MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION 2003

By: Senator(s) Huggins

To: Public Health and Welfare; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2807

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

SECTION 1. The Department of Human Services shall develop a model for adding one or more "Family Support Specialist" position(s) to the scope of services of the "Families First" Family Resource Center program. The model shall include provisions for basing the Family Support Specialist at an elementary school in the local school district where the Families First Center is located; establishing educational requirements for the position that require a degree in social work, guidance and counseling, family life education or a related field; provide a mechanism for the Department of Human Services to refer families to the Families First Center for services, including service provided by the Family Support Specialist. The Department of Human Services shall test this model in one or more Families First Family Resource Centers in each of the state's four (4) congressional districts.

SECTION 2. The Department of Human Services shall establish a uniform scope of services to define the core services provided by a Families First Family Resource Center; establish a service model and the extent to which these core services must be made available; and an estimate of the cost necessary to provide these services.
services. Any test establishing in conjunction with the
implementation of the Family Support Specialist model shall also
meet the requirements of this section and provide services,
including, but not limited to, comprehensive information and
referral; drop-in play and learn service for preschool-age
children in the care of grandparents and other relatives during
the hours of parental employment; parents-caregivers as teachers
and its adaptation, Supporting Care Providers for parents and
other caregivers referred by the Department of Human Services or
enrolling on a voluntary basis; and the availability of these and
other services that provide assistance to foster and adoptive
parents.

SECTION 3. The Department of Human Services, in conjunction
with the Department of Pediatrics at the University Medical
Center, shall establish developmental benchmarks that identify the
key milestones of development in children birth to age eight (8).
The department shall use the benchmarks to ensure the programs and
services provided through the Families First Family Resource
Center are providing opportunities for participating children to
reach their full potential. These benchmarks shall be provided to
the Interagency Advisory Council for their review and comment.

SECTION 4. The Department of Human Services shall report the
results of any assessment, test or activity conducted in
conjunction with fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of
this act to the Legislature no later than July 1, 2003. Any data
documenting the number of preschool-age children served through
this act shall meet the data reporting requirements of the
Interagency Coordinating Council and all such data shall be posed
on the department's website.

SECTION 5. The Department of Human Services shall use the
TANF funds appropriated to the Families First Family Resource
Center programs to meet the fiscal requirements of this act.
SECTION 6. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.