



Smart Start Update --- November 2013

www.SmartStartAlabama.org

The Alabama Partnership for Children Launches New Social Media Campaign

The Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) is excited to announce the launch of our social media campaign, to include Twitter and Facebook pages. The new campaign, entitled 'A Tweet a Day for Learning and Play', will target parents, early childhood professionals, business leaders and our partners in the state. APC will share early care and education tips and research, including information on our initiatives and partners. Each month, the content will highlight a specific focus area related to young children and will coincide with the APC's FOCUS (Focus On Children Under Six) [packet](#). For instance, in the month of November, APC Twitter and Facebook content will focus on early literacy. Monthly topics include school readiness, quality early care and education, play, advocacy and more. Links to our new [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#) pages can be found in the yellow column on the right side of the newsletter. Please check out our new pages and follow us.



The Alabama Partnership for Children is also launching a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Alabama Facebook page. The T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® program is a comprehensive scholarship program linking education and compensation and is administered by the APC (see Initiative Focus article below). This new page will serve as a recruitment tool and will highlight and celebrate the successes of the program, recipients, sponsors and colleges. If you would like to check out this page and follow [click here](#).

Zero to Five Matters

~A newsletter focused on our most valuable investment~

Follow us:



November FOCUS
Check out this month's Smart Start FOCUS [Packet](#) on early literacy!

Mark Your Calendars:

[Alabama Summit on Literacy](#)
November 7, 2013
Samford University

[FOCAL's Annual Training Conference](#)
November 15-16, 2013
Montgomery

[Alabama Early Intervention and Preschool Conference](#)
November 18-20, 2013
Birmingham

[NAEYC Annual Conference](#)
November 20-23
Washington DC

Partner Focus:



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Reach Out and Read Alabama



Reach Out and Read prepares America's youngest children to succeed in school by partnering with pediatricians to prescribe books and encourage families to read together. The national organization was founded in 1989 by a group of pediatricians who recognized the tremendous significance of early childhood in setting the stage for learning. Indeed, 90 percent of brain development occurs between birth and age 5 (Karoly et al., 1998).

In 2005, the Alabama Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics' board of directors voted to formalize a relationship with Reach Out and Read as a program of the Chapter. In January, 2006, Polly McClure was hired as statewide coordinator to oversee the program and expand it throughout the state.



Reach Out and Read Alabama leverages two extraordinary forces to improve early literacy and education outcomes in Alabama: The power of parents and the influence of children's doctors. Building on the special relationship between families & children's doctors, Reach Out and Read engages parents as

their [child's first teacher](#) starting in infancy. During regular, one-on-one visits with the doctor, families grow to understand the powerful and important role they play in supporting their child's [development](#). Parents gain the confidence and skills that enable them to support early language and literacy at home, and they help their children be ready for pre-k or kindergarten. And, they leave each visit with a brand-new book to enjoy together at home.

Research shows that when pediatricians promote literacy readiness according to the Reach Out and Read model, there is a significant effect on parental behavior and attitudes toward reading aloud, as well as improvements in the language scores of young children who participate. These effects have been found in ethnically and economically diverse families nationwide. These documented outcomes in 15 [peer-reviewed studies](#) mean that children are more likely to arrive at a pre-k program with the early literacy skills they need, and parents are more engaged in their child's development, thus laying the groundwork for a more successful Alabama quality pre-k program.

Reach Out and Read-Alabama currently has active programs in 28 of the 67 counties throughout Alabama. According to the latest data, our 60 program sites prescribed over 95,000 brand-new books this past year-over 400 each day. Our vision is to expand the program to reach the other 80% of Alabama's 303,905 children less than five years of age so that all of Alabama's children and families will be building better brains by sharing books together each day.

[Click here](#) to subscribe to future APC updates

Did you know?

APC staff served on a team of 13 Alabama business leaders & state legislators that attended the National Business Leader Summit on Early Childhood Investment. More than 200 business executives and policy makers from across the country attended. Below are a couple pictures from the event:



New Staff

The APC added two new staff members in August of this year. Please welcome Tish MacInnis (right), Coordinator of Family & Community Partnerships, and Julie Odom (left), Special Projects Coordinator.



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Initiative Focus:

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood Alabama

T.E.A.C.H. (Tea ch e r E d u c a t i o n a n d C o m p e n s a t i o n H e l p s) E a r l y C h i l d h o o d® ALABAMA is a scholarship program that links education and compensation to address the need for a well-qualified, fairly compensated and stable early childhood workforce in Alabama. The goal of the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship Program is to increase education, increase compensation and reduce turnover of the child care workforce while making educational opportunities more accessible and affordable. The program provides the opportunity for individuals currently working in the early childhood field to take coursework to increase their knowledge and skills by giving them access to early childhood credentials and a college degree. Scholarships are offered to child care and preschool teachers, directors and family child care home providers working in a Department of Human Resources (DHR) licensed child care or Alabama First Class Pre-k program willing to sponsor the recipient. Applicants must be working a minimum number of hours in the classroom with children and meet wage requirements. Each scholarship model is a cost sharing partnership between the APC, the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipient and the sponsoring child care program.

Research indicates that both higher education and specialized training in early childhood education are critical indicators of quality in a child's early learning experience. T.E.A.C.H. provides benefits which directly impact recipients, sponsoring child development programs, and the children and families they serve. From 2002 to present, T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ALABAMA has awarded scholarships to more than 1,800 child care center teachers, child care center directors and family child care home and group home providers working in over 500 sponsoring child care programs across the state. As a result of the scholarship program, 138 child care providers have earned an Associate degree in Child Development or Early Care and Education, 14 preschool teachers have earned a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education, and 425 child care providers have earned a CDA Credential. Since the scholarship began, Associate and Bachelor degree recipients have completed over 17,750 credit hours of college coursework, averaging a 3.23 GPA. T.E.A.C.H. Alabama scholarship recipient's compensation has increased 5.2% on average and the turnover rate has remained low at 2.1%. T.E.A.C.H. Alabama recipients have impacted the lives of more than 18,000 children in the state.

Joyce Buskey, a Pre-K Assistant Teacher from Bright Beginnings 1 in Greenville, was invited to participate in a panel discussion during the 2013 National T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood and Child Care WAGES Professional Development Symposium held April 23-24, in Chapel Hill, NC. During the panel, Joyce, along with recipients from Indiana and New Mexico, discussed their experiences with college, T.E.A.C.H. and paying it forward.



If you are interested in applying for a T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Scholarship, or would like additional information, please contact the T.E.A.C.H. staff at 1-866-711-4025, visit our website for [online applications](#) and like our new T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Alabama [Facebook page](#).

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ALABAMA is a licensed program of Child Care Services Association.

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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