



Smart Start Update --- October 2014

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Alabama Receives Project LAUNCH Grant

The [Alabama Department of Mental Health](#) and the [Alabama Department of Public Health](#) in collaboration with the Alabama Partnership for Children have been selected to receive a Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health) grant. The Project LAUNCH grant is being funded for 5 years by the US Department of Health and Human Services' [SAMHSA](#) (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) Center for Mental Health Services. The purpose of Project LAUNCH is to promote the wellness of young children from birth to eight years by addressing the physical, social, emotional, cognitive and behavioral aspects of their development. The goal of Project LAUNCH is to create a shared vision for the wellness of young children that drives the development of federal, state, territorial, tribal, and locally-based networks for the coordination of key child-serving systems and the integration of behavioral and physical health services. The expected result is for children to be thriving in safe, supported environments and entering school ready to learn and able to succeed.

Alabama's Project LAUNCH will build on the vision of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) plan ([Blueprint for Zero to Five](#)), and other successful collaborative efforts to integrate programs that provide a complete range of developmentally supportive services to families with young children, and to expand and enhance evidence-based programs related to children's healthy development. The local implementation area will be the greater Tuscaloosa area.

The Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH) in partnership with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) will lead the effort of a family-centered approach to address the core strategies of Project LAUNCH:

- Screening and assessment of young children - through the state [Help Me Grow](#) (HMG) initiative training and support for primary providers (health care, early education, and home visiting) to use the ASQ3/SE at regular intervals; develop a single point of referral and information and improve the roadmap for referrals; enhance the 211 and Parent Assistance Line for seamless and appropriate referrals; gather and analyze data to improve referral system and identify service barriers
- Integration of behavioral health into primary care settings - expanding the use of Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning materials and resources; technical assistance, training, and mentoring; training and

Zero to Five Matters

~A newsletter focused on our most valuable investment~

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Don't Forget to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#). '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!

October FOCUS

Check out this month's Smart Start FOCUS [packet](#) on Health Matters!

Mark Your Calendars:

[2014 Alabama Pre-K Conference](#)

October 15-17, 2014
Montgomery, AL

[2014 NAEYC Annual Conference & Expo](#)

November 5-8, 2014
Dallas, Texas

resources to implement the ASQ/SE and appropriate referrals in primary care settings

- Mental health consultation in early care and education including training and mentoring for diverse early learning settings; improved access to needed interventions; and broad understanding of the social and emotional needs of young children and the negative impact of adverse childhood experiences
- Enhanced home visiting with focus on social and emotional well-being by providing training and mentoring to existing and new home visitation programs; expanding evidence-based family strengthening and parent skills training - expanding and enhancing the [Strengthening Families Initiative](#) (SFI) to the local implementation area including community training and resources; parent cafés; improved access to resources; parent leadership training and engagement; building family and community strengths to improve resiliency

To learn more about Project LAUNCH click [here](#).

Partner Focus:

Choose to Have a Healthy Family, Alabama

Linda Lee, Executive Director Alabama Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics

October 1 marks the conclusion of the year-long "[Choose to Have a Healthy Family, Alabama!](#)" social media campaign, conducted by the [Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics](#) in conjunction with child health and advocacy partners, including the Alabama Partnership for Children. The campaign featured a series of 12 monthly child health topics and related posts from pediatricians across the state, serving as credible spokespeople for health messages to parents, emphasizing the importance of making healthy choices to positively impact child health among families in their own communities as well as the state audience. With the ultimate goal of meeting the Healthy People 2020 Objective HC/HIT-1, "improve the health literacy of the population," the campaign delivered multiple anticipatory guidance messages via practice social media pages and a "Choose" Facebook page to a broad audience, especially families with no access to care. The three primary objectives were to:

- Promote healthy choices to local practice parents and teens;
- Increase pediatricians' comfort in using social media and improve their practices' online image among their own patients;
- Improve health literacy among the state parent population while delivering unified evidence-based health messages from a network of state health organizations.

The focus areas and menu of messages were pre-chosen by a stakeholder

**2014 Early Intervention
Preschool Conference**
November 17-19, 2014
Mobile, AL

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Special Thanks:

The APC would like to thank the Department of Children's Affairs for allowing us to speak at the 2014 Home visiting conference. We had a great time sharing information about Help Me Grow Alabama and our Books, Balls & Blocks events. We also got to meet so many wonderful home visiting professionals who are serving families in Alabama and making a difference!



Special thanks to HIPPIY USA Houston County, Child Care Resource Network, Ft. Payne, Boaz & Guntersville Child Development Centers, The Department of Children's Affairs, The Family Guidance Center in Jefferson County, and The Family Guidance Center in Lowndes County for hosting Books, Balls & Blocks events in their communities.



committee of pediatricians and representatives from partner organizations, addressing such topics as tobacco use, teen driving, immunizations, oral health, SIDS, sun and water safety, reading to young children, and healthy weight. Pediatricians taped video messages and contributed links and photos to promote healthy decision-making, and shared content on their own social media pages.

Three of the 12 monthly topics focused specifically on early childhood: prenatal care, infant health & sleep; safety mental health and developmental milestones; and reading/literacy. This latter topic was the focus in September 2014, just on the heels of the release of the AAP's new policy statement promoting early literacy - beginning with an infant's very first days - as an "essential" component of primary care visits, representing the first time the AAP has adopted official policy on the issue. The new policy validates the work of Reach Out and Read-Alabama to partner with doctors to promote early literacy. According to the policy, "Providing books at pediatric primary care visits to families at economic and social risks, together with developmentally appropriate anticipatory guidance encouraging parents to read aloud with their children, has a powerful effect on the home environment of young children. It directly affects language development, a major factor in school readiness, during the critical period of early brain development."

Pediatricians celebrated the Choose to Have a Healthy Family campaign's success - the page garnered close to 700 "likes" and reached more than 12,000 individuals - in late September at the AL-AAP's Annual Meeting, where a compilation video was shown, highlighting a variety of the 97 videos that were contributed by pediatricians throughout the year. The decision has been made to keep the "Choose" page alive and recycle content and possibly introduce new posts as grant funding becomes available. To view the five-minute "Year in Review" video, click [here](#).

Initiative Focus:

Help Me Grow Alabama Purchases New Database

Help Me Grow Alabama is growing! While currently implemented in Central Alabama, the new addition of West Alabama has created a need and allowed for the purchase of a new database. This is an internal tool for Help Me Grow staff to better record, serve, and account for all the families, resources, and health care providers it connects. The database was created by [Help Me Grow Utah](#), a co-affiliate in the [Help Me Grow National Network](#). The database will allow for more seamless entry of information and enable us to generate accurate reports of aggregate data for sharing. This means we can better identify barriers to services and help communities bridge those gaps. Having the database will be a huge asset as we continue to grow and serve Alabama's young children and families.



Help Me Grow Alabama is a statewide effort to increase identification and referrals of early childhood developmental delays. Help Me Grow Alabama is

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also an affiliate of the national Help Me Grow Network.

APC Approved to Participate in Combined Campaigns

The Alabama Partnership for Children has been approved to participate in the [Alabama State Employees Combined Campaign](#). The Campaign Kickoff began in September and ends in December. You can give to the State Combined Campaign through three different avenues: Payroll deduction, Cash, or Check. Giving through payroll deduction is the most encouraged avenue of supporting your favorite organization. Campaign contributions made to the Alabama Partnership for Children must include the 6-digit code [999960](#). **ALL GIFTS GIVEN THROUGH THE STATE COMBINED CAMPAIGN ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.**

The Alabama Partnership for Children has also been approved to participate in the [Heart of Alabama Combined Federal Campaign](#). The Campaign Kickoff began in September and ends in December. Campaign contributions can be made to the Alabama Partnership for Children through payroll deduction and all contributions must include the 5-digit code [36782](#). If you are not contacted about making a pledge, or have a question about the campaign, please contact the CFC Project Officer in your organization.

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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