

EARLY CONNECTIONS
5315 OLD HIGHWAY 11, STE. 1
HATTIESBURG, MS 39402

January 5, 2009

Dear Parents:

The Lamar County School District is committed to the children and families of Lamar County. The District believes in lifelong learning for all of its residents. In keeping with that belief, Lamar County School District and Southern Miss Institute for Disability Studies have partnered to establish a pilot demonstration and training program called "Early Connections." The purpose of this pilot program is to reflect research on best practices in early childhood education for a diverse population of children ranging in age from infants through four years. Research based practices will be designed to enhance language, cognitive, emotional/social, motor and pre-academic skills needed for school readiness. This program will serve as a lab school for students at Southern Miss and a training site for other public schools and early childhood educators across the state of Mississippi. The program is open to Lamar County residents only.

Early Connections will provide a future forward approach to education. This program will provide a one of a kind early childhood program for Lamar County; one that will target and encompass all SES levels, race, teen moms, and disability. The day program will provide learning opportunities through play in the areas of art, music, theater and dance, literacy, Spanish, recreation, science and math. Your children will be fully engaged in activities with a warm and loving staff and with their peers. All lead teachers have or are working on a Master's degree and are highly trained in the field of early education. The after school program will focus on remedial skills and homework, computer skills and educational programs, recreation, arts, music, dance and theater. Other programs available include parent training and a parent and child library for checking out toys, books and other materials.

There is a \$50 enrollment fee; \$10 with the application and \$40 due when accepted. Fees for the day program are \$100 a week and hours are from 7:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. Fees for the after school program are \$25 a week for day students and \$70 a week for children not enrolled in the day program. After school hours are from 2:30 until 5:30 p.m. There is no charge for the day program for children with IFSPs or IEPs. There is, however, a \$70 a week fee for after school services. A six week summer program will run from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. and will be \$110 a week for all children.

Lunch and snacks are included in the weekly fee for day students and snacks are included in the weekly fee for after-school children. Transportation is not provided at this time.

We are very excited to be a part of such a ground-breaking opportunity that will empower this generation and future generations to come. The overall goal and expected outcome is to take advantage of the crucial early-learning years to ensure children are ready for school and to set the foundation for a lifelong love of learning.

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Ben Burnett, Ph.D., Superintendent
Lamar County School District

Jane Z. Siders, Ed.D.
The University of Southern Mississippi
Institute for Disability Studies



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