

Legislative Task Force Public Hearing Meeting – September 14, 2007
Diane Setzer, President, Mississippi Early Childhood Association
Kindergarten Teacher – Jackson Public Schools

The board of directors of the Mississippi Early Childhood Association supports the following issues concerning Early Childhood:

- ❖ **Promoting high standards for child care in Mississippi**
- ❖ **Implementing developmentally appropriate practices in all learning environments for young children**
- ❖ **Building relationships with children, parents and communities**
- ❖ **Education and training for child care providers**
- ❖ **Stabilizing the early childhood education system serving children who qualify for child care assistance in the state and improving program quality**

As President of the Mississippi Early Childhood Association, I would like to support statements made about the importance of adequate funding and support for Senate Bill 2602. Funding for the Quality Rating System needs to be passed this year. Funds also need appropriated to ensure the creation of a statewide child care resource and referral system.

As a Kindergarten teacher in a public school district, I feel very strongly that the 2008 Mississippi Legislature provide adequate funds that will support Senate Bill 2667 passed in 2007. This bill created the early childhood collaborative grant program that creates opportunities for expanding and enhancing programs for 4 year olds. Quality 4-year-old programs are a must for Kindergarten readiness.

The students that I teach who have attended a 4-year-old program that follows the educational program requirements set by the Mississippi Department of Education are way above my students who did not. Adequate funding that allows collaboration between Head Start, local licensed childcare programs and public schools is the only way to ensure that all students enter Kindergarten with similar educational experiences.

Help all children be successful. FUNDING High Quality Early Childhood Education = School SUCCESS