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State school readiness groups to receive national pre-K award

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Representatives from the Alabama School Readiness Alliance and the Alabama Office of School Readiness will be in Washington on Wednesday to receive the Pre-K Champion Award.

The award is given by Pre-K Now, a national organization that promotes high-quality kindergarten for 4-year-olds.

The Alabama School Readiness Alliance is a network of more than 80 members from various sectors. It was created in 2006 to support state pre-k, according to a statement by the organization and VOICES for Alabama's Children.

The Alabama Office of School Readiness will also be honored during Wednesday's ceremony for working to ensure that the number of Alabama children with access to early learning programs was increasing.

"Alabama has emerged as a national leader in the pre-k movement," said Libby Doggett, executive director of Pre-K Now, in a prepared statement.

"Thanks to the work of the Alabama School Readiness Alliance and the Office of School Readiness, thousands of children will benefit from the enriching, nurturing experiences that will set them on a trajectory for educational and social success. These organizations have helped to expand access and maintain quality at the same time. This should be the goal for every state."

Brittany Winfree, project coordinator for the Alabama School Readiness Alliance, said Alabama lawmakers have done their part to support pre-k in the state by "beefing up" funding during the 2008 special legislative session.

"We are pleased by this national recognition, but are even more gratified that increasing numbers of Alabama children are being given the opportunity to enter kindergarten with the greatest opportunities to succeed," she said.

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