

# HISTORY OF ICS

ICS was established in 1966 for the primary purpose of providing comprehensive child development services to children and families in northwest Mississippi.

In 1967, ICS opened 21 Head Start centers in Marshall and Lafayette counties and served 860 children. The centers were located in local churches, homes, and old school buildings. Upon incorporation in 1969, ICS became a legal entity, eligible to apply for, receive, and disburse federal, state, and local funds.

In 1971, ICS consolidated and reduced the number of centers to seven while still serving 860 children. In the fall of 1982 ICS was awarded a grant to serve five additional counties: Grenada, Panola, Quitman, Tallahatchie, and Tunica. In 1988 ICS was awarded a grant to serve DeSoto and Tate counties. In June of 1999 ICS was awarded a grant to serve Clay, Lowndes, Noxubee, and Oktibbeha counties. ICS became the grantee for Benton County in 2013. In 2021, ICS was awarded 96 slots for the Early Head Start Benton County program.



## Making Small Miracles a Great Success Since 1966

### Serving 14 Counties in North Mississippi

**Benton, Clay, Desoto, Grenada, Lafayette, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Panola, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, and Tunica**

## ICS AT THE PRESENT

The Institute of Community Services (ICS) is a private, nonprofit corporation headquartered in Holly Springs, Mississippi. While striving for excellence, we provide quality comprehensive child development and Head Start services to preschool children and their families in Benton, Clay, DeSoto, Grenada, Lafayette, Lowndes, Marshall, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Panola, Quitman, Tallahatchie, Tate, and Tunica counties.

ICS operates 21 centers in 14 counties, serves over 3,000 children and families, and has more than 800 employees. We use the team approach to management and have teams at every center. At the central office level, we have four teams: family and community partnership, early childhood development and education services, field services, and program management and design.

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ICS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, national origin, or disability.



Institute of Community Services, Inc.

# OUR SERVICES

ICS strives to provide in-depth services to each enrolled child through comprehensive daily planning based on individualized goals in the following specialized areas:

## EARLY HEAD START:

Children and families with the greatest need are served in Early Head Start. This program serves infants and toddlers aged six weeks to 36 months and pregnant women from their first trimester through delivery. Comprehensive child development services in a classroom setting are provided to the children. Support services are provided to the pregnant women to ensure a health pregnancy and delivery.

After delivery, the newborn is transitioned into the program as soon as a slot is available. Support services are provided to all families to assist them with achieving their own self-improvement goals.

## EDUCATION SERVICES:

The Child Development service area provides a comprehensive educational program for 3 and 4-year-old children. Activities are provided that allow each child to develop intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally, and are carried out in a culturally sensitive environment. Emphasis is placed on:

- Language development and literacy skills in listening and communication, phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge, print and book knowledge, and written expression.
- Mathematical skills
- Creative arts skills
- Scientific skills
- Social/Emotional Development
- Approaches to learning
- Physical health and development

Classrooms and playgrounds are designed to facilitate learning. Parents and communities are partners in helping children to develop to their full potential.

All Head Start classroom teachers have a bachelor's or master's degree in early childhood education/child development or related field. All classrooms are staffed with a teacher and an assistant. There are 17-20 students in each classroom.

## FAMILY SERVICES:

Recruitment, enrollment and family social services are major tasks. Families' strengths are assessed, family and individual goals set, and areas for specific training are identified. Family-centered services are offered based upon parental input. Community resource information and guidance are provided. Our overall goal is to strengthen families and move them toward self-sufficiency.

## HEALTH SERVICES:

The importance of routine and regular health care is stressed. Health education for children and parents is a major focus. Hand washing and tooth brushing are emphasized. Referrals are given and links are made to direct health care providers so children can receive routine, as well as comprehensive medical and dental services from licensed health professionals. Childcare needs are met through corrective measures deemed necessary. Families are connected to medical and dental homes to ensure continuity of quality health care. Ideally, parents participate in all health appointments.

## DISABILITIES:

Infants and toddlers with special needs or disabilities receive services in an inclusive environment in our center and partner sites through Early Intervention: First Steps. These services are individualized based on a child's needs. The child's needed services are included in the individualized Family Services Plan (IFSP). These services may include special class instructions, occupational therapy, and physical therapy.

Preschool children with special needs or disabilities receive special education or related services in an inclusive setting in our centers and partner sites through the local education agencies (public schools) and contracted private resources. These services are included in the Individual Education Plan (IEP). These services include audiology, speech and language therapy, medical services, psychological services, etc. Children with severe health impairments have their needs addressed in an Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP). All services provided, and the development of the IFSP/IEP/IHCP, include the child's parent or guardian.

## MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES:

Licensed clinical psychologists and/or mental health consultants are available to our children, families, and staff on a contractual basis. They observe classrooms, at least monthly, to ensure that our children are healthy, both socially and emotionally. Activities to promote mental health are carried out in all classrooms throughout the day.

Positive behavioral support plans are developed for children who need intervention, and referrals may be made to community resources with parental permission. Parent training is provided on various topics to aid parents in behavior management and mental health services as addressed through local community mental health agencies.

## TRAINING SERVICES:

The ICS Training and Technical Assistance Program provides an array of training opportunities for staff to enhance their knowledge and skills needed to adequately carry out their daily tasks in the Head Start centers. The overall goals are to:

- Improve the academic and work skills of ICS employees.
- Increase service delivery and productivity through a highly trained workforce.
- Encourage staff to take personal responsibility for self and professional growth.
- Help staff obtain the necessary academic training to meet required qualifications of Head Start staff.

In our continuing thrust to achieve excellence in Head Start, our mission is to exceed the requirements of the performance standards and issuance of ACF. To do this ICS must have a well-trained workforce. Our training and technical assistance program is designed to meet the training needs of staff, members of the policy council, board of directors, parents, volunteers and others involved in the operation of the ICS Head Start Program.

## NUTRITION SERVICES:

Children enrolled in Head Start are provided with free breakfast, lunch, and snack meals at no cost to parents. All meals are planned based on USDA requirements. Nutrition counseling services are also available to parents.

## PARENT ENGAGEMENT:

The involvement of parents, in our endeavors, is critical to the child's growth and development. ICS offers a parent learning curriculum and a fatherhood program. Training is provided to parents through each program service area and parents are encouraged to volunteer at their children's center. Parents may serve as members of the Policy Council and Board of Directors, having a voice in all policy decisions.

## LITERACY:

In collaboration with literacy councils, Financial Literacy, Adult Basic Education (ABC) and GED, classes are taught at locations throughout the areas served by ICS to help improve the literacy of parents and ICS staff.

## TRANSITION:

We enter partnerships and work closely with childcare providers and school districts on strategies to support children and families as they make the transition from Early Head Start to Head Start, from Head Start to kindergarten, and on through to the third grade.

## TRANSPORTATION:

Transportation to and from the ICS Head Start centers is made available to every child enrolled. Each child is picked up from home and returned home in the safest possible manner. Every bus is driven by a commercially licensed driver.

**Children Learn To Assume Responsibility • Children Learn To Solve Problems • Children Learn To Take Turns • Children Learn To Share • Children Learn By Doing**