**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE ALABAMA PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN LAUNCHES**

**“FEED ME WORDS” CAMPAIGN**

*Statewide Campaign to Promote Free Family Resources Supporting the*

*Healthy Brain Development of Their Children - Even Before They are Born*

**Montgomery, AL** – All babies need “language nutrition.” It’s just as important as food nutrition, and it has the proven ability to determine the best possible path to success for every child no matter where they live or their families’ economic challenges.

The Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) launched this week the “**Feed Me Words**” campaign, which is focused on spreading awareness on what adults can and must do right now to help every child in Alabama get the language nutrition they need for healthy brain development. It’s much easier than people realize; it costs nothing, can be given anytime and anywhere, and is a gift of joy and quality time for the adults, too.

“The first five years of a child’s life are the most critical years for their brain development; it’s when 95% of brain development occurs, and also when the unused brain cells get ‘pruned’,” explained APC Executive Director Gail Piggott. “Research shows that when adults have frequent, rich conversations with children during this very crucial time, they are helping determine how ready they will be for success in school and in life.”

The campaign, which launched its social media messaging in early December, is set to continue through the first quarter of 2020. Visitors of [FeedMeWords.org](https://feedmewords.org/) gain access to all of the free resources provided by the APC and [Talk With Me BabyTM](http://www.talkwithmebaby.org/), a program of the Georgia Department of Public Health.

 “Alabama is taking a strong lead investing in early childhood development and education,” said Governor Kay Ivey in a recent statement. “I’m excited to support the **Feed Me Words** campaign, and I encourage all Alabamians to tap into these resources and learn more about supporting every single child’s foundational brain development.

“Our children will be charged with leading our state and will need to enter the workforce fully prepared for success; when we do everything that we can to ensure their best possible start in life, we also ensure a prosperous future for Alabama,” said Governor Ivey.

The APC has partnered with the Alabama Department of Human Resources and the Georgia Department of Public Health to bring the expertise and resources of the Talk With Me Baby™ initiative to the state of Alabama. The online resources are free and provide many engaging and fun ways adults can talk, read and sing with the babies and toddlers in their lives.

“Children's lives can be changed if they are engaged from birth in rich conversation with adults,” said DHR Commissioner Nancy Buckner. “The Alabama Department of Human Resources (DHR) is thrilled to be a part of this exciting work to help ensure that all babies hear lots of loving words every day.

“We know that children need healthy food to grow; and research tells us that reading, singing, and talking to children is just as important to their growth,” Commissioner Buckner explained. “The ‘Language Nutrition’ they receive from parents and caregivers is essential to their future development and success in school.”

The multimedia campaign, incorporating social media, broadcast and print, and the website [**FeedMeWords.org**](http://www.feedmewords.org), is an effort to reach everyone in Alabama who interacts with children under the age of five, whether in their own families, in their community, or in a professional capacity. The message is simple: talk, read and sing WITH infants and toddlers, interacting with them using every-day language, eye contact, body language, and – most importantly – allowing children time to respond back to them, even if just through “coos,” gestures and eye movements.

*Related information for child care professionals:*

[The Alabama Partnership for Children (APC)](https://alabamapartnershipforchildren.org/) partnered earlier this year with the Atlanta Speech School’s Cox Campus to bring [Read Right from the Start](https://alabamapartnershipforchildren.org/our-work/rrfts/) – a free, online professional development program – to anyone in Alabama working with children from birth to pre-k, who wishes to enhance their skills to help children develop strong language and literacy skills. More information the program and how to register can be found at [AlabamaPartnershipforChildren.org/ourwork/rrfts](https://alabamapartnershipforchildren.org/our-work/rrfts/).

*Talk With Me Baby™ and Read Right from the Start are generously supported through funding from the Alabama Department of Human Resources, the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education, and the Alabama Department of Mental Health, and by private funding from the Mike and Gillian Goodrich Foundation, the Daniel Foundation of Alabama, the Protective Life Foundation and the PNC Foundation.*

***The Alabama Partnership for Children****is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization committed to enhancing the quality of life for Alabama’s children from birth to 5 years of age. This public-private partnership focuses on finding ways to use the state’s limited resources most efficiently to ensure that every Alabama child will have the opportunity to succeed in life. For more information, visit*[*AlabamaPartnershipforChildren.org*](https://alabamapartnershipforchildren.org/)*.*

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