



Child Care: Keeps Alabama Working Video Series

Last summer, the Alabama Partnership for Children commissioned M. Keivan Deravi, Ph.D. and Professor of Economics at Auburn University at Montgomery, to determine the economic impact of the early care and education industry on the economy of the state of Alabama. Findings from the report and the implication for the state will be detailed in a series of informational videos. Below is the first video in the series, featuring Dr. Deravi speaking about the study and the findings. To read the full report and learn more [click here](#).



The Importance of Investment in Young Children

Robert D. "Bob" Powers
President, The Eufaula Agency, Inc.

My involvement in early childhood investment started, as with many, as a parent. I approached parenting from the experience of how I was reared. My father jokingly said, "The two reasons you have children are to carry on the family name (in a positive manner), and to take care of their parents in their later years." He made reference to examples in the Bible and to life on the farm. Both *required the development of quality characteristics and skills* for one to mature into a responsible, productive adult. What my father said still has truth today. We need our children to become responsible, productive adults. As productive, responsible citizens they will support us, directly and/or indirectly.

Zero to Five Matters

~A newsletter
focused on our
most valuable
investment~

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to follow us on [Facebook](#)
and [Twitter](#). The APC
launched a social media
campaign in November
2013 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!

February FOCUS
Check out this month's
Smart Start FOCUS [Packet](#)
on investment in early
childhood matters!

Mark Your Calendars:

[Child Care Aware of
America
2014 Symposium](#)
April 2-4, 2014
Washington DC

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

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



in our "old age". Indirectly they support us through their productive work in businesses and by paying taxes. We, or others, invest by buying stock, bonds, or the like in business and then use the investment returns for our retirement. By being taxpayers, some of their taxes go to fund Medicare and Social Security benefits which help support us in our "old age".

The importance of early childhood investment was further reinforced during my graduate school studies in the Booth School of Business (at the time, the Business School), University of Chicago. An institution renowned for its research, professors, and achievements in business, economics, and other fields, Chicago provided opportunities for research and collaboration. During one such collaboration, in 1978, two classmates and I chose to research starting an early childhood care franchise business. We actually visited daycare facilities and early childhood development centers in different parts of the country. We reviewed federal and state laws on early childhood care; we studied research on early childhood development; and identified best practices in care and education. Though the research and data on early childhood development and investment was limited then compared to the research and data available in recent years, it supported what we thought was intuitive. That is, high-quality early childhood investment is essential to develop a child to the child's full potential. We found that the timely, quality investment in human capital to be as, if not more, important than timely, wise investment of financial capital, particularly for the long-term. If you do not invest timely and with quality in the "product" you are developing, you will pay a higher long-term cost due to poor quality, re-calls, and/or failures. In human capital, children, failing to invest in high-quality early childhood investment means poorer performance in school, remedial training, drop-outs, and, all too often, prison. These, as research shows, lead to high social costs that we are now paying! The good news is we can avoid the extremely high social costs by investing in high-quality early childhood development.

A productive worker today, receiving competitive compensation, has a much higher level of performance to achieve than the worker just thirty years ago. One must have, and continually develop, one's education, skills, and productivity. With two-income families, single-parent families, professional/career parents, and higher performance requirements, early childhood investment is essential for our children, businesses, communities, states, and nation to be successful. Parents, grandparents, and leaders in business, education, and communities need to become better informed about proven, high-quality programs for all our children. The investment must be at all levels, -local, state and federal. It must be ongoing and continuously monitored for quality. One example of a proven, high-quality early childhood investment is Alabama's voluntary, high-quality, diverse delivery First Class Pre-K, ranked number one in the country and with a proven track record. Unfortunately it is currently only available to about 9% of Alabama's four-year-olds. We can and must do better and more.

Robert D. "Bob" Powers is president of The Eufaula Agency, Inc., Co-chair of the Business Council of Alabama's Education/Workforce Development Committee, Co-chair of the Alabama School Readiness Alliance Pre-K Task Force, and a director on numerous boards including Alabama Power Company, Economic Development Partnership of Alabama Foundation, and the Alabama Partnership for Children.

The weight is on your shoulders!

It is much easier and more cost-efficient to build a healthy, productive child from birth than it is to remediate a troubled child. Children may be in our hands today, but our future is in theirs tomorrow.

Know the facts when it comes to investing!



Happy Valentines Day
from the staff at the
Alabama Partnership for
Children

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We would like to thank:

The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham



Jeanne Jackson, President/CEO of The Women's Fund of Greater Birmingham presented a \$25,000 check to the APC during their 2014 grantee luncheon held on January 15. The funding will provide T.E.A.C.H. scholarships which support job training and access to higher education for a minimum of 10 single women working in Blount, Jefferson, Shelby, St. Clair and Walker Counties.

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Mission Ready Alabama:

Investing in early education *is* investing in our national security

The Alabama Partnership for Children is excited to support *Mission Ready Alabama* as a Smart Start initiative. This important work, based on the national *Mission: Readiness* movement, brings retired military leaders together to address the critical need to provide quality early learning experiences for all children in Alabama.

A press release by *Mission: Readiness* states that "**75 percent of young people ages 17 to 24 are unable to enlist in the military** because they fail to graduate high school, have a criminal record, or are physically unfit." Over the past 30 years, adult obesity rates have doubled, but more alarmingly, childhood obesity rates have tripled. The habits that enforce academic achievement and physical fitness are most effective when they start in young children. With high obesity rates and low levels of service eligibility, our nation's military is facing an enrollment crisis.

In Alabama, nearly 400,000 young adults are unqualified for military service. However, that may actually be a low estimate because, compared to the national average, Alabama has more young people who are overweight, (37% vs. 32%), and more young people without on-time high school degrees, (33% vs. 26%). Alabama ranks second in percentage of overweight 18-24 year olds and the state spends \$1,320,000,000 on obesity medical expenses. In Alabama, over 50 percent of young adults are overweight.

Alabama plays a critical role in military service for our country, as evidenced by data from the National Priorities Project which shows that Alabama ranks third in the country for rate of recruitment of 18 to 24 year olds. By joining *Mission Ready Alabama*, leaders around the state can actively serve our nation's best interest by advocating for high quality early learning for children.

Who can join *Mission Ready Alabama*?

- Active and retired military leaders

What do members of *Mission Ready Alabama* do?

- Come together to support policies to ensure that a high priority is placed on our children's most critical years of learning and development

How can I find out more about *Mission Ready Alabama*?

- Email Julie Odom at jodom@smartstartalabama.org or call her at (334) 271-0304

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.

Phone: 866-711-4025 | social@smartstartalabama.org

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