

## Project PREPARE Workshops Registration Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Childcare Facility \_\_\_\_\_  
 Director's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street/PO Box \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please check which workshops you would like to attend.

### Literacy and Numeracy in Daily Routines

- |                                      |           |                  |
|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> February 3  | Meridian  | 9 a.m. - Noon    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> February 8  | Gulfport  | 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> February 17 | McComb    | 9 a.m. - Noon    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> February 21 | Brandon   | 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> March 3     | Cleveland | 9 a.m. - Noon    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> March 8     | Tupelo    | 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. |

### Enhancing Communication and Interactions

- |                                   |           |                  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> March 10 | Gulfport  | 9 a.m. - Noon    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> March 10 | Meridian  | 9 a.m. - Noon    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> March 15 | McComb    | 5:30 - 8:30 p.m. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> March 24 | Brandon   | 9 a.m. - Noon    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> April 2  | Cleveland | 6 - 9 p.m.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> April 12 | Tupelo    | 4:30 - 7:30 p.m. |

Mail registration form to  
 The University of Southern Mississippi  
 Institute for Disability Studies  
 118 College Drive #5163  
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Or fax to  
 601.266.5114  
 Attn.: PREPARE

Possibilities is a free newsletter published quarterly by the Institute for Disability Studies at The University of Southern Mississippi. PREPARE, a project of IDS, is funded by the Mississippi Department of Human Services. To subscribe or to submit materials (pictures, articles, etc.) for consideration, contact Susan Phillips at 601.266.5163, 1.888.671.0051 or [Susan.Phillips@usm.edu](mailto:Susan.Phillips@usm.edu).



[www.usm.edu/ids/prepare](http://www.usm.edu/ids/prepare)

AA/EOE/ADA

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The University of Southern Mississippi  
 Institute for Disability Studies  
 118 College Drive #5163  
 Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001





# Possibilities

## Early Childhood Inclusion

Institute for Disability Studies - Project Prepare

Mississippi's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities

Issue No. 10 • Winter 2006

### Save these dates

#### Inclusion Awareness Workshops

##### Positive Behavior Management

Jan. 13	McComb
Jan. 20	Meridian
Jan. 20	Gulfport
Jan. 27	Brandon
Feb. 8	Cleveland
Feb. 10	Tupelo

##### Literacy & Numeracy in Daily Routines

Feb. 3	Meridian
Feb. 8	Gulfport
Feb. 17	McComb
Feb. 21	Brandon
March 3	Cleveland
March 8	Tupelo

##### Enhancing Communication & Interactions

March 10	Gulfport
March 10	Meridian
March 15	McComb
March 24	Brandon
April 2	Cleveland
April 12	Tupelo

Register online at

[www.usm.edu/ids/prepare](http://www.usm.edu/ids/prepare)



### PREPARE Essentials

Many wonderful initiatives are being implemented across the state of Mississippi thanks to continued support from the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Office for Children and Youth. Project PREPARE will continue to be a vital resource for childcare centers and the young children of Mississippi. The primary goal of PREPARE is to improve the quality of care for ALL children by enhancing professional development opportunities and providing necessary supports, services, and resources. PREPARE is a proud subgrantee of Mississippi Child Care Quality Rating System, which is being piloted in the eastern part of the state.

This year PREPARE will offer seven workshops in our Inclusive Workshop Series. The topics include Designing an Inclusive Program; Child Development and Community Resources; Positive Behavioral Guidance; Enhancing Communication and Interactions; Ongoing Child Assessments; Promoting Literacy and Numeracy in Daily Routines; and Creating Learning Centers for ALL Children. The workshops are intended to provide practical and useful information that you can take back with you and share with other staff members at your centers. These workshops will be offered in six regional locations to include Brandon, Gulfport, Cleveland, Tupelo, McComb and Meridian.

PREPARE will continue to offer support for centers who are currently serving a child with a disability. If you have questions regarding the law, informal screening and assessment strategies, suggestions for creating an inclusive environment, modifying materials, developmentally appropriate curriculum or any other assistance, please feel free to contact Project PREPARE on our toll-free technical assistance hotline at 1.888.671.0051.

This is a great time marked by advancements for early childhood education in our state. Project PREPARE staff are working hard to improve the quality of early childhood education for ALL children throughout the state and we look forward to working with you this year!

Most Sincerely,

Elizabeth Beavers, Project PREPARE Coordinator

Project PREPARE is funded by the Mississippi Department of Human Services, Office for Children and Youth (GR# 525Q7472).

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**Child Care Program Highlight  
Christian Learning Center  
in Canton, Mississippi**

When Project PREPARE staff first met Thelma Harden at an inclusion workshop three years ago, she enthusiastically became involved with PREPARE supports. An initial ECERS-R evaluation was completed and although the center was good, Thelma's goals were clear: she wanted it to be great! Thelma set out to create a childcare program that provided high quality early childhood education for ALL children. In addition, she embarked upon finding good staff with an enthusiasm for teaching and initiatives to increase family involvement.

At first glance, Thelma's program stood out, not for the wealth of its resources but rather the wealth of its teachers. The preschool classroom looks like most other classrooms - tables and chairs, shelving units, and

materials. It is not until you get closer that you notice the quality of materials accessible to the children. Thelma reported that "you must be creative and find resources to keep the interest centers interesting." She has learned about the importance of having many centers for the children to choose from, keeping a variety of materials available and incorporating a weekly theme. According to Thelma, "It is so important to seek out all resources in the community like Project PREPARE."

When describing this program, one would never consider that most of the families of children enrolled have financial hardships. Keeping high quality teachers can be a struggle, and the days and weeks are long for Thelma. However, as a child, you feel special and excited to spend your days at Christian Learning Center.

Thelma's program has become a model for our state, not because of money, resources, or materials but because of Thelma and her endeavor to provide quality child development for ALL children! Thelma recently said, "I am so appreciative to have the opportunity to work with Project PREPARE, and I am confident in teaching all children in my community. Being featured in Possibilities is an honor for my program."



**Web site Spotlight: New  
PREPARE Web site**

The Project PREPARE Web site has recently been redesigned to provide you with informative resources in a format that is easier to access. The Web site has been designed to help you as providers ensure that the children of Mississippi are receiving high quality childcare services and that you are prepared to work with children with special needs who are included in your classrooms.

The Web site contains information about the various services offered

by Project PREPARE, including PREPARE Possibilities, the quarterly newsletter related to early childhood inclusion, and PREPARE Postings, which is a weekly electronic listserv providing up-to-date information on early childhood education. The listserv also contains inclusion and teaching tips for early childhood educators and links to previous issues. The Web site features answers to a variety of frequently asked questions and best practices related to early childhood inclusion.

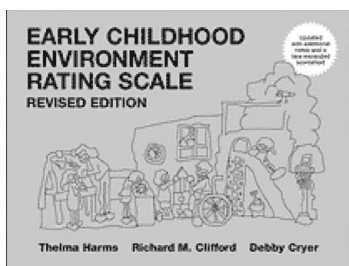
Under the Inclusion Resources and Links page you can find information about local and national organizations specifically designed for children with various special needs.

One of the most exciting changes to the Project PREPARE Web site is the Inclusion Awareness Workshops now posted. Individuals can register online for any of the trainings offered by PREPARE.

Please visit the Web site at [www.usm.edu/ids/prepare](http://www.usm.edu/ids/prepare).

## Resource Room: Breaking Down the ECERS-R

One way to determine a high-quality childcare program is to use the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, Revised Edition, by Thelma Harms, Richard M. Clifford, and Debby Cryer. This rating scale is more commonly referred to as the ECERS-R. The rating scale provides a means of rating early childhood programs based on specific criteria and is divided into seven subscales: Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines, Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Program Structure, and Parents and Staff. One of the requirements of Project



PREPARE is to use ECERS-R ratings of child care in programs across the state to determine what supports are needed from centers in order to raise the quality of services provided to Mississippi's children. In future issues of Possibilities, each of the ECERS-R subscales will be summarized and tips for including children with special needs in your classrooms will be provided.

## Getting Started: Importance of Curriculum Planning

As early childhood professionals, we all want children to learn, right? Well one of the most effective ways to make sure children are learning at an early age is to embed early learning opportunities into daily activities and routines. Planning

early learning opportunities for young children can be as simple as taking a weekly theme and coming up with fun and easy activities related to that theme that can be done throughout the day in the various learning centers. This means that if you choose to do a theme on winter, every activity you plan for that week will somehow relate to winter. You can turn your room into a winter wonderland by simply adding winter-related books in the literacy corner, winter-related clothing such as hats, scarves, and gloves in the dramatic play area, pretend snow in the sensory table, and art projects related to winter, just to name a few. By choosing a weekly theme and planning daily activities around this theme, children learn more than they would if they were simply told about the theme during group time. Their minds are more stimulated about the topic; therefore, they have more questions, they get the chance to act out the information they are taking in, and they get to talk about the theme all day long with their friends and teachers!

One effective way to encourage family involvement is to ask parents to bring in supplies they may have at home that reinforce the theme you are doing for the week. Parents love to feel needed, and this is an easy way to include them in planning what their children will learn. If you have children with special needs in your classrooms, it is especially important to plan your curriculum in advance. Many times only simple adaptations need to be made to the ideas you have, but you must be aware of these before hand so you can gather necessary materials to make the adaptations. Curriculum plans are most effective when teachers are able to adapt their ideas to new

concepts and ideas the children may come up with on their own.

When planning early learning opportunities in your classroom, there are several things to consider. First of all, the theme and related ideas must be appropriate for both the chronological and developmental age of the children you are teaching. Also, the activities should be centered around the individual needs of each child in the class. This means that not all children will be able to participate in each activity the way you may have planned. Teachers must be flexible in their ideas to allow all children to learn in their own way. Teachers should also be aware that, in many cases, smaller themes may develop out of a large global theme. It is OK if a theme extends further than a week. If the children are still interested by the end of the week, you should feel good because that means the theme was a success and the children want to learn more! Simply keep the same "props" in your classroom and develop more curriculum ideas to keep them learning!

Whether you plan your own activities or use a published curriculum in your class, make sure the children understand why you are talking about a specific theme, how they can learn about the theme using the different centers in the class, and encourage them to ask questions. By using lesson plans and implementing them throughout the day, children are better able to see the "big picture" of the theme and, therefore, will stimulate their interest to learn more. If you have questions or need assistance with making adaptations for children with special needs in your classroom, please contact Nicole Briceno at 601.266.5163 or Nicole.Briceno@usm.edu.