



CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Community Populations over 15,000 (PL4)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

C4.1	Establish a community coalition of at least 15 members comprised of parents, early childhood educators, health care providers, and other community representatives. A roster of coalition members must be maintained in the community.
C4.2	Adopt a Coalition Charter that defines the coalition membership process, purpose, and expectations.
C4.3	Designate a certification manager for the community.
C4.4	Conduct a community needs assessment of child care, health, family and community resources.
C4.5	Conduct quarterly coalition meetings and maintain meeting minutes. Coalition meetings require a fifty percent (50%) participation of coalition members.
C4.6	Conduct an annual communitywide early childhood update meeting to present the community needs assessment results, action plan for attaining certification, and progress towards attaining certification. Solicit feedback from the community to be used to revise the community action plan.
C4.7	Create an annually updated resource guide of services in the community that assist children 0-5 and/or their families.
C4.8	Send a representative to the quarterly state Excel By 5 Sites Collaboration meetings to report on the community's efforts to attain certification. Disseminate information from these meetings to the community coalition.
C4.9	Coalition members will assist with three (3) community-wide events per year with an early childhood focus.
C4.10	Create and maintain an action plan for the promotion of community events, activities, and resources.
C4.11	Demonstrate additional or extended community services to address identified community needs.
C4.12	Recruit and train community volunteers to assist in community events and activities and maintain a current list of volunteers in your documentation.
C4.13	The community budget reflects either an in-kind or cash commitment for some program that will benefit the lives of children prior to school entry.
C4.14	Recruit representatives from surrounding communities to apply for Excel By 5 certification.



FAMILY AND PARENT SUPPORT

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| F4.1 | Designate and publicize a local agency that provides information to parents of children ages 0-5 about community resources and services including early care and education providers, health care services, social services, family education services, and family support services. |
| F4.2 | Create and distribute information packets to parents of newborns or parents of children 0-5 relocating to the community. The packets will include materials about promoting positive early childhood development, community resources, and bounce-back cards pertaining to local family services. |
| F4.3 | Coordinate family education sessions/workshops, at least quarterly, to address family needs identified in the community. Topics are to include but are not limited to the following: ages and stages of development and early learning guidelines. |
| F4.4 | Develop a family resource center, a toy lending library, and a community workroom for creating educational materials. The center, toy library and workroom may be centrally housed or in separate locations within the community. |
| F4.5 | Develop a family support referral system and/or process to link families to community resources. The referral system must be available during day, evening, and weekend hours. |
| F4.6 | Coordinate an annual family community-wide event to address family needs as determined by the community needs assessment. |

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

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| E4.1 | Hold at least three (3) Educational Partners meetings annually. Attendees must include representatives from the community school system(s), Head Start centers, <u>and</u> early care centers or home providers. These meetings must include trainings on the MS Early Learning Guidelines. |
| E4.2 | Identify an agency/program to provide information about state licensure requirements, community resources and services (health care services, social services, family education services, and family support services), and local professional development opportunities to early care centers and home providers quarterly. |
| E4.3 | Demonstrate that forty percent (40%) or more of licensed early care centers have forty percent (40%) or more educational staff who have 20 or more professional development hours (as defined by the Mississippi Department of Health) per licensure year. |
| E4.4 | Collaborate with the MS State Extension Service/Nurturing Homes Initiative to identify non-licensed home early care providers in the community and provide information about community resources available to them. |
| E4.5 | Demonstrate that forty percent (40%) or more of licensed early care centers have forty percent (40%) or more “highly trained” educational staff. A staff member is considered “highly trained” if s/he currently holds a Child Development Associate (CDA) or college degree (Associate, Bachelors, or Masters) in early childhood, education, or related field. |



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| E4.6 | Demonstrate that sixty percent (60%) or more of licensed early care centers participated in an environmental evaluation using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-R (ECERS-R) and/or the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale-R (ITERS-R) within the certification timeline. |
| E4.7 | Coordinate an annual early care and education community-wide event to address early education and school readiness. |

HEALTH AND SAFETY

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| H4.1 | Identify two (2) or more health and safety issues that pose concerns for children ages 0-5 in the community. These should be identified in the community needs assessment. Provide community education about three (3) or more health and safety issues from the following list: immunization, health checkups, common symptom recognition, first aid, dental hygiene, transportation safety, home safety, poison prevention, food safety, and nutrition education. |
| H4.2 | Coordinate an annual Children's Health Fair where children ages 0-5 have access to developmental and health screenings and families have access to health and safety information. |
| H4.3 | Provide information to the community about early intervention services including First Steps (ages 0-3 through the MS Department of Health) and Child Find (ages 3-5 through the local school district). These services include speech therapy, cognitive, physical and mental health. |