



Feb. 18, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Older Voters Raise Their Voices for Early Childhood Education *Seniors4Kids rally in Frankfort for Kentucky's children*

Frankfort— Older Kentuckians from all walks of life gathered in the Capitol Rotunda today to send a clear message to state legislators: Seniors care about early childhood education.

Grandparents, veterans, retirees and active citizens ages 50+ came together in Frankfort in support of Kentucky Seniors4Kids, an organization that shows the role older adults play in support of issues directly benefiting Kentucky youth.

As Kentuckians across the state work to recover from a grave economic situation, older adults in Frankfort stressed one solution to lawmakers: quality, voluntary early childhood education. "Investing in quality early education doesn't just benefit Kentucky down the road," said Norma Meek, a Lead Captain from Ashland. "It pays off today and tomorrow, by stimulating the economy and strengthening families."

A recent study by the University of Kentucky Center for Business and Economic Research found that every dollar invested to make preschool available to more Kentucky children would result in more than \$5 for the state.

As part of Kentucky Youth Advocates' Children's Advocacy Day, Seniors4Kids – with the help of the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence – gathered in Frankfort for the premiere of a video highlighting support for children, wrote letters to legislators and conducted intergenerational interviews with local AmeriCorps volunteers to capture stories about why older adults support pre-k.

"My grandchildren benefitted greatly from their quality pre-k experience," said Mary Musgrave of Lexington, the State Coordinator for Seniors4Kids in Kentucky. "I am committed to raising my voice to ensure that every child gets the same opportunity to have a quality start in life. Many people don't realize that seniors are truly passionate about ensuring opportunities for the next generations."

Kentucky Captains4Kids volunteers – as well as countless other older adult advocates in the state – span all paths, backgrounds and political inclinations. High-profile Kentuckians have added their voices to Seniors4Kids. First Lady of Kentucky Jane Beshear, Honorary Co-Chair of Kentucky Seniors4Kids along with former First Ladies Fletcher, Patton, Wilkinson, Jones, Ford, George, and Carroll, could not attend the Thursday event but issued the following statement: "Every child in Kentucky deserves a quality education and a strong start. Early childhood education is an investment that benefits families, communities and the entire state."

Research demonstrates that children who attend pre-k perform better in school and require fewer special education and remedial services, saving taxpayer dollars. Children who participate in pre-kindergarten programs are more likely to finish high school, acquire higher-paying jobs, and become more productive citizens. Early childhood education programs are shown to produce a more capable workforce, promote long-term fiscal stability, and ensure Kentucky's future economic competitiveness.

For more information about older adult efforts to support quality early childhood education in Kentucky, see www.gu.org and www.seniors4kids.org.

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***Generations United** is a national, non-profit organization that works to improve the lives of children, youth, and older people through intergenerational collaboration, public policies, and programs for the enduring benefit of all.*

***Seniors4Kids** is a civic engagement initiative at Generations United that demonstrates the important role older adults can play in support of issues that directly benefit children and youth. More than 160 Kentuckians serve as Captains4Kids and countless other older adults in the state have shown their support for voluntary quality early childhood education.*