



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Grant Awarded to School Readiness Project

Birmingham, AL --Several agencies focused on early intervention recently received a \$52,000 grant from Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham, Robert R. Meyer Foundation, and Alabama Partnership for the *Contributing to Readiness: Early Health and Developmental Screening Pilot Project*.

The Contributing to Readiness project is a health and developmental screening project for children ages zero to five in Jefferson County which expands on the need for early identification of children with developmental delays. The project is designed to impact approximately 300 children, ages zero to five and their families. This translates into partnering with three to five child care centers, located within a 1.5 mile radius of a Central Park Elementary School located in the Birmingham City School System. The project also provides an educational component for childcare providers and families to improve their knowledge and understanding of the benefits of screening and early identification.

Success By 6, a community initiative of United Way of Central Alabama, serves as the lead agency for this collaborative effort created by members of the Early Care and Education Work Group (ECE) of the Children's Policy Cooperative of Jefferson County (the Cooperative). The entire ECE membership, comprised of members representing numerous agencies, is involved in this project. The following agencies/organizations represent the project's steering committee:

- Alabama Public Television – Ready to Learn
- Auburn University Family Child Care Partnership
- Cahaba Valley Health Care
- Childcare Resources
- Children's Policy Cooperative of Jefferson County
- Jefferson County Committee for Economic Opportunity Head Start Program
- UAB School of Public Health: Maternal and Child Health Department

Additionally, the project will benefit staff members at each participating child care center. The project contains an educational training component for staff which is focused on increasing their knowledge and their awareness of the value of early screening, detection, and appropriate referral options and how to communicate this knowledge to the parents.

Health screening provider partners include: FocusFirst, Vision Research Corporation, Sight Savers of Alabama, and UAB School of Dentistry.

When children have their developmental needs identified and appropriate interventions are provided, children enter school equipped for optimal learning. The project is slated to roll out this school year.

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