

Butler Snow Foundation Awards Grant to The University of Southern Mississippi Children's Center for Communication and Development

April 23, 2012

The Butler, Snow, O'Mara, Stevens & Cannada Foundation has awarded a \$25,750 grant to The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) Children's Center for Communication and Development for its project focusing on Early Intervention, Literacy and School Readiness for Young Children with Significant Disabilities. The Butler Snow Foundation, established in 1997 by a gift from a client of the law firm, selects worthy causes or social services organizations in the area and uses the Foundation's funds to help make a difference.

"The USM Children's Center for Communication and Development creates programs that significantly enrich the lives of its participants and the community it serves and we are happy to provide this support," said Foundation Chair and Butler Snow Attorney Thomas E. Williams. "We applaud the Center for its contributions to early intervention which is critical to creating a positive future for children with developmental challenges."

The Children's Center for Communication and Development provides an interdisciplinary team approach to the assessment and treatment of communicatively and developmentally delayed children ages birth through five years. Services are either home-based or center-based, depending on a child's needs. Services are also geared to train and support families, university students and professionals.

"It is gratifying to have Butler Snow recognize the daily challenges faced by our families," said Children's Center Director, Cindy Bivins. "This generous gift will help us make life-changing differences for the children and families we serve, directly and indirectly, throughout Mississippi."

The funds provided by Butler Snow will be used in part to purchase a variety of high-tech therapy and classroom devices to support language development, fine and gross motor skills, and to support behavioral and social development. In addition to technology devices, funds will be used to purchase valuable testing and assessment tools. Children are assessed and reassessed during the year to determine their most current needs and to determine if a child's comprehensive treatment and educational plan should be modified. New technologies and assessment tools give the Children's Center more opportunities to focus on children's abilities, to meet their needs, and to have them ready to transition into their communities before they turn six.

The Children's Center follows the calendar schedule of local public schools. Services are coordinated with each child's local school district and include speech-language pathology, special education, audiology, physical therapy, occupational therapy, psychology, augmentative/alternate communication, at-risk follow-up, parent education and a resource loan library.

About The USM Children's Center for Communication and Development



Since 1973, The Children's Center for Communication and Development, a clinical division of Speech and Hearing Sciences at The University of Southern Mississippi, has provided services throughout Mississippi for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers with communication and developmental disabilities.

Each year more than 80 children receive early intervention at The Children's Center through small-group, center-based services and individual home and community based services. In addition, hundreds of other children and families benefit through consultation, outreach, and teacher training.

The Children's Center is funded by MS Department of Education, MS Department of Health, United Way, and United Givers and other private donors.