



Smart Start Update --- April 2014

www.SmartStartAlabama.org

Celebrate *Week of the Young Child*

April 6-12, 2014

Please note: Joining Hands Day at the State House has been canceled

The Alabama Partnership for Children has **canceled** the 10th annual *Joining Hands for Week of the Young Child* event that was scheduled for April 9th at the State House. This year's legislative session ended earlier than expected on April 3rd and legislators will have left the State House and returned to their home districts by the event date of April 9th. In light of this new information, we have decided to encourage advocates of young children to engage their lawmakers in their local communities as they return home from the legislative session.

Anyone interested in celebrating *Week of the Young Child* by advocating for young children in their local communities can visit <http://www.legislature.state.al.us/> to determine local contact information for your legislators. State lawmakers are always interested in hearing from constituents on the issues that are important to them. Don't be afraid to invite them to your facility and be sure to engage them in any *Week of the Young Child* activities you may have planned.

The *Week of the Young Child* is an annual celebration sponsored by the [National Association for the Education of Young Children](http://www.naeyc.org) (NAEYC), the world's largest early childhood education association, with nearly 80,000 members and a network of over 300 local, state, and regional affiliates. The purpose of the *Week of the Young Child* is to focus public attention on the needs of young children and their families and to recognize the early childhood programs and services that meet those needs. NAEYC first established the *Week of the Young Child* in 1971, recognizing that the early childhood years (birth through age 8) lay the foundation for children's success in school and later in life. The *Week of the Young Child* is a time to plan how we - as citizens of a community, of a state, and of a nation - will better meet the needs of all young children and their families.

Here are some easy ways to celebrate the *Week of the Young Child*:

- Visit your local lawmaker and deliver child hand print artwork to remind them of the needs of young children.
- Host a day at the mall, with activities for children and information for parents from family service organizations.

Zero to Five Matters

~A newsletter focused on our most valuable investment~

Follow us:



Don't Forget to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). The APC launched a social media campaign in November that targets parents, early childhood professionals, business leaders and our partners in the state. 'A Tweet a Day for Learning and Play' provides early education tips and research, including information on our initiatives and partners. Check it out today!

April FOCUS

Check out this month's Smart Start FOCUS [Packet](#) on child abuse prevention and celebration of the Week of the Young Child!

Mark Your Calendars:

Canceled: [Joining Hands Day at the State House for Week of the Young Child](#)

April 6, 2014

- Have a children's parade through town.
- Have a proclamation signed by a city government official.
- Post art done by children in local restaurants and businesses.
- Decorate community store windows to promote the celebration.
- Have an art project set up at a child care center for parents and children to do together.
- Support programs that provide quality early childhood education by volunteering at a local school, community center, Head Start or child care program.
- Have local newspapers cover activities during the week.
- Have an award where parents can nominate someone they think is an exceptional friend of young children.
- Educate yourself and others about the importance of quality early childhood education in preparing young children for school.

For more information and ideas for the *Week of the Young Child* visit our [website](#) or NAEYC's [webpage](#).

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month

Sallye R. Longshore
Executive Director
Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

As the new Director of the [Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention](#), I am honored to be writing this article for the Alabama Partnership for Children. April is set aside nationally as "Child Abuse Prevention Month" and our agency staff would like all of our partners across the state to share in our events and make the citizens of Alabama aware of our collective efforts in the prevention of child maltreatment.



Our state agency, also known as "The Children's Trust Fund", was created 31 years ago by an act of the legislature. During the past 31 years we have granted funds to community-based organizations, schools, faith-based entities, and state organizations dedicated to strengthening families, educating parents and caregivers, and engaging in public awareness activities to assist us in fulfilling our sole

mission of preventing child abuse and neglect.

Why prevention? Alabama spent an estimated \$1 billion (\$1,131,882,140) in 2012 to pay for the costs of child maltreatment, according to recent research conducted by Prevent Child Abuse America. The 9,573 victims of child maltreatment in 2012 will cost our state's economy over \$2 billion (\$2,010,444,876) over their lifetime, according to cost estimates developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and we keep adding more victims each year! Research has proved the lasting effects of adverse childhood experiences and links such adverse events to depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, poor physical health, attention difficulties, and delinquency.

April 9, 2014
 Montgomery, AL

[Week of the Young Child](#)
 April 6-12, 2014

[National Smart Start Conference](#)
 May 5-8, 2014
 Greensboro, NC

Provider Appreciation Day
 May 9, 2014

[NAEYC 2014 National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development](#)
 June 8-11, 2014
 Minneapolis, MN

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We would like to thank:

Special thanks to **Cathy Miller & the United Way of Madison County** for hosting a Books, Balls and Blocks event on February 26, 2014.



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One only has to pick up a newspaper or watch the news on television to know why prevention efforts are so important. Child abuse and neglect is a complex societal problem that requires a comprehensive response. It requires investing in programs and services that have shown to reduce the occurrences and negative effects of child abuse and neglect. As a professional in the field of child development/human development and family life for over 39 years, I realize the positive impact programs and services can have on ensuring better outcomes for our children. We know what causes child maltreatment and we know there are effective strategies that prevent it. The need is clearly evident and the work on-going. It is why prevention matters to us all!

Our Mission: To work in partnership with other public and private entities to maintain an effective state and local system of resources and support that enables parents, families, and others who care for young children to ensure that they are healthy, protected, nurtured, and offered every opportunity to succeed in life.

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