

BILOXI



EXCEL BY

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story by **Lynn Lofton**
photo courtesy of **Biloxi Excel By 5**



BOB CLAY, past director of State of Mississippi Excel by 5 program and **Linda Perkes**, President of the Biloxi Excel By 5 Coalition

Biloxi Excel by 5 is an early childhood community initiative focusing on the community's young children. The initiative will better prepare children for school, emphasizing the important roles parents and early childhood educators play during the most formative years — birth to age five.

"The mission is to give every child a chance to live up to his or her potential," said Susan Hunt, certification manager. "Biloxi Excel By 5 makes a positive difference in children's lives as well as making a positive difference in the future of Biloxi."

In 2009, a group of educators, community leaders and parents met to form Biloxi Excel By 5. The certification process began by adopting a coalition charter, coalition bylaws, and community resolutions with the Biloxi Schools and City of Biloxi. In 2011, Biloxi became the first certified community in Harrison County and the eighth in the state.

Biloxi Excel By 5 sponsors community events for

children birth to 5 years and Teaching Tots on Tuesday for children 4 years of age. There are also special events at the Biloxi Family Resource Center and parent/child educational workshops. Parent academies are held six to eight times a year free of charge with food and child care provided. The Resource Center is available to parents and children three days a week, including a Toy Lending Library that provides educational materials and educational games.

IP Casino Resort Spa is one of Biloxi Excel By 5's founding community partners. The IP donated tables, chairs, and filing cabinets for the Biloxi Family Resource Center, awarded a \$10,000 check in 2013, 2014 and 2015, and provides volunteers for community events.

Biloxi Excel By 5

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www.excelby5.com/biloxi

★ PROUD TO SUPPORT BILOXI EXCEL BY 5 ★

holiday joy
for everyone



In 2015, IP was pleased to donate over \$1,000,000 and hundreds of volunteer hours to charities including Biloxi Excel by 5. Like you, our sense of community is strong. Join IP and give generously this season!



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