



**ALAS APPLAUDS OBAMA'S INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT WITH A BILLIONAIRE BUDGET**

Washington, D.C., January 2009 – President Barack Obama places Early Childhood Development in the top of his education campaign with the announcement of a 10 Billion budget for early childhood education. ALAS supports the initiative of the new American government through an open letter published in the most important Latin news papers.

OPEN LETTER FORM ALAS ARTISTS

This document is backed by ALAS Foundation and signed by Alejandro Sanz, Diego Frenkel, Fonseca, Jorge Drexler, Juanes, Miguel Bose, Shakira, Tania Libertad y Carlos Clemente (Former Executive Director) to communicate and raise awareness about the importance of early education.

January 18, 2009

As part of ALAS foundation, we, the artists, want to highlight the decision of the President Elect of the United States to invest 10.000 million dollars to make early education universal in his country. This will mean a significant qualitative jump for the American education system. We want to echo this decision to celebrate the news that many children will benefit from this by having equal opportunities, especially in the Hispanic population. We consider this announcement ratifies what we have been making and saying from ALAS Foundation about the importance of investing in early education and of understanding what really is on stake.

Recent research has shown that between the zero and six years of life is when the talents of a person can be boosted. Early Childhood is the beginning of a virtuous cycle for the child benefited, for his family and the community that provides it. It has been proven that it is the most effective path towards equal opportunities and the social and economic development of a country. This decision of the President Elect Barack Obama confirms the rising importance that the topic will have in the world.

We would like to motivate our Latin American leaders to double their efforts in making early education universal. The government's investment in this segment will save us from all the consequences and later expenses in rehabilitation systems. We are sure that the school desertion and juvenile violence rates will decrease drastically, and that the per capita income of the future workers will increase. Therefore, the government will receive a clear and measurable return to their investment.

We, the artists, want to deliver our message through our voices: Investing in early education must be a priority in the region. Preschool, as the school system, has to be universal and at no cost. We know how big this challenge is, but we are sure that when we all are aware of how fundamental this is for our future we will start building an absolute solution. If we all care we can definitely make it.