITY 2: COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY – INCLUDING ALL EARLY LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN THE TIERED QUALITY RATING AND IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM.

(10 points)

Competitive Preference Priority 2 is designed to increase the number of children from birth to kindergarten entry who are participating in programs that are governed by the State’s licensing system and quality standards, with the goal that all licensed or State-regulated programs will participate. The State will receive points for this priority based on the extent to which the State has in place, or has a High-Quality Plan to implement no later than June 30, 2015--

(a) A licensing and inspection system that covers all programs that are not otherwise regulated by the State and that regularly care for two or more unrelated children for a fee in a provider setting; provided that if the State exempts programs for reasons other than the number

of children cared for, the State may exclude those entities and reviewers will score this priority only on the basis of non-excluded entities; and

(b) A Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System in which all licensed or State-regulated Early Learning and Development Programs participate.

If the State chooses to respond to this competitive preference priority, the State shall write its full response in the text box below. The State may also include any additional information it believes will be helpful to peer reviewers. If the State has included relevant attachments in the Appendix, these should be described in the narrative below and clearly cross-referenced to allow the reviewers to locate them easily.

In scoring this priority, peer reviewers will determine, based on the evidence the State submits, whether each element of the priority is implemented or planned; the quality of the implementation or plan (see the definition of a High-Quality Plan for the components reviewers will be judging); and the extent to which the different types of Early Learning and Development Programs in the State are included and addressed. The State is responsible for providing clear and detailed information to assist the peer reviewers in making these determinations.

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of eight pages)*

Mississippi has in place the components required to have an excellent TQRIS. In Mississippi, the TQRIS is called the Mississippi Child Care Quality Steps System. The major components in place today include the following.

- The state's Early Learning Guidelines for infants and toddlers, and for children between the ages of 3 and 5 years old. The latter is maintained by the Mississippi Department of Education and is aligned with existing state K-12 standards. The infant and toddler guidelines are also aligned with the K-12 standards and are maintained by the Office of Head Start in the Governor's office.
- The state has put in place the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) as a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in licensed early child care and education settings across the state.
- The Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) was developed for licensed child care centers. Since 2007, it has been adapted to use with child care settings run by in-home providers, pre-K early childhood education run by schools and out of school (before and afterschool) settings. As of 2012, the MCCQSS will cover all of birth to five child care in Mississippi, except family, friend and neighbor care.

- Beginning in 2012 licensure is the first level in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) for centers and for in-home providers. Accreditation is the first level in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) for pre-K programs provided by schools.
- Through 2010-11, participation in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System (MCCQSS) for any type of provider was voluntary. Beginning in 2011-12, participation in the system will be required for licensed centers. Beginning in 2013, pre-K programs offered through schools will also be required to participate. For licensed in-home providers receiving CCDF children, participation beginning in 2012 will also be required. For other in-home providers and out of school providers, participation in the MCCQSS will be encouraged but will not be required.

The state proposes to use grant resources to ensure that the MCCQSS system meets the challenges related to moving from a voluntary to a required participation system. Many of those challenges are described in the questions listed below.

- What types of support are needed by providers as they move from one level to another?
- Are the appropriate incentives in place to encourage providers to move up the steps of the quality rating system?
- Are the appropriate incentives in place to encourage parents to choose higher quality providers?
- Several provider support programs exist in the state today. How do they extend their reach to child care providers all across the state? Should these services be coordinated or directed in some way? What is the state's responsibility in terms of providing access to these support programs?
- How does the state learn from the work of provider support organizations and the program elements they offer? To what measures of success and quality should the state aspire?

- How do the finances work in this system? Do providers receive subsidies (seed funds) to purchase needed quality improvement support? Is support for quality paid for and delivered by state or local government? What level of support is needed? What level is affordable? If there is a difference, who is responsible?
- How does the new division of Early Learning and Development manage and coordinate this support?
- What steps should be implemented to ensure a seamless re-assignment of the child care licensing division from the Mississippi Department of Health to the Division of Early Childhood Development and Education at the Mississippi Department of Human Services?
- How does this new state system work effectively and efficiently at the local level? How are services for individual children with needs more effective and more efficient under the proposed system?

As the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and its agency partners begin to implement the comprehensive TQRIS plan in Mississippi, the questions posed above, along with others that will inevitably emerge, will be addressed by the new Division, its unit managers, the liaisons, and local service providers.

MISSISSIPPI CHILD CARE QUALITY STEP SYSTEM (MCCQSS)

The Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System is a method to assess, improve and communicate the level of quality in licensed early child care and education settings across the state. The MCCQSS is the State's broader quality improvement continuum which offers incentives and has five components: Administrative Policy, Professional Development, Learning Environments, Parent Involvement and Evaluation. Financing incentives for providers will be linked to progress on the quality step system and incentives will be given to parents for sending their children to centers with higher star ratings. Mississippi has adopted the motto, "Step Up To Star Quality."

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Office for Children and Youth (OCY) coordinated the development of the MCCQSS. Development meetings convened on November 3-4, 2005 and November 30, 2005 in Jackson, Mississippi and included representatives of early childhood programs, children with special needs, licensed child care programs not serving low income children, Head Start, colleges, universities, MDHS early childhood program grantees, the Mississippi Department of Health (MDH), Local Education Agencies (LEA), Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), and the Office of the Governor. Julia Todd, Director of the Office for Children and Youth, Judy Collins, State Technical Assistance Specialists and Desiree Reddick-Head, State Technical Assistance Specialists with the National Child Care Information Center (NCCIC) facilitated the meetings and guided participants in tasks related to the development of a quality rating system.

The objectives of the MS Child Care Quality Step System are the following:

- Increase the quality of early childhood care and education as evidenced by improved ratings in components of the system: by providing learning environments that are built around high standards of result in access to healthier children in Mississippi; provide appropriate school readiness skills for all childcare; provide more childcare programs; and have consistent standards across all licensed child care settings and education.
- Increase training and compensation by increasing the rate of pay for subsidized children and rate of individual compensation for caregivers.
- Increase parental awareness through parental involvement, responsibility and providing information about the MCCQSS and quality child care.
- Increase and develop a support system and a resource and referral system that links professional development, training and technical assistance, parental education and assessment of the environment.

In addition to developing and implementing a TQRIS, in 2003, Mississippi was able to count itself among the few states that had developed early learning standards and had those standards officially adopted. The Early Learning Guidelines (ELGs) serve as the basis for all program and child outcome expectations in Mississippi. For details on the ELGs, see Section B Appendix. These Guidelines apply whether the child receives care from a licensed center, an in-home

provider and a K-12 school district. They have driven the development of program standards which provide criteria for important program features such as adult to child ratios, group sizes, teaching strategies and curricula (all part of the MCCQSS).

Today, the Early Learning Guidelines for 3 and 4 year of age are housed at the Mississippi Department of Education. The guidelines cover competencies and objectives, suggested teaching strategies and developmental checklists in the following areas.

- Language, Vocabulary, and Early Literacy Development
- Mathematical Concepts Development
- Scientific Investigation
- Social/Emotional Development
- Physical Development

Similarly, the Early Learning Guidelines for infants and toddlers are officially managed out of the Mississippi Head Start Collaboration Office located in the Office of the Governor. The guidelines cover use, awareness, exploration and experimentation in the following areas.

- Language, Vocabulary, and Literacy Development
- Mathematical Development
- Scientific Development
- Social/Emotional Development
- Physical Development
- Self-help Development

Table (B)(1) – 1 was modified to focus on the categories of providers recognized in Mississippi including licensed centers, in-home providers and pre-K programs provided by schools (includes

all public school programming). The vast majority of Head Start programs are currently run by independent grantees and are therefore part of the licensed center category.

Table (B)(1)-1: Status of all Program Standards currently used in the State						
	Program Standards Elements					
	<i>If the Program Standards address the element, place an "X" in that box</i>					
List each set of existing Program Standards currently used in the State; specify which programs in the State use the standards	Early Learning and Development Standards	Comprehensive Assessment System	Qualified Workforce	Family Engagement	Health Promotion	Effective Data Practices
Child Care Center Rules and Regulations	X	X	X	X	X	X, partial
In-Home Provider Care Rules and Regulations	X	X	X	X	X	X, partial
Pre-K Guidelines for schools and Title 1 Programs	X	X	X	X	X	X, partial
Head Start and Early Head Start	X	X	X	X	X	X, partial

(B)(1)(B) IS CLEAR AND HAS STANDARDS THAT ARE MEASURABLE, MEANINGFULLY DIFFERENTIATE PROGRAM QUALITY LEVELS, AND REFLECT HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF PROGRAM EXCELLENCE COMMENSURATE WITH NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED STANDARDS³⁷ THAT LEAD TO IMPROVED LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

³⁷ See such nationally recognized standards as:

The criteria for the MCCQSS are developed on a system of upward progression. For example, for a facility to move to a Step 3 all criteria must be met in Steps 1, 2 and 3. This systematic approach to improving quality allows for gradual improvement that is acknowledged through public recognition of the stars found on the facility's licensing certificate. The list of steps, criteria and standards to be met are described on the following pages. The criteria in Mississippi are organized into the following five areas: administrative policy; professional development; learning environment; parent involvement; and evaluation. These grids are placed in the body of this proposal to illustrate the measures that are used, how they are used to differentiate program quality and the level of expected program excellence. The shortened version of the MCCQSS grid is presented for licensed centers and for in-home providers. A more detailed description is provided for pre-K programs provided by schools. Additional supporting materials and checklists for each of these three categories of providers are referenced in Section B Appendix.

PRIORITY 3: COMPETITIVE PREFERENCE PRIORITY – UNDERSTANDING THE STATUS OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AT KINDERGARTEN ENTRY.

(10 points)

To meet this priority, the State must, in its application--

(a) Demonstrate that it has already implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1) by indicating that all elements in Table (A)(1)-12 are met; or

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2009). Head Start Program Performance Standards. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. PDF retrieved from: 45 CFR Chapter XIII - 1301-1311 http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/Head%20Start%20Program/Program%20Design%20and%20Management/Head%20Start%20Requirements/Head%20Start%20Requirements/45%20CFR%20Chapter%20XIII/45%20CFR%20Chap%20XIII_ENG.pdf

U.S. Department of Defense. DoD Instruction 6060.2, Child Development Programs (CDPs), January 19, 1993, certified as current August 25, 1998 (to be updated Fall 2011). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense. Retrieved from:

http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil/portal/page/mhf/MHF/MHF_DETAIL_1?section_id=20.60.500.100.0.0.0.0.0¤t_id=20.60.500.100.500.60.60.0.0

American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health association, and National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. (2011) Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and education Programs. Elk Grove Village, IL; American Academy of Pediatrics.

(b) Address selection criterion (E)(1) and earn a score of at least 70 percent of the maximum points available for that criterion.

For Competitive Preference Priority 3, a State will earn all ten (10) competitive preference priority points if a majority of reviewers determines that the State has met the competitive preference priority. A State earns zero points if a majority of reviewers determines that the applicant has not met the competitive preference priority.

Applicants do not write a separate response to this priority. Rather, applicants address Competitive Preference Priority 3 either in Table (A)(1)-12 or by writing to selection criterion (E)(1).

Under option (a) below, an applicant does not earn competitive preference points if the reviewers determine that the State has not implemented a Kindergarten Entry Assessment that meets selection criterion (E)(1); under option (b) below, an applicant does not earn competitive preference points if the State earns a score of less than 70 percent of the maximum points available for selection criterion (E)(1).

Specify which option the State is taking:

- (a) Applicant has indicated in Table (A)(1)-12 that all of selection criterion (E)(1) elements are met.
- (b) Applicant has written to selection criterion (E)(1).

Note about Invitational Priorities: Invitational priorities signal areas the Departments are particularly interested in; however addressing these priorities will not earn applicants any additional points.

PRIORITY 4: INVITATIONAL PRIORITY – SUSTAINING PROGRAM EFFECTS IN THE EARLY ELEMENTARY GRADES.

The Departments are particularly interested in applications that describe the State's High-Quality Plan to sustain and build upon improved early learning outcomes throughout the early elementary school years, including by--

(a) Enhancing the State's current standards for kindergarten through grade 3 to align them with the Early Learning and Development Standards across all Essential Domains of School Readiness;

(b) Ensuring that transition planning occurs for children moving from Early Learning and Development Programs to elementary schools;

(c) Promoting health and family engagement, including in the early grades;

(d) Increasing the percentage of children who are able to read and do mathematics at grade level by the end of the third grade; and

(e) Leveraging existing Federal, State, and local resources, including but not limited to funds received under Title I and Title II of ESEA, as amended, and IDEA.

(Enter narrative here)

Mississippi has aligned its Early Learning Guidelines to the Kindergarten Standards. Over the course of the grant, its early education team will work to address all of these goals as it understands its system better.

PRIORITY 5: INVITATIONAL PRIORITY – ENCOURAGING PRIVATE-SECTOR SUPPORT

The Departments are particularly interested in applications that describe how the private sector will provide financial and other resources to support the State and its Participating State Agencies or Participating Programs in the implementation of the State Plan.

(Enter narrative here)

The private sector in Mississippi has, through a variety of activities over the past several years, been primed to provide continued leadership and financial support to implement key elements of the State Plan described in this proposal. In particular, the private sector has already:

1. Demonstrated an understanding of the importance of early childhood education in building Mississippi's strong economy;
2. Played a leading role in Mississippi public "will building" and in spreading the message across the state about the importance of early childhood education; and
3. Made significant investments in Mississippi, including in Mississippi early childhood education programs.

Each of these areas is discussed in further detail below. Each demonstrates the depth of commitment and understanding which the Mississippi business community and the private sector have demonstrated to early childhood education in the state, and are strong indicators of the level of support they will bring to the implementation of the State Plan.

Demonstrating an understanding of the importance of early childhood education. In 2010 the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation (MSCEI) in cooperation with the Mississippi

Economic Council (MEC) hosted several focus groups that included 25 key business leaders from Jackson, Greenwood, and Tupelo. The purpose of these groups was to explore the reactions of Mississippi business leaders and community members to a variety of early childhood education concepts.

Several key findings that emerged from this work indicate that there is a high level of existing awareness among the Mississippi business community of the critical importance of early childhood education and of the need for the business community to support such education. For instance, findings showed business leaders have received strong exposure to birth to five education issues because the topic has been continually discussed by leading statewide business organizations such as the Mississippi Economic Council. Findings also indicated awareness from business leaders that: 1) education drives economic development by providing an educated workforce; 2) the business community may be more equipped to focus on education efforts since it will reap the rewards of an educated workforce over time; and 3) learning at an early age is critical as shown in birth to five brain development research.

Other conclusions that arose from the focus group work were that businesses and the private sector have a critical role to play in funding projects and systems where state government cannot, and that the business community is more likely to invest in projects with longer term goals and payoffs – such as early childhood education programs – than elected officials, who are oriented to more short-term issues.

Private Sector Role in Public Will Building. In the early 1980's, Governor William Winter was attempting to reform public education in the state. As part of his reform efforts he promoted the addition of kindergarten in the 1-12 public school system. The Mississippi Economic Council (MEC), the state's Chamber of Commerce, was charged with informing the public about the value and need for kindergarten. MEC took on the challenge and: (1) convened informational meetings for the general public, (2) worked with civic groups to share information and (3) recruited volunteers to canvas neighborhoods to inform voters about their need to vote for the Education Reform Act of 1982. The legislation was passed and full-day kindergarten became a reality in Mississippi in 1986.

In the first decade of the 21st century MEC again has worked with early childhood advocates and economic development experts to make the case for investment in early childhood

education. The message that continues to be promoted is one of investing in early childhood education as an economic development strategy. This investment will improve the economic outlook for the future by aiding in the development of a skilled workforce which will result in bringing more industry into the state and increasing the family income of Mississippians.

In Governor Haley Barbour's first term in office, MEC endorsed a sweeping public education bill that enabled the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System and statewide resource and referral system to be implemented and codified.

Other early childhood-related public engagement efforts led by the Mississippi business community include the following:

In 2010, The Mississippi Economic Council (MEC), the state's Chamber of Commerce, and the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation (MSCEI) with other foundation support contracted with a well-known public relationship firm to build a public awareness campaign to move the early childhood agenda forward. The primary message to be developed and delivered was to move the legislature and governor to invest state funds in quality improvements in existing programs as well as provide more programs to serve 4 year olds.

As part of the preparation for the public engagement campaign, the public relations firm surveyed randomly selected individuals representing all income levels as well as race and region across the state to determine the public's views and understanding of early childhood education in Mississippi. Some of the powerful results obtained through a scientifically conducted process which engaged over 1,000 individuals are : (1) 77% rate early childhood education as "very important" to the future success of a child, and another 20% rate it "important;" and (2) to improve the early educational opportunities and quality available in the state, both MS businesses and voters prefer "enhancing the existing public and private early childhood education programs" (66%) over expanding the public k-12 system (25%).

In 2011, MEC will release a Blue Print for Economic Development. In this document, early childhood education is featured as an important strategy to improve the state's economic development through a better trained workforce. This document was constructed through the

work of hundreds of individuals and reviewed by the business and industry leaders in the state. They have endorsed the content and action steps to reach the goals outlined.

The Private Sector's Existing Investment in Mississippi Early Childhood Education

The private sector has already demonstrated strong commitment to investing in Mississippi early childhood education programs through such programs as: 1) Excel by 5; 2) Mississippi Building Blocks; and 3) Mississippi Gulf Coast revitalization efforts. These programs and efforts, including brief descriptions of the role played by the private sector, are described below.

Excel by Five

Excel By 5 is a community-based certification that began in 2005. It is designed to improve a child's overall well-being by age five. The first-of-its-kind in the United States, this program emphasizes the important roles communities play in educating their children during their most formative years--birth to five.

Funded with a \$650,000.00 grant from Chevron, Excel By 5 is currently in 28 Mississippi communities including Alligator, Belzoni, Beulah, Biloxi, Cleveland, Duncan, Gunnison, Hancock County, Hattiesburg, Hollandale, Isola, Lafayette County, Louise, McComb, Mid-Jackson, Monroe County, Moss Point, New Albany/Union County, North Madison County, Oktibbeha County, Pace, Pascagoula, Petal, Rosedale, Shelby, Silver City, Stone County and West Point, MS.

Excel By 5 sets forth a variety of standards involving parent training, community participation, child care and health to help communities focus on supporting young children and their families. The certification process also identifies available resources and existing best practices to help Excel By 5 - Early Childhood Communities reach the goal that all of their children will be ready to learn when they start school at age five.

Mississippi Building Blocks

In 2008, the Barksdale Reading Institute, along with several business and foundations, responded to the need to improve the quality of educational programming at licensed child care centers. This program, Mississippi Building Blocks, served as a strategy to provide support and

training for participating centers in return for their participation in moving up the step quality rating system.

This incentive program has resulted in over 7 million dollars being donated to implement the program that provides intensive, on-site technical assistance to between 50-100 licensed early care and education programs serving low income children.

The program was also designed for the purpose of gathering data to determine the most effective and efficient technical assistance methods that should be implemented to yield improved child outcomes. Entering into its third year of operation with funding for two more years, statistically significant gains are reported in the classroom observations and participation in the MCCQSS and social emotional outcomes for children in the treatment group.

Mississippi Gulf Coast Revitalization Efforts

In August of 2005, Hurricane Katrina made landfall on the Mississippi Gulf Coast unleashing wind and rain of epic proportion devastating thousands of homes and businesses and leaving behind hundreds of broken and almost dysfunctional communities. Chevron executives, advised by Stephen Renfroe of the Chevron Refinery at Pascagoula, determined in September that the corporation should itself pay for repairs and reconstruction of child care facilities that served Jackson County.

The corporation reassigned some of its own construction crews to child care repairs and made a financial commitment of \$500,000 for the work, donating the reconstruction funds through a local nonprofit organization, Rebuild Jackson County, and coordinating repairs with the Early Childhood Institute (ECI) at MSU. The WK Kellogg Foundation made an initial contribution to ECI that allowed the recovery process to move much quicker than otherwise could have been expected. ECI leveraged other funds collected through the Institute with Chevron's expenditures and funds provided by Save the Children for facility repair and furnishings with materials worth hundreds or thousands of dollars per center.

As Jackson County was under reconstruction, Chevron, Early Childhood Institute and MSU-ES, Save the Children and a small community foundation on the coast began what has been recorded the largest rebuild of an early childhood system in the history of the country.

BUDGET PART I: SUMMARY

BUDGET PART I - TABLES

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category--The State must include the budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant. These line items are derived by adding together the corresponding line items from each of the Participating State Agency Budget Tables.

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	991,659	2,356,580	1,787,863	991,659	6,127,761
2. Fringe Benefits	293,412	702,889	532,274	293,412	1,821,987
3. Travel	22,240	22,240	22,240	22,240	88,960
4. Equipment	83,000	0	0	0	83,000
5. Supplies	103,000	106,600	6,600	6,600	222,800
6. Contractual	326,480	610,000	5,000	5,000	946,480
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	1,819,791	3,798,309	2,353,977	1,318,911	9,290,988
10. Indirect Costs*	254,092	785,941	710,457	582,507	2,332,997
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners	3,253,047	12,195,860	12,025,522	10,501,585	37,976,014
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	5,426,930	16,880,110	15,189,956	12,503,003	49,999,999
14. Funds from other sources used to	11,189,145	11,726,630	20,381,882	20,381,882	63,679,539

Budget Table I-1: Budget Summary by Budget Category
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
support the State Plan					
15. Total Statewide Budget (add lines 13-14)	16,616,075	28,606,740	35,571,838	32,884,885	113,679,538

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The State must set aside \$400,000 from its grant funds for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated to Participating State Agencies evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Line 14: Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.

Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency--*The State must include the budget totals for each Participating State Agency for each year of the grant. These line items should be consistent with the totals of each of the Participating State Agency Budgets provided in Budget Tables II-1.*

Budget Table I-2: Budget Summary by Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Participating State Agency	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
<i>MS Department of Human Services</i>	16,425,071	28,331,386	35,301,484	32,614,531	112,672,472
<i>MS Department of Education</i>	0	0	0	0	0
<i>MS Department of Mental Health</i>	191,004	275,354	270,354	270,354	1,007,066
Total Statewide Budget	16,616,075	28,606,740	35,571,838	32,884,885	113,679,538

Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project--The State must include the proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant. These line items are the totals, for each project, across all of the Participating State Agencies' project budgets, as provided in Budget Tables II-2.

Budget Table I-3: Budget Summary by Project (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))					
Projects	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Childhood Infrastructure	3,063,496	5,953,968	4,935,920	3,494,231	17,447,615
Center Supports	1,000,000	7,300,000	7,300,000	6,100,000	21,700,000
Family and Child Supports	641,004	1,652,554	1,647,554	1,584,505	5,525,615
Professional Supports	821,480	1,876,856	1,309,500	1,318,932	5,326,768
Total Statewide Budget	5,525,980	16,783,377	15,192,973	12,497,667	49,999,997

BUDGET PART I -NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the overall structure of the State's budget for implementing the State Plan, including

- A list of each Participating State Agency, together with a description of its budgetary and project responsibilities;

- *A list of projects and a description of how these projects taken together will result in full implementation of the State Plan;*
- *For each project:*
 - *The designation of the selection criterion or competitive preference priority the project addresses;*
 - *An explanation of how the project will be organized and managed in order to ensure the implementation of the High-Quality Plans described in the selection criteria or competitive preference priorities; and*
- *Any information pertinent to understanding the proposed budget for each project.*

*(Enter **narrative** here – recommended maximum of five pages)*

Moving from *pockets of innovation* to a *comprehensive system* in Mississippi will begin with significant investments of time and resources in reorienting state employees to support the goals of the RTT-ELC grant. Mississippi will begin to follow the lead of other states such as Georgia, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts who formed a state-level department dedicated to the Early Learning Development of children.

This will require a shift in framework of the state system, to move from a compliance orientation to a supportive framework. This goal will be operationalized at first with the state building relationships with early educators across the state. Mississippi will do this with a focus at first on how agencies, divisions and departments at the state level interact with each other, modeling how these interactions can take place within the state’s 82 counties.

One lynchpin in this system design is the hiring of **Liaisons housed at DHS**. Liaisons will work with Medicaid, Health Department, Mental Health, & Department of Education across all Bureaus in each agency and across agencies such as in the case of Part C and B (IDEA), IHL, Community College, Work Force Investment Board, & TEACH and WAGE\$ site. Liaisons and possible staff **will be housed within each state agency** under the collaborative direction of both the “base” agency administration and the Director of the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development and Office of School Readiness.

In the next section, the organizational structure will be described.

(A)(3)(A)(1): ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

As the first step in creating a *collaborative, comprehensive system* using funds from the RTT-ELC Grant, the State of Mississippi proposes to expand the current Division of Early Childhood Care and Development into the Mississippi Division of Early Childhood Care and Development, within the Department of Human Services.

The section below introduces and specifies the efforts needed for this *collaborative, comprehensive system*.

AN OVERVIEW: MISSISSIPPI'S DIVISION OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT

Mission: The mission of the Division is to coordinate policies, regulations and workforce preparation to:

(1) maximize access to high quality early care and education programs in all types of out-of-home settings for all children with specific attention to children from rural, low income and at-risk home environments;

(2) improve partner state agencies' abilities to coordinate services for eligible children and families with the goal of increased access to high quality programs and services in a timely and efficient manner; and

(3) maintain and utilize data on children 0 to 5 and their families that will assist in planning and executing high quality programs for children 0- to 5-years of age and their families.

DESCRIPTION OF ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR DIVISION:

The Division Director is the head of the project and will be ultimately responsible for the work of the RTT-ELC grant activities. There will also be a Deputy Director. The division will be split into two offices: The Office of Early Learning and the Office of Family Support.

Quality Initiatives Unit: Houses offices of (1) Quality Rating and Improvement System, (2) Workforce Development Including Child Care Resource and Referral Network which includes coordination of Partner Agencies and Special Programs including 4 percent (CCDF) grant funded programs through the division (other than QRIS) and those in the Early Childhood Innovations Unit (see below), agency coordination which is responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and: MDE, IHL, Community College, Directors of Part C and B (IDEA), Work Force Investment Board, TEACH

and WAGES site, Medicaid, Mental Health and Health Departments, and Head Start Collaboration Office

Community and Family Engagement Unit: The Community and Family Engagement Unit consists of the Departments of Community Engagement and Family Engagement. The Department of Community Engagement oversees grants to programs that (1) promote community involvement specifically to address the well-being and education of children 0-8 years of age, (2) engages communities in aspects of high quality early care and education programs including, but not limited to: specific technical assistance to communities and/or early care and education programs based on geographic location/proximity to elementary schools most at risk under MDE direction and (3) Public/Private Partnerships developed and implemented for the purpose of strengthening early care and education in and out of the home.

The Department of Parent Engagement promotes parent engagement through: (1) coordinating with the Secretary of State and the Mississippi Economic Council and Foundations to implement the MS IMPACT early childhood savings plan for child's college education starting in early childhood (2) coordinating with DHS protective services to cross train social workers and Families First Resource Centers incorporating state parent engagement standards and the state TQRIS model, (3) oversee and conduct on-going reviews and audits of existing programs' goals and systems of delivery for the purpose of improving outreach to parents and children of special populations such as migrant families, immigrants and children with special needs and reporting to the Division findings of needed improvements on a regular basis and (4) develop and implement outreach to families and other agencies through all types of media and technology concerning all aspects of high quality early childhood education and quality.

Early Childhood Innovation Unit: provides oversight to: (1) programs that develop and deliver cross-training among/ between different professions that provide auxiliary/medical services to infants through pre-schoolers and their families. Training content includes specific information on the negative impact of chronic poverty on the development of young children and their families, the relationship between negative mental health development in the early years and family dynamics when chronic poverty exists and the relationship between poverty and the quality of home and out of home educational environments for young children. Specific populations include, but are not limited to: medical professionals, social workers, medical

professional educators, early childhood teacher educators, parent educators, social work educators, and professionals delivering services specific to IDEA Parts B and C such as speech therapists. Additional responsibilities include the monitoring and increased requirements for state credentials of various professionals involved in the medical and overall well-being of children 0 to 5 years of age, (2) the early childhood program incubator where ideas are developed and piloted that address the unique circumstances rural children and families in chronic poverty face with the goal of eliminating and/or minimizing the negative impacts.

Unit of School Readiness: The unit, in coordination with the Department of Community Engagement, Quality Initiatives and Data Units and MDE: (1) oversees the quality of programs in public schools including teacher instruction for children prior to kindergarten entry, (2) coordinates the development and alignment of curriculum of learning standards (3) ensures teaching strategies and information to parents and teachers of children with special needs are embedded into programming and curriculum development, and (4) coordinates program transactions children and families make between early care and education programs and public school based programs.

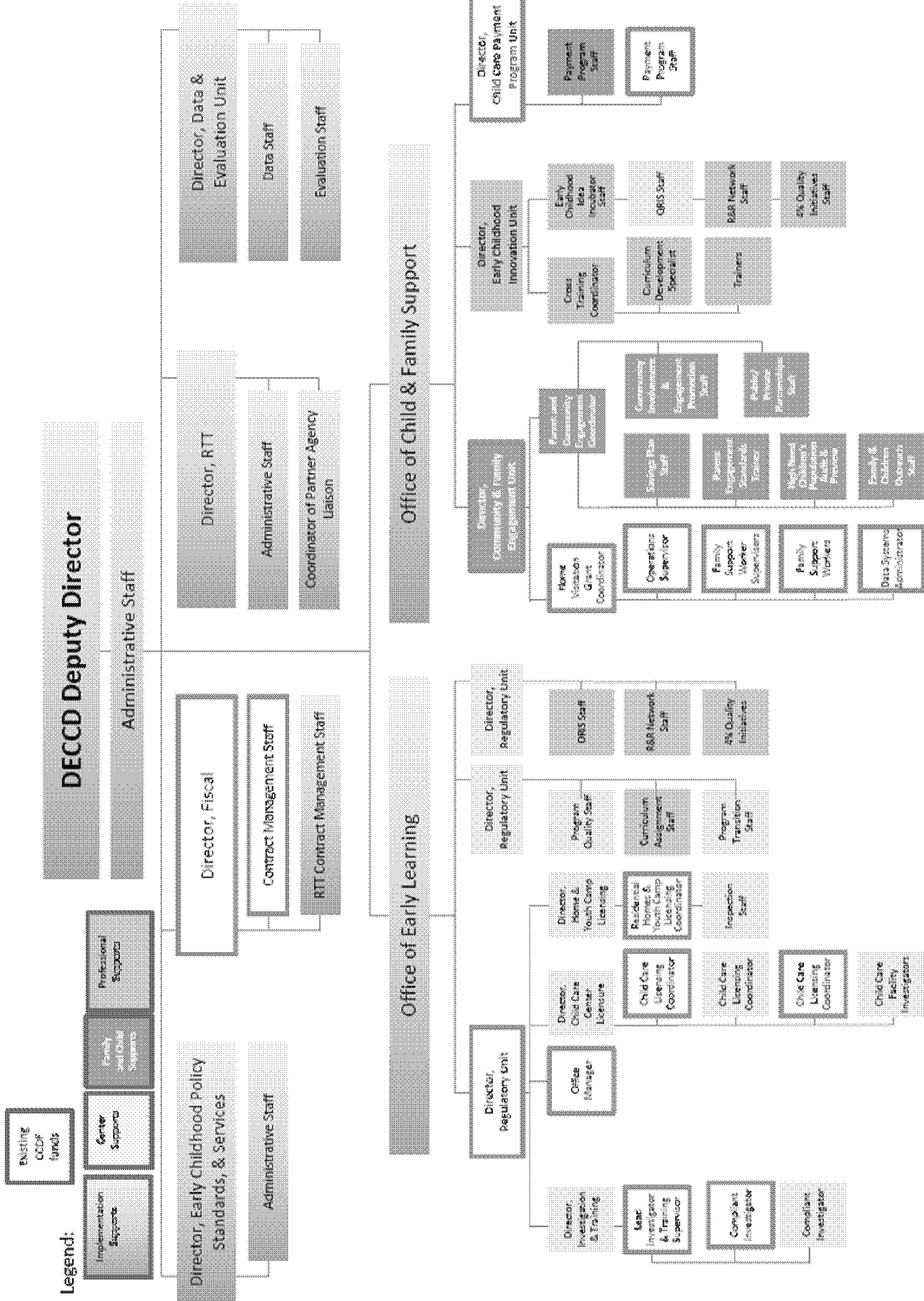
Child Care Subsidy Unit: Monitor the annual registration of children who are eligible to receive child care subsidy; coordinate with data unit to monitor monthly attendance of children and program status related to status and report to director/deputy director; monitor contact with designated agents for compliance; utilize payments to child care programs as a means to deliver important information related to quality environments

Regulatory Unit: Executes child care licensing monitoring for all out-of-home settings; coordinate licensing data with data unit, quality unit, workforce development unit through deputy director's over site. The unit also works with the Division of Protective Services within DHS to monitor and provide information to foster care monitors regarding high quality care environments.

Data and Evaluation Unit: The data and evaluation unit is critical to the successful work of the division. All decisions will be based on data therefore the unit must have capacity and expertise to manage all incoming data, utilize it for evaluative purposes of all other units in the Division and to contribute to the interagency and intra-agency planning.

Fiscal Unit Director- Oversees all financial record keeping, contracts and reporting related to the work of the Division.

The following diagrams illustrate the structure of the Mississippi Division of Early Childhood Care and Development.



BENEFIT TO STAKEHOLDERS

The organizational structure of the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development presented in Mississippi's Race to the Top application aligns services for children and families in such a way as to support increased access to higher quality programs. Relocating child care licensure under the new organizational structure removes current roadblocks to adopting regulations that would increase the level of care offered in child care environments throughout the State. All children in licensed or regulated child care in Mississippi would be cared for in increasingly higher levels of care, offering a stronger foundation for development across domains. The new structure eliminates the need to navigate multiple agencies to access assistance and information. With all of these services housed at the Department of Human Services, families will not only contact one agency for the services identified in the re-organization, but also to other services such as TANF, SNAP, LiHEAP, CPS and Child Support. As the re-organization is implemented, existing policies and processes will be evaluated to eliminate duplication of services and remove barriers to access caused by conflicting program policies. A reduction in the duplication of services and streamlining of processes reduces confusion and increases a family's chance of accessing all needed supports. Finally, as processes and program operations are streamlined and redundancies eliminated, more funds become available for services so that higher numbers of families receive benefits.

BUDGET PART II: PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY

The State must complete Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, and a narrative for each Participating State Agency with budgetary responsibilities. Therefore, the State should replicate the Budget Part II tables and narrative for each Participating State Agency, and include them in this section as follows:

- *Participating State Agency 1: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*
- *Participating State Agency 2: Budget Table II-1, Budget Table II-2, narrative.*

BUDGET PART II - TABLES

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency Budget By Budget Category--*The State must include the Participating State Agency's budget totals for each budget category for each year of the grant.*

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Mississippi Department of Human Services

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	909,948	2,274,869	1,706,152	909,948	5,800,917
2. Fringe Benefits	272,984	682,461	511,846	272,984	1,740,275
3. Travel	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	40,000
4. Equipment	80,000	0	0	0	80,000
5. Supplies	100,000	100,000	0	0	200,000
6. Contractual	321,480	600,000			921,480
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	1,694,412	3,667,330	2,227,998	1,192,932	8,782,672
10. Indirect Costs*	254,092	785,941	710,457	582,507	2,332,997
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	3,187,422	12,051,485	11,881,147	10,357,210	37,477,264
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	5,235,926	16,604,756	14,919,602	12,232,649	48,992,933
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	11,189,145	11,726,630	20,381,882	20,381,882	63,679,539
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	16,425,071	28,331,386	35,301,484	32,614,531	112,672,472

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Mississippi Department of Human Services

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
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Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Line 14: Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency Budget By Project--*The State must include the Participating State Agency's proposed budget totals for each project for each year of the grant.*

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency (Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b)) Mississippi Department of Human Services					
Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Childhood Infrastructure	3,028,496	5,670,468	4,935,920	3,494,231	17,129,115
Center Supports	1,000,000	7,300,000	7,300,000	6,100,000	21,700,000
Family and Child Supports	450,000	1,377,200	1,377,200	1,314,151	4,518,549
Professional Supports	821,480	1,876,856	1,309,500	1,318,932	5,326,768
Total Budget	5,299,976	16,224,523	14,922,619	12,227,313	48,674,431

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Mississippi Department of Mental Health

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
1. Personnel	81,711	81,711	81,711	81,711	326,844
2. Fringe Benefits	20,428	20,428	20,428	20,428	81,712
3. Travel	12,240	12,240	12,240	12,240	48,960
4. Equipment	3,000	0	0	0	3,000
5. Supplies	3,000	6,600	6,600	6,600	22,800
6. Contractual	5,000	10,000	5,000	5,000	25,000
7. Training Stipends	0	0	0	0	0
8. Other	0	0	0	0	0
9. Total Direct Costs (add lines 1-8)	125,379	130,979	125,979	125,979	508,316
10. Indirect Costs*	0	0	0	0	0
11. Funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs and other partners.	65,625	144,375	144,375	144,375	498,750
12. Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance	0	0	0	0	0
13. Total Grant Funds Requested (add lines 9-12)	191,004	275,354	270,354	270,354	1,007,066
14. Funds from other sources used to support the State Plan	0	0	0	0	0
15. Total Budget (add lines 13-14)	191,004	275,354	270,354	270,354	1,007,066

Columns (a) through (d): For each grant year for which funding is requested, show the total amount requested for each applicable budget category.

Column (e): Show the total amount requested for all grant years.

Line 6: Show the amount of funds allocated through contracts with vendors for products to be acquired and/or professional services to be provided. A State may apply its indirect cost rate only against the first \$25,000 of each contract included in line 6.

Line 10: If the State plans to request reimbursement for indirect costs, complete the Indirect Cost Information form at the end of this Budget section. Note that indirect costs are not allocated to line 11.

Line 11: Show the amount of funds to be distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating

Budget Table II-1: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Mississippi Department of Mental Health

Budget Categories	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
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Programs, and other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws. States are not required to provide budgets for how the localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners will use these funds. However, the Departments expect that, as part of the administration and oversight of the grant, States will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure that localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, and other partners spend these funds in accordance with the State Plan.

Line 12: The Participating State Agency's allocation of the \$400,000 the State must set aside from its Total Grant Funds Requested for the purpose of participating in RTT-ELC grantee technical assistance activities facilitated by ED or HHS. This is primarily to be used for travel and may be allocated evenly across the four years of the grant.

Line 13: This is the total funding requested under this grant.

Line 14: Show total funding from other sources (including Federal, State, private, or local) being used to support the State Plan and describe these funding sources in the budget narrative.

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Mississippi Department of Mental Health

Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Childhood Infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0
Center Supports	0	0	0	0	0
Family and Child Supports	191,004	275,354	270,354	270,354	1,007,066
Professional Supports	0	0	0	0	0
Total Budget	191,004	275,354	270,354	270,354	1,007,066

Budget Table II-2: Participating State Agency
(Evidence for selection criterion (A)(4)(b))
Mississippi Department of Education (non-grant funds)

Project	Grant Year 1 (a)	Grant Year 2 (b)	Grant Year 3 (c)	Grant Year 4 (d)	Total (e)
Early Childhood Infrastructure	35,000	283,500	0	0	318,500
Center Supports	0	0	0	0	0
Family and Child Supports	0	0	0	0	0
Professional Supports	0	0	0	0	0
Total Budget	35,000	283,500	0	0	318,500

BUDGET PART II - NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the Participating State Agency's budget, including--

- *How the Participating State Agency plans to organize its operations in order to manage the RTT-ELC funds and accomplish the work set forth in the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work;*
- *For each project in which the Participating State Agency is involved, and consistent with the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work:*
 - *An explanation of the Participating State Agency's roles and responsibilities*
 - *An explanation of how the proposed project annual budget was derived*
- *A detailed explanation of each budget category line item, including the information below.*

BUDGET PART II - NARRATIVE

Describe, in the text box below, the Participating State Agency's budget, including--

- *How the Participating State Agency plans to organize its operations in order to manage the RTT-ELC funds and accomplish the work set forth in the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work;*
- *For each project in which the Participating State Agency is involved, and consistent with the MOU or other binding agreement and scope of work:*
 - *An explanation of the Participating State Agency's roles and responsibilities*
 - *An explanation of how the proposed project annual budget was derived*
- *A detailed explanation of each budget category line item, including the information below.*

1) Personnel \$5,800,917

Forty percent of the positions will be hired in the first year. The second year 100% of the positions will be in place. The third year, 100% of the positions will be in place, but 75% of the salary will be charged to the grant. In the fourth year 100% of the positions will be in place, but 40% of the salary will be charged to the grant.

The total charges of the grant by year are as follows:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
\$909,948	\$2,274,869	\$1,706,152	\$909,948	\$5,800,917

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Percent of Position Costs to Grant				
							Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Office Manager <i>Responsible for the organization and coordination of office operations, procedures and resources to facilitate organizational effectiveness and efficiency.</i>	1	\$39,962.72	\$39,962.72	\$13,986.95	\$13,986.95	\$53,949.67	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
DECCD Deputy Director <i>Assist the director with management of the Early Childhood Care and Development Division.</i>	1	\$53,600.93	\$53,600.93	\$18,760.33	\$18,760.33	\$72,361.26	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
Admin Staff <i>Perform a wide range of administrative and office support activities for the department to facilitate the efficient operation of the organization.</i>	1	\$27,747.86	\$27,747.86	\$9,711.75	\$9,711.75	\$37,459.61	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
Director- Early Childhood Policy, Stds & Serv.	1	\$45,154.91	\$45,154.91	\$15,804.22	\$15,804.22	\$60,959.13	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

This position will be responsible for ensuring that all units implement policy changes and standards in each service area in the new developed early childhood division. This position will be key in the development of new policies and standards with early childhood stakeholders and policy developers in the state.

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Admin Staff <i>Perform a wide range of administrative and office support activities for the department to facilitate the efficient operation of the organization.</i>	1	\$27,747.86	\$27,747.86	\$9,711.75	\$9,711.75	\$37,459.61	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
RTT Contract Mgmt <i>This position will be responsible for creating and managing all contracts related to the RTT grant. This will include ensuring that all contracts are following the subgrantee manual and monthly expenses are processed and submitted for payment.</i>	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
Director- RTT <i>This position will be responsible for the implementation of the RTT grant. This position will work with all other units to ensure all goals and objectives are being met.</i>	1	\$45,154.91	\$45,154.91	\$15,804.22	\$15,804.22	\$60,959.13	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
Admin Staff	1	\$27,747.86	\$27,747.86	\$9,711.75	\$9,711.75	\$37,459.61	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

Perform a wide range of administrative and office support activities for the department to facilitate the efficient operation of the organization.

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Coord of Partner Agency Liaisons <i>This position is responsible for ensuring frequent contact with other identified liaisons in partnering agencies and organizations. Communication between agency liaisons will be encouraged but the coordinator will be aware to ensure awareness of work towards a common goal. The coordinator will also develop and hold meetings and trainings to give the liaisons the tools to push toward the common goal.</i>	1	\$40,848.71	\$40,848.71	\$14,297.05	\$14,297.05	\$55,145.76	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
Director- Data & Eval <i>This position will engage with the responsible for ensuring that all units capture data components necessary to deliver information to the SLDS. They will also address data needs in the development of new data and evaluation needs with early childhood stakeholders and policy developers in the state. This position will also manage the data and evaluation staff for the Division.</i>	1	\$51,358.88	\$51,358.88	\$17,975.61	\$17,975.61	\$69,334.49	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

Data Staff 1 \$41,164.13 \$41,164.13 \$14,407.45 \$14,407.45 \$55,571.58 100% 40% 100% 75% 40%

This position would be responsible for the data needs in the Division and will work with other partnering agencies.

Evaluation Staff 1 \$41,164.13 \$41,164.13 \$14,407.45 \$14,407.45 \$55,571.58 100% 40% 100% 75% 40%

This position would be responsible for the evaluation of data sets in the Division and will work with other partnering agencies conducting the evaluation.

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Director-Division Regulatory Unit	1	\$45,154.91	\$45,154.91	\$15,804.22	\$15,804.22	\$60,959.13	100%	0%	100%	75%	40%

This position is responsible for the operation of the Regulatory Unit and the inspection of child care facilities.

Director- Special Investigations Unit	1	\$41,254.98	\$41,254.98	\$14,439.24	\$14,439.24	\$55,694.22	100%	0%	100%	*75%	*40%
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This position is responsible for conducting special investigations with child care centers concerning neglect and abuse. This position will also lead the trainers in the Regulatory Unit.

Complaint Investigator	3	\$27,615.55	\$82,846.65	\$9,665.44	\$28,996.33	\$111,842.98	100%	0%	100%	75%	40%
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This position compiles complaints from the public about child care centers and processes them to ensure that complaints are addressed.

Director-Child Care Licensing	1	\$41,254.98	\$41,254.98	\$14,439.24	\$14,439.24	\$55,694.22	100%	0%	100%	75%	40%
<i>This position ensures that child care centers are inspected on a bi-annual basis, and manages and operates the Child Care Center Licensure unit.</i>											
Branch Director I	1	\$35,993.50	\$35,993.50	\$12,597.73	\$12,597.73	\$48,591.23	100%	0%	100%	75%	40%
<i>This position is responsible for the operations in the regional offices for licensing child care facilities.</i>											
Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Child Care Licensing Coordinator	1	\$32,947.47	\$32,947.47	\$11,531.61	\$11,531.61	\$44,479.08	100%	0%	100%	75%	40%
<i>This position coordinates the inspectors and their work with the child care centers.</i>											
Office Manager III	1	\$23,896.65	\$23,896.65	\$8,363.83	\$8,363.83	\$32,260.48	100%	0%	100%	75%	40%
<i>Responsible for the organization and coordination of office operations, procedures and resources to facilitate organizational effectiveness and efficiency.</i>											
DHS-Program Specialist-Inspectors	15	\$30,292.35	\$454,385.25	\$10,602.32	\$159,034.84	\$613,420.09	100%	0%	100%	75%	40%

These positions coordinate child care center licensing visits to ensure the health and safety of the center.

Director-Home & Youth Camp Licensing 1 \$41,254.98 \$41,254.98 \$14,439.24 \$14,439.24 \$55,694.22 100% 0% 100% 75% 40%

This position ensures that homes and youth camps are inspected on a bi-annual basis, and manages and operates the Youth Camp Center Licensure unit.

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Child Care Licensing Coordinator	1	\$32,947.47	\$32,947.47	\$11,531.61	\$11,531.61	\$44,479.08	100%	0%	100%	75%	40%

This position coordinates the inspectors and their work with the child care centers.

DHS-Program Specialist - Inspectors 2 \$30,292.35 \$60,584.70 \$10,602.32 \$21,204.65 \$81,789.35 100% 0% 100% 75% 40%

These positions coordinate child care center licensing visits to ensure the health and safety of the center.

Director- School Readiness Unit 1 \$45,154.91 \$45,154.91 \$15,804.22 \$15,804.22 \$60,959.13 100% 40% 100% 75% 40%

This position is responsible for coordinating with the Community and Parent Engagement, Quality Initiatives and Innovation, and Data Units and MDE. They will work with others to coordinate the quality of programs in public schools, development and alignment of curriculum ensures teaching strategies and information to parents and teachers, and program transactions children and families make.

Program Quality Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
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This position oversees the quality of programs in public schools including teacher instruction for children prior to kindergarten entry.

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Curriculum Alignment Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

This position coordinates the development and alignment of curriculum of learning standards.

Program Transition Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
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This position ensures teaching strategies and information to parents and teachers of children with special needs are embedded into programming and curriculum development.

Director Community and	1	\$45,154.91	\$45,154.91	\$15,804.22	\$15,804.22	\$60,959.13	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
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**Family
Engagement Unit**

This position will manage the Community and Family Engagement Unit and oversee grants to programs as well as promoting parent engagement.

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Parent and Community Engagement Coordinator <i>This position oversees the management and oversight of the parent coordinating with the State Treasurer’s Office and others to implement the MS IMPACT early childhood savings plan for child’s college education starting in early childhood, coordinate with DHS protective services to cross train social workers and others, oversee and conduct on-going reviews and audits of existing programs’ goals and systems of delivery, reporting to the Division findings of needed improvements on a regular basis, and develop and implement outreach to families.</i>	1	\$40,848.71	\$40,848.71	\$14,297.05	\$14,297.05	\$55,145.76	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

Savings Plan Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
<i>This position will coordinate with the State Treasurer's Office and the Mississippi Economic Council and Foundations to implement the MS IMPACT early childhood savings plan for child's college education starting in early childhood.</i>											
Parent Engagement Standards Trainer	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
<i>This position will coordinate with DHS protective services to cross train social workers and Families First Resource Centers incorporating state parent engagement standards.</i>											
Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
High Need Children's Population Audit and Preview Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
<i>This position will coordinate with DHS protective services to cross train social workers and Families First Resource Centers incorporating state parent engagement standards.</i>											
Family and Children Outreach Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

This position will develop and implement outreach to families and other agencies through all types of media and technology concerning all aspects of high quality early childhood education and quality.

Community Involvement & Engagement Promotion Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
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This position will promote community involvement specifically to address the well-being and education of children 0-8 years of age, engages communities in aspects of high quality early care and education programs including, but not limited to: specific technical assistance to communities and/or early care and education programs based on geographic location/proximity to elementary schools in state conservatorship.

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Public & Private Partnership Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

This position will be responsible for Public/Private Partnerships developed and implemented for the purpose of strengthening early care and education in and out of the home.

Director- Early Childhood Quality Initiatives and Innovation Unit	1	\$45,154.91	\$45,154.91	\$15,804.22	\$15,804.22	\$60,959.13	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
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This position will be responsible for management and oversight of the Quality Initiatives and Innovation Unit.

Cross Training Coordinator	1	\$40,848.71	\$40,848.71	\$14,297.05	\$14,297.05	\$55,145.76	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
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This position will be responsible for programs that develop and deliver cross-training among/ between different professions that provide auxiliary/medical services to infants through pre-schoolers and their families.

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Curriculum Development Specialist	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

This position will be responsible for programs that develop and deliver cross-training among/ between different professions that provide auxiliary/medical services to infants through pre-schoolers and their families. Additional responsibilities include the monitoring and increased requirements for state credentials of various professionals involved in the medical and overall well-being of children 0 to 5 years of age.

Trainers	2	\$36,176.62	\$72,353.24	\$12,661.82	\$25,323.63	\$97,676.87	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
<i>This position will be responsible for training on the negative impact of chronic poverty on the development of young children and their families, the relationship between negative mental health development in the early years and family dynamics when chronic poverty exists and the relationship between poverty and the quality of home and out of home educational environments for young children. Those trained would include: medical professionals, social workers, medical professional educators, early childhood teacher educators, parent educators, social work educators, and professionals delivering services specific to IDEA Parts B and C such as speech therapists.</i>											

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Early Childhood Idea Incubator Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
<i>This position will be responsible for the early childhood program incubator where ideas are developed and piloted that address the unique circumstances rural children and families in chronic poverty face with the goal of eliminating and/or minimizing the negative impacts.</i>											
QRIS Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

This position will be responsible for the subcontracted implementation of the Quality Rating and Improvement System.

R&R Staff	1	\$36,176.62	\$36,176.62	\$12,661.82	\$12,661.82	\$48,838.44	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
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This position will be responsible for workforce development including Child Care Resource and Referral Network which includes coordination of Partner Agencies and Special Programs.

4% Quality Initiatives Staff	2	\$36,176.62	\$72,353.24	\$12,661.82	\$25,323.63	\$97,676.87	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
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This position will manage the 4 percent (CCDF) grant funded programs through the division.

Position	Qty	Salary	Salary Total	Fringe	Fringe Total	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Payment Program Staff	2	\$36,176.62	\$72,353.24	\$12,661.82	\$25,323.63	\$97,676.87	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

This position will monitor the annual registration of children who are eligible to receive child care subsidy; coordinate with data unit to monitor monthly attendance of children and program status related to status and report to director/deputy director; monitor contact with designated agents for compliance; utilize payments to child care programs as a means to deliver important information related to quality environments.

* Only 40% of the positions will be filled during this project period.

** This percentage of cost is charged to the grant for the percentage indicated per year. Other funds will cover the remainder of the costs for the remainder of the salary, which is a majority of state funds.

2) Fringe Benefits \$1,740,275

The percentage for fringe benefits is 30%. This cost covers state retirement costs, FICA, Social Security.

Forty percent of the positions will be hired in the first year. The second year 100% of the positions will be in place. The third year, 100% of the positions will be in place, but 75% of the salary and fringe will be charged to the grant. In the fourth year 100% of the positions will be in place, but 40% of the salary and fringe will be charged to the grant.

The total charges of the grant by year are as follows:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
\$272,984	\$682,461	\$511,846	\$272,984	\$1,740,275

3) Travel \$40,000

Travel costs for each year will be 10,000 per project year. This travel will be required to attend meetings, trainings, and related conferences.

a) Estimated number of trips: 13

Estimated costs for each trip: \$1,500

This cost will include airfare, transportation, hotel costs and per diem.

b) Estimated mileage for attending meetings: 196 trips x 200 miles = 39,216 miles

4) Equipment \$80,000

The agency will provide a desk top or lap top computer to each staff member that is charged to this grant. Each computer will cost \$1,250.

\$1,250 x 64 MDHS positions = \$80,000

Definition of equipment used by the state: "Equipment is usually categorized into various types: cameras and camera equipment, tape recorders, radio equipment, appliances, televisions, lawn maintenance equipment, cellular telephones, computers and computer equipment, and vehicles."

Justification of need: The computers will be needed to process daily work and interactions with other staff and partnering agencies.

5) Supplies \$200,000

MDHS will purchase office furniture to supply the staff with a work space. Desks average \$1,000. Chairs average \$100 each. This may include partitions to create office spaces. This will also include general office supplies and postage.

6) Contractual \$921,480

Entity	Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
MSDH/ MDE	Early Intervention TA	\$321,480	\$600,000	\$0	\$0	\$921,480

This project will complete comprehensive reviews of state Part C systems, identify and collaborate with key stakeholder groups within the state, evaluate system variables and resources, analyze existing data and develop data gathering tools as needed, explore strategies that have been successful in other states, examine national research on effective long-term system changes utilizing evidence-based practices and develop outcome driven recommendations and implementation plans to support states to create paradigm shifts in early intervention practices. This project will take 24 months to complete.

State will follow the procedures for procurement under 34 CFR Parts 74.40 - 74.48 and Part 80.36.

7) Training Stipends

This budget does not include training stipends.

8) Other

This budget does not include other costs.

9) Total Direct Costs

The total direct costs of the grant by year are as follows:

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
\$1,694,412	\$3,667,330	\$2,227,998	\$1,192,932	\$8,782,672

10) Indirect Costs \$2,332,997

MDHS will use an indirect cost rate of 5%.

11) Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

\$37,477,264

Entity	Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
State Treasury	Parent Savings Account	\$250,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$3,250,000
	<i>This program will help parents save for their child's education. The funds will be matched based on the amount funds they contribute.</i>					
MDHS	Child Care Center Grants	\$1,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000	\$4,000,000	\$15,000,000
		0	0	0	0	0
	<i>Financial Incentive Resource Program will be voluntary that compliments the required QRIS. Provide up to 300 licensed early care and education centers that are currently in the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step System rated at either a step 1 or 2 who choose to participate with some choices of educational materials, training, or salary bonuses.</i>					
MSCEI	TEACH & Wages	\$500,000	\$892,356	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$3,392,356
				0	0	
	<i>This project would be offered through the MS Center for Education Innovation, who is the TEACH and WAGES site for MS. This program will offer tuition assistance and wage supplements while in school.</i>					
MDE	Assessments	\$35,000	\$283,500	\$0	\$0	\$318,500

The assessment system will be targeted to the appropriate age/grade range (kindergarten, first, second, and third grades) and demonstrated to be aligned with the current Mississippi Language Arts and Mathematics Frameworks. The Mississippi Department of Education is proposing for the 2012-2013 school year, the top two-four district selected screeners. At least two administrations of the instrument will be required, one at the beginning of the kindergarten year, the other within the last 4 weeks of school. School districts will be strongly encouraged to administer an additional assessment at the mid-point of the year to gauge student progress.

Entity	Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
R&R	In Home Cert Program License <i>This project will manage and oversee the certification, licensing and registration of in-home providers.</i>	\$0	\$336,000	\$636,000	\$625,000	\$1,597,000
R&R	Training & Technical Assistance <i>This project will provide intensive technical assistance and materials to child care centers. A technical assistance person will work with the classroom teacher to implement best practice, a nutritionist will work with the cook and director, and a business advisory will work with the director to better business operations.</i>	\$0	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$6,000,000
MSU-	QRIS Additional	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$900,000	\$800,000	\$3,700,000

ECI	Program Admin	0				
	<i>QRIS will become mandatory for child care in 2013. This line item will be necessary to hire the staff to monitor the centers for their ratings.</i>					
Entity	Activity	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
	Choctaw Tribe	\$0	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$100,000	\$700,000
	<i>A liaison to support tribal staff on the activities outlined, R&R on the reservation, families become enrolled in the savings account program, Employ up to 5 technical assistants that are from the tribe and trained by ECI and MSU to provide technical assistance in family homes and QRIS centers, train a school employee to administer the CLASS assessment in the pre-k program.</i>					
	MS State Extension Offices	\$200,000	\$377,200	\$377,200	\$314,150	\$1,268,550
	<i>Provide Navigators to serve as liaisons between families and the services available to them, identify and promote early learning services, enhance positive culture of education, provide parenting education opportunities through classes and mentoring programs, facilitate access to educational materials, research and document the early childhood support network, ease transitions for children between child care service providers and public school, educate community members about needed educational services, and develop connections between children and schools by supporting continuity of care</i>					
UMC	Pediatric Unit	\$0	\$350,000	\$300,000	\$318,932	\$968,932

This proposal has 3 efforts to help equip pediatricians, nurse practitioners, family practitioners and allied health professionals in early recognition of children with learning or developmental problems. The first effort will be a telecommunications set up between UMMC's Child Development Center, Dr. Susan Buttross, a Developmental/Behavioral Pediatrician, and 4 remote sites in the state. Dr. Buttross will consult with providers for medical consultation on a regular basis and would also periodically conduct teaching conferences on particular topics concerning child learning/educational needs. The second effort will be a travel team comprised of Dr. Buttross, a psychologist, and a project coordinator to regularly schedule visits to the above sites and conduct evaluations on specific patients who are a difficult puzzle for the physicians. The third effort will offer visits to pediatrician offices (who are not at the above sites) around the state to conduct in depth teaching conferences on developmental screening and identification.

AAP	MS Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
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Community pediatrician Ed Ivancic, MD will work in conjunction with the Mississippi Chapter AAP and the MS Early Childhood Institute to develop a protocol (or potentially revise an existing protocol) to train residents as well as practicing physicians on the need for early identification of normal and atypical development in early childhood.

MDHS Cross Training \$0 \$9,500 \$9,500 \$0 \$19,000

There are two areas of cross training proposed: 1) programs that develop and deliver cross-training among/ between different professions that provide auxiliary/medical services to infants through pre-schoolers and their families. Training content includes specific information on the negative impact of chronic poverty on the development of young children and their families, the relationship between negative mental health development in the early years and family dynamics when chronic poverty exists and the relationship between poverty and the quality of home and out of home educational environments for young children. Specific populations include, but are not limited to: medical professionals, social workers, medical professional educators, early childhood teacher educators, parent educators, social work educators, and professionals delivering services specific to IDEA Parts B and C such as speech therapists. Additional responsibilities include the monitoring and increased requirements for state credentials of various professionals involved in the medical and overall well-being of children 0 to 5 years of age, and 2) coordinating with DHS protective services to cross train social workers and Families First Resource Centers incorporating state parent engagement standards.

Liaison	Salary	Fringe	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1*	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
Division of Medicaid- Liaison	\$40,848.71	\$14,297.05	\$55,145.76	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%

Responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and appointed entity. The Liaison will work with the Liaison Coordinator at the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development

Department of Health- Part C Liaison \$40,848.71 \$14,297.05 \$55,145.76

Responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and appointed entity. The Liaison will work with the Liaison Coordinator at the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development

Department of Ed-Liaison \$40,848.71 \$14,297.05 \$55,145.76

Responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and appointed entity. The Liaison will work with the Liaison Coordinator at the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development

IHL-Liaison \$40,848.71 \$14,297.05 \$55,145.76

Responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and appointed entity. The Liaison will work with the Liaison Coordinator at the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development

Community College -Liaison \$40,848.71 \$14,297.05 \$55,145.76

Responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and appointed entity. The Liaison will work with the Liaison Coordinator at the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development

Liaison	Salary	Fringe	Total	Amt of Time	Year 1 *	Year 2	Year 3**	Year 4**
UMC - Liaison	\$40,848.71	\$14,297.05	\$55,145.76	100%	40%	100%	75%	40%
<i>Responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and appointed entity. The Liaison will work with the Liaison Coordinator at the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development</i>								

Development

Treasurer's Office Liaison \$40,848.71 \$14,297.05 \$55,145.76
Responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and appointed entity. The Liaison will work with the Liaison Coordinator at the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development

TEACH & WAGES Liaison \$40,848.71 \$14,297.05 \$55,145.76
Responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and appointed entity. The Liaison will work with the Liaison Coordinator at the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development

Work Force Investment Board/nSparc- Liaison \$40,848.71 \$14,297.05 \$55,145.76
Responsible for coordination of information and joint planning between the Division and appointed entity. The Liaison will work with the Liaison Coordinator at the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development

* Only 40% of the positions will be filled during this project period.

** This percentage of cost is charged to the grant for the percentage indicated per year. Other funds will cover the remainder of the costs for the remainder of the salary, which is a majority of state funds.

Equipment for Liaisons

For year one - 9 computers at \$1250 each = \$11,250.00

The liaisons will need a desk top or lap top computer to each staff member that is charged to this grant. Each computer will cost \$1,250.

Definition of equipment used by the state: “Equipment is usually categorized into various types: cameras and camera equipment, tape recorders, radio equipment, appliances, televisions, lawn maintenance equipment, cellular telephones, computers and computer equipment, and vehicles.”

Justification of need: The computers will be needed to process daily work and interactions with other staff and partnering agencies.

12) Funds set aside for participation in grantee technical assistance \$400,000

The Lead Agency will set aside \$100,000 per year for grantee technical assistance.

13) Total Funds Requested

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
\$5,235,926	\$16,604,756	\$14,919,602	\$12,232,649	\$48,992,933

14) Other Funds Allocated to the State Plan

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
\$11,189,145	\$11,726,630	\$20,381,882	\$20,381,882	\$63,679,539

SAC Head Start Funds \$ 2,132,011

A total of 1,685,344 will be used in 2012 and 2013 for the following programs:

Workforce Investment- Developing and implementing a career ladder for early care and education teachers with a method of providing compensation for career advancements by year 3 of the program; in addition, investigating and implementing a wage and compensation program to create stability within the field.

The Kellogg Foundation offered a match of \$466,667 to assist with the workforce investment project.

Data Systems- Developing a data sharing system that is inclusive of core data elements from the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH), Mississippi Department of Mental Health (MDMH), Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS), Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC), and Head Start Collaboration Office for the purpose of improving existing service delivery systems and planning for new ones that will more effectively deliver services to the

children birth through age 4 years with special attention paid to those in critical need areas of the state.

Coordinated Service Models- Sponsoring a work process study for MDHS, MSDH, and MDE in order to determine a model for optimizing early childhood education, health and well-being services that will be piloted in four communities in year one with additional communities involved.

Home Provider Registry- Developing and implementing a voluntary registration process for family child care providers in year one with development of a quality rating and improvement system (QRIS) to be completed for family child care providers.

Healthcare Access- Developing a review of state health resources and practices for children 0-4 years of age for the dual purposes of making current practices more efficient and quantifying the need for health service providers in areas of the state identified as being in critical need.

These funds will end August 2013.

The 4% Quality CCDF, and CCDF Earmark funds will be used to promote the objectives of this grant by providing funding for intensive technical assistance and training, a QRIS for in home providers, a certification program for in home providers, a director's credentialing program, CDA program, and a conference.

CCDF Administrative funds will absorb the cost for some of the cost associated with the grant such as copier service plans, data system needs, and infrastructure needs.

It is planned that each partnering state agency is to begin asking for an increase in state budgets to begin absorbing the costs of the salaries and fringe for project year 2014. The state agencies will begin asking for more funding to support the projects associated with their part of the system in 2014 as well. This process will begin in the summer of 2012 when budget requests are being made to the Legislative Budget Office of the MS State Legislature begins planning for the state budget. The total request will be from \$20,000,000 to \$30,000,000.

15) Total Budget

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Total
\$16,425,071	\$28,331,386	\$35,301,484	\$32,614,531	\$112,672,472

PARTICIPATING STATE AGENCY – MS DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

Budget Part II – Narrative

The Department of Mental Health is dedicated to participating in the RTT-ELC initiative by addressing the health, behavioral and developmental needs of Children with High Needs by hiring two full-time staff members, providing training and technical assistance and by providing funds for local Community Mental Health Centers to expand local MAP Teams to include children birth to 5 and to cover all 82 counties of the state. All operations, supervision and management of these positions will fall under the Division of Children & Youth Services within the Bureau of Community Services at the Department of Mental Health. The Division of Children & Youth Services has experience in administering grants to local non-profit agencies; monitoring programs for compliance with DMH Operational Standards; writing and reviewing state and federal grants; developing specialized programs across the state for all children with High Needs; collecting and analyzing data; training on Evidence-based Practices; and evaluating the effectiveness of the programs serving children with High Needs. Direct Supervision of these positions will be under the Director of the Division of Children & Youth Services. The Division Director and the two hired staff funded by the RTT-ELC will abide by the governing structure, regulations, policies and processes set forth in the RTT-ELC State Plan and Memorandum of Understanding. The below annual budget was derived utilizing the Division's experience in administering current grants regarding expenditures on salaries, fringe, supplies, travel and trainings.

1. **Personnel:** Race to the Top (RTT) Liaison at \$40,855.71 each year for a total of \$163,422.84 for four (4) years. This is a full-time position that will actively participate in all relevant meetings and events that are organized or sponsored by the State, U.S. Department of Education or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Job roles include participation in evaluation of the project; coordinating project activities related to the Participating State Agency; frequent communication with other RTT Liaisons from other agencies on outcomes and barriers; coordinating trainings and technical assistance; and, assist in the development of project plans and products.

State Level MAP Team Coordinator at \$40,855.71 each year for a total of \$163,422.84 for four (4) years. This is a full-time position that will coordinate and develop MAP Teams across the state for the provision of services to children, birth to 5 years and their families. Job roles include facilitation bi-monthly meetings of MAP Team Coordinators; develop and coordinate specialized trainings for local MAP Teams and their members; travel state-wide to facilitate interagency participation from local child care centers, Head start, education, child development programs on MAP Teams; and, develop a plan for collecting data and evaluation of MAP Teams.

For year 1- \$81,711.42, Year 2 - \$81,711.42, Year 3 - \$81,711.42 and Year 4 - \$81,711.42.
Total Personnel cost for four years = \$326,845.68

2. **Fringe benefits** for the RTT Liaison and MAP Team Coordinator are 25% of the annual salaries at \$10,214 each position per year for a total of \$20,428 per year for both positions. This totals to \$81,712 for four (4) year period. Fringe benefits include FICA, Workers Compensation, Unemployment, Insurance and Retirement based on the agency's current rates.
For year 1- \$20,428, Year 2 - \$20,428, Year 3 - \$20,428 and Year 4 - \$20,428.

Total Fringe Benefits for four years = \$81,712

3. **Travel** for the RTT Liaison is estimated at \$3,762 each year for a total of \$14,688 for four (4) years. The RTT Liaison will travel an average of 150 miles per week for 48 weeks annually at 51¢ per mile. Mileage reimbursement is needed for this position to provide technical assistance, attend local or out-of-town meetings, and training events related to project activities. Local travel rate is based on the state's privately owned vehicle reimbursement policy. Travel for the MAP Team Coordinator is estimated at \$8,568 each year for a total of \$34,272 for four (4) years. The MAP Team Coordinator will travel an average of 350 miles per week for 48 weeks annually at 51¢ per mile. Mileage reimbursement is needed for travel to local MAP Teams across the state for developing new MAP Teams, expanding existing MAP Teams and to provide technical assistance activities to the team members.

For year 1- \$12,240, Year 2 - \$12,240, Year 3 - \$12,240 and Year 4 - \$12,240.
Total Travel for four years = \$48,960

4. **Equipment**

For Year 1, two laptop computers are needed for the RTT Liaison and the MAP Team Coordinator at \$1,250 each (\$2,500 total). Two printers are also needed in Year 1 for both positions at \$250 each (\$500 total). Laptops are needed for data collection activities, word processing in developing plans, e-mail communication, evaluation management and research. Printers are needed to producing necessary letters, plans and other documents related to the project. Total cost for laptops and printers is \$3,000.

5. **Supplies** are estimated at \$50.00 per month for 11 new MAP Teams for a total of \$19,800 for four (4) years. For Year 1, 5 new MAP Teams will be implemented for a total of \$3,000. In Year 2, 6 new MAP Teams will be added for a total of 11 Map Teams and a total of \$6,600. For Years 3 & 4, all 11 new MAP Teams will continue to need \$50.00 monthly for supplies for a total of \$6,600 each year. Supplies include printing of educational materials, necessary forms, assessments, outreach materials, training brochures and announcements related to the project.

For year 1- \$3,000, Year 2 - \$6,600, Year 3 - \$6,600 and Year 4 - \$6,600.
Total Supplies cost for four years = \$25,800

6. **Contractual:** Three regional trainings will be conducted for MAP Team Coordinators and their teams at \$5,000 each. In year 1, a central training will take place at \$5,000. In year 2, two trainings (one in North MS and one in South MS) will take place at \$10,000. In year 3, a supplemental training will take place at \$5,000 and in year 4, another supplemental training will take place at \$5,000. Training topics include Wraparound services, System of Care values, interagency collaboration and cultural/linguistic competency. Trainings for years 3 and 4 will be on any issues or topics determined necessary by the RTT Liaisons. The training costs for rental space, speakers, printing and materials is estimated at \$5,000 each for a total of \$25,000.

For year 1- \$5,000, Year 2 - \$10,000, Year 3 - \$5,000 and Year 4 - \$5,000.

Total Contractual cost for four years = \$25,000

7. No training stipends are needed.

8. Other: none identified.

9. Total Direct Costs:

10. Indirect Costs: none identified.

11. Funds distributed to localities, Early Learning Intermediary Organizations, Participating Programs, or other partners through MOUs, interagency agreements, contracts, or other mechanisms authorized by State procurement laws.

Eleven (11) new MAP Team Coordinators will be needed to expand the program to include children birth to five and to cover all 82 counties. These positions will be funded 30% by RTT funds at \$13,125 each. Coordinators will be phased in with 5 in Year 1 and then an additional 6 in Year 2 for a total of 11 Teams. Cost for Year 1 will be \$65,625 and for Years 2, 3 and 4 the cost will be \$144,375 for a total of \$498,750 for four (4) years. Funds for the MAP Team Coordinators will be distributed to the Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC) which provides 70% of the MAP Team Coordinators salary through state and local funds. Their specific activities include coordination and facilitation of monthly MAP Team meetings, reviewing referrals, development of individual service plans and collaborating with interagency partners serving children birth to 5 in their local communities. DMH (Participating Agency) will monitor and track all expenditures to ensure these funds are spent in accordance with the State Plan.

For year 1- \$65,625, Year 2 - \$144,375, Year 3 - \$144,375 and Year 4 - \$144,375.

Total cost for four years = \$498,750