



August 2012

# Excel By 5 August 2012 Newsletter

## Welcome!

As the staff of Excel By 5 works with each community, we are grateful to know that "YOU" are making a difference in the lives of young children. You continue to work toward, not just the goal of being certified, but taking a much deeper approach to go above and beyond to meet the additional needs of the children and their parents in your community.

What you do is not the end, but the beginning. As you will see in this newsletter there are many examples of how "YOU" succeed. Please take a moment to see what



the Excel By 5 communities are doing on behalf of children ages 0-5. My thanks to each of you for your efforts to serve the most important citizens of our state and the future of our nation.

*Bob Clay  
Executive Director  
Excel By 5*

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### Breaking News

On Thursday August 9, Oktibbeha County completed their final review for certification. Congratulations to **"Oktibbeha County"** as the newest Excel By 5 Certified Community!

## EB5 Welcomes the Newest Communities

Since the 2011 Excel By 5 Community Collaboration Summit, seven communities have accepted the challenge of Excel By 5 certification. These communities are working diligently to ensure their children have the best experiences possible during their most formative years. We would like to welcome and thank the following communities for their dedication to their children:

Central Clarke County (Oct. 2011), Indiana (Dec. 2011), Copiah County (March 2012), Hernando (March 2012), Gulfport (April 2012), Corinth/Alcorn County (May 2012), and Grenada County (July 2012).

## Meet the EB5 Staff



### **Bob Clay, Executive Director**

Bob Clay is the Executive Director for Excel by 5. Prior to this position he was the sites coordinator with Excel By 5 from 2009—2011 where he recruited and worked statewide with both certified and candidate communities.

Before joining the Early Childhood Institute and Excel By 5, Clay was employed by and retired from the International Business Machines Corporation.

From Madison, MS Bob holds the Bachelor of Science in Personnel Management from the University of Southern Mississippi.



### **Mechelle Wallace, Sites Coordinator**

Mechelle Wallace is the sites coordinator in the Mississippi Delta Region for Excel By 5.

Mechelle earned the Master of Science in Community Development from Delta State University. She is an alderwoman for the Town of Alligator, Mississippi, and the lead coordinator for Alligator's Health and Wellness Project.

She is also a member of the Rural Sociological Society, the Alabama Mississippi Sociological Association, and the Community Development Society, and is a graduate of the Mid-South Delta Leaders Class III.



### **Gabrielle Phillips, Sites Coordinator**

Gabrielle Phillips is the Sites Coordinator for northern, central, and southwest Mississippi for Excel By 5.

Gabrielle received her Bachelor's of Science in Business Administration with an emphasis in Entrepreneurship from the University of Southern Mississippi. She is currently seeking her Master's of Business Administration from Mississippi State University. Prior to Excel By 5, Gabrielle was employed by Channel Control Merchants, LLC. as a Shipping Administrator and Inventory Manager.



### **Patti Fleming, Sites Coordinator**

Patti Fleming is the sites coordinator for the east central, eastern, and southern regions of the state.

Patti is a native of Biloxi. She graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and graduate work in Secondary Education. Patti spent 24 years as a teacher, serving in both public and private schools in classrooms ranging from pre-k/3 through fifth grade. She also worked as a private tutor and developed/directed a summer camp program for preschoolers. Patti served as assistant chair of the education focus group for the Biloxi Excel By 5 coalition and continues to be an active member. Prior to becoming sites coordinator, she was the preschool director and pre-k/3 teacher at a local elementary school.

## Meet the EB5 Board of Directors



(2012 Excel By 5 Planning Retreat)  
(Board members and other participants)

### Our Current Board Members:

**Stephen Renfroe**, President of the Board, Chevron Retired  
**Nadine Coleman**, Vice President of the Board, Petal School District  
**Marcie Skelton**, Treasurer of the Board, Walker Foundation  
**Amy Brandenstein**, Secretary of the Board, Chevron  
**Oleta Fitzgerald**, Board Member, Children's Defense Fund  
**Debby Renfroe**, Board Member, Retired Teacher  
**Donna Ritchey**, Board Member, Godwin Group  
**Rhea Williams-Bishop**, Board Member, MS Center for Education Innovation  
**Portia Epsy**, Board Member, Children's Defense Fund  
**Hans Pettit**, Board Member, Horne CPA, LLC  
**Laurie Todd Smith**, Board Member, MS Building Blocks  
**Becky Montgomery**, Board Member, MS Power Education Foundation  
**Mike McPhail**, Board Member, Forrest County Youth Court Judge  
**Ira Murray**, Board Member, United Way of the Capitol Area

## A Letter from the President:

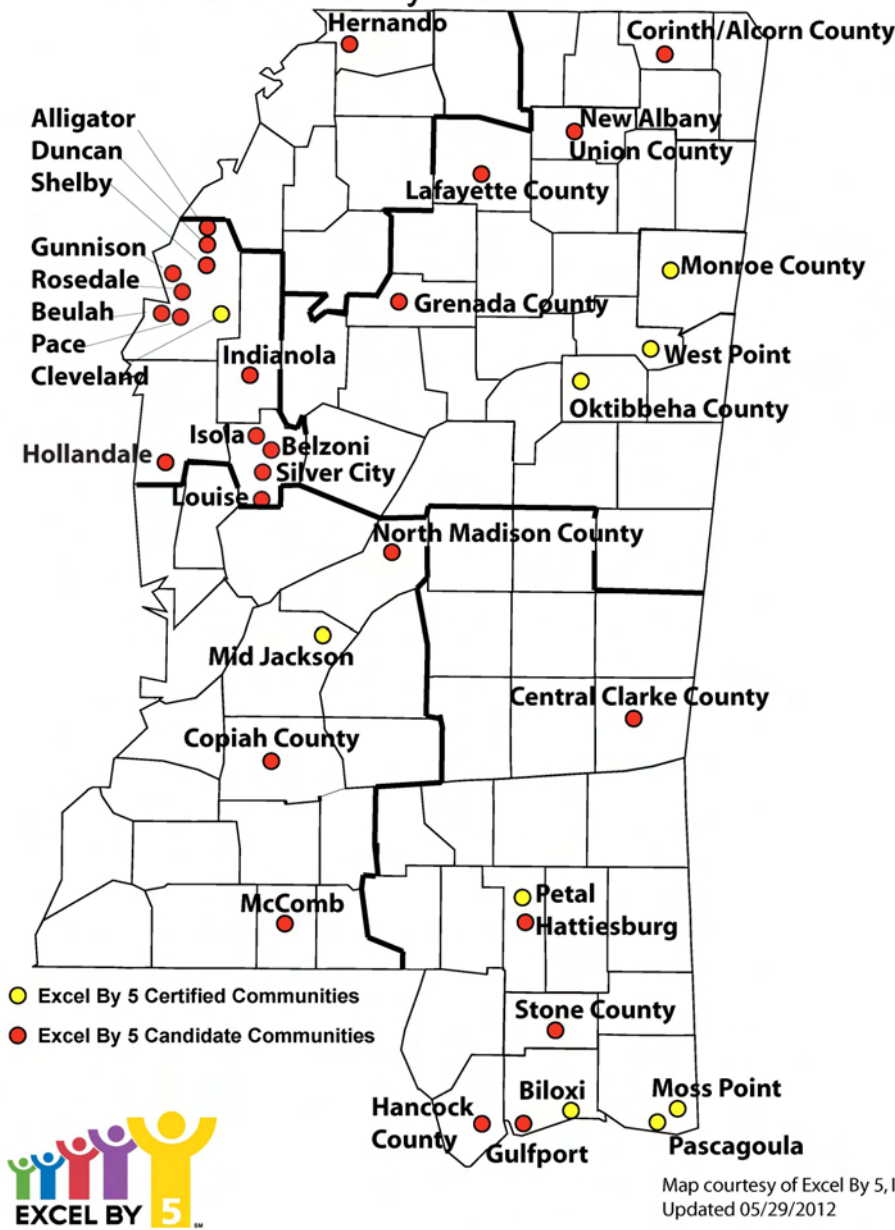
*The best part of each Excel By 5 board of directors' monthly meeting is Bob Clay's community update. It's always exciting to hear about the good things being done in the 30-plus Mississippi communities that are making their youngest children a priority. We were reminded at our July meeting what an honor it is when another community decides to adopt Excel By 5. In voting to accept Grenada as Mississippi's thirty-fifth Excel By 5 community, we acknowledged once again that the real work of Excel By 5 is done by the organizations and individuals in each and every community. We at Excel By 5 are humbled that so many of you have invited us into your communities to assist you and encourage you and celebrate with you as you all accomplish great things for the children in your communities. Many thanks to all of you. Keep up the great work.*

*Best regards,  
Steve Renfroe, President  
Excel By 5 Board of Directors*



# Excel By 5: 35 Communities Strong!

## Current Excel By 5 Communities 2012



Currently, there are 9 certified and 26 candidate Excel By 5 Communities in Mississippi

## Excel By 5 Certified Communities

- Petal
- West Point
- Pascagoula
- Mid-Jackson
- Monroe County
- Moss Point
- Biloxi
- Cleveland
- Oktibbeha County

## Excel By 5 Candidate Communities

- Alligator, Belzoni, Beulah, Central Clarke County, Cleveland, Covich County, Corinth/Alcorn County, Duncan, Grenada County, Gulfport, Gunnison, Hancock County, Hattiesburg, Hernando, Hollandale, Indianola, Isola, Lafayette County, Louise, McComb, New Albany/Union County, North Madison County, Pace, Rosedale, Shelby, Silver City, and Stone County

## New Albany/Union County Resource Center

Submitted by Windy Faulkner, Co-Certification Manager, windyteach1@yahoo.com

Union County/New Albany is working on becoming an Excel by 5 community. Union County is a place where all children are valued. The coalition group has a vested interest in educating the community on the value of early childhood education.

Thanks to the New Albany/Union County Excel By 5 coalition, a resource center for our community has been implemented. Located at the Win Job Center/ Northeast Campus, this is the beginning of a great re-

source for our community. Through various Excel by 5 meetings the coalition group has gained enough funds to purchase items for the resource center. Also the surrounding schools

have donated items from their schools for the resource center.

The New Albany/Union County Excel by 5 coalition feels this resource center will be a huge asset to our community. The coalition is very excited about the resource center. We thank Excel by 5 for all their help with the project and all they have done and will do to help New Albany/Union County educate our community about the importance of early childhood education.



## Cleveland: The Week of the Young Child

Submitted by Patsy Clerk, Certification Manager, patsy\_clerk@yahoo.com

The Cleveland coalition celebrated "The week of the Young Child" with the following events:

**Saturday April 21, 2012**

*Cleveland Community Annual Cross-tie Festival*

This community event is held annually focusing on the arts. It provided entertainment and provides interaction for the entire family. Children sang and danced with Mr. Watermelon Head. They also participated in several art activities and played in the sandbox. Cleveland's coalition, along with Bright Beginnings gave out books to young children and tried to have

story time, but the excitement was just too much.

**Saturday April 14, 2012**

*Community-wide Family Event...Party in the Park*

This event was held in Bear Pen Park with activities for the entire family. It was driven from our needs assessment. Health surveys showed that asthma and obesity were two main issues for Clevelanders. Therefore, the coalition came up with a way for the entire family to get active, have fun, and provide healthy information.

Activities for the entire family included: fishing, kite flying, volleyball, ultimate Frisbee, and face painting. The Fighting Okra from Delta State University was there as well as several cartoon characters. Wheezy Bear talked with children and parents about asthma.

### *Early Care and Education*

The Early Care and Education Focus group partnered with Head Start and Child Care centers to host Ready "K" Start. Young children from our centers participated in transition activities. The activities are designed to help children transition from early care into kindergarten as smooth as possible. The children visited kindergarten classrooms, participated in activities in the kindergarten classrooms, and were served lunch. They also got to meet the school staff. Head Start provided transportation. After this was done, kindergarten teachers traveled to centers and did pre-screenings on all children who will be entering kindergarten in the fall of 2012.



## Central Clarke County: Trail of Champions

Submitted by Elisa Mayo, Coalition Member, [emayo@qsd.k12.ms.us](mailto:emayo@qsd.k12.ms.us)

Recent studies have noted positive associations between children's physical fitness and academic performance, which motivated Central Clarke County Excel By 5 to liven up their local walking track with kid-friendly activities. The process began with painting the alphabet on the track surface in a color pattern.



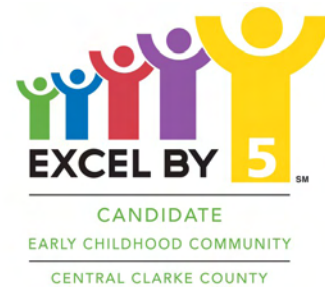
Next, an interesting maze was painted directly on the walking track using masking tape. The maze can be used as a "highway" for kids to play with toy cars or can be used to give a great cognitive boost as kids try to find their way through the network of lines.

Shapes and colors were also painted in the area. Two hopscotch were painted on the track. One was a traditional hopscotch using squares, numbers, and objects inside each numbered square to encourage kids to count. A second hopscotch was painted in the shape of a caterpillar. The caterpillar was painted in bright colors and proved to be the group's crowning achievement.



Distance markers were also strategically placed along the track so that walkers could measure their trip around the track. Finally, nine educational learning stations were added to the 1 mile long track. The stations consist of signs that educate kids about the area's history, native insects, flowers, the state bird, and such. A cotton patch was also planted with a learning station describing the uses of this plant and the process for growing cotton.

The group plans to add a playground one day, which would cap off this area of the trail as "kid-friendly".



"There is a strong connection between the development a child undergoes early in life and the level of success that the child will experience later in life. For example, infants who are better at distinguishing the building blocks of speech at 6 months are better at other more complex language skills at 2 and 3 years of age and better at acquiring the skills for learning to read at 4 and 5 years of age. Not surprisingly, a child's knowledge of the alphabet in kindergarten is one of the most significant predictors of what that child's tenth grade reading ability will be."

**The Bush Administration's Early Childhood Initiative**

## Biloxi: Second Annual Count Down to School Readiness Fair

Submitted by Susan Hunt, Certification Manager, [susan.hunt@biloxischools.net](mailto:susan.hunt@biloxischools.net)

The second annual "Count Down to Kindergarten Readiness Fair" was held on April 19<sup>th</sup> at Lopez School with approximately 60 children attending. The fair was sponsored by Biloxi Public Schools, City of Biloxi and Biloxi Excel by 5. Parents with children 5 years old on or before September 1, 2012 were encouraged to attend the free event.

Upon registering, parents received a "Countdown to Kindergarten Readiness Fair" stamp card. The children and parents who visited 8 or more designated activities had their cards stamped and received a 'goody bag'.



Each school was assigned a designated skill activity: Syllable Count, Number Recognition, Sequence, Fine Motor, Color Recognition, Alphabet Recognition, and Shape Recognition. Children also visited the library and received a "free" book; learned correct procedures for hand washing; and visited the Biloxi Excel by 5 Family Resource Center.

Children also had the opportunity to board a school bus, learn about bus safety, visit the school cafeteria, go through the serving line, select food items of their choice, and see how lunch numbers are keyed into the cafeteria PIN pad.



During the Readiness Fair, the preschoolers, received booklets designed by Biloxi Excel by 5 and Biloxi Public Schools: *Count Down To Kindergarten Readiness Fair; School Bus Activity; Food Service; Hand Washing Procedures; Nutrition Tips*, and commercially prepared materials: *My First Day of School is Near; Get Wild about Reading; Making Move to Kindergarten; and The Night Before Kindergarten*. A Biloxi Schools magnet was given to each child.



Participating schools were Cedar Lake Christian Academy, Gorenflo, Jeff Davis, Nativity BVM, North Bay, Our Lady of Fatima and Popp's Ferry.

Special thanks to the "Educational Partners" who helped make the event a success! The educational partners were: Beau Rivage Diversity Champions, Biloxi Excel by 5 Coalition, Biloxi Public Library, Pascagoula Excel by 5, West Point Excel by 5, West Biloxi Library, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College - Jefferson Davis Campus, Count Down to Readiness Fair Committee, Chartwells School Dining Service, City of Biloxi, Biloxi Public Schools, Cedar Lake Christian Academy, Gorenflo, Jeff Davis, Nativity BVM, North Bay, Our Lady of Fatima and Popp's Ferry, Biloxi Public Schools (Transportation, Maintenance, Special Services, Child Nutrition, and Student Services departments).



If you have any questions regarding the event, please contact Susan Hunt, Certification Manager, at 228-297-6808 or email [susan.hunt@biloxischools.net](mailto:susan.hunt@biloxischools.net).



## Oktibbeha County: Events

Submitted by Ellen Goodman, Certification Manager, [OKCountyexcelby5@bellsouth.net](mailto:OKCountyexcelby5@bellsouth.net)

On December 10, 2011, we had our first Christmas Family Extravaganza. Families went to various stations and made various gifts, we had storytelling, music and movement, and of course pictures with Santa Claus. All families left with a book and a calendar of activities to do at home during the holidays to help with passing the time until the big day and for those days following while waiting for school to reopen.

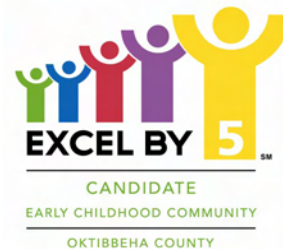
We had our first "Kindergarten, Here We Come!" event on May 5<sup>th</sup>. Families got to meet various representatives from the kindergarten sites and find out those answers to their questions ranging from uniform policies to when the Meet the Teacher Day event was scheduled at

the local schools. Various community support agencies were present to provide information on how to have a smooth transition for the children to kindergarten. Some kindergarten teachers were present to explain to the children and families what kindergarten is all about. We had a school bus out front with a bus driver to explain bus safety rules to the children.

The "Pamper Me!" event was held in June for our new mothers who had participated in our coalition sponsored childbirth classes for the past two years. Professionals were present to share tips on healthy cooking, exercise, and to answer any questions the mothers had. It was a great support for our new mothers. Some of the ba-

bies came to meet those who taught their mothers at childbirth classes.

Our Back to School Bash and Health Fair was held in late July. It continues to grow every year as more agencies want to be a part of it. We had 45 agencies present to share information with the families. Families left with materials, books, and school supplies to help start the new school year off smoothly. Various health screenings were available on site for the families.



**Babies are born with 100 to 200 billion cells in their brain.** Most nerve cells are made before birth. The number created in the womb is nearly a lifetime's worth. Cells that fire together, wire together. This is learning. The brain grows most in the first 3 years of life. Most of this growth is in the number of branches of nerve cells that connect with other cells. Pruning begins soon after 12 months, the connections that aren't being used disconnect, those nerve branches that aren't being used die back; those nerve cells that aren't being used die off.

-West Central Initiative of Minnesota



## Moss Point: Events and Tips

Submitted by **Patrice McCollum, Certification Manager, [pymccullum@mosspointschools.org](mailto:pymccullum@mosspointschools.org)**  
& **Stephanie Packer, Steering Committee Chair, [SBPacker@mosspointschools.org](mailto:SBPacker@mosspointschools.org)**

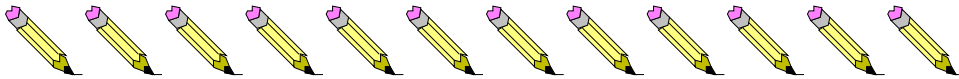


### Upcoming Events:

Saturday, August 11, 2012, "It's Deeper than Me", Back to School Rally 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Friday, September 14, 2012- Community-Wide Early Childhood Update Meeting -Moss Point School District Family Education Center; 3524 Prentiss Ave. Moss Point, MS 6:00 p.m.

Friday, November 2, 2012- Moss Point Excel By 5 Night at the football game 7:30 p.m.



### A Special Thanks to the Moss Point Excel By 5 Community Partners:

Moss Point School District, Bacot/McCarty Foundation, City of Moss Point, Chevron Pascagoula Refinery, BP, Merchants & Marine Bank, Excel By 5, Inc. Ad-In Advertising, American Red Cross, Charles Clark Post 243, Cupit Signs, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Estus McCullum and Company, Four Seasons Produce, Good-games Printing, Jackson County CASA, Jackson Civic Action Committee, Jackson County District Attorney's Office, Jackson/George Regional Library System, Junior Auxiliary of Pascagoula-Moss Point, Legacy Alumni Group of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Jackson County, Little People Learning Center, Moss Point Fire Department, Moss Police Department, Moss Point Rotary Club, Nordan/Smith, Northrop Grumman Shipbuilding, Pascagoula River Audubon Society, Photeaux-genic Photography, Piggly Wiggly, Repicci's Italian Ice of New Orleans, Scordino's Main Street Market, Singing River Services, Singing River Federal Credit Union, Sue Dobbs @ Variety Outlet, Triage, Unity Funeral Home, Waste Pro, Wayne Lee's Grocery, We Care Hospice and Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc.

### Moss Point Innovations: Resource Center

We are revamping our Family Education Center to meet needs of the parents and caretakers in our community. As a district and as a community we believe healthy families = healthy students.

Our parent center will focus on the following components:

1. Education (Continuing education for adults, parenting skills and enrichment preparation education for Birth to 5)
2. Health (Physical and Mental - to focus on a healthy way of life)
3. Enrichment (Activities and events that include ALL family members)

### Tip from Moss Point: Cost Effective Way to Promote Events.

*Our local television station WLOX is a wonderful partner. Any time we have an event, they will advertise it, do interviews, and even come to those events. WJDZ, one of our local radio stations, will also advertise and do interviews to promote our events. In addition, we have a very strong partnership with our Athletic Department where we use sporting events and athletes to help promote our goals for the community.*

### Tip from Moss Point: How to Raise Funds and Involve Businesses.

*The funds we have received for events have come from local businesses, individuals, sororities, fraternities, non-profits, and we have posted banners with their names at the events.*

## Mid-Jackson: Health Fair

Submitted by Eileen Beazley, Certification Manager, [EileenBeazley@MidtownPartners.org](mailto:EileenBeazley@MidtownPartners.org)

This year the Mid-Jackson Excel By 5 Coalition partnered with the annual Midtown/Millsaps College Block Party for the Excel By 5 Health Fair. The result was a huge success! There was a tremendous amount of positive feedback from both participants and volunteers. We had over 48 volunteers to assist with providing health screenings and extremely important health and wellness related education to over 130 individuals. Those children and family members that completed health screenings received a hula hoop or jump rope to encourage an active lifestyle.

The following activities and health screenings were available to participants:

- Height, weight, and blood pressure screening
- Information about dental hygiene with proper brushing demonstrations using brushing puppets
- Children's games and hand-outs about healthy eating and proper nutrition
- First Aid Kits
- Imagination Library enrollment

The following community partners assisted with this event:

- Millsaps College
- UMMC UNACARE
- UMMC School of Nursing
- UMMC Dental Hygiene School
- Habitat for Humanity
- Midtown Partners, Inc.
- Allies for Quality Care
- MSCCR&R - Mid-Jackson
- Mississippi Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
- Walker Foundation
- Mississippi Department of Health



**A special thanks to all of  
the Mid-Jackson  
Excel By 5  
Community Partners.**

The Mid-Jackson Excel By 5 Coalition looks forward to an even bigger and better Health Fair with the Midtown/Millsaps Block Party—Millsaps 1 Campus 1 Community in the spring of 2013!



## Mid-Jackson: Early Links to Innovation

Submitted by Eileen Beazley, Certification Manager, [EileenBeazley@MidtownPartners.org](mailto:EileenBeazley@MidtownPartners.org)

Recognizing that kindergarten is the foundation for all future formal learning experiences and that all students must enter the doors ready to learn on day one, Midtown Partners, in 2011 introduced **Early Links to Innovation**.

Early Links is a six-week intensive summer program focused on preparing upcoming kindergartens who will be enrolling in Brown Elementary in the fall. Early Links is designed specifically for those children who have not had the opportunity to participate in an early childhood classroom and for those who might need some additional assistance in preparation for the transition into the school setting.

Components of the program include:

**Screenings** - Speech, hearing, vision & emotional/social with referrals being made to early intervention agencies as needed.

**Readiness Assessment** - The program utilizes the same assessment used by the Jackson Public School District during the initial weeks of kindergarten in efforts to promote a continuum approach to tracking development once the official transition is made.

**Individualistic Instruction** - The program is designed with a low student to teacher ratio in an effort to promote individualistic instruction and guidance.

**Parent Academy** - A program focused on preparing parents for the transition into the school setting and how to be a "kindergarten parent." This program was established in partnership with Parents for Public Schools of Greater Jackson.



**Mid-Jackson is going  
above and beyond  
EB5 requirements.**

## Fundraising In Moss Point and Petal

Wonderful things are happening for the children in both Moss Point and Petal. To help support their efforts the Moss Point Excel By 5 coalition created a fund raiser brochure. The brochure allows a donor to become a Silver, Platinum or Gold sponsor. Petal uses a similar brochure and plans to distribute them at chamber meetings, with ticket purchases at the Petal Children's Concert, and at child care centers. For more information on their fundraising techniques, contact Patrice McCollum in Moss Point at [pymccollum@mosspointschools.org](mailto:pymccollum@mosspointschools.org) or Julie Fondren in Petal at [Julie.fondren@petalschools.com](mailto:Julie.fondren@petalschools.com)



Believe it or not, our children's futures may well be determined by what their lives are like in their early years. This isn't opinion; it's scientific fact.

Excel By 5 is an innovative early childhood community certification focusing on the community's young children. It emphasizes the important roles parents and early childhood educators play in the lives of children during their most formative years - birth to age five.

It is our mission to give every child a chance to live up to his or her potential. This not only makes a positive difference in children's lives, it makes a positive difference in the future of Moss Point.

Our goal is for children in Moss Point to be healthier and better prepared for kindergarten and beyond.

Moss Point has completed the certification process to become a certified Excel By 5 "child friendly" community. This means we support parents and children by connecting them with the available resources and services they need to lead healthy and strong lives.

Whether you're a parent, a neighbor, a local business person or a caring community member, you can become a Moss Point Excel By 5 community partner.

The Moss Point Excel By 5 Coalition will use funds donated to purchase materials for the parent center to provide quality parenting seminars as well as age appropriate activities for children from birth to age five. The materials and opportunities afforded through your donation will ensure the children of Moss Point develop the academic and social skills necessary for kindergarten by age five.

### DONATIONS

Interested in touching the lives of our future leaders?

It just takes One Commitment,  
One Caring Adult  
Be the One

Become involved in the Process!

Help provide the children of Moss Point a place where they can Excel By 5.

\_\_\_\_\_ Platinum Sponsor \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ Gold Sponsor \$50

\_\_\_\_\_ Silver Sponsor \$25

\_\_\_\_\_ I am unable to participate at the levels; however, I would like to donate \$\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE AND MAIL ALL DONATIONS TO:**

*Bacot/McCarty Foundation*

*P O Box 1442*

*Pascagoula MS 39568*

Please note on Check: Excel By 5-Moss Point  
(All donations are tax deductible)

## Hancock County: Library and Technology Grant

Submitted by Cathy Wilson, Certification Manager, [cwilson@hancock.k12.ms.us](mailto:cwilson@hancock.k12.ms.us)

In partnership with The Hancock County Excel By 5 Hancock County Coalition and the Hancock Housing Resource Center, the Hancock County Library System received a \$12,760 federally-based Library Services and Technology grant to fund a joint project between the Hancock County Library System and Hancock County Excel By 5 to help reach parents who lack the reading skills to share books with their children. The grant will fund literacy-based workshops for parents to encourage them to share books with their children using non-traditional means such as storytelling, interactive games, phonemic awareness exercises and nursery rhymes. It will also fund the purchase of books,

games, puppets and multimedia devices that parents will be able to borrow as well as high interest/low reading level literacy books for beginning adult readers.

Excel By 5 volunteers will help recruit parents from the Hancock Housing Resource Center, the Health Department, Head Start and local day care centers, and invite them to attend a series of family reading workshops at the library. A professional storyteller will provide an exciting series kick-off and wrap-up event. Parents will be offered a library card and encouraged to borrow literacy kits consisting of picture books, board books, puppets, puzzles, educational games, and Play-

away VIEW units containing read-aloud children's stories. To further maximize attendance and educational outcomes, structured learning activities for children aged 3-9 years of age will be provided during the parent workshops. An early literacy instructor will engage the children in a traditional story-time in addition to providing a variety of activity stations featuring themes tied in to the adult programs. Some workshop sessions will be joint parent-child events where parents can practice their new skills with their children.

## McComb to become a 501(c)3

Two Excel By 5 communities, McComb and New Albany/Union County have chosen to pursue 501(c)3 status for their coalitions. According to Carol Rawlings, the Steering Committee Chair for the McComb Excel By 5 Coalition, McComb chose to go this route for several reasons.

"We are partnered with the McComb School District. They have been very generous to our initiative; however, rather than be under the umbrella of the school district, we wanted to be on our own. For example, if we wanted to recognize someone for their many hours of service, we could not purchase a plaque for this individual (even though it is our money). If we stayed with the district, we had to

follow their expenditure policy: no money is to be spent on adults in this matter. Also, if we had a fish fry fundraiser, we could not use our money to purchase the meal. Lastly, any purchases would have to go through a purchase order which requires careful planning. I am sure there are possible situations we are not expecting, but our coalition feels that this was the best decision in applying for 501(c)3 status."



**During early childhood, children undergo rapid growth that is highly influenced by their environment.**

**Many challenges faced by adults, such as mental health issues, obesity, heart disease, criminality, and poor literacy and numeracy can be traced back to early childhood.**

*-World Health Organization*

## 2012 Excel By 5 Annual Collaboration Summit

When: October 3, 2012

9:00am to 3:00pm

\*Registration begins at 8:30am

Where: The Old Capitol Inn in Jackson, MS

Keynote Speakers: TBD

Breakout Sessions: Choose 2 of 8 Topics

Register online at [ExcelBy5.com](http://ExcelBy5.com)

### Breakout Sessions

The following breakout topics were developed based on inputs from the communities at the January Sites Meeting.

#### 1. Leaders First

Identifying and involving community leaders in creating and sustaining partnerships, engaging businesses in early childhood issues and making Excel Coalitions stronger.

#### 2. Getting the Word Out

Tips for ways to improve communication, marketing and public relations using the Family Resource Guide, website, branding strategies, and good meeting skills.

#### 3. EDI (Not E-I-E-I-O)

Information about the Early Development Instrument: What is it? How do we get it? How do we use the results? What does it cost?

#### 4. Show Me the \$\$\$

Identifying fund raising and grant opportunities (where, how, who), tips on writing grants and Excel guideline information.

#### 5. Including Everybody and Everything

Working to reach all children and families by getting parents interested and involved. Hearing more about child centered agencies: Head Start, Kids Count, Building Blocks, Mississippi State Early Childhood Institute, and others.

#### 6. Prescription for Health Fairs

Sharing ideas for organizing a successful Children's Health Fair that involves health care providers and agencies to evaluate health of the "whole child" and support the relationship between health and academics.

#### 7. "Centering" on Child Care

Information for working with child care centers to create partnerships and engage providers; ideas for providing contact hours, offering center and worker incentives and discussions of center evaluations.

#### 8. Crazy Good Resource Centers

Suggestions for creating flexible, effective resource centers: materials, physical setting, community involvement and use, hours of operation, partners and volunteers, changing provisions to meet changing needs.

#### Directions:

The Old Capitol Inn  
226 North State Street  
Jackson, MS 39201

#### Directions from I-55

- Take I-55 and use the Pearl Street exit - exit 96-A.
- Take a right to turn onto State Street, heading north. The Inn is only a block and a half away, between Amite Street and Yazoo, on your right

## Excel By 5 Conference Call

Excel By 5 will host its first quarterly Community-wide conference call on Monday, September 10th from 9am to 10am. The topic of the first conference call will be the importance of brain development in the first years of a child's

life with Dr. Lynn Darling, the Director of the Early Childhood Institute at Mississippi State University, as our guest speaker. All Certification Managers are strongly encouraged to participate. Call in information will be sent to all Certifica-

tion Managers in the near future.

For more information concerning the conference calls, please contact Patti Fleming:

PFleming@colled.msstate.edu

### *Conference Call Topic:*

*Some of our most significant brain development occurs in the first five years of life. When we provide children with early learning experiences that encourage them to use language, play together, experiment, solve problems, use their imaginations, and express themselves creatively, we are maximizing their brain development. Meeting the needs of the whole child allows us to support social/emotional, physical, and cognitive development, which are all critical to future school success.*

*Presented by: Dr. Lynn Darling*

## Mississippi Children's Museum Field Trips

Chevron has donated a quantity of tickets for use by the Excel By 5 Communities. These tickets are available for field trips of groups only and with prior planning can be tied to a specific program or curriculum.

These field trips require a minimum of one chaperone per 5 children and all chaperones will be admitted free of charge. Normally groups are admitted on Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays.

To take advantage of the free group tickets, please contact Bob Clay at the State Excel By 5 office, 601-707-7726.



For more info on the museum,  
visit  
[www.mschildrensmuseum.com](http://www.mschildrensmuseum.com)

"Five basic themes provide the content base for the museum exhibits: Mississippi Heritage in the **Exploring Mississippi Gallery**, Literacy in the **Wild About Reading Gallery**, Health and Nutrition in the **Healthy Fun Gallery**, The Arts in the **Express Yourself Gallery**, and the Mississippi Industry in the **World at Work Gallery**."

## Excel By 5 Partners: Child Care Centers



Excel By 5 and its Communities recognize the importance of Child Care Centers in early education. We'd like to thank all of those centers that are participating with Excel By 5 coalitions in helping children be better prepared for kindergarten and the first grade.

Here are this month's featured Child Care Centers that participate with Excel By 5 coalitions.

### Participating Centers in Moss Point:

- Bundle of Love Daycare and Learning Center
- First Steps
- Head Start
- Little People Learning Center
- Mary's Little Lambs, Inc.
- Merry- Go- Round Kindergarten and Nursery

### Participating Centers in Mid-Jackson

- The Bethlehem Center
- Holy Ghost Head Start Center
- Isaiah Sanders YMCA Child Care Center
- Jones Early Childhood Center
- Kiddie Kingdom
- Little Samaritan Montessori Center
- Mary C. Jones Head Start Center
- Mid-Town Head Start Center
- Pied Piper Playhouse

### Participating Centers in Oktibbeha County:

- Aiken Village Preschool
- Brickfire Project #1 and #3
- Child Development and Family Studies Center
- Creative Learning Center
- Designed With Love Child Haven
- Emerson Family School
- First Presbyterian Church Child Care Center, Inc.
- First United Methodist Church Week Day
- Ministries
- God's Little Giants
- Happy Start Learning Center #2
- ICS Head Start Center-Oktibbeha County
- Little Hearts Learning Center





## Excel By 5, Inc.

Launched in the Fall of 2004, Excel By 5 is an innovative community certification, that is designed to encourage and assist communities to become actively involved in supporting their young children. The first of its kind, this certification emphasizes the important roles parents, primary caregivers, and the community play in educating children during their most formative years, birth to five.

This process identifies gaps in community resources, promotes community collaboration, volunteerism and economic development. On the whole, we expect children in Excel By 5 communities will be healthier and better prepared for kindergarten and first grade. Excel By 5 certification requirements are divided into four groups: Community Involvement; Family and Parent Support; Early Care and Education; and Health and vary according to community size and capacity. The certification process takes about two years to complete, and the certification is awarded for three years.



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