

By: Representative Eads

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1185

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, IN
2 CONSULTATION WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, TO IMPLEMENT A
3 PROGRAM THROUGH WHICH WRITTEN MATERIALS DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE
4 PARENTS TO READ TO THEIR YOUNG CHILDREN ARE GIVEN TO THE PARENTS
5 OF NEWBORN CHILDREN BEFORE THEIR DISCHARGE FROM THE HOSPITAL; AND
6 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 **SECTION 1.** (1) Subject to the availability of funding
9 specifically for such purpose, the State Department of Education,
10 in consultation with the State Department of Health, shall
11 establish and implement a program designed to inform parents of
12 newborn children of the benefits of reading to their children.
13 Under the program, the mother of each newborn child in the State
14 of Mississippi will be provided, free of charge, a packet of
15 written materials before being discharged from the hospital after
16 the birth of her child, which packet must include, at a minimum,
17 the following:

18 (a) Easily comprehensible information explaining the
19 role of parents as the primary early childhood educators of their
20 preschool child;

21 (b) Documentation supporting the benefits to be gained
22 by reading to a child from age birth, including: enhanced bonding
23 between the parent and child; enhanced language, problem-solving
24 skills and social development; increased school readiness skills;
25 and greater parental involvement when the child enters school;

26 (c) An age-appropriate book for an infant; and

27 (d) Any other available material deemed by the
28 departments to further the intent of this section.



29 (2) The State Department of Education may cause to be
30 published the materials required under this section or
31 alternatively, may use any available materials published by
32 another entity, public or private, which are intended to
33 accomplish the goals of this section, including noteworthy
34 articles from reputable news sources which may be reprinted. For
35 the support of this program, the department may accept gifts or
36 donations of materials or financial assistance from any person or
37 entity, public or private.

38 (3) The State Department of Education shall make available
39 the reading information packet required under this section to
40 those hospitals providing labor and delivery services throughout
41 the state.

42 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
43 and after July 1, 2002.

