



EARLY CHILDHOOD COUNCILS

about

The Children's Foundation of Mississippi is an independent operating foundation focused on improving the policies and systems that affect the well-being of children in our state. We were founded in 2019 to serve as a convener, facilitator, advocate, and catalyst for positive change.

Today's young people are tomorrow's neighbors, leaders, and workforce. We are building a better future for our state by safeguarding their well-being.

To begin designing a better future, CFM has proudly undertaken signature initiatives to "turn the curve" for children and youth in Mississippi. Recognizing that no one knows what a community needs more than the members of the community itself, the CFM has launched planning grants to establish **Early Childhood Councils** at the local level. We are hopeful to expand this program state-wide over the next several years.

goals

Early Childhood Councils should:

- work to expand and deepen civic engagement with policymakers, business leaders, educators, healthcare providers and parents on children's issues identified in their communities
- support or advocate for policies that continue to expand state funding for high-quality public Pre-K in Mississippi
- serve as a facilitator and connector to build partnerships with existing non-profits or programs with established track records. Examples are Excel by 5, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, Parents Campaign Research and Education Fund, United Ways, Reach Out and Read, Mind in the Making/VROOM, etc.
- determine what programs or services are not currently in their communities but need to be accessed

purpose

The purpose of an ECC is to unite community leaders from all sectors interested in improving conditions for children and families in their neighborhoods, cities, or counties. The CFM will provide data about children's outcomes at the local level, but it will be up to the Council members to collaboratively determine local needs and develop plans to improve outcomes for children ages 0-5 and their families. Through the planning grant phase, the early childhood councils will evaluate their ability to move solutions forward and seek sustainable support to broaden their impact.

priorities

While each community might be working on different projects, there are eight common priorities that these projects should focus on:

- accessible, high-quality early childhood education and learning programs
- quality pediatric services
- mental health family support
- safe home environment/shelter
- access to high-quality early intervention services
- establish "Resource and Referral" sites for every county
- access to high-quality prenatal care
- universal access to developmental screening and referral services

While children across the state will have differing needs, the CFM is offering peer-to-peer support opportunities among early childhood councils. This will allow ECCs to learn from each other, offer help and support, and share best practices and lessons learned. There are no formal criteria for council members. We ask that councils are comprised of passionate and focused individuals that want to actively participate in improving the lives of young children in their communities. While CFM is an active resource, advisor, and initial coordinator for these councils, each council will determine their unmet early childhood needs and then develop and implement strategic solutions.

To learn more about CFM, visit childrensfoundationms.org or @childrensfdnms on all social media platforms. If you are interested in joining an ECC or creating one in your community, please email info@childrensfoundationms.org