

By: Huggins

To: Public Health and
Welfare;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2936

1 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
2 TO DEVELOP A PLAN TO STRENGTHEN FAMILIES USING FUNDS AVAILABLE TO
3 THE AGENCY FOR THAT PURPOSE; TO PROVIDE CERTAIN SPECIFIC SERVICE
4 COMPONENTS OF THE PLAN; TO AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
5 SERVICES TO ENTER INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH CERTAIN PUBLIC
6 AND PRIVATE ENTITIES TO PROVIDE SUCH SERVICES; AND FOR RELATED
7 PURPOSES.

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

9 SECTION 1. The Department of Human Services is authorized
10 and directed to develop a plan for investing in programs and
11 services to strengthen families using funds available to the
12 agency for these purposes. Specifically included in the plan will
13 be strategies for expanding the Agency's Families First family
14 resource program to all counties, expanding the range of services
15 provided through Families First by either establishing new service
16 components or developing cooperative agreements with (a) local
17 school district parental assistance centers, (b) Head Start
18 programs, (c) community-based child care providers, (d) the
19 Cooperative Extension Service, and (e) privately operated state or
20 local programs that provide related services to the targeted
21 population. The plan shall also address the unique developmental
22 needs of Mississippi's low income preschool-age population through
23 the provision of high quality early care and education services
24 that operate on a full day, year-round basis through Head Start
25 and community-based child care providers. For the purposes of the
26 plan, standards should address the feasibility of high quality for
27 four-year-old children as defined as a group size of ten (10)
28 staffed by a licensed early childhood teacher and a teacher

29 assistant using measurable curriculum benchmarks that provide for
30 the optimum development of enrolled children with instructional
31 activities to support the achievement of the benchmarks.
32 Additionally, any school-age care services proposed in the plan
33 shall meet not only the unique developmental needs of
34 Mississippi's school-age population kindergarten to age thirteen
35 (13) but also the state's economic development needs by
36 coordinating the care for these children during out-of-school time
37 with the operating hours of business and industry in the
38 communities where these services would be provided. Any
39 anticipated need for the minor renovation and repair of public
40 parks, playgrounds and facilities necessary for early care and
41 education, school-age care and family resource center programs
42 shall also be addressed in the plan.

43 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
44 and after July 1, 2000.