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To: Public Health and
Welfare

SENATE BILL NO. 2003

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A STATE INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL
2 FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES; 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 FOR EARLY
5 CHILDHOOD SERVICES; TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP, ORGANIZATION
6 AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE; AND FOR RELATED
7 PURPOSES. BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF
8 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 hereby finds and declares that:

14 (a) Parents have the primary duty to provide
15 appropriate developmental experiences for their young preschool
16 children;

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

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

23 SECTION 2. (1) The State Interagency Coordinating Council
24 for Early Childhood Services is hereby created to ensure

25 coordination among the various agencies and programs serving
26 preschool children in order to support school district's efforts
27 to achieve the goal of readiness to start school, to facilitate
28 communication, cooperation and maximum use of resources and to
29 promote high standards for all programs serving preschool children
30 and their families in Mississippi.

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

33 (a) The State Superintendent of Education, or his
34 designee;

35 (b) The Executive Director of the Department of Health,
36 or his designee;

37 (c) The Executive Director of the Department of Human
38 Services, or his designee;

39 (d) The Executive Director of the Mississippi
40 Department of Mental Health, or his designee;

41 (e) The Executive Director of the Division of Medicaid,
42 Office of the Governor, or his designee; and

43 (f) The Executive Director of the State Department of
44 Rehabilitation Services, or his designee.

45 (3) The council shall meet upon call of the Governor not
46 later than August 1, 2000, and shall organize for business by
47 selecting a chairman who shall serve for a one-year term and may
48 be selected for subsequent terms. The council shall adopt
49 internal organizational procedures necessary for efficient
50 operation of the council and may establish committees for
51 conducting specific programs and activities. Council procedures
52 shall include duties of officers, a process for selecting
53 officers, duties of committees, quorum requirements for conducting
54 business and policies for any council staff. Each member of the
55 council shall designate necessary staff of their departments to

56 assist the council in performing its duties and responsibilities.

57 The council shall meet and conduct business at least quarterly.

58 Quarterly meetings of the council shall be open to the public and

59 opportunity for public comment shall be made available at each

60 such meeting. The staff of the council shall notify all persons

61 who request such notice as to the date, time and place of each

62 quarterly meeting.

63 (4) Members of the council shall receive no compensation for

64 their services, but shall be reimbursed for travel and other

65 expenses actually incurred in the performance of their official

66 duties. Such reimbursement shall be paid in accordance with the

67 provisions of Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, and shall

68 be approved by the chairman of the council.

69 (5) The State Interagency Coordinating Council for Early

70 Childhood Services shall perform each of the following duties:

71 (a) Serve as interagency coordinating council for the

72 various agencies, public and private programs serving preschool

73 children and their families in the State of Mississippi;

74 (b) Advise the State Board of Health, the State Board

75 of Education, the Department of Human Services and any other

76 appropriate agency, concerning standards, rules, rule revisions,

77 agency guidelines and administration affecting child care

78 facilities, pre-kindergarten programs, family training programs

79 and other programs and services for preschool children and

80 families;

81 (c) Collect, compile and distribute data relating to

82 all programs and services for preschool children and families,

83 including, but not limited to, an inventory of the programs and

84 services available in each county of the state; and identify and
85 make recommendations with regard to subject areas for which an
86 unfulfilled need exists within state government for accurate and
87 accessible information;

88 (d) Review and analyze the proposed budget for each
89 state agency which utilizes state or federal funds to administer
90 or provide programs and services for preschool children and make
91 recommendations thereon to the Legislative Budget Committee and
92 the Governor;

93 (e) Publish annually, on or before November 1, a
94 comprehensive report on the status of all programs and services
95 for preschool children in Mississippi, with any recommendations
96 for the development or modification of such programs and services,
97 and distribute the report to the Governor, each member of the
98 Legislative Budget Committee and the Chairmen of the committees of
99 Education and Public Health & Welfare of the Senate and House of
100 Representatives;

101 (f) Develop and recommend accrediting standards for
102 child care facilities;

103 (g) Develop programmatic standards for parent and
104 family education programs for families with preschool children;

105 (h) Develop uniform training, curriculum and staff
106 development standards for providers of child care and preschool
107 programs and services;

108 (i) Receive and act upon recommendations of the
109 Interagency Advisory Committee for Early Childhood Services
110 established in Section 3;

111 (j) Apply for, receive and administer funds for

112 administration, research, pilot, planning and evaluation of all
113 programs serving preschool children and their families; and

114 (k) Promote local community support and public
115 awareness of child care and preschool programs and services.

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

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

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

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

129 (c) A representative of the Governor;

130 (d) A representative of the State Department of
131 Education;

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

133 (f) A representative of the Department of Human
134 Services;

135 (g) The following representatives of the early
136 childhood profession:

137 (i) The President of the Mississippi Head Start
138 Association;

139 (ii) A representative from a regulated family

140 child care home network appointed by the Governor;

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

143 (iv) A representative from a public school
144 pre-kindergarten program appointed by the Speaker of the House;

145 (v) A representative from a private school
146 pre-kindergarten program appointed by the Governor;

147 (vi) A representative from a half-day church
148 sponsored pre-kindergarten program appointed by the Speaker of the
149 House;

150 (vii) A representative from a university or
151 college early childhood teacher preparation program appointed by
152 the President of the Senate;

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

155 (ix) A representative of an early childhood
156 professional organization appointed by the President of the
157 Senate; and

158 (x) A representative of an advocacy organization
159 appointed by the Speaker of the House;

160 (h) A parent of a preschool-age child appointed by the
161 Governor;

162 (i) A parent of a preschool-age child with special
163 needs appointed by the Speaker of the House;

164 (j) A representative of the cooperative extension
165 services appointed by the President of the Senate;

166 (k) A physician who is a member of the American Academy
167 of Pediatric Physicians, appointed by the Director of the

168 University Medical Center; and

169 (1) The Director of the Mississippi Public Education
170 Forum, or his designee.

171 (3) The advisory committee shall meet upon call of the State
172 Interagency Coordinating Council for Early Childhood Services not
173 later than August 1, 2000, and the council shall appoint a
174 chairman who shall serve for a one-year term and may be
175 reappointed for subsequent terms. The advisory committee shall
176 adopt internal organizational procedures necessary for efficient
177 operation of the advisory committee and may establish
178 subcommittees for conducting specific programs and activities.
179 Advisory committee procedures shall include duties of officers, a
180 process for selecting officers, duties of subcommittees, quorum
181 requirements for conducting business and policies for any staff.
182 The State Superintendent of Education, the Executive Officer of
183 the State Department of Health and the Executive Director of the
184 Department of Human Services shall designate necessary staff of
185 their departments to assist the advisory committee in performing
186 its duties and responsibilities. The advisory committee shall
187 meet and conduct business at least quarterly. Quarterly meetings
188 of the advisory committee shall be open to the public and
189 opportunity for public comment shall be made available at each
190 such meeting. The staff of the advisory committee shall notify
191 all persons who request such notice as to the date, time and place
192 of each quarterly meeting.

193 (4) Nonlegislative members of the advisory committee shall
194 receive no compensation for their services, but shall be
195 reimbursed for travel and other expenses actually incurred in the

196 performance of their official duties. Such reimbursement shall be
197 paid in accordance with the provisions of Section 25-3-41,
198 Mississippi Code of 1972, and shall be approved by the chairman of
199 the advisory committee. Legislative members of the advisory
200 committee shall receive the same per diem and expense
201 reimbursement as is authorized for interim committee meetings to
202 be paid from the contingent expense funds of the respective
203 chamber.

204 (5) The Interagency Advisory Committee for Early Childhood
205 Services shall perform each of the following duties:

206 (a) Assist in the implementation of the study conducted
207 by the Task Force on the Development and Implementation of
208 Comprehensive Early Childhood Services in Mississippi established
209 under Senate Bill No. 2618 (1999 Regular Session);

210 (b) Identify services to children which impact early
211 childhood development and education;

212 (c) Identify and recommend methods to facilitate
213 interagency coordination of service programs for preschool
214 children;

215 (d) Serve as a forum for information exchange regarding
216 recommendations and priorities in early childhood development and
217 education; and

218 (e) Advise and make recommendations to the interagency
219 council as deemed necessary to effectuate the council's
220 responsibilities.

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