



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Voices for Georgia's Children Welcomes Judy Fitzgerald as Executive Director**



ATLANTA – Voices for Georgia's Children is thrilled to announce Judy Fitzgerald as its new Executive Director, effective February 19, 2024.

With an illustrious career spanning over twenty-five years, Judy brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record of compassionate and strategic leadership. Judy served as Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) from 2016 to 2022. Her tenure was marked by transformative initiatives, navigating budget challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a strong focus on improving the lives of individuals with behavioral health challenges and intellectual and developmental disabilities.

"Judy's extensive experience aligns seamlessly with Voices' mission," said Voices' board chair Cindy Abel. "Her passion and commitment to children and families while in government and non-profit settings underscores her dedication to making a positive impact on the lives of those in need."

For more than twenty years, Voices for Georgia's Children has built a strong reputation as the state's only comprehensive statewide child policy and advocacy organization. We serve as a trusted, non-partisan resource for legislators, philanthropy, and a wide array of stakeholders who care about the children and youth of the state. As Judy joins the organization as executive director, she will lead a strategic planning process to set the vision and direction of Voices and its future work.

"Voices for Georgia's Children has an incredible legacy, bipartisan trust, and a strong reputation through Georgia," said Judy. "I am honored to join an organization known for its intelligence, compassion, and tenacity. Across the Voices' board and staff, this is an organization that thinks deeply and acts collaboratively and courageously. We know there are opportunities to bring a 'whole child approach' to crucial conversations happening in communities around the state. I am excited to tackle the challenges ahead, laser-focused on our vision to improve policies and systems that will allow all children in Georgia to thrive."

A social worker by trade, Judy has a history of strong leadership in health and human services. Prior to DBHDD, she served as Executive Director of the National Mental Health Association of Georgia, Senior Vice President of Strategy at View Point Health and, more recently, advisor to Mercy Care - the highly regarded Federally Qualified Health Center. Judy began her career at the Mental Health Program of The Carter Center, working for former First Lady Rosalyn Carter on domestic and international advocacy and policy efforts to promote mental health and reduce the stigma of mental illness.

Judy earned her master's degree in social work from the University of Georgia. She and her husband Tim Gould live in Cobb County with their two children, Abbie and Jack.

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### ***About Voices for Georgia's Children***

*Voices for Georgia's Children is the state's only comprehensive policy and advocacy organization committed to improving the lives of children in Georgia. Through research and analysis, public education, convening and engagement with state decision-makers, Voices is striving to ensure ALL children thrive. Our work is framed in a holistic "whole child" perspective that allows us to identify how different policies impact children and to propose solutions that benefit children on multiple levels.*