



**ALAS IS THE ONLY GUEST SPEAKER AT THE LATIN AMERICAN MEETING OF
SECRETARIES OF EDUCATION**

Panama City, November 19, 2007 - - The ALAS Foundation announced that ALAS CEO Araceli Ruano extended an offer of assistance in a speech to the Latin American ministers of education at a conference entitled “Lessons Learned and Hemispheric Commitments for Early Childhood Education” in Cartagena, Colombia .

The members of ALAS are artists, entrepreneurs and intellectuals with deep roots in Latin America and Spain. We have the ability to mobilize not just the public, but also government and business in order to implement solutions that deal with the problem on many levels, from the grass roots to the corporate suites to the halls of power.

At birth, a child’s brain is only a quarter the size of an adult’s. By age 3, the brain has grown to 80 percent the size of an adult’s. Investing in this period of dramatic brain development is much more cost-effective than compensating for disadvantage in older children. The RAND Corporation recently cited research demonstrating that the return to society for every dollar invested in early education was as high as US\$17. Yet almost 40 percent of children in Latin America are not in early education programs.

ALAS would be honored to partner with the Latin American education authorities to work to give every child in Latin America a head start on a good life, to help us help you help children.

The Ministry of Education of the Republic of Colombia was the host of the Fifth Meeting of Ministers of Education under the auspices of the Inter-American Council on Integral Development of the Organization of American States. The meeting took place from November 12-14 in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia. ALAS was the only non-governmental organization given a speaking role in the formal program.

ALAS is a nonprofit organization founded on December 2006 by prominent Latin American artists, business men and intellectuals to mobilize Latin America’s society towards the implementation of integrated early childhood development public policies, so that every child from zero to six years old has access to health plans, education and nutrition.

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