

Opportunities for Preschool in Mississippi

Mississippi Department of Education

Mississippi's application proposes tripling the number of children in the state's high-quality preK program; improving the quality of preK educators through training and professional development; increasing the number of highly qualified preK educators and ensuring comparable pay; developing greater state capacity for implementing program standards; implementing a comprehensive early learning assessment system; providing families of eligible children access to services essential to engagement; and strengthening the coordination programs serving children birth through third grade. MDE's objectives are as follows: **Objective 1: Revise the current teacher requirements.** **Activities:** (1) Convene Early Childhood Education Task Force to establish a list of essential knowledge and skills, (2) Submit recommendations to Licensure Commission for approval and (3) Upon approval, provide guidance to all teacher preparation programs. **Objective 2: Develop and adopt a process for approving coursework based on standards aligned with the approved list of knowledge and skills.** **Activities:** (1) Utilize the task force-created list of essential knowledge and skills, (2) Develop and adopt an official coursework review process. (3) Develop a list of pre-approved courses at each Mississippi college or university. **Objective 3: Develop and adopt a process for approving training programs.** **Activities** (1) Adopt a process for approving training programs, (2) Approve training programs that meet the standards, (3) Work with the Early Years Network to approve the PreK Credential, (4) Create a Teacher Summer Institute **Objective 4: Examine whether to promote, amend, or eliminate any preK license as well as whether and how to encourage one or more universities to offer the B-K program.** **Activities:** (1) Conduct a needs assessment, (2) Convene Task Force to analyze results and make a recommendation, (3) Partner with higher education officials to determine the feasibility degree programs that support license. **Objective 5: Develop and implement a professional development plan for collaboratives.** **Activities:** (1) Collaborate with the Early Years Network to determine professional development needs, (2) Create a professional development plan for preK teachers, (3) Hire regional coaches. **Objective 6: Increase the number of teachers becoming a "master teacher" and encourage collaboratives to use them as part of professional learning communities.** **Activities:** (1) Determine process for tracking teachers meeting the master teacher qualification, (2) Ensure each collaborative has at least 1 master teacher, (3) Support collaboratives in utilizing master teachers for professional development, (4) Encourage master teachers to achieve National Board Certification. **Objective 7: Examine the appropriateness of using the Praxis II alone to earn a preK license or supplemental endorsement.** **Activities:** (1) Convene Task Force to examine issues pertaining to early childhood education degrees, (2) Submit recommendations to Licensure Commission, (3) Implement a transition plan. **Objective 8: Increase the pool of highly qualified preK personnel.** **Activities:** (1) Provide support to the (T.E.A.C.H.) program, (2) Provide scholarships to the Early Years Network's PreK Credential, (3) Provide stipends to the Summer Training

Institute, (4) Publicize supports. **Objective 9: Ensure comparable pay for preK educators in grant-funded classrooms.** **Activities:** (1) Provide salary subsidies for grant-funded programs. **Objective 10: Revise the Guidelines to meet all the requirements of the Preschool Development Grant and implement a transition plan.** **Activities:** (1) Review and revise the Guidelines to align with grant, (2) Establish a Committee of Practitioners to review proposed Guidelines, (3) Adopt the revised Guidelines. **Objective 11: Staff an Office of Early Childhood Education at MDE.** **Activities:** (1) Hire staff. **Objective 12: Adopt and implement a CELAS.** **Activities** (1) Procure tools to fulfill the remaining components of a CELAS, (2) Provide the tools for no cost to grant-funded and state-funded collaboratives, (3) Provide training and technical assistance. **Objective 13: With MDE and Early Years Network support, collaboratives will leverage existing services and resources to provide parents the five essentials of family engagement.** **Activities:** (1) Complete a needs assessment of local community resources, (2) Require collaboratives to hire a Director of the Collaborative, (3) Identify and leverage local partners who can provide the five essentials family engagement, (4) Establish a parent advisory committee. **Objective 14: Develop a stronger partnership between MDE's Office of Early Childhood Education, MDHS's DECCD, MDHS's Foundations for Families Unit, and Excel by 5.** **Activities:** (1) Establish meetings, (2) Establish clear, mutually agreeable goals for coordination of tasks, (3) Coordinate program services, (4) Use the results of the needs assessment to coordinate services. MDE expects all state- and grant-funded preK programs to demonstrate the following outcomes: (1) By 2018-2019, 75% of children in the state preK program will enter Kindergarten ready to succeed in school, (2) 50% of students in a selected high-need community will have access to high-quality preK programs, (3) PreK programs will receive support to increase classroom quality, (4) High-quality preK programs will increase their collaboration with other early childhood education programs and related services. MDE plans to coordinate with the following organizations: Center for the Advancement of Youth; Early Years Network, Mississippi State Extension; MS Department of Human Services; MS Head Start Association, MS Head Start Collaboration Office; MS State Department of Health; National Strategic Planning & Analysis Research Center, MDE Offices of Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education (K-5), Federal Programs, Professional Development, Special Education; and State Early Childhood Advisory Council. The following is a list of school districts/nonprofit subgrantees: Ocean Springs, Okolona, Moss Point, Agape/Canton, Hazlehurst City, South Pike, Leake, Lumberton, Jackson Public, Meridian, Clarksdale, North Panola, Yazoo City, Greenwood, Forest Municipal, Picayune, Nettleton, Poplarville Separate, South Panola, Columbia, Vicksburg- Warren, Starkville/Oktibbeha, Humphreys, Holmes, Perry, Quitman Co., Prek4ward/Gulfport/Harrison, Claiborne, Marshall, Sunflower, Wayne, Simpson, Quitman Municipal, Greene, Cleveland, Hancock, Itawamba, Pontotoc Co., and Lamar.