

DRAFT – December 6, 2006

Partners for Prosperous Athens Early Care and Learning Work Group

Vision: All young children in Clarke County will be ready to succeed in school and beyond.

Mission Statement: To reduce poverty in the next generation of Athenians by ensuring that all young children in Clarke County can experience high quality early care and learning in a safe and caring environment at home and in out-of-home early care and learning programs.

Objective I: Increase access to high quality early care and learning programs for children living in poverty and near poverty:

Recommendations for Objective I:

1. Educate the community about the need for quality early care and learning programs for all children.
2. Increase financial assistance for child care.
 - a. Advocate for increased federal funding for child care.
 - b. Create "Hope" Scholarships for Babies.
 - c. Seek employer support for child care for their employees (collaborate with the PPA-Work Force Committee regarding employer support for child care, research ways in which employers can do this, support development of child care center at UGA for employees/faculty).
 - d. Seek support from faith communities for child care for children living in poverty or near poverty and/or for children of their parishioners
3. Increase number of high quality private early care and learning centers and homes
 - a. Provide training followed by on-site technical assistance to improve quality.
 - b. Ask UGA and Athens Tech to find faculty and graduate students willing to volunteer free professional development for child care settings serving low income children.
 - c. Encourage civic clubs and faith communities to "adopt" early care and learning centers and homes and provide resources to improve the program/facility and to cover costs of seeking accreditation.
4. Preserve and expand government-funded programs (Early Head Start, Head Start, pre-K) to serve all eligible children in the community.
5. Provide Head Start for 3-year olds
6. Develop an annual agenda for early childhood development in the Athens area. This agenda could include:
 - a. Legislation and/or school policies that need to be addressed
 - b. Funding needs and where the funding can come from
 - c. Invite elected officials to events at early childhood sites and share our agenda with them and ask for their support
 - d. Maintain ongoing contact with our elected officials to help assure their ongoing support