

Early Childhood Developmental Health System: Implementation in a High Need State

The Early Childhood Developmental Health System: Implementation in a High Need State program aims to improve early developmental outcomes through the implementation and study of a high quality statewide early childhood developmental health system and the development of an early childhood cross-systems workforce program. In 2017, HRSA awarded \$3.5 million per year for an initial 3 year period; with an additional year of funding for a fourth year in 2020 to the University of Mississippi Medical Center to develop a statewide early developmental health system.



Early childhood is a critical period for physical, cognitive and social-emotional growth and development laying the foundation for life-long health and well-being. Children who experience poverty, particularly during early life are at risk of adverse health and developmental outcomes. Mississippi has the highest rate of child poverty along with the lowest rate of developmental screening in the nation. This program works to reach Mississippi's children and families early and ensure that they receive the supports, screenings and interventions needed to realize their potential and thrive.

This program is raising the potential of Mississippi's youngest children and families by:

- ***Increasing the proportion of children receiving age appropriate developmental screening and successful referral to needed services***
- ***Increasing the state's early childhood providers demonstrating improved practices around developmental health promotion***
- ***Increasing positive parenting practices including daily shared talking, reading and singing***

Recognizing that when Mississippi's youngest children and families thrive, Mississippi thrives. This initiative has been named ***Mississippi Thrive!*** as a result. Mississippi Thrive! over the last several years has :

- Conducted a statewide study of the needs and strengths of Mississippi's children ages 0-5 and their families
- Launched a statewide early developmental promotion campaign reaching over 65,000 families
- Developed an early childhood cross-sector fellowship program and trained 9 full-time fellows to date
- Supported pediatric and child care practice change through intensive coaching and technical assistance along with targeted and universal training and workforce development
- Expanded the capacity of a call-in and web-based central access point for developmental promotion, screening and service linkage
- Engaged families, state and local partners in expanding the reach, quality and sustainability of developmental promotion, screening and service linkage
- Worked with national experts to explore opportunities to improve the developmental health of Mississippi's children and families and inform the efforts of other states

For More Information Contact: Dina Lieser, DLieser@hrsa.gov