

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Governor Musgrove Meets with Early Childhood Task Force**

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove met this morning with members of the Early Childhood Task Force convened to conduct an 18-month study on childcare in Mississippi. The task force will identify what is needed to improve childcare in the state, what such improvements would cost, and what internal and external resources exist to help pay for those improvements.

“Early childhood care and education are critical to the future learning ability of our children,” Musgrove said. “Research shows we all learn from the day we are born, and our investment in education must include our youngest children.”

The task force study is being led by Dr. Sharon Lynn Kagan and Susan Ochshorn of Columbia University, and Dr. Richard Brandon and Dr. Erin Maher of the University of Washington. Funding for the study is being provided through a partnership between the Mississippi Department of Human Services and the Barksdale Reading Institute.

“We are privileged to have these national experts here to help lead our work,” said Musgrove. “This results of this assessment will play an integral role in the development of legislation and policy in the near future.”

Members of the task force include childcare providers, parents, and childcare advocates, as well as representatives of Head Start, state agencies, academia, the private sector and the Mississippi Legislature.

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