

**Statement to MS Legislative Task Committee**  
**September 14, 2007**  
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**MS Early Childhood Association, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President**

The Board of Directors of the Mississippi Early Childhood Association supports the following goals:

- \* **Higher standards for child care in Mississippi**
- \* **Implementation of developmentally appropriate practices in all learning environments for young children**
- \* **Building relationships with children, parents, and communities**
- \* **Education and training for child care providers**

I urge you to support SB 2602 and its adequate funding by the MS Legislature during the 2008 session to implement the Mississippi Child Care Quality Step Program and the Child Care Resource and Referral program. Both projects work hand in hand to promote high standards of quality early care and education and to provide a bridge between parents, providers, community leaders and policy makers.

The Mississippi Child Care Quality Step Program advocates the importance of research-based developmentally appropriate practices in the classroom for all children birth – 8 years of age. By adequately funding SB 2602 and the Quality Step Program, you will support these teaching and learning strategies for early childhood teachers who serve children receiving child care subsidies.

The Mississippi Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) program compliments the Quality Step Program by providing the training that will be required to participating child care providers. In addition, the Child Care Resource and Referral program will advocate for MS children and parents by posting current research and up-to-date information for parents concerning quality childcare and education, thereby taking the guesswork out for parents in finding and paying for quality child care.

CCR&R's promote close partnerships between parents and the community, thereby involving families in their children's development and learning.

The MS Early Childhood Association wants all MS children to have high- quality early care and believes that investments in a well-financed early childhood system, and continued support of services for young children, their families, and the child care providers who serve them will help children arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.