

## South Mobile County Families to Benefit from Grant

**Mobile, Alabama, January 10, 2012** – The Gulf Regional Childcare Management Agency, Early Childhood Directions received a \$239,640 grant from The Community Foundation of South Alabama to provide families affected by the Deepwater Horizon oil spill with help in coping with the toxic effects of the stress resulting from the spill.

“As Executive Director of south Alabama’s child care resource and referral agency and the Mobile Early Head Start program, I see every day how families of young children are struggling to push past adversity to ensure success for their children,” said executive director Wendy McEarchern of GRCMA Early Childhood Directions. “With this Gulf Coast Initiatives grant, the Community Foundation of South Alabama is making an important community investment in vulnerable children and families, and we are proud to partner with them to provide life-altering programs .”

The goal of GRCMA’s grant is to teach parents and care givers ways to reduce the impact of stress and the resulting health or behavioral issues so that the children can enjoy a normal healthy development. “Parenting young children, especially during challenging conditions can be especially stressful,” said Violetta Simpson, project director for Mobile Bright Beginnings Gulf Coast Initiative. “The activities funded with the generous support from the Community Foundation of South Alabama will go a long way towards providing parents with essential resources to help them during this critical period of their child’s growth and development. With Bright Beginnings parenting resources, Early Head services, and home visits with an early childhood teacher, we will be able to engage parents in sharing positive early life experiences so their children will enter school eager and ready to learn.”

The grant was made possible by a contribution received from the Fund for Gulf Communities, a program of Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors. The Fund for Gulf Communities was created through an anonymous donation to Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors to enhance the resiliency of diverse communities along the Gulf Coast. The Fund will achieve this goal by working with nonprofit organizations, such as The Community Foundation of South Alabama, that have strong ties to community-based organizations providing direct services to people in need.

**Specifics:** Parenting education through **Bright Beginnings** materials, utilization of **Family Home Visitor Program** to provide weekly home to deliver more intensive support for parents; **Parenting Counts**

classes on the effect of stress on a child's development are part of the educational mix GRCMA ECD has in store to aid South Mobile County families recovering from the 2010 oil spill.

In addition, **Early Head Start** - a center-based early learning program for children 0-3 years - operating in partnership with the Lighthouse Academy Child Development Center in Grand Bay will also participate. Comprehensive services include EHS program staff (family/health service coordinators) to help families access the resources they need to provide a stable home and healthy development for their children, reducing stress on the families and the resulting health or behavioral issues; and ensure that children participating in Early Head Start are ready for successful transition into school.

For more on the grants for Gulf oil spill recovery read the Press Register story  
[http://blog.al.com/live/2012/01/more\\_than\\_15\\_million\\_awarded\\_i.html](http://blog.al.com/live/2012/01/more_than_15_million_awarded_i.html)