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**Memo of Agreement for Partners**

**VOICES for Alabama’s Children**

**Montgomery, Alabama**

VOICES for Alabama’s Children wants to be an active member in the collaborative work to expand quality pre-k programs in order to close achievement gaps. We understand that the other partners are the Alabama Partnership for Children, A+, and Alabama Giving. The collaboration consults with and supports the work of the State of Alabama Office of School Readiness.

We are committed to making the joint decisions that will be required if the collaboration is to achieve its desired results. We understand those results include voluntary, high quality preschool options for all three and four year olds that will result in school success.

We will contribute the time and resources necessary from our executive director and staff to accomplish the work as set out by the collaboration partners.

Our self interests include:

* To be visible as the leader in legislative and administrative public policy advancement for children.
* To increase our visibility with legislators and administration as “players/experts.”
* To further our own mission to advocate sound policy decisions that impact the education, health, safety and economic security for Alabama’s children.
* To increase organizational and issue specific grassroots support and activity as a means to influence the decision making process.

We expect to remain engaged in open and honest dialogue and discussion, to respect the tenants of the mutually agreed upon Governance Agreement and to do our share of the work in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Thank you to all the partners for working with us.

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**Board Chair Executive Director**

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**Organization**

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**Memo of Agreement for Partners**

**Alabama Giving**

**Birmingham, Alabama**

Alabama Giving wants to be an active member in the collaborative work to expand quality pre-k programs in order to close achievement gaps. We understand that the other partners are the Alabama Partnership for Children, A+, and VOICES for Alabama’s Children. The collaboration consults with and supports the work of the State of Alabama Office of School Readiness.

We are committed to making the joint decisions that will be required if the collaboration is to achieve its desired results. We understand those results include voluntary, high quality preschool options for all three and four year olds that will result in school success.

We commit a representative from our staff and volunteers as appropriate to actively participate in collaboration activities and will provide other resources as possible to ensure the success of the project.

Our self interests include:

* Alabama Giving is recognized as a campaign initiator and leading partner
* Alabama Giving members across the state are recognized for their participation and support
* The role of grant makers as advocates and funders of advocacy is enhanced by our involvement in this initiative

We expect to remain engaged in open and honest dialogue and discussion, to respect the tenants of the mutually agreed upon Governance Agreement and to do our share of the work in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Thank you to all the partners for working with us.

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**Board Chair Executive Director**

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**Memo of Agreement for Partners**

**A+**

**Montgomery, Alabama**

A+ wants to be an active member in the collaborative work to expand quality pre-k programs in order to close achievement gaps. We understand that the other partners are the Alabama Partnership for Children, VOICES for Alabama’s Children and Alabama Giving. The collaboration consults with and supports the work of the State of Alabama Office of School Readiness.

We are committed to making the joint decisions that will be required if the collaboration is to achieve its desired results. We understand those results include voluntary, high quality preschool options for all three and four year olds that will result in school success.

We commit a representative from our staff and volunteers as appropriate to actively participate in collaboration activities and will provide other resources as possible to ensure the success of the project.

Our self interests include

* Recognition as a leading partner in working for improving educational outcomes for all children
* Expansion of the A+ network through connections to more individuals and organizations working to improve the lives of children
* Accelerating progress toward our number one student achievement goal - all children reading at or above grade level

We expect to remain engaged in open and honest dialogue and discussion, to respect the tenants of the mutually agreed upon Governance Agreement and to do our share of the work in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Thank you to all the partners for working with us.

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**Board Chair Executive Director**

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**Memo of Agreement for Partners**

**Alabama Partnership for Children**

**Montgomery, Alabama**

Alabama Partnership for Children wants to be an active member in the collaborative work to expand quality pre-k programs in order to close achievement gaps. We understand that the other partners are the VOICES for Alabama’s Children, A+, and Alabama Giving. The collaboration consults with and supports the work of the State of Alabama Office of School Readiness.

We are committed to making the joint decisions that will be required if the collaboration is to achieve its desired results. We understand those results include voluntary, high quality preschool options for all three and four year olds that will result in school success.

We commit a representative from our staff and volunteers as appropriate to actively participate in collaboration activities and will provide other resources as possible to ensure success of the project.

Our self interests include:

* Furthering our vision - Every *Alabama Child Will Have the Opportunity to Succeed in Life*) - and 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.*
* Supporting our current strategies: enhancing quality of early learning programs (professional development and quality enhancement/ratings); public awareness about Zero *to Five Matters* and learning begins at birth; support for parents as first teachers; increased investment and leadership in early learning (corporate, business, government).
* Strengthening our role as the only statewide agency with a birth to five focus and mission
* Increased attention, funding and advocacy efforts for priorities and outcomes for young children identified through the ECCS/Blueprint process
* Ensuring access to high quality early learning options for families through a variety of means– using increased funding first to build upon what exists (not limited to newly established programs for 4-year olds).

We expect to remain engaged in open and honest dialogue and discussion, to respect the tenants of the mutually agreed upon Governance Agreement and to do our share of the work in order to achieve the desired outcomes. Thank you to all the partners for working with us.

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**Board Chair Executive Director**

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**Statement of Public Support**

**Our vision:** ***All Alabama children are healthy, eager to learn and ready to succeed in school.***

**Our mission: *To expand quality pre-k programs to close achievement gaps.***

**The Alabama School Readiness Alliance (ASRA)** is a collaborative effort of the Alabama Partnership for Children, A+, VOICES for Alabama’s Children, and Alabama Giving in support of the Alabama Department of Children’s Affairs/Office of School Readiness.

 We believe that the first five years of life are critical to a child’s lifelong

***School Readiness means that a child has enthusiasm for learning, the ability to function in a social setting, age appropriate communication and problem solving skills, age appropriate physical and emotional skills and optimal health.***

 development. A child’s earliest experience and environment sets the

 stage for future development and success in school and life. We know

 from many data sources that children will not enter school ready to learn

 unless families, schools and communities provide early learning

 environments and experiences that support the physical, social, emotional, language, literacy and cognitive development of infants,

 toddlers and preschool children. Today we know more than ever before

 about how young children develop and about how to best support early

 learning. While there are high quality pre-k programs for four year olds

 in Alabama, there are currently only 60 state funded pre-k sites serving

 fewer than 2% of our four year old children. Our goal is that every family

 who wishes to enroll their child in a quality pre-k program may do so.

We accept this opportunity to advocate for expansion of voluntary, high quality early learning experiences for Alabama four year olds as one piece of seamless, comprehensively integrated birth to five services for all young children and their families *(Blueprint for School Readiness)*. We understand that school readiness is fostered through opportunities that promote child exploration, sociability, curiosity, creativity, decision-making, independence, and responsibility, in combination with partnerships among families, teachers, local and state communities.

We will know we are successful when we have achieved the following: *voluntary, high quality pre-k options for children that result in school success.*

Essential elements of Alabama’s pre-k program are:

* A voluntary program for those who choose it
* Focus on closing the achievement gaps
* Research based curriculum
* Ongoing assessment of children’s health, development and learning
* Supports for parental and family involvement
* Build on existing child care and Head Start programs
* Delivery in a variety of settings
* Funding for community based programs as well as schools
* Assurance that new dollars do not displace current funding
* Funding level necessary to achieve quality (including infrastructure)
* Accountability

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**ASRA Partner Roles and Commitment**

**VOICES for Alabama’s Children agree to:**

* Create a special section of AL Kids Count that focuses on School Readiness
* Provide lobbying and framing expertise
* Provide professional lobbyists during legislative session
* Post requests for information and assistance on national Voices and Kids Count list serves
* Create ASRA page on website; maintain and update as needed
* Preside at meetings

**Alabama Partnership for Children agrees to:**

* Provide coordination with existing early learning initiatives and planning efforts (*Blueprint for School Readiness/ECCS, Zero to Five Matters* and *Born Learning* public awareness campaigns, Quality Enhancement/Rating program development, Parenting Resources, etc.)
* Share resources, research, and compiled data available on Birth to Five issues
* Coordinate increased business/corporate investment in Birth to Five
* Provide a connection to local communities and service providers through local partnerships and ECE committees of Children’s Policy Councils and statewide advisory committees for TEACH, Parenting Kit, Public Awareness, and Blueprint
* Utilize existing venues for public education and awareness: website, monthly update, meetings; and keep APC Board and Advisory Committees informed on activities as appropriate
* Preside at meetings

**A+ agrees to:**

* Serve as ASRA’s fiscal sponsor
* Communicate about Pre-k through regular vehicles: electronic education news update, website and presentations
* Solicit support from business, education, media and policy maker connections
* Facilitate the coordination of ARI and pre-k programs, evaluation and promotion
* Share lessons learned in education advocacy
* Preside at meetings

**Alabama Giving agrees to:**

* Communicate regularly with its network of Alabama grantmaking foundations and other funders to encourage their involvement in this initiative
* Assist with the identification and solicitation of other funding sources inside and outside Alabama
* Assist with making connections with the business community
* Preside at planning meetings

**Finances**

A+ Education Partnership agrees to act as the collaboration fiscal agent, receiving moneys from grantors, contributions and partner organizations, creating appropriate fiscal reports and audit trails, and disbursing funds as required

**Process Charter**

The ASRA partner organizations agree that:

1. BUILDING THE ALLIANCE: New members will be added when the partners signing this document decide to add them. This decision will be made during regular ASRA partner meetings. All members will be recruited to fill strategic needs of the collaboration. New members can ask to join, or an ASRA partner can nominate them to join. New members will be added if a majority of ASRA partners is in favor.
2. PARTICIPATION PROCESS: Each ASRA partner sends a representative, an individual who represents his or her organization. Each partner representative is expected to keep his or her home organization and governing board appraised of collaboration events, decisions, and discussions. Each partner representative is expected to attend all regularly scheduled partner meetings, or to assign a substitute representative with whom he or she is in close contact and to participate fully in open, honest communication processes and feedback. Any ASRA partner may choose to modify his or her participation and involvement in activities of the collaboration following disclosure and/or discussion with the other ASRA partners.
3. DECISION MAKING: We make decisions at regularly scheduled partner meetings by consensus if possible. When we must, we vote with majority ruling. Decisions must be made in the atmosphere of mutual benefit. Specific decisions can be delegated to staff, consultants, task forces, or others, ONLY after we have decided to delegate such a decision during a regularly scheduled collaboration meeting.
4. CONFLICT is a normal part of collaboration, and we seek to find creative resolutions to our conflicts. When consultants are employed, they have the right to intervene and direct our conflict dialogues. If we cannot resolve a conflict we will employ a conflict mediation firm or bring in a neutral third party to resolve the issues.
5. WE WILL REWARD OURSELVES with a celebration for partners and their key staff and board members. We will publicize our success through the appropriate media outlets as appropriate.

**Organization: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 **Chairman/President, Board of Directors**

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 **Executive Director**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**