

Child Care Connection

MSDH Child Care Licensure Bureau

March 2026

“Bridging the gap between Child Care Providers and MSDH Child Care Licensure Bureau in order to provide a safe and healthy environment for Mississippian children and families.”

Happy March, Child Care Provider!

Spring is whispering at the door—soon we’ll see vibrant colors stretching across the landscape, flowers blooming with promise, and little ones arriving with sniffles as allergy season begins to stir. As nature renews itself, so too must we renew our focus, our awareness, and our commitment to excellence.

March is a month of preparation and attentiveness. Staying informed and proactive ensures your program continues to thrive—and remains in full compliance with licensing regulations. Please take a moment to review these important reminders:

General Compliance Reminders

- **Fire Inspection Form:**
A completed Fire Inspection Form is required for license renewal. Please ensure inspections are scheduled, conducted, and submitted on time. Delays can impact your renewal status.
- **Annual Training Hours:**
Fifteen (15) contact hours are required for renewal. All training hours must be uploaded into Lift-Ed prior to your renewal deadline.
- **Director Coverage:**
A qualified Director or approved Designee must be present at the facility at all times to ensure proper supervision and regulatory compliance.
- **Self-Reporting:**
Remember that timely and accurate self-reporting is not only required—it reflects your integrity and dedication to maintaining a safe and transparent environment.

Sun Safe Practice

April 1st – September 15th

As we transition into sunnier days, please prepare to implement Sun Safe practices. Protecting children from overexposure is essential during outdoor activities.

Review your policies, confirm parental permissions, and ensure sunscreen and protective measures are readily available.

March invites us to be diligent, prepared, and steadfast in our responsibilities. Like spring itself, your work nurtures growth, safety, and new beginnings every single day. Thank you for the care, structure, and warmth you provide to children and families in our community.

Here's to a compliant, confident, and blossoming season ahead. 🌸

St. Patrick's Day March 17





March 2026 MSDH Trainings



Date	Time	Training Topic	Location	Trainer
March 2 nd	5:30pm-8:30pm	CCDF Health & Safety	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
March 3 rd	5:30pm-8:30pm	Infant Safety in the Classroom	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
March 11 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Regulations Governing Licensure of Child Care Family Homes for 5 OR Fewer Children	Virtual (ONLY for Family Homes Centers)	J. Dockery
March 16 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
March 17 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
March 23 rd	5:30pm-8:30pm	Directors' Orientation	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
March 24 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Playground Safety	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
March 2 nd	9:00am-12:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Vicksburg	S. Smith
March 2 nd	12:00pm-3:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Vicksburg	S. Smith
March 10 th	9:00am-12:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Gulfport	S. Smith
March 10 th	12:00pm-3:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Gulfport	S. Smith
March 11 th	12:00pm-3:00pm	Playground Safety	Gulfport	S. Smith
March 21 st	8:30am-11:30am	CCDF Health & Safety	Ridgeland	S. Smith
March 12 th	8-11 am	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Ocean Springs	J. Smith
March 12 th	11:30-2:30 pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Ocean Springs	J. Smith
March 13 th	8:30-11:30 am	Playground Safety	Ocean Springs	J. Smith
March 17 th	9-12 pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Online/Virtual	J. Smith
March 17 th	1-4 pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Online/Virtual	J. Smith
March 18 th	1-4 pm	Playground Safety	Online/Virtual	J. Smith
March 18 th	5-8 pm	Directors Orientation	Online/Virtual	J. Smith
March 21 st	9-12 pm	CCDF Health & Safety	Online/Virtual	J. Smith
March 25 th	9-12 pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Online/Virtual	J. Smith
March 25 th	1-4 pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Online/Virtual	J. Smith
March 26 th	9-12 pm	Playground Safety	Online/Virtual	J. Smith
March 26 th	1-4 pm	Directors Orientation	Online/Virtual	J. Smith
March 2 nd	5:30-8:30pm	Director's Orientation	Virtual	M Jordan
March 3 rd	5:30pm-8:30pm	Playground Safety	Virtual	M. Jordan
March 4 th	9:30 am-12:30pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Cleveland	M. Jordan
March 4 th	1:00 pm-4:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Cleveland	M. Jordan
March 10 th	9:30am-12:30pm	Director's Orientation	Virtual	M. Jordan
March 11 th	9:30 am-12:30 pm	Playground Safety	Virtual	M. Jordan
March 17 th	9:30 am-12:30pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Greenwood	M. Jordan
March 17 th	1:00pm-4:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Greenwood	M. Jordan
March 18 th	9:30 am-12:30pm	Director's Orientation	Greenwood	M. Jordan
March 18 th	1:00pm-4:00pm	Playground Safety	Greenwood	M. Jordan



MSDH Sun and Heat Safety

Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) light from the sun is the most serious environmental risk factor for skin and lip cancer. Even a few serious sunburns can double your lifetime risk of cancer.

Why It Matters

- Serious sunburns, especially during childhood and adolescence, can double the chance of developing malignant melanoma, one of the most deadly forms of skin cancer.
- Skin cancer cases have been rising among younger adults in recent years.
- Unprotected skin can be harmed by UV rays in as little as 15 minutes, yet it can take up to 12 hours for skin to show the full effects of sun exposure.

Sun Safety

Adults of all ages – and especially children – should take steps against sun exposure from April through September:

- Use sunscreen rated SPF-15 or higher with both UVA and UVB protection. Remember that last year's sunscreen may not still be effective — check the expiration date on the packaging.
- Apply sunscreen half an hour before you go outside for full effectiveness. [More sunscreen tips](#)
- Seek shade, especially during midday when the sun's rays are strongest and do the most damage. Avoid direct exposure between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m., and seek shade under an umbrella or tree.
- Cover up with clothing to protect exposed skin. Loose-fitting long-sleeved shirts and long pants made from tightly woven fabric offer the best protection. Light clothing is not a substitute for sunscreen: a T-shirt only has an SPF of about 4.
- Get a hat with a wide brim to shade the face, head, ears, and neck. UV rays can reach anyone on cloudy and hazy days as well as bright and sunny days
- Wear sunglasses that wrap around and block as close to 100 percent of both UVA and UVB rays as possible. Sunglasses protect both the eyes and tender skin around the eyes from sun exposure.

Find Your Local Heat Risk—Copy and Paste Link

[HeatRisk | Tracking | NCEH | CDC](#)

FOOD ALLERGY FACT SHEET

Managing Food Allergies: Child Care Centers

1. Create a food allergy policy for your center.

- Form a food allergy team to write a food allergy policy.
- Develop an emergency plan specifically for your center(s).
- Notify parents about any reactions or exposures to an allergen.
- If outside foods are allowed, limit to pre-packaged foods with complete ingredient lists.
- Check all food labels for allergens.
- Require all children to wash their hands when entering the center and before and after meals and snacks to prevent cross-contact.
- Keep information about children with food allergies confidential.

2. Create an individual food allergy plan for each child with a food allergy.

- Obtain completed medical statement from parents/guardians (forms available from your sponsoring organization). Talk with parents/guardians if you need clarification.
- Work with parents to create a plan to treat a reaction if it occurs.
- Keep the plan where you can refer to it as needed.
- Obtain any necessary medications from parents. Be sure you understand when and how to give each medication.
- Keep medications in a location that is secure.
- Work with parents to create an affordable plan using the menus and resources that you have.

3. Take actions to avoid exposure to food allergens.

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after each task. Using water alone or hand sanitizer alone does not remove food allergens.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize all utensils and cookware after each use.
- Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces before and after each use.
- Use designated cutting boards and designated work areas to prepare food for children with food allergies.
- Store foods so that allergy-safe foods do not come in contact with other foods.
- Clean and sanitize tables and chairs before and after meals and snacks.
- Create a way for staff to be able to identify children with food allergies.
- Prevent trading or sharing food, food utensils, or food containers.
- Avoid foods that a child is allergic to in art projects or cooking activities.
- Limit food to specific areas in the center.
- Ask parents to approve items such as body lotions, sunscreens, shampoos, and creams, as some may contain allergenic ingredients that could be ingested.

4. Train staff about food allergies.

- Train staff on the center's food allergy policy and each child's individual food allergy plan.
- Train staff on symptoms of an allergic reaction.
- Instruct staff on when and how to give medications.
- Ensure confidentiality of children's medical information.



FOOD ALLERGY FACT SHEET

5. Train staff to read food labels for allergens.

- Most food labels list the top eight allergenic foods using their common name (milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and crustacean shellfish).
- Check labels for warning statements such as “may contain,” “produced on shared equipment,” or “produced in a plant that uses.” These foods should not be served to children with allergies.
- Check ingredient labels for allergens on every product each time food is purchased.

For More Information

American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology
www.aaaai.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Network
www.foodallergy.org

Food Allergy Initiative
www.faiusa.org

Food and Nutrition Information Center
www.nal.usda.gov

Food Insight (Web site sponsored by International Food Information Council Foundation)
www.foodinsight.org

National Food Service Management Institute
www.nfsmi.org

National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
www.niaid.nih.gov

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education
www.nrckids.org

School Nutrition Association
www.schoolnutrition.org

U.S. Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

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Cavity Free in Mississippi!

Oral Evaluation and Fluoride Varnish

What is Cavity Free in Mississippi?

Tooth decay (dental caries) affects more children than any other chronic childhood disease, in spite of the fact that it is preventable. The medical office is an ideal place to deliver a set of preventive dental services which will help to reduce decay rates in children, since children are seen frequently in primary care offices for Well Child visits. Cavity Free in Mississippi is a collaborative effort between the Mississippi State Department of Health's Office of Oral Health and medical providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, and physician's assistants) focusing on children who have limited or no access to a dental provider.

How Does the Program Work?

Medicaid-accepting medical providers who sign up for the program will be trained by the Regional Oral Health Consultants (ROHCs) in their respective region where underserved populations may live. Medical providers will receive training on how to perform an oral health evaluation, benefits and application of fluoride varnish, and caregiver education on good oral hygiene practices. Medical providers will also receive training on billing/coding for services rendered and supplies and materials needed in order to screen and apply fluoride varnish. Referral networks will be provided in order to ensure referral to dental offices and the establishment of a dental home.

Who Are the Trainers?

The Regional Oral Health Consultants (ROHCs) with the Mississippi State Department of Health's Office of Oral Health are licensed, registered dental hygienists in Mississippi who provide oral health education to health department staff, health professionals and the public. They enable collaborative partners to plan and implement effective oral health prevention strategies such as the "Make a Child's Smile" fluoride varnish program, Cavity Free Kids training, and preventive dental sealant programs.

What Are the Benefits?

Medical providers are a part of the oral health workforce team who address significant public health issues - dental caries, increased oral health care access, and improved oral-systemic health across the lifespan of patients. Medical providers also have the potential to bill for both oral evaluation and fluoride varnish application in children 0 to 36 months of age.

How Do I Get Involved?

For program enrollment contact:
Mississippi State Department of Health
Office of Oral Health
Email: Veronica.Gates@msdh.ms.gov
Phone: (601)206-1597
Fax #: (601)991-9963



MISSISSIPPI
STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

EM-6000

Employee Appreciate Day: March 6th

The Power of Recognition: Why Employee Appreciation Day Matters More Than Ever

Employee Appreciation Day is more than just a date on the calendar—it's an opportunity to strengthen company culture, boost morale, and create a more engaged workforce. Recognizing employees' hard work and dedication is essential in today's fast-paced work environment, where job satisfaction and retention go hand in hand with appreciation.

Here's why Employee Appreciation Day matters more than ever and how you can make the most of it:

The Impact of Employee Recognition

Employees who feel valued are more likely to be motivated, productive, and loyal to their company. A culture of recognition can:

- **Increase Engagement:** Employees who feel appreciated are more engaged in their work and committed to the company's success.
- **Boost Retention:** A simple “thank you” can go a long way in reducing turnover and improving job satisfaction.
- **Enhance Workplace Culture:** Recognition fosters a sense of belonging and strengthens teamwork.
- **Improve Productivity:** Employees who feel appreciated are often more willing to go above and beyond in their roles.

Showing appreciation doesn't have to be complicated—it just needs to be meaningful.

Creative Ways to Show Appreciation

When it comes to employee recognition, a little effort can make a big impact. Consider these thoughtful ways to celebrate your team:

- **Personalized Thank You Notes:** A handwritten note expressing gratitude can feel more personal than an email.
- **Shout-Outs and Awards:** Publicly recognize employees' hard work through newsletters, meetings, or company-wide messages.
- **Team Celebrations:** Organize a team lunch, happy hour, or virtual gathering to celebrate achievements.
- **Surprise Gifts and Swag:** A well-thought-out gift can make employees feel truly valued.

Reference: [The Power of Recognition: Why Employee Appreciation Day Matters More Than Ever | SwagUp](#)

Happy
Employee
Appreciation
Day!

Thank you.

THANK YOU

In appreciation of You,

And all that you do!

Your sincerity is highly appreciated!

HAPPY
Employee Appreciation
DAY

GREAT
JOB

PARENTING TOOLKITS

This is a **FREE** Parenting Toolkit Series for families in Mississippi. Families will choose one developmental toolkit and then receive an additional four toolkits. After each toolkit is received, one of our TIPPS Caseworkers will reach out to offer extra supports and to complete a survey.



Infant Toolkit



Toolkits for new parents include items tailored for the developmental needs of newborns and infants:

- Onesie
- 2 children's books
- Teething Tool
- CDC Developmental Milestones Booklet
- Extension publications on topics such as car seat safety

These toolkits include items tailored for the developmental needs of toddlers:

- Melissa and Doug Lacing Beads
- 2 children's books
- Guide to reducing biting
- Extension publications on topics such as selecting a quality child care

Toddler Toolkit



SCAN HERE TO
SIGN UP



PARENTING TOOLKITS

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School-Age Toolkit

These toolkits include items tailored for the developmental needs of school-age children:

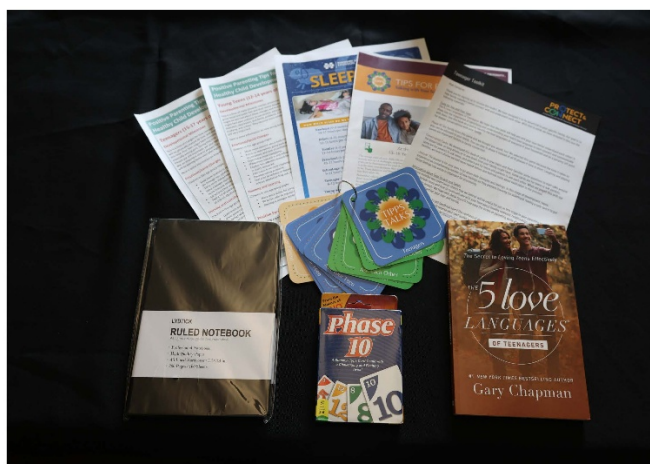
- Mad Libs
- Charades
- Superpower Book
- Conversation Cards
- Extension publications on topics such as sleep schedules



These toolkits include items tailored for the developmental needs of teens:

- The 5 Love Languages of Teenagers
- Phase 10
- Conversation Cards
- Journal
- Extension publications on topics such as healthy relationships

Teen Toolkit



SCAN HERE TO
SIGN UP



2026

MISSISSIPPI EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE:

- June 16-18, 2026
- Cadence Bank Arena and Conference Center
Tupelo, MS
- Registration Opens
February 16

[Click here to REGISTER](#)

[Call for Proposals](#)

Proposal Submission Deadline:
February 27

Please email
earlychildhoodtrainings@mdek12.org
if you have any questions.

DHA Resource & Referral Centers

Our Services

Quality Professional Development

- Local Area Coaching
- Coaching & Training on Specific Topics
- Virtual & In-person Trainings

(Trainings are done through MDHS)

Quality Professional Development

- Computer Access for Career Development
- Access to Educational Resources for children ages 0-12yrs
- Information on Health, Social Services, & Job Training

Scan our QR code to find a center near you!



Children must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

Makers Space

- Order Ellison Die Cutouts
- Lamination
- Poster Maker
- Resources for Completing School Projects.

Lending Library

- Developmentally & Age-Appropriate materials for ages 0-12yrs
- Mock Classroom Setup
- Supervised Play
- Storytime



Resource and Referral Network



**DELTA
HEALTH
ALLIANCE**

HEALTH • EDUCATION • COMMUNITY

Mississippi Lift is a program of Mississippi Department of Human Services.

MECIC provides on-site support for early childhood teachers and directors!

individualized ● challenging behavior ● supporting all children

MECIC Referral

To request on-site support, follow
the QR code and answer a few
questions!



SCAN HERE

Let us know if we can help you.

MS DIRECTOR'S CREDENTIAL RENEWAL

Dates and Locations

March 10, 2026; 8:30 am – 3:30 pm – Senatobia
March 10, 2026; 8:30 am – 3:30 pm – Indianola
March 10, 2026; 8:30 am – 3:30 pm – Columbus
March 11, 2025; 8:30 am – 3:30 pm – Tupelo
March 12, 2026; 8:30 am – 3:30 pm - Jackson
March 12, 2026; 9:00 am – 4:00 pm – D'Iberville
March 18, 2026; 8:30 am – 3:30 pm – Oxford
March 23, 2026; 8:30 am – 3:30 pm – Batesville
March 24, 2026; 9:00 am – 4:00 pm - Hattiesburg
April 09, 2026; 9:00 am – 4:00 pm - Brookhaven

All trainings are in-person.

Renewal Eligibility

- **Previously completed and passed the MS Director's Credential (9-Module) course**
- **Credential has expired or will expire in 2026**
- **Have a copy of your original credential certificate or most recent renewal certificate**

Scan
to
Register



6 CONTACT HOURS

Confirmation of enrollment will be sent via email.
Monitor your email for additional information
regarding training details.

RESOURCE & REFERRAL CENTER

WE ARE OPEN IN AN AREA NEAR YOU!



Center Locations:

- Leland, MS
- Greenwood, MS
- Indianola, MS
- Cleveland, MS
- Belzoni, MS
- Clarksdale, MS
- Batesville, MS
- Senatobia, MS
- Hernando, MS
- Grenada, MS
- Winona, MS

- * Technical assistance
- * Professional development
- * Lending library for childcare providers and families.

Scan our QR code for more information!



New Trainings
**Available
Now!**

REGISTER TODAY

Find us on:
<https://portal.lift-ed.ms>

Mississippi
EARLY CHILDHOOD
INCLUSION CENTER

Professional Development series are offered in-person, statewide, and virtually via Zoom.

Participants will receive four contact hours upon successful completion of the series.

Follow the steps below

01 Professional Development Opportunities

02 Advanced Search

03 Sponsoring Organization

04 MECIC

