



**PRESS RELEASE
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FORUM SELECTS ERIN SMELTZER AS NEXT PRESIDENT AND CEO

TALLAHASSEE, FL (May 12, 2022) The Children’s Forum, along with our Board of Directors, is pleased to announce that Erin Smeltzer has been selected as the Forum’s next President and CEO. Dr. Phyllis Kalifeh announced her plan to retire on July 31, 2022, after serving as the Forum’s leader for the past 22 years.

For nearly 20 years, Erin has worked tirelessly to advocate for advancements in quality early childhood education. Most recently, she served as Executive Director of the Association of Early Learning Coalitions where she actively streamlined best practices across the state’s 30 early learning coalitions and built partnerships to help give all children an equitable early learning experience. She previously managed statewide quality initiatives funded by the School Readiness Program at the Florida Department of Education (FDOE). In addition, she acted as interim manager of Florida’s VPK program in her final year at FDOE.

“I am confident that Erin is the right individual to write the next chapter in the Forum’s story,” said Dr. Kalifeh. “She is no stranger to the early childhood field and is well-qualified to assume her new role with the Forum. We look forward to working with our partners to improve the landscape for early learning in Florida and are delighted to welcome Erin.”

Erin received her Bachelor’s degree in Child and Family Development from the University of Georgia, a Master’s degree in Education from Nova Southeastern University, and is a Zero to Three Academy Fellow. As president of a local NAEYC affiliate, the public policy representative for Florida AEYC, and a former child care center director, Erin advocates at the national level that early childhood must become a priority in our society.

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About the Children’s Forum

The Children’s Forum is a statewide, not-for-profit organization with an uncompromising vision to make Florida a state where children grow and thrive in quality environments and where families have access to information, resources, and options to assist them in their parenting roles. Through a broad array of programs, services, research and advocacy, the Forum is committed to achieving our vision and expanding opportunities for success.

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