

## **Objectives and Need for Assistance**

Each year, about 60,000 babies are born in Alabama, and they will pass quickly through the most critical years of development and opportunity for impact. They will arrive at school “ready or not,” and our schools will be accountable for their progress.

A child’s health, early development and economic status can be inter-related and impact outcomes later in life. At-risk children who have access to quality health care, early care and education opportunities, and family supports are more likely to lead healthier lives, graduate high school, and avoid reliance on social programs. In Alabama, funding and services are limited for the birth to five populations. The vast majority of funding is from the federal government for very specific needs. Most early care and education services are delivered through community-based non-profits rather than through government agencies. There are vast differences in services that are available from one area of the state to another, and there are few services offered across the state for ALL children. The delivery of early care and education services falls far short of demand.

## **Quality & Availability of Early Childhood Education & Care Programs and Services**

According to various studies collected by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), quality early learning programs help to narrow the achievement gap and result in improved child outcomes. For the last four years, Alabama’s First Class Voluntary Pre-K Program has been ranked number one in quality

and last in access by National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER). First class provides quality pre-kindergarten services for only 6.5% of all eligible four-year-old children in the state. Head Start and Early Head Start serve 18,800 children and 91 pregnant women. There are 27,050 children receiving child care subsidies in Alabama, with 2,457 licensed child care facilities (family daycare, group daycare, and daycare centers) and 838 licensed exempt child care programs. Alabama has 89 National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accredited early childhood sites, which represents only 1.3% of the nationally accredited programs in the country. Additionally, Alabama has four of the five national models for home visitation, including HIPPI, Parents as Teachers, Nurse Family Partnership and Healthy Families. While these programs collectively serve hundreds of children and their families, there is not a direct connection to a strong state entity, nor is there a system where these varied programs can share best practices and professional development.

According to the Alabama's Kids Count Data (2010), Alabama ranks 47th in child well-being, with over 23% of Alabama's children living in poverty - 12% White, 41% African American, and 23% other. Adequate prenatal care ranges from as high as 74% to as low as 57% in some of Alabama's most rural and impoverished counties. Moreover, infant mortality ranks as low as 10%, but as high as 23%. Again, some of the highest disparities are found in those counties that have the highest percentage of poverty and at-risk children.

### **Existing Need for Coordination and Collaboration**

Alabama is well on its way to building a system of early care and education for children birth to five that focuses on families, communities, services, and schools, in an effort to ensure that all children are able to enter school ready to reach their full potential. The Department of Children's Affairs is responsible for the Early Childhood Education and Care Advisory Council. The overall responsibility of this State Advisory Council is to facilitate the development and enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care designed to improve school readiness. The subordinate goals are to (a) increase the overall participation of children in existing federal, state and local child care and early childhood education programs, including outreach to underrepresented or special populations; (b) identify best approaches for collaboration and coordination among federally-and state-funded child development, child care and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among state and federal agencies responsible for administering such programs, (c) establish a unified data collection system for public early childhood programs and services throughout the state, and (d) develop strategies for increasing opportunities in the statewide professional development and career advancement plans for early childhood educators in the state.

Additionally, DCA is responsible for Alabama's system for coordination of children's services through the state's Children's Policy Council. The Alabama Children's Policy Council addresses the needs of children 0-19 and conducts an annual children's needs assessment (Attachment A). The needs assessment is theme based and does not have a strong or intentional focus on children birth to school entry.

Additionally, the state has a strong Early Childhood Comprehensive System through the Alabama State Department of Public Health. The ECCS has developed the Blueprint for Zero to Five (Attachment B), coordinated by the Alabama Partnership for Children. The Blueprint for Zero to Five is Alabama's plan to ensure that every child has the opportunity to succeed in life. This comprehensive plan focuses on children from birth to school entry, but is theme based as well, addressing Ready Families, Ready Communities, Ready Services and Ready Schools.

There are additional state entities working to build collaborations. They include Head Start Collaboration Office and the Head Start Needs Assessment (Attachment C), State Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention and the National System-Building Initiatives. While these groups work to enhance coordination and collaboration of services, their focus is specific to their group's needs, e.g. Head Start Collaboration helps to coordinate and collaborate for Head Start Programs. This approach further supports the need for a State Advisory Council that is inclusive of the

diverse coordinating groups for young children and comprehensive in its approach to coordinating a system of collaboration for all children birth to zero.

### **Status of State Early Learning Standards**

Along with the many groups focused on young children, Alabama has taken steps to address the varied needs of children zero to birth and the professionals that support these children. The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) has developed Alabama Early Learning Guidelines. The guidelines were established for children birth to age five to promote continuity of high quality care and learning for children. The guidelines are intended to be inclusive of all children. The ages between birth and five are critical to child development, and these guidelines are developed along a continuum that embraces all ages within that span, with appropriate consideration for unique characteristics of development at each age.

Additionally, the Alabama Office of School Readiness (OSR) has developed the Alabama Performance Standards for 4-Year-Olds. The standards describe appropriate outcomes for children at the end of their preschool experience and entering kindergarten. The standards are based on what is known about four-year-old children, including what they should know and be able to do along a continuum of development. The Standards are grouped around eight domains of learning that include emergent literacy, emergent mathematics, creative arts, science and environmental education,

technology, social and emotional development, approaches to learning, and physical health and development.

### **Governance**

The system of governance for early childhood education and care is supported by several state agencies. DHR serves as the state agency responsible for child care subsidies, the state's new QRIS and child care management and licensing. The Alabama Department of Children's Affairs (DCA) has as its mission the responsibility of supporting services for children 0-19. The state's voluntary pre-kindergarten program, the state's Head Start Collaboration Office, the federal Early Childhood Home Visiting program, the state Children's Policy Council, and the state Early Childhood and Care Advisory Council (ECAC), all are in the Department of Children's Affairs.

Through a National Governor's Association (NGA) grant in 2008, the ECAC was established as the State Advisory Council and the designation was given to DCA to coordinate the Council. The long term goal was to expand a quality, unified system that would improve child outcomes for at risk children. More specific goals and activities were as follows:

*Goal 1:* To identify gaps, inefficiencies, duplication of efforts, and opportunities for leveraging resources.

*Goal 2:* To seek input from state, local, public, and private stakeholders on the vision, priorities, and recommendations for building an early childhood system.

*Goal 3:* To implement mechanisms to ensure better collaboration among all agencies that administer programs and services for children in relation to policy decisions, budgeting, and coordination of services.

*Goal 4:* To unify professional standards and development across pre-k, child care, and Head Start programs as part of a broader P-16 effort.

*Goal 5:* To consider new funding and/or leveraging existing resources for system coordination efforts.

*Goal 6:* To consolidate and standardize goals and measure progress toward outcomes for children, families, schools, communities, programs, and state systems.

*Goal 7:* To establish common measurements and consistent data reporting mechanisms that enable information sharing and analysis across state agencies and programs and between the state and local levels.

*Goal 8:* To develop a communications strategy to report progress and use results to inform policy decisions and build support for school readiness efforts among parents, educators, legislators, policymakers, and the public.

*Goal 9:* To use progress results to revisit the comprehensive plan, evaluate progress, and realign goals, resources, and priorities over time.

### **Professional Development**

The Council will help to create a system of governance that connects several state agencies responsible for developing and implementing facets of the system. One facet of

the system is professional development. Again, there are many state agencies working on professional development. DCA has strong professional development standards and a system for producing trained professionals. First Class, Alabama's voluntary pre-kindergarten program, has the highest standards of professional requirements for professionals in early childhood education and care. Teachers in pre-k classrooms must have a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development, while Assistants must hold a Child Development Associate credential (CDA). To support the growth of the profession, DCA provides funding to APC for Teacher Education and Compensation Help (T.E.A.C.H.) scholarships. T.E.A.C.H. scholarships are used to support professionals who are pursuing Bachelor's Degrees.

Head Start requires that lead teachers have an Associate Degree and Assistant Teachers must possess a CDA. The Office of Head Start has a mandate that 50% of Head Start Teachers in the nation will have to have a Bachelor's Degree. Many of the teachers who work in Alabama's Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms participate in T.E.A.C.H. and are advancing their educational credentials.

DHR has established a system called the Alabama Pathways to Quality Care and Education. Pathways is Alabama's child care and education professional development system and provides a roadmap for expanding professional learning and application abilities to ensure high quality care and education through improved care giving and teaching. Pathways addresses the need for a comprehensive professional development

system that incorporates the key elements necessary for improving the quality of care and education provided by all individuals in all areas of early childhood.

### **Data System**

One final piece to the system of care for early childhood education and care is data. Currently, Alabama does not have a comprehensive early childhood data system. Each state agency has developed and uses its own data system, and the systems are not compatible between agencies.

There is, however, one example of the state moving toward the creation of a comprehensive data system. The DCA is partnering with Alabama State Department of Education to provide state identifiers to pre-k children in state funded pre-k. The identifying number will stay with the child throughout their K-12 education experience. The tracking of these children will provide much needed longitudinal data, as well as provide an opportunity to share information across educational experience, i.e. Pre-K, Head Start, Childcare and Public School.

### **Approach**

#### **Scope & Detail of Work**

The plan of action that describes the scope and detail of the work of the ECAC will include the required legislative language encompassed in the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Head Start Act, 42 USC 9801 et seq.). The Governor: (a) designated an individual to coordinate activities of the State Advisory

Council (The Alabama Department of Children’s Affairs), b) appointed other members determined to be relevant to the work of the Council, and c) appointed nine required members. Through funding from the NGA, the ECAC was established with overall responsibility to facilitate the development or enhancement of high-quality systems of early childhood education and care designed to improve school readiness. Additionally, the ECAC as the State Advisory Council will work to strengthen state-level coordination and collaboration among the various sectors and settings of early childhood programs in the State.

More specifically, the ECAC will carry out activities that will promote school readiness of children birth to five; support professional development, recruitment and retention initiative for early childhood educators; and enhance existing early childhood and development programs.

These activities will be carried out by developing recommendation for the following goals: (a) increasing the overall participation of children in existing Federal, State, and local child care and early education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations; (b) establishing or improving core elements of the State early childhood system, such as a statewide unified data collection system; (c) establishing or improving a statewide professional development system and career ladder for early childhood educators; (d) establishing, enhancing or improving high-quality State early learning standards;

and (e) assessing the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4- year public and private institutions of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators.

*Goal #1: Increasing the overall participation of children in existing Federal, State, and local child care and early education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations* - This goal will be accomplished through parent/community education and awareness, improving parental understanding of how important their choices are and encouraging more parents to choose or demand high quality programs. Additionally, efforts will be made to increase participation in existing Head Start and Early Head Start, state funded pre-kindergarten, licensed child care, home visitation and education programs that serve children with disabilities, particularly children from underserved and rural communities, who are at-risk. Through partnerships, sharing of resources, and joint opportunities to pursue funding, and innovative strategies the ECAC will work to increase participation in existing early childhood education and care programs.

*Goal #2: Establishing or improving core elements of the State early childhood system, such as a statewide unified data collection system* - The ECAC will work to develop a unified data collection system that will allow the state to speak with clarity and certainty about where young children are during their preschool years as well as to identify the types of experiences young children have. The data system will be capable

of incorporating data across multiple early childhood systems, e.g. Head Start and Early Head Start, Pre-K, Child Care, IDEA Part B&C, and Home Visitation Program. The data system will also allow us to identify specific gaps in service areas (children's age, geographic location, funding), replication, and access (eligible children not receiving Head Start and Pre-K services or child care subsidy). Linking critical health and developmental milestones and connections with parents/families will also be an important function of a unified data system. Finally, translating early learning standards, teacher credentials, and program elements into a comprehensive quality enhancement and improvement system (QRIS) will be another function of the data system.

*Goal #3: Establishing or improving a statewide professional development system and career ladder for early childhood educators* – Progress toward this goal has already been made through DHR's Pathways Career Lattice, but additional work needs to be done to create a seamless plan that includes Pre-K and Head Start. The state plan should be comprehensive and include high quality components of a professional development system, a professional registry, searchable database of professional development opportunities and resources, and maintenance of comprehensive data on the early childhood workforce. Additionally, the work of T.E.A.C.H. should be continued to provide the needed workforce data to support and expand opportunities for comprehensive professional development. Moreover, shared high quality research and

relevant training opportunities that will have the greatest impact on improving and advancing early childhood professionals should be identified.

*Goal # 4: Establishing, enhancing or improving high-quality State early learning standards* - The ECAC will work to align currently existing early childhood standards. Training and education regarding the standards are important elements to creating an understanding of a unified approach to development and learning. The alignment of these early learning standards is important to bring cohesion through a unified set of accepted standards.

*Goal # 5: Assessing the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4- year public and private institutions of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators* - This is an on-going goal and requires multiple stakeholders to move the concept forward. One such stakeholder is the Alabama School Readiness Alliance (ASRA). ASRA has begun some of this work by assessing the early childhood offerings at 2- and 4-year colleges and universities. The ECAC is inclusive of stakeholders from postsecondary and higher education, and the Council will work to create additional opportunities for strong articulation agreements between 2- and 4-year colleges and universities.

### **Periodic Statewide Needs Assessment**

Recommendations will be prioritized based on the results of the findings of the required periodic (bi-annual) statewide needs assessment of the quality and

availability of programs and services for children birth to zero. The assessment will also be inclusive of the availability of high quality pre-kindergarten services for low-income children in Alabama. Additionally, annually, the ECAC will provide opportunities for public comments on the work of the ECAC. Public comments will also direct the work of the Council.

The bi-annual needs assessment will be coordinated by DCA, to be inclusive of the work of the State Children's Policy Council and the needs assessment of the Head Start Collaboration Office. The needs assessment will be conducted by the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC). APC is the state of Alabama's private/public partnership for children zero to five. Its purpose is to develop and strengthen early childhood systems, forge strategies and increase public awareness for all early childhood programs in Alabama.

### **Opportunity for and Barriers to Coordination & Collaboration**

There are opportunities for, and barriers to, collaboration and coordination among Federally-funded and State-funded child development, child care, and early childhood education programs and services, including collaboration and coordination among State agencies responsible for administering such programs. All stakeholders must be involved in the planning and execution of a seamless system. Funding silos created at the federal level exist, although the lines are blurring. These funding silos have an impact on the work at the state level. The child care subsidy program supports

working families, while Head Start is income-based (and somewhat age-based), and is viewed as a separate and distinctly different program. At the state level, state funded Pre-K has different goals that may not fit neatly with Head Start Performance Standards.

Nonetheless, we have been successful in the past few years in identifying common goals for children and families, clearly articulating these goals, and being specific about the outcomes we will measure together. We have created a working coalition of stakeholders whose collaborative work (Blueprint for Zero to Five through the Early Childhood Comprehensive System Initiative) is viewed as a comprehensive framework for working together on commonly held goals and a unified vision that can be accomplished by no single entity.

Working together, we can promote the priorities of state and federal early childhood initiatives. Layered strategies based on top down and bottom up, predicated on partnerships, will further enhance the sustained work of the ECAC.

### **Accelerate or Decelerate the Work**

Factors that might accelerate or decelerate the work of the ECAC are one and the same. Alabama has begun the work of the ECAC, the State Advisory Council, through multiple groups. The work of these groups can accelerate the work of the ECAC because much of the work has been accomplished through various goals and objectives of these early childhood groups. However, the work is fragmented and addresses the

specific goals and objectives of each group. There is not one comprehensive group that addresses the inclusive needs of children zero to school entry, with a specific focus on preparing children for school. Additionally, there is not one governing Council at the state level charged with the responsibility of bringing all of the groups together to create one unified partnership.

Because there are multiple established councils and/or groups, the ECAC was established as a new and separate entity. The Council's goals and objectives will focus solely on the legislative mandate. The ECAC serves as a dedicated partnership of individuals working on issues for children.

#### **Unusual Features of Project**

There are no unusual features of the project such as design or technological innovations. However, there will be a perceptible reduction in cost and time of the work of the ECAC by dedicating a staff member who will be responsible for coordinating and conducting the work of the ECAC. Time and cost will be saved because the work will not be labored and delayed because of inactivity. A possible increase in cost of services to other agencies will be avoided through the efficient and effective work of the ECAC.

As indicated by the Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007 (Head Start Act, 42 USC 9801 et seq.), Congress authorized the Governor of each State to designate or establish an Early Childhood and Care Advisory Council. Governors were to: (a) designate an individual to coordinate activities of the State Advisory

Council (The Alabama Department of Children's Affairs), b) appoint other members determined to be relevant to the work of the Council, and c) appoint nine required members. A list of the Members of Alabama's ECAC is included (Attachment D).

## Plan of Action

<b>Goal 1 (Primary)</b>		
Increasing the overall participation of children in existing Federal, State, and local child care and early education programs, including outreach to underrepresented and special populations		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>QUARTERLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS</b>
Establish a team to work on Parent/Community Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Team Members</li> <li>• Set Goals and Objectives</li> </ul>	On-going work: Yr. 1, Yr. 2, and Yr. 3  Yr. 1-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Yr. 1-2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter Work of the Team: Yr. 2 (all Quarters) Yr. 3 (all Quarters)	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter – Identify team members 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter-Set Goals and Objectives Team works on goals and objectives each year
Statewide (regional) Forums on quality early childhood experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Agenda and Activities</li> <li>• Identify Locations</li> <li>• Recruit Volunteers</li> <li>• Conduct Forums</li> </ul>	On-going work: Yr.1, Yr.2, and Yr.3  Yr. 1-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Yr. 1-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Yr. 1-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter Yr. 1-2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , and 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter Yr. 2 (all Quarters) Yr. 3 (all Quarters)	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter-Develop agenda and activities for Forums 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter-Identify 4 locations across the state 1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter-Recruit volunteers for support of Forums Conduct Forums across the state each year
Establish Media Campaign on quality early childhood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Media Plan to be inclusive of multiple PR initiatives</li> <li>• Implement Media Plan</li> </ul>	On-going work: Yr.1, Yr.2, and Yr.3  Yr. 1-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter Yr. 1-3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter and 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter  Yr. 2 (all Quarters) Yr. 3 (all Quarters)	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter-Develop Media Plan for ECE 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter and 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter-Implement statewide Media Plan for ECE  Implement Media Plan each year

<b>Goal 2 (Primary)</b>		
Establishing or improving core elements of the State early childhood system, such as a statewide unified data collection system		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>QUARTERLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS</b>
Identify Current State Data Systems	Yr. 1-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter through 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	Identify Current State Data Systems
Analyze Data Needs Across State Data Systems	Yr. 1-3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter through 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Analyze Data Needs Across State Data Systems
Establish Common Data Needs	Yr. 1-3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter through 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Establish Common Data Needs
Identify and Explore Existing National Models	Yr. 2-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter through 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	Identify and Explore Existing National Models
Develop Data Plan Based on State Needs and Existing Data Models	Yr. 2-3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter through 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Develop Data Plan Based on State Needs and Existing Data Models
Identify Software/Systems for Data	Yr. 2-3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter through 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Identify Software/Systems for Data
Pilot System	Yr. 3-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter through 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	Pilot System
Expand System	Yr. 3-3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter through 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Expand System
Identify Additional Funding to Support System	Yr. 3-4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Identify Additional Funding to Support System

<b>Goal 3 (Primary)</b>		
Establishing or improving a statewide professional development system and career ladder for early childhood educators		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>QUARTERLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS</b>
Develop and implement scholarship plan (CDA, AA, and BS) to improve professional development through T.E.A.C.H. Plan must be inclusive of diverse ECE partners, e.g. child care, faith-base, home visitation, Pre-K, Head Start and Early Head Start.	On-going work: Yr. 1, Yr. 2, and Yr. 3  Development-Yr.1-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter  Implementation-Yr. 1-2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter through 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter-Develop scholarship plan inclusive of professional training and T.E.A.C.H.  2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter-Implement scholarship plan to support diverse ECE partners
Develop a professional development training plan that is inclusive of the diverse ECE partners and standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify quality training</li> <li>• Identify qualified and well trained trainers</li> <li>• Provide training</li> </ul>	On-going work: Yr. 1, Yr. 2, and Yr. 3  Development -Yr.1-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter through 2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter  Implementation-Yr. 1-3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter through 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter-Identify quality training for professional development training  1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter-Identify high quality trainers  All Quarter for each year-Implement training for ECE

<b>Goal 4 (Secondary)</b>		
Establishing, enhancing or improving high-quality State early learning standards		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>QUARTERLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS</b>
Align and publish varied ECE standards	Yr. 1-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter through 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter	Align ECE standards
Develop and implement training of unified ECA training	Yr. 1-3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter through 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter On-going work: Yr. 1, Yr. 2, and Yr. 3	Develop and implement unified data system

<b>Goal 5 (Secondary)</b>		
Assessing the capacity and effectiveness of 2- and 4- year public and private institutes of higher education in the State toward supporting the development of early childhood educators		
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>QUARTERLY ACCOMPLISHMENTS</b>
Establish working committees to address strategies for creating strong articulation agreements and innovative approaches to developing early childhood educators	On-going work: Yr. 1, Yr. 2, and Yr. 3  Establish Committee-Yr. 1-1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter  Work of the Committee-Yr. 1-2 <sup>nd</sup> Quarter through 4 <sup>th</sup> Quarter	Establish Committee to begin work

## **Plan for Conducting Needs Assessment**

The required needs assessment will be conducted bi-annually, with an annual update disseminated to the Governor and legislators. A number of different measures will be used to assess the quality, availability and coordination of early childhood education and care programs and services. The needs assessments will be coordinated by the DCA, and will include a comprehensive assessment of children's readiness upon school entry and a means of tracking children from multiple early childhood settings into the school systems.

## **Public Hearing**

To support the work and direction of the ECAC, the DCA provided an opportunity for public comments concerning the work of the ECAC. The goals of the ECAC were posted on the DCA website from July 19-23, 2010. Notices were sent to stakeholders across the state, as well as early childhood educators in Pre-K, Head Start, Child Care, Faith-Based and Military Child Care. Comments have been incorporated into this funding opportunity. Additionally, comments will be used to help set the agenda of work for the ECAC and establish priorities for such work.

Annually, there will be an opportunity for public comments concerning the work of the ECAC. Stakeholders across the state of Alabama will be given an opportunity to attend an ECAC meeting, as well as provide comments via the departments' website.

### **State Advisory Council Meeting**

The ECAC, as the State Advisory Council, will be required to meet three times a year to work and approve any recommendations brought before the ECAC. Work of subcommittees will occur in person or by conference call. If needed, the ECAC will have additional called meetings.

The meeting requirements will be enforced throughout the life of the ECAC, including the three years of the grant period. During the three years of the grant, the three annual meetings will be used to review the status of the grant activities, the needs assessment, and the plan for the Council.

### **Data Collected, Maintained or Disseminated**

There will be no collection, maintenance and/or dissemination of data that would require clearance from OMB.

### **Organizations, Cooperating Entities, & Consultants**

The Department of Children's Affairs will have the primary responsibility for carrying out the work of the ECAC and this application. There will be several key organizations that will work on the ECAC objectives. They include the Alabama Department of Human Resource, Alabama Head Start State Collaboration Office, and the Alabama Partnership for Children. However, the primary work of the ECAC will be carried out by the Department of Children's Affairs.

The Alabama Department of Human Resources will work closely on increasing participation of children in local child care and early education, improvement of core elements to include the unified data collection system, professional development system to include the QRIS, as well as the standards for early learning.

The Alabama Head Start State Collaboration Office will work closely on increasing participation of underrepresented and special populations, unified data system and alignment of standards.

The Alabama Partnership for Children will conduct the ECAC needs assessment and administer T.E.A.C.H. for improvement of professional development of early childhood educators.

### **Sustainability**

The state Alabama will sustain our statewide, high-quality, comprehensive early childhood development system beyond the three years of the grant. The objectives accomplished or started by this one-time funding opportunity will become part of the work of the DCA, becoming part of the infrastructure of the department and supported by the existing work that is done on behalf of the children's issues. Staff hired for this project will also have a strong background in proposal development. With this knowledge base, additional funding opportunities will be identified and explored to continue the work of the ECAC.

### **Staff and Position Data**

The key person assigned to the ECAC is Dr. Marquita Furness Davis, Commissioner of the Department of Children's Affairs. Dr. Davis has been the Commissioner of the department for two years and has a Ph.D. in Early Childhood Education and Development. The Commissioner has been the Director of Pre-K, a Head Start Director, and college professor. As the state designee to coordinate the ECAC, Dr. Davis will be responsible for the coordinating the work of the ECAC.

There will be one additional new staff appointed to serve as the ECAC Project Manager. The job description is attached (Attachment E).

### **Organizational Profiles**

The Alabama Department of Children's Affairs is the responsible state agency for management of the State Advisory Council. Dr. Marquita Davis, Commissioner for DCA was designated by the Governor to coordinate the activities of the ECAC. A letter of designation by the Governor of the state of Alabama is included (Attachment F). Additionally, an organizational chart of DCA (Attachment G), and most recent financial audit (Attachment H) are attached. The DCA Employer Identification Number is 636000619, and the contact person and contact information is:

Dr. Marquita Furness Davis, Commissioner  
P.O. Box 302755, Montgomery, Alabama 36130  
Office: (334) 353-2700 Fax: (334) 353-2701

### **Third Party Agreements**

Currently, DCA does not have any third party agreements. However, if in the future a third party agreement is made, DCA will send appropriate documentation to the governing agency responsible for administering this one-time funding opportunity.

### **Budget and Budget Justification**

#### Year 1

<b>Object Class Categories</b>	<b>Federal Budget</b>	<b>Non-Federal Budget</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>
Personnel	\$ 28,343.00		\$ 28,343.00
Fringe Benefits	\$ 6,357.38		\$ 6,357.38
Travel	\$ 7,600.00		\$ 7,600.00
Equipment	\$ 0		\$ 0
Supplies	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 15,000.00
Contractual	\$389,963.12		\$389,963.12
Construction	\$ 0		\$ 0
Other	\$ 85,000.00		\$ 85,000.00
Indirect Charges	\$ 67,064.84		\$ 67,064.84
First Class Pre-K		\$1,398,432.60	\$1,398,432.60
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$599,328.34</b>	<b>\$1,398,432.60</b>	<b>\$1,997,760.91</b>

#### Year 2

<b>Object Class Categories</b>	<b>Federal Budget</b>	<b>Non-Federal Budget</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>
Personnel	\$ 28,343.00		\$ 28,343.00
Fringe Benefits	\$ 6,357.38		\$ 6,357.38
Travel	\$ 7,600.00		\$ 7,600.00
Equipment	\$ 0		\$ 0
Supplies	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 15,000.00
Contractual	\$389,963.11		\$389,963.11
Construction	\$ 0		\$ 0
Other	\$ 85,000.00		\$ 85,000.00
Indirect Charges	\$ 67,064.84		\$ 67,064.84
First Class Pre-K		\$1,398,432.60	\$1,398,432.60
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$599,328.33</b>	<b>\$1,398,432.60</b>	<b>\$1,997,760.90</b>

Year 3

<b>Object Class Categories</b>	<b>Federal Budget</b>	<b>Non-Federal Budget</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>
Personnel	\$ 28,343.00		\$ 28,343.00
Fringe Benefits	\$ 6,357.38		\$ 6,357.38
Travel	\$ 7,600.00		\$ 7,600.00
Equipment	\$ 0		\$ 0
Supplies	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 15,000.00
Contractual	\$389,963.11		\$389,963.11
Construction	\$ 0		\$ 0
Other	\$ 85,000.00		\$ 85,000.00
Indirect Charges	\$ 67,064.84		\$ 67,064.84
First Class Pre-K		\$1,398,432.60	\$1,398,432.60
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$599,328.33</b>	<b>\$1,398,432.60</b>	<b>\$1,997,760.90</b>