

Child Care Connection

MSDH Child Care Licensure Bureau

May 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.”

MSDH Monthly Compliance Check-In



May is here, bringing warmer days, busy classrooms, and a perfect opportunity to refresh our focus on compliance. As we head into May, let's take a moment to check in on the details that matter most. These monthly reminders are here to support you in maintaining a safe, healthy, and compliant environment for the children in your care.

Providers, by now many of you have completed the new Child Care Regulation training and are familiar with the updated requirements all child care facilities must meet to remain in full compliance. As we move into May, this is a great time to revisit key areas and ensure your policies and daily practices align with current standards.

Below are a few important regulations to review. Please take a moment to ensure you and your staff are fully aware and implementing these requirements consistently:

- **Subchapter 4: Facility Policy and Procedures**

- o Rule 1.4.8 – Prevention of Shaken Baby Syndrome and Abusive Head Trauma
- o Review Rule 1.4.8 (1) through Rule 1.4.8 (6)

- **Subchapter 4: Facility Policy and Procedures**

- o Rule 1.4.9 – Emergency Preparedness and Evacuation Planning
- o Review Rule 1.4.9 (1,A) through Rule 1.4.9 (1,O (a–d (i–vi)))

- **Subchapter 13: General Nutritional Standards**

- o Rule 1.13.1 – Meals and Snacks
- o Rule 1.13.2 – Feeding Infants and Children
- o Rule 1.13.3 – Baby Bottles and Formula
- o Rule 1.13.4 – Feeding Chairs
- o Rule 1.13.5 – Menus



Thank you for your continued commitment to providing safe, healthy, and high-quality care for Mississippi's children. Your attention to these important details makes a lasting difference every day.

May 2026 Trainings

Date	Time	Training Topic	Location	Trainer
May 4 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
May 6 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	CCDF Health & Safety	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
May 12 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
May 13 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
May 14 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Directors' Orientation	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
May 18 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Playground Safety	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
May 19 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
May 20 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Virtual/Online	J. Dockery
May 6 th	9:00am-12:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Virtual/Online	J. Smith
May 6 th	1-4 pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Virtual/Online	J. Smith
May 7 th	9:00am-12:00pm	Playground Safety	Virtual/Online	J. Smith
May 7 th	1:00pm-4:00pm	Directors Orientation	Virtual/Online	J. Smith
May 9 th	5:00pm-8:00pm	Directors Orientation	Virtual/Online	J. Smith
May 14 th	8:00am-11:00am	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Ocean Springs, MS	J. Smith
May 14 th	12:00pm-3:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Ocean Springs, MS	J. Smith
May 15 th	8:00am-11:00am	Playground Safety	Ocean Springs, MS	J. Smith
May 15 th	12:00pm-3:00pm	Directors Orientation	Ocean Springs, MS	J. Smith
May 21 st	9:00am-12:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Virtual/Online	J. Smith
May 21 st	1:00pm-4:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Virtual/Online	J. Smith
May 22 nd	9:00am-12:00pm	Playground Safety	Virtual/Online	J. Smith
May 22 nd	1:00pm-4:00pm	Directors Orientation	Virtual/Online	J. Smith
May 4 th	9:00am-12:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Virtual/Online	M. Jordan
May 7 th	5:30pm-8:30pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Virtual/Online	M. Jordan
May 8 th	9:30 am-12:30pm	Directors Orientation	Virtual/Online	M. Jordan
May 8 th	1:00pm-4:00pm	Playground Safety	Virtual/Online	M. Jordan
May 13 th	9:30 am-12:30pm	Child Care Regulations Part 1	Virtual/Online	M. Jordan
May 13 th	1:00pm-4:00pm	Child Care Regulations Part 2	Virtual/Online	M. Jordan
May 14 th	9:30am-12:30pm	Director's Orientation	Virtual/Online	M. Jordan
May 14 th	1:00pm-4:00pm	Playground Safety	Virtual/Online	M. Jordan



May: A Season of Wonder in Early Childhood Classrooms

May arrives like a cheerful invitation—bursting with color, curiosity, and countless opportunities for young learners to explore the world around them. For early childhood educators, it's the perfect moment to lean into hands-on discovery, meaningful connections, and joyful learning.

Springtime Exploration in Full Bloom

Classrooms come alive as children investigate flowers, plants, and tiny backyard creatures. Whether it's a nature walk, a classroom garden, or close-up insect observations, May encourages curiosity and nurtures a sense of wonder about the natural world.

Celebrating Mother's Day with Heart

This special time offers opportunities for children to express love and appreciation through thoughtful art, handmade gifts, and storytelling. It's more than a holiday—it's a chance to foster empathy and connection.

Moving Through Transportation Themes

From building cardboard cars to designing imaginative train tracks, transportation studies spark creativity and problem-solving. Children explore how people and goods move, all while engaging in playful, hands-on construction.

Taking Learning Outdoors

With warmer days calling, outdoor learning becomes a highlight. Planting seeds, observing seasonal changes, and creating spring-inspired art outside helps children connect learning to real-world experiences.


Discovering Through the Elements

Earth, water, air, and sun provide a rich framework for exploration. Through sensory play, simple experiments, and movement activities, children build foundational skills while engaging their whole bodies and minds.

A Month That Matters

May isn't just another month—it's a vibrant chapter in the early learning journey. By blending nature, creativity, and exploration, educators can create experiences that inspire curiosity, strengthen relationships, and support holistic development.

Here's to a May filled with growth, giggles, and great discoveries! 🌱 ✨

 **May 4–8: Teacher Appreciation Week — Celebrating the Heart of Our Classrooms!**

This week, we celebrate the incredible teachers who inspire curiosity, nurture growth, and fill each day with care and creativity. For our youngest learners, teachers are guides, cheerleaders, and everyday heroes—and a little appreciation goes a long way! Let’s come together as families to make them feel seen, valued, and celebrated.

 **Fun & Creative Ways to Celebrate All Week:**

Monday – “Kind Words Kickoff”

Help your child draw a picture or dictate a sweet note about why they love their teacher.

Tuesday – “Thank-You Treat Day”

Send in a small snack, flower, or homemade goodie to brighten your teacher’s day.

Wednesday – “Wear Your Thanks”

Dress your child in their teacher’s favorite color or a fun outfit that shows appreciation.

Thursday – “Helping Hands Day”

Encourage your child to lend an extra hand—cleaning up toys, listening well, or being extra kind.

Friday – “Celebrate & Shine!”

Create a class thank-you poster, short video message, or group card to wrap up the week with joy.

Let’s fill this week with smiles, gratitude, and heartfelt moments as we celebrate the amazing teachers who make a difference every single day!





Children's Book Week

May 4th – 10th: Children's Book Week — Sparking a Love of Reading!

Children's Book Week is the perfect time to bring stories to life and nurture a lifelong love of reading in our youngest learners. Through imagination, play, and shared reading experiences, children can explore new worlds, build language skills, and discover the joy of books!

Fun & Creative Classroom Ideas for the Week:

Monday – “Storybook Dress-Up Day”

Invite children to come dressed as their favorite book character. Keep it simple—hats, colors, or props work great!

Tuesday – “Reading Picnic”

Spread out blankets in the classroom or outside and enjoy books together picnic-style with stuffed animals as reading buddies.

Wednesday – “Author & Illustrator Spotlight”

Introduce a favorite children's author or illustrator and read a few of their books. Let children create their own mini “books” inspired by the style.

Thursday – “Puppet Storytelling”

Use puppets or stuffed animals to retell a favorite story. Encourage children to act out parts and use their voices.

Friday – “Favorite Book Share”

Children bring a favorite book (or choose one from the classroom) to share. Teachers can help them talk about what they love about it.

Special Highlight: Guest Author Visit

Invite a local children's author (in person or virtual) to read a story and talk briefly about how books are made. This gives children a memorable, real-life connection to storytelling and can spark their own creativity!

All Week Long Ideas:

- Create a cozy reading corner with pillows, soft lighting, and a rotating selection of books
- Start a “Book of the Day” tradition with a special reveal each morning
- Invite guest readers (family members, staff, or community helpers)
- Encourage children to dictate their own stories and illustrate them

Let's make this week magical, meaningful, and full of stories that inspire a love of reading for years to come!



Growing Healthy Together: Family Wellness Month for Early Childhood Families

Family Wellness Month is a special time to focus on building healthy habits, strengthening connections, and creating joyful moments together. For families with young children, even the simplest activities—playing, sharing meals, and showing kindness—can support lifelong physical, emotional, and social well-being. By making wellness fun and part of everyday routines, families can grow stronger, happier, and more connected together.

Turn Wellness into Play

Young kids learn best through play, so build wellness into fun activities:

- **“Move Like Animals” Game:** Hop like a frog, stretch like a cat, stomp like an elephant—great for motor skills and laughter.
- **Obstacle Course Day:** Use pillows, boxes, and toys to create a safe indoor or outdoor course.

Make Food Interactive

Instead of just sharing snacks, make it an experience:

- **Rainbow Plate Challenge:** See how many colors kids can eat in one meal.
- **Build-Your-Own Snack Bar:** Yogurt + fruit + granola, or mini sandwiches they assemble themselves.

Mindfulness (Kid-Style)

Keep it short and playful:

- **Bubble Breathing:** Pretend to blow big bubbles—inhale, then slowly exhale.
- **Feelings Check-In Chart:** Use emojis or colors so kids can point to how they feel.

Family Connection Moments

- **“High-Low” Game at Dinner:** Everyone shares the best and hardest part of their day.
- **Family Talent Show Night:** Singing, dancing, jokes—builds confidence and connection.

Get Outside Together

- **Nature Treasure Hunt:** Find leaves, rocks, or colors in nature.
- **Sunset Walk Ritual:** A calm way to wind down and talk.

Creative Expression

- **“My Happy Place” Art Project:** Kids draw what makes them feel safe and happy.
- **Music & Movement Party:** Play songs and let kids lead the dance.

Kindness with a Twist

- **Kindness Jar:** Add a pom-pom every time someone does something kind.
- **Community Helpers Week:** Draw pictures or write thank-you notes for helpers (mail carriers, teachers, etc.).

Gentle Routine Building

- **Bedtime Wind-Down Basket:** Books, stuffed animals, calming music.
- **Gratitude Moments Before Sleep:** Name one thing they’re thankful for.



FAMILY
WELLNESS
MONTH
MAY



Dear Early Childhood Professionals,

The Office of Early Childhood's Approved Specialized Training Program, also known as Boot Camp, will begin **Part I of this two-part training on April 13 – May 8, 2026.**

By completing both parts of the Approved Specialized Training Program (Boot Camp), teachers and assistant teachers, whether in general or special education, who lack a focus on early childhood education, will earn the equivalent of 12 hours of approved early childhood coursework, qualifying them to teach in Pre-K classrooms*.

Part I consists of a four-week self-paced online course. Participants will be required to use the Learning Management System (LMS) platform to complete all assignments and assessments via a desktop or laptop computer. Participants who successfully complete the Early Childhood Online Pre-K Boot Camp will be eligible to earn 2.6 CEUs, 20 SEMIs, 2 OSLs, and 26 contact hours.

Part II consists of an online course that begins in fall 2026 and concludes in spring 2027. To complete Part II of the training program, participants must finish all online modules, pass all assessments, and submit assignments through the Learning Management System (LMS) and Canvas Early Edu. Successful completion of Part II will result in a certificate of completion.

Certified teachers who complete both Part I and Part II may be eligible for an added Pre-K endorsement*.

Registration for Boot Camp Part One will open March 23, 2026 via the GoSignMeUp website: [Browse Courses](#)

*Certified teachers seeking a license endorsement in prekindergarten must meet pre-existing license endorsement criteria. **This program does NOT allow participants an opportunity to earn an educator's license.**

For more information, please email earlychildhoodtrainings@mdek12.org.



Greetings Early Childhood Friends,

We are excited to release details of upcoming professional learning opportunities in an area near you! MDE, through the Office of Early Childhood, is offering multiple opportunities to attend a full day training that will consist of **Set Up for Success: Pre-K Smart Start** and **Introduction to CLASS**. These trainings will take place over the summer break and at the start of the 2026-2027 school year.

All trainings are available to early learning public, private, childcare, and Head Start administrators, principals, district leaders, teachers, and assistant teachers of pre-kindergarten classrooms. A description of each offered session is detailed below:

Set Up for Success: Pre-K Smart Start

Participants of this half-day training will receive valuable information about setting up their pre-K classroom for success including classroom arrangement, organizing materials and resources for learning centers, effective classroom management, and establishing a safe environment that is free from clutter and optimizes student learning.

Introduction to CLASS

This half-day training will consist of an overview of the CLASS assessment tool, learning about the dimensions of CLASS, and best practices for favorable assessment outcomes. Participants will understand what the CLASS tool measures, study the link between effective teacher-child interactions, learning gains, and be able to identify effective teacher-child interactions.

Pre-K Smart Start and Introduction to CLASS trainings will be offered at the following location/date/time:

July 9 from 8:30am – 4:00pm

Eagle Ridge Conference Center
1500 Raymond Lake Rd
Raymond, MS 39154

July 16 from 8:30am – 4:00pm

McComb School District
Kennedy Early Childhood Center
207 S Myrtle Street
McComb, MS 39648

July 16 from 8:30am – 4:00pm

South Tippah School District
Oscar Shannon Building
410 Greenlee Street
Ripley, MS 38663

July 21 from 8:30am – 4:00pm

Moss Point School District
Family Education Center
3524 Prentiss Avenue
Moss Point, MS 39563

July 28 from 8:30am – 4:00pm

Louisville Municipal School District
Fair Elementary School
77 N. Columbus Avenue
Louisville, MS 39339

Space is limited at each location and participants must register via the Go Sign Me Up website. The registration link can be accessed here: [Browse Courses \(mdek12.org\)](https://mdek12.org). The trainings will be conducted in several locations, so it is important to be certain of the intended date and location when completing registration. Registration is granted on a first come, first serve basis.

Participants who successfully complete a full day of training are eligible to receive (.6) CEUs for a small fee. (6) Contact Hours, (0) OSLs and (5) SEMIs are available at no cost. Contact earlychildhoodtrainings@mdek12.org if there are any questions regarding registration.

Thank You,

Jill Dent, Ph.D., Executive Director
Office of Early Childhood Education
601-359-2932 | mdek12.org

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



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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
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- Batesville, MS
- Senatobia, MS
- Hernando, MS
- Grenada, MS
- Winona, MS

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

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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

