



**Charlie Crist**  
Governor  
**Monesia T. Brown**  
Director

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## **Office of Early Learning Director Named**

*Dr. Birken selected to lead Early Learning, Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten and other vital programs*

**Tallahassee, FL** – After a national search, Brittany Birken, Ph.D., has been appointed Director of the Office of Early Learning within the Agency for Workforce Innovation.

Formerly a childcare professional and researcher, Birken earned her Ph.D. in Child Development from the Florida State University. She has been with the Agency since 2005, having served as a Program Administrator, Assistant Director and most recently as Interim Director, all within the Office of Early Learning.

"I am thrilled to have such a talented and dedicated leader in this key position," said Monesia T. Brown, Agency Director. "Her enthusiasm, training and depth of knowledge are the perfect match for this vital role."

Supporting both the Agency's mission to advance the economic well-being and self-sufficiency of Floridians through premier early learning and workforce services, as well as one of Governor Crist's top priorities of strengthening Florida's families, the Office of Early Learning is committed to ensuring Florida's children are emotionally, physically, socially and intellectually ready to enter school and ready to learn, as well as to stress the crucial role of parents as their child's first teacher. Among others, the Office oversees Florida's School Readiness, Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten and Child Care Resource and Referral programs. For more information about the Office of Early Learning, [follow this link](#).

As Director of the Office of Early Learning, Birken will also serve as an Agency liaison to the state's 31 local Early Learning Coalitions, as well as our state partners the Florida Department of Education and the Florida Department of Children and Families. Early Learning Coalitions are composed of members from the private and public sectors and represent all of Florida's 67 counties. The Governor appoints each Coalition chair and two additional local Coalition members, and each Coalition is responsible for administering their area's early learning services.

"Florida is home to more than one million children younger than five, with almost 600 more being born every day," Birken stated. "Of these, more than a half-million attend some type of early learning program. Our children count on us to make sure they have every opportunity for success in school and in life and I am very grateful for the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of so many children – and in our state's future workforce."

Dr. Birken will assume her new role effective immediately.

### **Agency for Workforce Innovation**

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