

CONTACT: Ashley White, Greater Houston Partnership
713-844-3640
awhite@houston.org

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 4, 2015

***Early Matters* Coalition Announces Executive Director**

Early childhood education initiative welcomes Veronica Chapa to leadership role

HOUSTON (August 4, 2015) – The *Early Matters* coalition today announced that Veronica Chapa would join the organization as Executive Director.

Ms. Chapa joins Early Matters after serving as Deputy Director of Grants Management and Compliance for the City of Houston Housing & Community Development Department. She brings years of experience to the coalition, previously working as a Legislative Assistant and Special Assistant and Planner for the HOME Division of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs in Austin.

“I am very excited to welcome Veronica to lead the *Early Matters* collective impact effort,” said Jim Postl, Chair of Early Matters. “Veronica’s experience working with many different stakeholders in the city and in Austin is a key asset for the organization.”

Launched in 2014, *Early Matters* is a broad-based coalition of business, civic, education, philanthropic and nonprofit organizations and volunteers, working together to raise awareness about the importance of high quality early education and to make a strong case for increased investment in this critical, high return on investment area. *Early Matters’* mission is to ensure every child reads at or above grade level by 3rd grade. The coalition played a key role in helping pass HB 4, Texas’ new investment in pre-K, during the 84th Texas Legislature.

Research shows that more than 60 percent of children start kindergarten lacking basic letter identification skills and 80 percent are challenged with number recognition. Another study shows that a student who can’t read at grade level by the end of the third grade is four times more likely to drop out of high school.

“Improving the quality of early education is one of the most important steps we can take to ensure a strong workforce pipeline for our region,” said Bob Harvey, President and CEO of the Greater Houston Partnership. “We are excited to have Veronica on board and know she will help make *Early Matters* even more effective as we work across the community to ensure every child has the foundation they need to excel.”

Veronica earned a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Spanish from University of Texas at San Antonio. She also earned a Masters in Community and Regional Planning and a Masters in Latin American Studies from the UT Austin. She is on the Board of the Latin Women’s Initiative and was in Leadership Houston, Class XXX. She is in the current class of the American Leadership Forum. She joins *Early Matters* on August 17.

###