

Introduction



The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) has partnered with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the citizens of Mississippi to improve the well-being of the children and their families in Mississippi. We are doing this by focusing on healthy marriage/relationships and fatherhood programs. Marriage has long been the foundation of society but more often families today are being plagued with divorce and parents are burdened with debt and inadequacies. Together we can bring about positive growth in Mississippi and prepare a way for children and families to sustain healthy living/relationships with one another.

Foundation for Families Unit

MDHS established the Foundation for Families Unit within the Division of Economic Assistance to connect families to resources, equip families with the skills needed to solve problems, make healthy choices and access services, advocate healthy marriages and relationships, increase father's involvement in the lives of their children and reduce out of wedlock pregnancies. The Foundation for Families Unit works with children and families to provide the skills and knowledge needed to sustain a healthy life and family. The Unit supports thirty (30) Family First Resource Centers in the state allowing them to offer educational classes, free of charge, to children and families. The classes include:

- Abstinence-Until-Marriage and Youth Development Education
- Responsible Fatherhood Training
- Healthy Marriage Education
- Parenting Skills Training



Abstinence-Until-Marriage and Youth Development

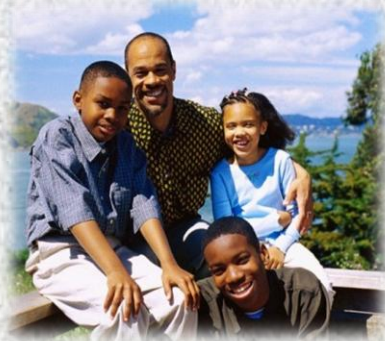
The goal of the abstinence and youth development until marriage, perform better academically, a healthy self-image, have a greater for parental values and build a these things can be done through the educational classes and through mentoring programs. By working drug use, risky sex and dangerous through social media as normal functions of involvement.



component is to help youth abstain from sexual activity achieve goals they've set for themselves, create resistance to peer pressure, a deeper respect commitment to their communities. All of Family First Resource Center's monthly presentations, after-school, clubs, and together, we can deglamorize violence, behaviors often portrayed to our youth society. Improvement requires

Responsible Fatherhood

Fathers are essential for healthy growth and character development in children. They are advisors, role models, confidants, protectors, heroes, and friends. Fathers teach their children the difference between right and wrong and explain how the decisions they make today can affect the rest of their lives. Fathers teach core values and prepare their children for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, all the while offering unyielding love and support.



Responsible fatherhood classes are offered monthly by the Family First Resource Centers to fathers and expectant fathers, ages 15 and older, who want to be educated, encouraged, inspired and assisted in becoming stronger leaders in their children's lives. Responsible fatherhood classes can bridge gaps and forge newer, better and stronger relationships within the family unit.

Healthy Marriage

Healthy Marriage defines marriage as a loving, mutually supportive and monogamous relationship between a husband and a wife committed to a lifetime together. Too often marriages are short lived and families suffer the loss of one or more parent through divorce or separation. Healthy marriage classes provided monthly by the Family First Resource Centers offer knowledge and understanding to engaged couples, newlyweds, married couples in distress, couples making the transition to becoming parents, co-habiting couples and couples who are caretakers of relatives. The program advocates strong, healthy, lifelong marriages; promotes the importance of both mothers and fathers in the lives of their children; and works to prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies.



Parenting

Parents are the leading influencers in their children's lives, from the sports they play to the foods they eat to the decisions they make. Even when you think children aren't listening, they are; what you say and do matters more than any other influence in their lives.

The Family First Resource Centers provide monthly parenting classes, and offer seminars, workshops, and other structured activities that cover topics such as: appropriate discipline, child development, health, safety, nutrition, and newborn parent education. Services also include: professionally led life skills training and offers sources of ongoing peer support and problem solving to all parents.



Summary

The Foundation for Families Unit is committed to Mississippi and all Mississippians. Working together we can make a positive difference in our children's and our family's lives. Improvement requires involvement. There are thirty (30) Family First Resource Centers in Mississippi open to anyone who is interested in making a positive change from abstinence-development, to responsible parenting, to until-marriage and youth fatherhood, to healthy marriage, volunteering in Mississippi. We're in this together. Let's make Mississippi strong.

