



**ALAS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CITY OF BUENOS AIRES SIGN AN AGREEMENT TO SUPPORT THE PROJECT “CENTERS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD”**

**Panama, April 20, 2009** - “ALAS Foundation and the government of the city of Buenos Aires signed an agreement to make effective the two million dollar donation to start the project “Centers for Early Childhood”. This project seeks to reach a total of 1.200 girls and boys, and to broaden in a 20% the educational coverage for children under five years old that live in the southern area of the city. The agreement was signed by Maria Eugenia Vidal, Secretary of Social Development of the City of Buenos Aires, and Juan Antonio Pungiluppi, ALAS’ Executive Director.

The Project, which was approved by the City of Buenos Aires through the Decree N° 306/2008, is directed to assist the neighborhoods that have the highest levels of poverty. It consists of the selection of existing nurseries and community dining halls in the neighborhoods of Villa Soldati, Bajo Flores, Villa Lugano, La Boca, Villa 21-24, Barracas and Parque Avellaneda, in order to be recycled, equipped and turned into Centers for Early Childhood that guarantee the healthy development of girls and boys from 45 days to 4 years old who are in a vulnerable situation.

ALAS, in conjunction with the Government of the City of Buenos Aires, will have an active participation in the development and implementation of the Centers for Early Childhood Program. ALAS will collaborate by monitoring, supervising and disseminating the launch, advances and results of the program in all the forums and fields where it takes part.

As part of the commitment acquired in the last Iberoamerican Summit in El Salvador, ALAS will present the project “Centers for early Childhood” at the next XIX Iberoamerican Summit 2009 in Estoril, Portugal, as a pilot experience and as an example of the Governments’ commitment with Early Education. ALAS has been part of the dialogues that have taken place with the purpose of presenting the final plan of the Program for Early Childhood for Latin America in the next Summit of Presidents.

Helping children in the early stages of life has a multiplier effect on society, and experts agree it is one of the best tools to fight poverty. Important scientific research have shown that human beings develop their intelligence, personality, social behavior, and all the other essential potentialities during the first six years of life. In a joint effort to contribute to early childhood development, ALAS Foundation and the Government of the City of Buenos Aires come together to take forward the project “Centers for Early Childhood.”

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