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To: Education;  
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 418  
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES INTERAGENCY  
2 COORDINATING COUNCIL; TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP AND  
3 ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNCIL; TO DEFINE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE  
4 COUNCIL; TO ESTABLISH AN INTERAGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE  
5 EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES INTERAGENCY COUNCIL; TO PROVIDE FOR THE  
6 MEMBERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADVISORY  
7 COMMITTEE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

9 SECTION 1. (1) As used in this act, the term "preschool  
10 children" means any children who have not entered kindergarten.

11 (2) To ensure that all children have access to quality early  
12 childhood education and development services, the Legislature  
13 finds and declares the following:

14 (a) Parents have the primary duty to educate their  
15 young preschool children;

16 (b) The State of Mississippi can assist and educate  
17 parents in their role as the primary caregivers and educators of  
18 young preschool children; and

19 (c) There is a need to explore innovative approaches  
20 and strategies for aiding parents and families in the education  
21 and development of young preschool children.

22 SECTION 2. (1) The Early Childhood Services Interagency  
23 Coordinating Council is created to ensure coordination among the  
24 various agencies and programs serving preschool children in order  
25 to support school district's efforts to achieve the goal of  
26 readiness to start school, to facilitate communication,  
27 cooperation and maximum use of resources and to promote high  
28 standards for all programs serving preschool children and their

29 families in Mississippi.

30 (2) The membership of the Early Childhood Services  
31 Interagency Coordinating Council shall be as follows:

32 (a) The State Superintendent of Public Education;

33 (b) The Executive Director of the State Department of  
34 Health;

35 (c) The Executive Director of the Department of Human  
36 Services;

37 (d) The Executive Director of the State Department of  
38 Mental Health;

39 (e) The Executive Director of the Division of Medicaid,  
40 Office of the Governor;

41 (f) The Executive Director of the State Department of  
42 Rehabilitation Services;

43 (g) The Commissioner of Higher Education;

44 (h) The Executive Director of the State Board for  
45 Community and Junior Colleges; and

46 (i) The Executive Director of Mississippi Educational  
47 Television.

48 (3) The council shall meet upon call of the Governor before  
49 August 1, 2000, and shall organize for business by selecting a  
50 chairman, who shall serve for a one-year term and may be selected  
51 for subsequent terms. The council shall adopt internal  
52 organizational procedures necessary for efficient operation of the  
53 council. Council procedures must include duties of officers, a  
54 process for selecting officers, quorum requirements for conducting  
55 business and policies for any council staff. Each member of the  
56 council shall designate necessary staff of their departments to  
57 assist the council in performing its duties and responsibilities.

58 The council shall meet and conduct business at least twice  
59 annually. Meetings of the council must be open to the public, and  
60 opportunity for public comment must be made available at each  
61 meeting. The chairman of the council shall notify all persons who  
62 request such notice as to the date, time and place of each  
63 meeting.

64 (4) The Early Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating  
65 Council shall perform each of the following duties:

66           (a) Serve as interagency coordinating council for the  
67 various agencies and public and private programs serving preschool  
68 children and their families in the State of Mississippi;

69           (b) Advise the State Board of Health, State Board of  
70 Education, Department of Human Services, State Department of  
71 Mental Health, Division of Medicaid, State Department of  
72 Rehabilitation Services and any other appropriate agency of  
73 standards, rules, rule revisions, agency guidelines and  
74 administration affecting child care facilities, prekindergarten  
75 programs, family training programs and other programs and services  
76 for preschool children and families;

77           (c) Collect, compile and distribute data relating to  
78 all programs and services for preschool children and families,  
79 including, but not limited to, an inventory of the programs and  
80 services available in each county of the state, and identify and  
81 make recommendations with regard to program areas for which an  
82 unfulfilled need exists within the state for accurate and  
83 accessible information;

84           (d) Review and analyze spending priorities for each  
85 state agency that utilizes state or federal funds in the  
86 administration or provision of programs and services for preschool  
87 children and make recommendations thereon to the Legislative  
88 Budget Committee and the Governor;

89           (e) Publish annually, before November 1, a  
90 comprehensive report on the status of all programs and services  
91 for preschool children in Mississippi and distribute the report to  
92 the Governor, the Legislature and local school districts and make  
93 the report available to the general public, using the following  
94 criteria:

95                   (i) Program name and location;

96                   (ii) Dates of operation;

97                   (iii) Services provided;

98                   (iv) Target population and number served;

99 (v) Eligibility requirements;  
100 (vi) Funding sources;  
101 (vii) Amount of funding per unit;  
102 (viii) Annual cost;  
103 (ix) Evaluation type and results; and  
104 (x) The state agency administering the program.

105 (f) Receive and consider recommendations of the  
106 Interagency Advisory Committee for Early Childhood Services  
107 established in Section 3; and

108 (g) Apply for, receive and administer funds for  
109 administration, research, pilot, planning and evaluation of all  
110 programs serving preschool children and their families.

111 (5) If any agency represented on the Early Childhood  
112 Services Interagency Coordinating Council includes a request for  
113 funding for the support of the council in the agency's annual  
114 budget request presented to the Legislative Budget Committee the  
115 Early Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council shall be  
116 abolished, effective on the date that the agency presents its  
117 budget request.

118 SECTION 3. (1) The Interagency Advisory Committee for Early  
119 Childhood Services is created to develop and make recommendations  
120 to the Early Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council  
121 established under Section 2 of this act as deemed necessary to  
122 implement the council's responsibilities relating to all programs  
123 serving preschool children and their families in Mississippi.

124 (2) The membership of the Interagency Advisory Committee for  
125 Early Childhood Services shall be as follows:

126 (a) The Chairmen of the Senate Education, Public Health  
127 and Welfare and Appropriations Committees, or their Senate  
128 designees;

129 (b) The Chairmen of the House Education, Public Health  
130 and Welfare and Appropriations Committees, or their House  
131 designees;

132 (c) A representative of the Governor;

133 (d) A representative of the State Department of  
134 Education;

135 (e) A representative of the State Department of Health;

136 (f) A representative of the Department of Human  
137 Services;

138 (g) A representative of the State Department of Mental  
139 Health;

140 (h) A representative of the State Department of  
141 Rehabilitation Services;

142 (i) The following representatives of the early  
143 childhood profession:

144 (i) The President of the Mississippi Head Start  
145 Association;

146 (ii) A representative from a regulated family  
147 child care home network appointed by the Governor;

148 (iii) A representative from a licensed child care  
149 center appointed by the President of the Senate;

150 (iv) A representative from a public school  
151 prekindergarten program appointed by the Speaker of the House;

152 (v) A representative from a private school  
153 prekindergarten program appointed by the Governor;

154 (vi) A representative from a half-day church  
155 sponsored prekindergarten program appointed by the Speaker of the  
156 House;

157 (vii) A representative from a university or  
158 college early childhood program appointed by the President of the  
159 Senate;

160 (viii) A representative of a tribal early  
161 childhood program appointed by the Governor;

162 (ix) A representative of an early childhood  
163 professional organization appointed by the President of the  
164 Senate;

165                   (x) A representative of an advocacy organization  
166 appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

167                   (xi) A representative of a community or junior  
168 college early childhood program appointed by the Governor;

169                   (j) A parent of a preschool-age child appointed by the  
170 Governor;

171                   (k) A parent of a preschool-age child with special  
172 needs appointed by the Speaker of the House;

173                   (l) A representative of the cooperative extension  
174 services appointed by the President of the Senate;

175                   (m) A physician who is a member of the Mississippi  
176 Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, appointed by the  
177 Director of the University Medical Center;

178                   (n) The Director of the Mississippi Public Education  
179 Forum, or his designee; and

180                   (o) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Economic  
181 Council, or his designee.

182           To the extent possible, any representative of a state agency  
183 designated to serve on the Interagency Advisory Committee shall be  
184 the same individual designated to assist the Interagency  
185 Coordinating Council in performing its duties and  
186 responsibilities.

187           (3) The advisory committee shall meet upon call of the Early  
188 Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council before August  
189 1, 2000, and the council shall appoint a chairman from among the  
190 membership of the advisory committee. The chairman shall serve  
191 for a one-year term and may be reappointed for subsequent terms.  
192 The advisory committee shall adopt internal organizational  
193 procedures necessary for efficient operation of the advisory  
194 committee and may establish subcommittees for conducting specific  
195 programs and activities. Advisory committee procedures must  
196 include duties of officers, a process for selecting officers,  
197 duties of subcommittees, quorum requirements for conducting

198 business and policies for any staff. The members of the Early  
199 Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council shall  
200 designate necessary staff of their departments to assist the  
201 advisory committee in performing its duties and responsibilities.

202 The advisory committee shall meet and conduct business at least  
203 quarterly. Quarterly meetings of the advisory committee shall be  
204 open to the public, and opportunity for public comment must be  
205 made available at each meeting. The staff of the advisory  
206 committee shall notify all persons who request such notice as to  
207 the date, time and place of each meeting.

208 (4) The Interagency Advisory Committee for Early Childhood  
209 Services, in addition to responsibilities assigned by the Early  
210 Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council, shall perform  
211 each of the following duties:

212 (a) Assist in the implementation of the study conducted  
213 by the Task Force on the Development and Implementation of  
214 Comprehensive Early Childhood Services in Mississippi established  
215 under Senate Bill No. 2618, 1999 Regular Session;

216 (b) Identify services to children which impact early  
217 childhood development and education;

218 (c) Identify and recommend methods to facilitate  
219 interagency coordination of service programs for preschool  
220 children;

221 (d) Serve as a forum for information exchange regarding  
222 recommendations and priorities in early childhood development and  
223 education; and

224 (e) Advise and make recommendations to the Interagency  
225 Coordinating Council as deemed necessary to effectuate the  
226 council's responsibilities.

227 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
228 and after July 1, 2000.