

August 11, 2003

Dr. Jane Siders, Director  
The Institute for Disability Studies  
Box 5163  
The University of Southern Mississippi  
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-5163

Dear Dr. Siders:

I am pleased to offer this letter in support of the Institute for Disability Studies' (IDS) proposal entitled **IN FACT (Inclusion: Fathers and Children Together)** to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families for a planning and implementation grant for an innovation and improvement project to addresses the President's Initiatives within Head Start programs.

IN FACT's focus on strengthening families/fatherhood, early literacy development, improving services to rural areas, and positive youth development is certainly a need in our state. As you know, a large percentage of children in Mississippi live in single parent homes with their mothers and it is vital to involve their fathers in their education and well-being. This is especially true of children with special needs. IN FACT builds upon a partnership between IDS and Head Start. IDS' expertise in developmental disabilities will benefit Head Start staff in developing new strategies for working with children with special needs and their fathers.

I am pleased to offer support for this project. Thank you for IDS' dedication and investment in the future of our state – our children and their families.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:klr