



# Collaboration for Early Childhood

*Strong Start, Bright Future*

## Position Guide

### *Executive Director*

<http://collab4kids.org/>





**Collaboration for  
Early Childhood**  
*Strong Start, Bright Future*

**POSITION:** Executive Director  
**REPORTS TO:** Board of Directors  
**LOCATION:** Oak Park, Illinois (Chicagoland)

### **VISION STATEMENT**

*A community where every child thrives.*

### **MISSION**

*We champion high-quality early childhood care and learning experiences and support for families, so all children develop their full potential.*

### **VALUES**

- C.** Collaboration (connection)
- A.** Action
- R.** Results
- E.** Excellence

### **ABOUT COLLABORATION FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Founded in 2002 by all six of Oak Park's governing bodies, the Collaboration for Early Childhood is a public/private partnership that leverages the resources of more than 70 local agencies to promote the development of a comprehensive, community-wide system of high-quality programs and services to foster physical, cognitive and social-emotional development during the critical first five years of life. All Oak Park jurisdictions participate in the Collaboration for Early Childhood: the Village of Oak Park, District 97 (the elementary school district), District 200 (the high school), Oak Park Township, Oak Park Public Library and Park District of Oak Park. In addition to the jurisdictions, the Collaboration's partners include a wide range of early childhood service providers and stakeholders. The Collaboration serves as the local "table" at which virtually all stakeholders in the early childhood system meet regularly.



The Collaboration estimates that there are 5,000 children birth to kindergarten age living in the Oak Park and River Forest community and that 800 are at-risk due to family income, developmental delays and stressed family situations. Its programs and activities are designed to benefit all children, with a special focus on at-risk children.

In April 2013, the Village of Oak Park, Oak Park Elementary School District 97 and Oak Park River Forest High School District 200 approved a contract for services with the Collaboration for Early Childhood to establish a comprehensive, high-quality system of services through a three-year ramp-up period beginning in July 2013. The most significant expansion of the early childhood system in Oak Park supports the implementation of model fidelity home visiting and low-intensity parenting support programs to benefit all children ages birth to three living in Oak Park and River Forest.



The Collaboration is governed by a 15-member Board of Directors which works in consultation with The Collaboration Council, a body comprised of approximately 80 local organizations and municipal agencies that impact young children and families. The Council meets every other month with an annual meeting in May. The Council receives reports and presentations on the Collaboration's activities and accomplishments and is asked to approve budgets and Board

appointments. The Collaboration also reports to the Inter-Governmental Agreement Governing Board that monitors the contract for services with the Village of Oak Park and School Districts 97 and 200.

In December 2017, the inter-governmental agreement (IGA) voted to fund the Collaboration for the next five years.

### **THE OPPORTUNITY**

The Executive Director of the Collaboration for Early Childhood will be provided the opportunity to substantially shape the long-term future of this highly accomplished, regionally recognized early education organization with a trusted reputation, dedicated staff, and an engaged Board of Directors. Specifically, the Executive Director will be charged with enhancing organizational and programmatic efforts across the organization. Critical strategic opportunities exist for the Collaboration to expand its impact across all program areas. The chief executive will be supported by a motivated, dedicated Board of Directors seeking to build upon a strong foundation and advance our effectiveness, impact and influence with ambition.

The Collaboration has been widely recognized for its innovative approach to early education collaboration. In November 2013, the Collaboration entered into a five-year contract with Chapin Hall, a research and policy center through the University of Chicago, to build an unprecedented, unified early childhood database. This system will give early childhood service providers a real-time, three-dimensional map detailing the collective well-being and needs of Oak Park and River Forest's children, age 5 and under. The comprehensive database will analyze and integrate a multitude of disparate bodies of information, from data on school enrollment and poverty levels at the local level to subsidized child care and SNAP benefit data held at the state level.

In the fall of 2017, the Collaboration was selected to be one of four partner communities for the Erikson Institute's Early Development Instrument (EDI). This exciting opportunity brings together policy and program representatives from District 97, District 200, the Village of Oak Park, the Oak Park Public Library, the Park District of Oak Park, Oak Park Township, Success of All Youth, Chapin Hall, and many community partners, child care providers and parents. This team will look at results from a survey of kindergartners that covers areas such as physical health, social competence, emotional maturity, language development, and communication skills. This spring, there will be greater insight into how the community can better support families before their children enter the school system at age 5 and the subsequent policy changes or resource realignment needed.



Through generous funding from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation, Erikson is partnering with select Illinois communities to implement the EDI through a three-phase pilot. Erikson supports community partners in the form of coaching, technical assistance, and resources to implement the EDI, analyze the results, and develop action plans to improve the development of young children, including school readiness.

The Collaboration's next Executive Director will have the opportunity to leverage the organization's expanded influence and funding, potentially beyond the state of Illinois. The Executive Director will enhance the organization's advocacy profile and will help shape a policy agenda for early learning. He or she will help expand the organization's opportunities for revenue generation and strategic partnerships. Most significantly, the Collaboration will continue to serve as one of the state's primary thought leaders in early childhood education.

### **POSITION SUMMARY**

Reporting to the Board of Directors, the Executive Director provides leadership and direction in fulfilling and advancing the vision, mission, values and goals of the Collaboration for Early Childhood. The Executive Director is responsible for leading the Collaboration in achieving its operational and strategic goals including successful performance on the Contract for Services with the Village of Oak Park and School Districts 97 and 200; donor development and grant seeking; program development and operations; fiscal management; board relations; human capital management; data collection and analysis; and administrative matters. The Executive Director also serves as an advocate for the interests of young children and their families to the private and public sectors outside of Oak Park. Major responsibilities include:

#### **Community and Public Relations**

- Represent the Collaboration to the Intergovernmental Agreement Governing Board
- Represent and promote the Collaboration to education, social service, health, business and civic organizations
- Establish and maintain effective professional relationships with federal, state, county, village and community organizations and funders on behalf of the Collaboration

- Act as a spokesperson for the Collaboration with media, community organizations, other agencies and groups
- Advocate for quality and equitable early childhood education and care for all young children
- Promote Collaboration involvement in state and community level committees working to improve services and or advance the early childhood field

#### **Human Capital Management**

- Recommend staffing to the Board to ensure that the Collaboration achieves its goals and its mission
- Manage the Collaboration's staff including: hiring, termination, ongoing staff development and providing verbal and/or written evaluations of staff, engagement of contractors and monitoring of performance on contracts, and participation of volunteers; inform the Board of Directors regarding staffing issues as appropriate
- Ensure that employment policies are enforced and in compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and Collaboration policies

#### **Donor Development and Fundraising**

- Oversee all donor development and fundraising activities including: grant writing, cultivation and stewardship of donors, event planning, and identifying new donors

#### **Board Relations**

- Cultivate partnerships with the Board of Directors and oversee the preparation and distribution of Board materials; serve as *ex officio* on Board committees and work with the Board leadership to implement Board decisions
- Inform the Board of early childhood issues and community needs, concerns and opportunities and their impact on the Collaboration; make recommendations to the Board regarding these issues
- Serve as a liaison between the Collaboration Board and its provider, jurisdictional, and community partners

#### **Strategy Development and Planning**

- Develop and execute the strategic plan, long term goals and operational plans of the Collaboration with the Board of Directors, the Collaboration Council, the staff, and committee members

#### **Program Leadership**

- Assure alignment of Collaboration programs with the Contract for Early Childhood Services and the Plan for Progress
- Oversee the development, implementation, and evaluation of programs

#### **Data Collection and Analysis Leadership**

- Oversee collection of data, promulgation and implementation of data sharing agreements with partners, and adherence to industry standards for data security
- Oversee contractors who develop and maintain the Collaboration's Unified Early Childhood database and support the data collection efforts of the Collaboration and its partners
- Staff the Measurement and Evaluation Committee and work with committee members and contractors on data analysis and report development

### **Fiscal Management**

- Ensure the Collaboration has the financial where-with-all to thrive and deliver on its mission, including the necessary financial discipline needed to achieve its goals
- Prepare and manage the annual budget including expense management
- Ensure accurate financial reports are prepared monthly and provide explanations of financial activity each month to the Board Treasurer and Board of Directors
- Oversee all financial activity, including management of contracted bookkeeping services and ensure that processes are in place to comply with the Collaboration's finance policies and procedures, and any contractual requirements

### **CANDIDATE PROFILE**

The next Executive Director will be an experienced, visionary leader with progressive leadership experience and a passion for the unique mission and vision of the Collaboration for Early Childhood. The new leader will have the ability to guide the organization through periods of growth and change and will have demonstrated the ability to increase an organization's regional public visibility, footprint and scale. He or she will have experience building collaboration among an array of external organizations and stakeholders to improve programming and policy outcomes for the early childhood learning sector. Experience in the field of early childhood and education is highly desired.

He or she will have prior management experience, preferably in nonprofit management and/or collective impact leadership, and will have analytical, organizational and problem-solving skills that support sound decision making. Strong business, financial and organizational savvy will be evidenced by a proven ability to set clear priorities, delegate and guide the investment of human and other resources to help achieve goals.

As the chief representative of the Collaboration, the successful candidate will have excellent written and oral communication skills including public presentations. A proven track record of political savvy and diplomacy will be highly beneficial. He/she will embrace data to inform program decisions and provide evidence needed for policy direction and fundraising.

The next Executive Director will serve as the primary external representative of the Collaboration and will possess strong networking skills to help foster the fundraising program for the organization. He or she will have demonstrated skills in development, including cultivating and soliciting major gifts, corporate and foundation grants, and nurturing a culture of giving.

The next Collaboration leader will have the drive and skill to build upon a culture that is positive and productive; this leader will help the team continue to grow a culture of accountability and of mutual support. The Collaboration seeks an active listener with a relational approach who will support and value the important skills of staff and who will bring a collaborative, communicative and compassionate nature to problem solving. The Collaboration believes in and practices equal opportunity in its operations, community engagement, employment, and decision-making and encourages inclusion of diverse members of our community. The successful candidate will demonstrate a history of building and supporting a diverse team.

The minimum of a bachelor's degree is required, though a master's or advanced degree is preferred. Evidence of continuing education, certification and executive level training is desirable. Applications and nominations are being received by Kittleman & Associates, LLC. To apply, please send a current resume and letter of interest to

<https://www.kittlemansearch.com/collaboration-for-early-childhood/>

For more information on the Collaboration for Early Childhood, please visit

[www.collab4kids.org](http://www.collab4kids.org)