



Talking Points: Pre-K Expansion/Funding

The Alabama Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics strongly supports Governor Ivey's Fiscal Year 2024 proposal for a combined \$42 million increase in state investments in Alabama's First Class Pre-K program and the Alabama Quality Stars Rating and Improvement System for Child Care. Alabama Quality Stars directly supports pre-k expansion by helping child care programs make the improvements needed to become First Class Pre-K providers

General messages to lawmakers:

- Thank you for increasing state pre-kindergarten investments over the past 11 years. Since 2012, state leaders have incrementally increased the level of investment in Alabama's First Class Pre-K program from \$19 million to \$173.7 million. As a result, Alabama's high-quality First Class Pre-K program has expanded its reach from six to 45 percent of four-year-olds statewide.
- Please build on this progress by supporting Governor Ivey's proposal to increase state investments in First Class Pre-K and the Alabama Quality Stars Rating and Improvement System for Child Care by a total of \$42 million during the 2023 Legislative Session. This increase will keep our state on track to fully fund Alabama's First Class Pre-K program to reach 70 percent of four-year-olds by 2026.
- This plan to incrementally increase state funding for First Class Pre-K over a multi-year period was developed in 2012 by the Alabama School Readiness Alliance's statewide, business-led Pre-K Task Force. This year's funding request would add approximately 100 new classrooms and expand enrollment from 45 to 47 percent of Alabama's four-year-olds.

Pre-K is working in Alabama:

- For 16 years in a row, the National Institute for Early Education Research has ranked Alabama's pre-k program as the number one state-funded pre-kindergarten program in the country for quality. Research by the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama and the University of Alabama at Birmingham has found that students who participate in a First Class Pre-K classroom - regardless of demographics, zip code or school - are more likely to be proficient in math and reading than their peers, and less likely to be chronically absent from school, held back a grade, in need of special education services, or have serious disciplinary issues.
- The Alabama Department of Children's Affairs administers First Class Pre-K by providing and monitoring grants to support quality pre-k classrooms in a variety of settings.