



**Georgia Dept
of Early Care
and Learning**
BRIGHT FROM THE START

Brian P. Kemp
Governor

Amy M. Jacobs
Commissioner

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact: Reg Griffin
404-656-0239 office
404-309-8131 mobile
reg.griffin@dec.al.ga.gov



Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning Welcomes Three New Members to Board of Directors

New board members hail from LaGrange, Gainesville, Marietta

ATLANTA, GA (March 10, 2026) — The Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning (GFEC+L) is pleased to announce the appointment of three distinguished leaders to its Board of Directors: **Judge R. Michael Key**, **Abigail Thompson Garcia**, and **Callie Flack**. Each brings deep expertise in public service, advocacy, and community leadership that will strengthen the Foundation’s work on behalf of Georgia’s youngest learners.

The Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to expanding access to high-quality early childhood education across the state. The Foundation supports children, families, providers, and educators through strategic investments, collaborations, and partnerships that strengthen early learning experiences and help prepare Georgia’s current and future workforce. Its vision is to ensure the best possible beginnings for all of Georgia’s children, regardless of income or location.

Judge R. Michael Key

Judge R. Michael Key served as Juvenile Court Judge for Troup County, Georgia from 1989 until 2024, making him one of the state’s longest-serving juvenile court judges. He still sits as a Senior Judge for the State of Georgia, presiding for other judges around the state when they need assistance due to conflicts or heavy caseloads. Throughout his career, Judge Key has been a national leader in juvenile justice and child welfare, including serving as President of the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges and President of the Georgia Council of Juvenile Court Judges. He has been widely recognized for his leadership and advocacy on behalf of children and families, including receiving the Supreme Court of Georgia’s prestigious Amicus Curiae Award for exceptional service to the judiciary. Judge Key continues

to serve his community as the Co-Lead of a five-county coalition of Resilient Georgia better known as Resilient WEST. Judge Key's lifelong commitment to improving outcomes for vulnerable children aligns closely with the Foundation's mission.

Abigail Thompson Garcia

Abigail Thompson Garcia is the Director of Government Relations and Advocacy at Shepherd Center, where she leads state and federal advocacy efforts to advance policy priorities affecting individuals with disabilities and their families. Based in Atlanta, she brings more than a decade of experience in government affairs, public policy, and legislative strategy, including prior roles with Wellstar Health System, the Georgia Association of REALTORS®, and the Georgia General Assembly and Governor's Office. Abigail holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia and has recently completed both a Master of Business Administration and a Master of Health Administration at Georgia State University. Her background in health policy and advocacy provides valuable perspective as the Foundation works to strengthen early childhood systems statewide.

Callie Flack

Callie Flack is an Account Director at Forum Communications in Gainesville, Georgia, where she develops and manages creative marketing strategies, public relations, and communications plans across multiple accounts. She previously worked with the North Georgia Community Foundation and has been deeply involved in philanthropic and civic efforts throughout Hall County, through organizations such as Family Promise of Hall County, the Gainesville City School System, Boys & Girls Clubs of Lanier, Greater Hall Chamber of Commerce, Grace Episcopal Church of Gainesville, and the Junior League of Gainesville-Hall County. Callie has been recognized for her community leadership, including receiving the Gus Whalen Young Philanthropist Award from the North Georgia Community Foundation and being selected as the Gainesville Jaycees' Young Woman of the Year. A graduate of the University of Georgia with a master's degree from Brenau University, she brings strong expertise in storytelling, community engagement, and philanthropy to the Board.

About the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning

Founded in 2017, the Georgia Foundation for Early Care and Learning is an independent 501(c)(3) organization that supports and enhances early childhood education in partnership with the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL). Through grantmaking, innovation, and recognition of excellence in the early childhood workforce, the Foundation works to ensure that all children in Georgia are prepared to succeed when they enter school and beyond.