

Excel By 5 March 2013 Newsletter

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March 2013
Newsletter**



Welcome

Welcome to the Excel By 5 March 2013 Newsletter. In this newsletter, you will find community updates, information from the Regional Sites Meetings, and important upcoming dates. Please take a few minutes to view the wonderful things happening all over the state of Mississippi for young families and their children birth to age five.

**"YOU'RE IMPROVING
OUR FUTURE, ONE
CHILD AT A TIME."
- PATTI FLEMING**

The Excel By 5 board of directors and staff greatly appreciate each and every coalition member, community partner, and child care provider for their ongoing support. Together we can make a difference!

Excel By 5 State Staff

Excelby5.com: Website Refresh

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Excelby5.com is undergoing a website refresh. Once the new website is live, communities will be able to experience a more user-friendly format.

Coalition members are responsible for updating their respective commu-

nity pages with information concerning their coalition: contact information, event dates, etc. Please designate a coalition member to be in charge of website updates. A username and password are required and may be obtained by contacting the State Office.

The website is an ideal place to share with coalition and community members the importance of early childhood education, the wonderful things your coalition is doing in the community, and ways to

get involved. For questions concerning the upcoming website changes, please contact the State Office.

**"KEEP MOVING
FORWARD,
OPENING NEW
DOORS, AND
DOING NEW
THINGS."
-WALT DISNEY**

Biloxi: Active Parenting Classes

Submitted by Susan Hunt, Certification Manager, huntsd41@yahoo.com



Biloxi Excel By 5, Biloxi Public Schools, City of Biloxi and Mississippi State University Extension Services sponsored the first "Active Parenting Classes" in the fall of 2012. Active parenting training classes are designed specifically for parents or caregivers with children ranging from 2 – 12 years of age.

Parents had the opportunity to register and participate in the free, hour long classes held twice a month in September, October and November. Supper was served and babysitting provided. Each parent received the book "Active Parenting Today for Parents" by Dr. Michael H. Popkin, PhD.

At the December School Board meeting, parents were recognized and received a "goody bag" and framed Certificate of Completion from Arthur McMillan, Super-

intendent, and Kenny Holloway, Board President. Children were also recognized and presented with Super Kid Certificates and goody bags.

While parenting is not the only influence on a child's development, it is the one we can do the most about. The *Parent's Guide* was designed to teach parents a method of parenting and problem solving that helps prepare children to courageously meet the challenges life will pose. The guide will help parents build relationships that bring joy and satisfaction for a lifetime.

As stated by Kim Gowdy, Instructor, Mississippi State University Extension Services, "The instruction parents received provided teaching tools for parents to become better equipped in parenting. Our children are changing and so are the things around them." Gowdy continued, "Parenting is the most difficult job, but also the most rewarding!"

Linda Perkes, Coalition Chairperson, attended the first Active Parenting Class. She noted, "The class was very well taught and applicable to our actual challenges and the homework assignments were relevant and helpful in addressing our real family concerns. I am a better parent be-

cause I have 'tools' that work. I'll keep practicing the principles we were taught."

"They say parenting doesn't come with a manualnow it does!" stated Anna Eklund. "This class has been a true enjoyment for becoming a new parent," Christopher M. Peterson explained.

Because of parent enthusiasm for this offering the next Active Parenting Class will continue through April. As Mark Reed encouragingly noted, "We need more parenting classes".



Kids with goody bags and Super Kids certificate– with Superintendent, Arthur McMillan and Board President, Kenny Holloway.

Did You Know?

"Learning in the early years is critical to a child's lifelong development. The neurological pathways children will later use for everything from coloring to calculus are constructed within the first few years. Enrichment through preschool is particularly important for children from low-income families.

Education gaps between children of low-income and more affluent

families start from the beginning, in the home.

A landmark 1995 study found that poor children are exposed to 30 million fewer words by age 3 than children from more affluent families. Other studies have shown that achievement gaps can appear as early as 18 months for children at risk of learning delays, such as those from low-income families."

-DesMoinesRegister.com

New Albany/Union County: "We Are Certified!"

Submitted by Lecia Stubblefield, Co-Certification Manager, lstubblefield@newalbany.k12.ms.us

New Albany/Union County Excel By 5's greatest news for December is: WE ARE CERTIFIED!! We certified in 16 months making us the "fastest" certified community in Mississippi. We give much of this credit to the great community in which we live! We have five licensed childcare providers who are all active in our coalition. Our licensed providers are: Grammy's Little Puddle Jumpers, Kountry Kids, Rainbow Learning Center, UAC Kiddie Academy, and Union County Head Start. We are in the process of planning our Excelebration and meeting with our steering committee to plan for 2013.

November and December were busy months for us. Our Family Resource Center held a Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting on November 12, 2012. Parents, children, educators, and community leaders toured the facility and learned more about the mission of the New Albany/Union County



Excel By 5 coalition.

In conjunction with the grand opening, a parent workshop was held. The Early Childcare II students from New Albany High School, under the leadership of Instructor Kimberly Langley, hosted a Parent & Pre-K Make/Take Workshop for children ages 3 & 4 at the Family Resource Center. Children rotated through stations where the high school students demonstrated ways to use common items around the house to promote learning. Sta-

tions included: name writing in shaving cream, play-doh, reading to your children, sight words on a cookie sheet, and puppet making. The New Albany/Union County Excel By 5 Coalition sponsored a Dyslexia Workshop on Thursday, December 6. The workshop focused on the following topics: Characteristics of Dyslexia, Brain Function of Dyslexics, Remediation for Dyslexics, and Faces of Dyslexia. Presenters were teachers from East Union Attendance Center: Melinda Hill, Tonya Chapin, Karen Sheffield, and Morgan Wallis. There were more than 20 workshop participants that included parents, grandparents, educators, and community members.



Oktibbeha County: Excel By 5 Events

Submitted by Ellen Goodman, Certification Manager, okcountyexcelby5@bellsouth.net



The Oktibbeha County Excel By 5 Coalition is busy planning and hosting events for the Oktibbeha County Community. The month of February included hosting a new series of Childbirth Classes for our expectant mothers.

On February 19th we held our first

Partners' Meeting for the year and had 28 present for our program "Helping Children Succeed: The Community Involvement Connection". Teachers led the program with activities they have included in their classrooms to have their children develop that social/emotional connection with the local community. Activities ranged from visits to local assisted living centers at holiday times to participating for local canned food drives. Also teachers and center directors shared about how local agencies/organizations have assisted them with various events by providing

vital volunteer helpers!

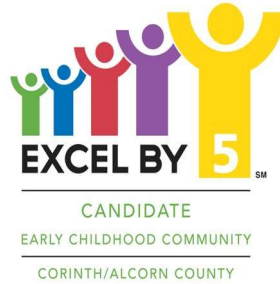
All those present gained ideas that can be used at their center/school. Before the attendees left they were given information about the upcoming community-wide event "Kindergarten, Here We Come!" which is scheduled for Saturday, April 6th. Two other Partners Meetings are scheduled for 2013: April – "The ELG/ELS/ Common Core Connection" and September – "Encouraging Parent Involvement At Your Center/ School".

Corinth/Alcorn County: Excel By 5 Elves and Mobile Resource Center

Submitted by Susan O'Connell, Certification Manager, susanhoconnell@comcast.net

The Corinth/Alcorn County Excel By 5 Coalition is continuing to progress toward our certification completion. We are in the beginning stages of our certification, so we believe it is important to promote the advantages of the Excel By 5 certification and the positive results it will provide our community. Therefore, we coordinated with one of our partners, Magnolia Regional Hospital at their annual Winter Wonderland event. The event was free to the public and attracted over 3,000 children. The "Excel By 5 Elves" read to the children that were waiting in line to see Santa. We gave each child a sticker that said "I read with the Excel By 5 Elves". Many of our elves were students with the high school teacher academy at the county vocational school, but the most popular Elf was the County school district superintendent, Mrs. Gina Rogers Smith. The children loved it and the parents had an opportunity to learn more about the efforts of the Excel By 5 Coalition.

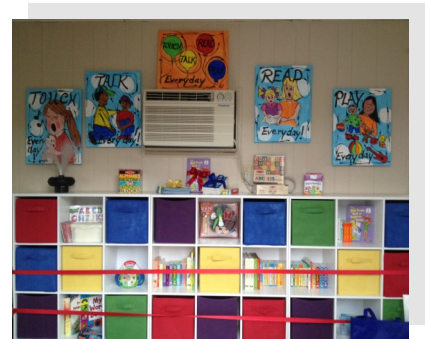
The Early Education task force is working very hard to visit with each child care center in our community to build a relationship that will ensure their participation in the Corinth/Alcorn County Excel By 5. They put together a benefits package for the participating child care centers. The benefits package includes visits from our Mobile Resource Center, opportunities to receive free CPR training from our local hospital, advertising in the local paper



as a participating child care center, easy access to extra contact hours through the school systems, a goody basket and much more. The goody basket is given to the child care center when they complete the survey and make the decision to participate in the Excel By 5 certification process. The basket includes a Wal-Mart gift card, cleaning supplies, educational books and materials, a few snacks and much more. Very quickly, Kids Country's owner Mitzi Potts saw the benefits of the certification and became our first participating child care center. Mrs. Potts also decided to serve on our Coalition and Education task force. Her enthusiasm will spark a lot of interest in the community.

Our "mobile" resource center is ready to roll! The goal is to take the resource center to the at-risk communities on a quarterly schedule, as well as the child care centers. With well trained volunteers, the strategy will be to visit with parents about the importance of early brain development by reading, talking, touching, and playing with their children, so their children are better prepared

for kindergarten and life. As we visit child care centers, we hope to provide services, testing and fun activities that they have requested for children and parents.



Touch Talk Read Play

North Madison County: Events of 2012

Submitted by Jan Collins, Steering Committee Member, collins.jan01@gmail.com

The North Madison County Excel By 5 coalition hosted and participated with several events in 2012 to benefit families and their young children ages 0-5.

Fall Family Readiness Event

Members of the North Madison County Excel By 5 steering committee helped with the Back to School family readiness event held at the Canton Community-Center. Co-sponsored by the city of Canton Parks & Recreation and Lively Stones, 250 backpacks were presented to 0-5 year old children who completed 12 school readiness stations.



Statewide Excel By 5 Summit

Members of North Madison County Excel By 5 Coalition attended the annual Statewide Excel By 5 Summit in Jackson on October 3rd at the Old Capitol Inn.

Health Fair

The North Madison County Excel By 5 Coalition and the Madison River Oaks Medical Center sponsored a health fair on the historic square in Canton October 22, 2012.



(l-r) front row: Dr. Mary Sims Johnson, Dr. Nancy New, Dr. Polia Griffin, Veda Archie

(l-r) back row: Jan Collins, Nicole Kemp, Roylean Payton, Karen Robison, Charlotte Wilson, Monica Daniels

North Madison County Excel By 5 Co-Certification Managers

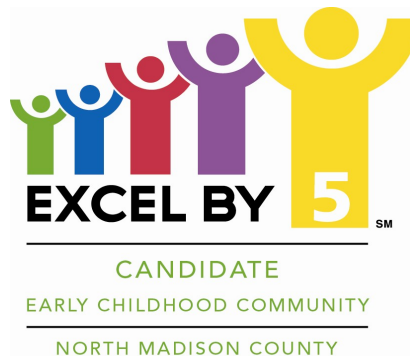
The North Madison County Excel By 5 Co-Certification Managers are Kim Dowe-Davis representing Madison County Schools, and Veda Archie representing Canton Public Schools. The Co-Certification Managers are responsible for coordinating the planning and implementation of the North Madison County Excel By 5 activities among other tasks.



Front row (l-r): Veda Archie, Dr. Nancy New, Kim Dowe-Davis

Middle row (l-r): Roylean Payton, Jacqueline Cotton, Jan Collins

Back row (l-r): Ira Murray, Lenita Knight, Eliza Hegwood, Silbrina Wright, John Brown



Town Hall Meeting

An early education town hall meeting was held October 30, 2012, at the Madison County Library in Canton. A large group of 0-5 children dressed in their Halloween costumes attended along with their parents and local elected officials.



State Senator Kenny Wayne Jones, Canton Mayor Dr. William Truly and Lanny Slaughter among the local elected officials attending the North Madison County Excel By 5 Town Hall meeting

Regional Sites Meetings

A special thanks to the Moss Point and Grenada Excel By 5 coalitions for hosting the Excel By 5 Regional Sites Meetings.

Excel By 5 held two Regional Sites Meetings for Excel By 5 communities in the northern and in the southern parts of the state to come together to share ideas. The Excel By 5 communities in the southern part of the state met January 28, 2013 at the Family Resource Center in Moss Point. The Excel By 5 communities in the northern part of the state met on February 4, 2013 at Regions Bank in Grenada. We were delighted to have had speakers Debbie Anglin and Michael Bentley of MAPE discussing partnering education with business. Also, Earnest Hargrove of New Life Fellowship Christian Church in Grenada and Elisa Mayo discussed engaging faith based organizations. Amy Brandenstein of Chevron also spoke about 'Getting the Word Out' to communities.

The Steering Committee Chair in Duncan found the site meeting to

be quite helpful. "I had a wonderful time learning different ways to include all of the community, the businesses and churches, as we work towards certification. We are busy working on the Community Needs Assessment. We are so excited about making our community better for children 0-5 and parents."

The Co-Certification Manager of Alligator realizes the benefit of all of the Excel By 5 communities coming together. "I learned so much when I attended the Sites Meeting in Grenada, MS. I just wish more Alligator coalition members could have been there to meet all the people around the state working in their communities to make them Child Friendly."

According to the Certification Manager in Isola, "The Sites Meeting was very informative. I noticed that all the Excel By 5 communities represented had eager people there working together to make changes in their community to make them a success. In Isola, MS we too are working eagerly to make our

community an Early Childhood Community success!"

The Certification Manager in Cleveland found the sites meeting to be a success. "The Sites Meeting in Grenada was a real boost for members of the coalition as we work towards Recertification. The speakers were dynamic and inspiring. We were also able to network with other Excel By 5 Coalitions which is always a bonus when we gather quarterly. The Cleveland Excel By 5 Coalition is busy working to gain new community partners while keeping the partnerships we have in place."

MARK
DATE
IN YOUR CALENDAR

The next Regional Sites Meetings are scheduled April 22, 2013 in Tupelo for the northern Excel By 5 communities and April 29, 2013 in Hattiesburg for the southern Excel By 5 communities.

Delta Communities Summary

The Excel By 5 Delta Candidate Communities which included Alligator, Duncan, Shelby (North Bolivar County), Pace, Gunnison, Rosedale, Beulah (West Bolivar County) Isola, Belzoni, Silver City, Louise (Humphreys County) made serious strides in completing the Excel By 5 requirements since the Fall 2010. However as of January 2013 (as noted on the Excel By 5 Communities 2013 Map on the following page) the

Delta Candidate Communities have decided to move forward in completing the requirements as individual Community Coalitions rather than as a County Coalition. Although starting over has not been easy, the new Candidate communities of Alligator, Duncan, Beulah, Gunnison, and Isola have been diligently working on developing new strategies, identifying resources and building local partnership to help engage the com-

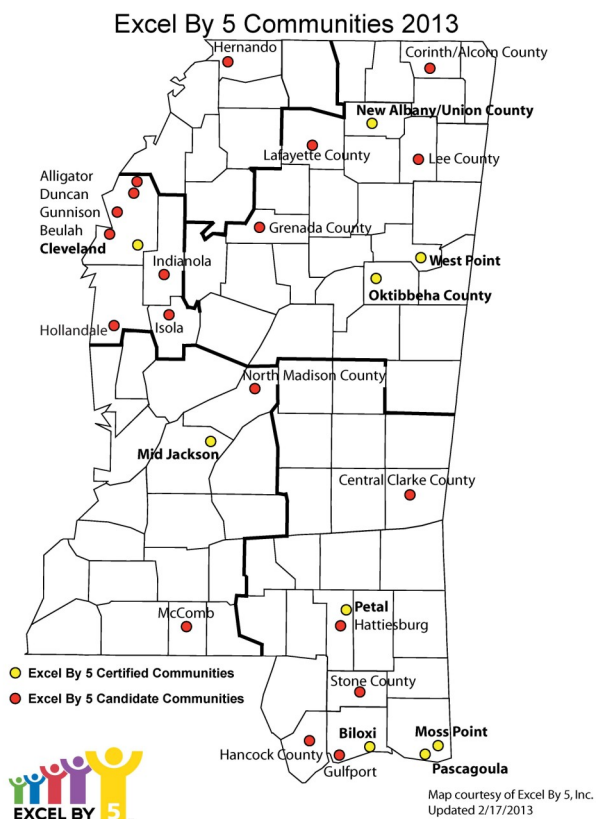
munity to focus on supporting young children and their families. The overall vision remains the same which is to create a model for child friendly, healthy living that would become not just a few sporadic activities or events, but a way of life for the citizens living in the above mentioned communities.

Mechelle Wallace

Excel By 5

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



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