



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Agency Collaboration

Agency collaboration involves agencies within the community working together with a shared goal—to promote all the services available to families to build a strong early childhood presence within the community. Agency collaboration will be required in order to fulfill the certification criteria.

Bounce Back Cards

Used along with other information in newborn packets sent to new parents in local hospitals, bounce back cards are a good way to introduce the family resource center and its services to new parents.

Child Development Associate (CDA)

The Child Development Associate (CDA) is a national certification earned by early care providers considered equivalent to a two-year Associate degree. The CDA may be earned in one year while working in an early childhood environment.

Certification Manager

This individual serves as the primary contact to facilitate and advance the certification process. This individual is the “point person” within the community and between the Coalition and the EXCEL BY 5 state office and is appointed or designated by the Coalition.

Coalition Steering Committee

The Coalition Steering Committee is the governing body of the Coalition, consists of two focus area liaisons from each focus area and a chair elected by the Coalition. Steering Committee members serve a one-year term. Additional officers, such as a Vice-Chair and Secretary may be elected by the Coalition.

Coalition Charter and By Laws

Each Community Coalition is required to adopt a charter and by laws. These instruments are critical to the maintenance and sustainability of the EXCEL BY 5 community status.

Coalition Focus Area Liaisons

Liaisons work under the auspices of the Coalition, focusing on gathering information, identifying resources, and conducting outreach to engage participants in the focus areas of Community Involvement, Family and Parent Support, Early Care and Education, and Health. Two liaisons from each group serve on the Coalition Steering Committee.

Community Action Plan

A plan of action for the fulfillment of the certification requirements outlining the events/activities, how they will be marketed, the coalition members responsible and when the activities will take place.

Community Coalition

A group of community organizations, childcare providers, school and health providers, parents, businesses and local officials working together to achieve the EXCEL BY 5 designation. The necessary composition and number of members is detailed based on the community size and resources. Members of the coalition typically serve 3 years.



Community Resources Assessment

A “snapshot” of community resources and events related to each community’s families of children ages birth to five. The assessment is critical to learning where services may be missing so that work may begin to fill those gaps.

Community-wide Events

These events can be health fairs, reading extravaganzas, family night outs, or any family focused event where all community families are invited and the events are focused on children ages birth – 5.

Developmental Screenings

Developmental screenings involve an assessment of young children’s physical, mental, social/emotional, and behavioral health to identify children who may need early intervention services.

Early Care and Education Center

An early care and education center is a business or non-profit that provides care and/or education to more than five children who are not biologically related. Early care and education centers are licensed by the Mississippi Department of Health.

Early Childhood Update Meeting-Communitywide

A yearly meeting in the community where members of the EXCEL BY 5 coalition will present findings of the community needs assessment to the public and will seek feedback regarding local children’s issues. These meetings serve as vehicles to involve the community at large and to maintain a current status of health and safety issues of children birth – 5 living in the community.

Early Intervention Services

Early Intervention Services are a range of therapeutic services provided to young children and their families to prevent or remediate developmental delays and/or other disabling conditions (such as autism, mental retardation, and speech/language delays) to lessen their impact on children’s future development. In Mississippi, early intervention services are coordinated by First Steps (MS Department of Health) for children ages birth to three years and Child Find (local school districts) for children ages three to five years.

Educational Partners Group

This group of community representatives from childcare, Head Start, and kindergarten teachers meets quarterly to collaborate and become familiar with the state early learning guidelines as classroom curriculum.

EXCEL BY 5 Candidate Community

Denotes a community that is pursuing certification based upon the established criteria, which is based upon community size, resources and necessary organizational and participation steps.

EXCEL BY 5 Certification Requirements

Established research-based criteria of best practices when implemented in a community provide the environment and optimal early childhood experiences to reach kindergarten ready to succeed.



EXCEL BY 5 Certified Community

Based upon established criteria, the community has earned the status of certified early childhood community by working together to provide access to optimal early childhood development experiences for the community's children. Recognition and designation, which is valid for three years, is achieved after the review and authentication process.

EXCEL BY 5 Staff

With funding from Chevron Corporation, Mississippi State University manages the initiative through the state EXCEL BY 5 office located in Madison, MS, which is staffed with a director and regional sites coordinators.

Family Care Provider

A family care provider is a person who provides care and/or education for young children in their home. Most family care providers are unlicensed. However, if the family care provider cares for five children who are not related within three degrees, they must seek licensure from the Mississippi Department of Health.

Family Resource Center

A centralized place where parents, childcare providers, teachers and the public can check out or make learning materials for children and receive trainings on early childhood topics. The center is also a resource for information to services available to families in the community.

Lead Agency

This community agency requests initial information about EXCEL BY 5 certification and takes the initiative to form the Steering Committee.

Parent Trainings

EXCEL BY 5 communities are required to offer parent trainings/materials in the community. The family resource center will be the source of information about where these trainings will be held.

Professional Development Hours

Mississippi requires that all licensed childcare center staff earn 15 professional development hours per year if the center in which they work maintains its license. EXCEL BY 5 communities require their full time instructional staff additional hours. These trainings are offered year round by several local and state agencies and most are free of charge.

Steering Committee

This committee is the organizing structure by which the certification process begins. This committee forms the community Coalition.

Sites Meetings

Collaboration meetings are held by the state EXCEL BY 5 office to bring all candidate and certified communities together to share ideas and to receive current information and updates from state staff.



Toy Lending Library

A community with a population of over 5,000 is required to have a toy lending library in conjunction with a parent resource center. This library must have age appropriate materials/toys that can be checked out and used by families in the community.