A Strong Start: Positioning Young Black Boys for Educational Success

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Enrollment of children of color in rural schools has increased by 31 percent between 2004—2005 and 2008—2009 school year.

More than 1/3 of rural students in 12 states are children of color.

Rural students who were struggling readers at the beginning of kindergarten have lower average reading achievement in third grade than both urban and suburban students of the same socioeconomic status.
Rural poverty rates are as high as 55.87 percent among young Black children (under 6 years of age)

Nearly one in 2 rural-single-mother-head-of-household-families are poor with the highest rate in the rural south followed by the rural midwest

Delta Early Learning Program

- Funded by the Delta Health Alliance and Kellogg Foundation
- Administers 3 major programs: Delta Promise School, Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW) and Sisterhood
Changing the Picture Begins at the Beginning

- Program Site: Sunflower County, MS
- 72.9% Black residents
- $24,880 median income
- Under age 5 years 2,305/1,165 male
- Births in 2009 — 353 Black/59-White
- Births to unmarried girls/women-326 (311 Black and 15 White)

Maternal Infant Health Outreach Worker (MIHOW) Program

Utilizes trained paraprofessionals in the community to discuss child development and how parents can support their infants to three year olds meet milestones “on time”

Connects new moms with much needed resources

Source: http://www.mihow.org/approach.html
Special needs mothers with limited cognitive ability

New mothers who were victims of incest

Mothers who are in domestic violence situations

Young mothers who have no parent who emotionally supports them and encourages them to remain in school
Measures of Success

- Recruitment of mothers
- Referrals from local physicians
- Brigance Results on Infants
- Parent feedback
- Fourth year of operation-program growth