



Collaboration for  
Early Childhood  
*Strong Start, Bright Future*

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## PRESS RELEASE

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### THE COLLABORATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD ANNOUNCES LIFTING LITTLE VOICES 2021: PLANNING FOR CHANGE – AN EARLY CHILDHOOD FORUM

*Lifting Little Voices is a biennial community forum, hosted by the Collaboration for Early Childhood, to bring local leaders together to discuss the importance of early childhood in policy and leadership decisions.*

**OAK PARK, ILLINOIS, JANUARY 21, 2021** – The Collaboration for Early Childhood is excited to host Lifting Little Voices, a community forum that will take place on February 18, 2021 from 6:30 – 8:15 p.m. The event will be hosted virtually, and is open to the public. Child care providers, parents, caregivers, early childhood educators, systems leaders, and members of the community who are interested in the health and development of children birth-five years of age are especially encouraged to attend.

“I am thrilled that the Collaboration can serve as a space to have these conversations about the future of our children,” says **John Borrero**, Executive Director of the Collaboration for Early Childhood. After an overview of the work of the Collaboration in Oak Park and River Forest, **Grace Araya**, Director of Community Systems Statewide Supports at Illinois Action for Children will speak on the topic of: Community Systems Development: What Does It Take? **John Borrero** will facilitate a panel that will serve as a window into the state of our community as it relates to early childhood. The panel will also explore opportunities to deepen early childhood work in 2021.

“We are delighted to welcome panelists from a variety of professional backgrounds to give us a multifaceted perspective on the state of our community,” says **Becki Streit**, Chair of the Collaboration for Early Childhood Board of Directors. Panelists include: **Rebecca Barbato**, pediatrician based out of the Loyola Center for Health at North Riverside, **Whitney Brooks**, Community Ambassador at the Collaboration for Early Childhood, **Dr. Jaqueline Moore**, Psychologist and School Board President at Oak Park and River Forest High School, **Jill Pacyna**, Prekindergarten teacher at Henry Wadsworth Longfellow School (PKP), **Robert Tucker**, COO and Executive Vice President of Programs at Chicago Community Loan Fund, and **Raheem Young**, Co-founder of Welcome to Fatherhood, Inc.

After the panel discussion, **Dana Garner**, an Early Childhood Education Program Manager with the Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF) will speak on the implications for policy and advocacy in early childhood, and **Becki Streit** will conclude the evening.

*The Collaboration for Early Childhood is a public/private agency based in Oak Park, Illinois that seeks to improve early childhood outcomes. They do this through capacity-building partnerships, and support of families, educators, health professionals and systems leaders that care for children five and under.*