



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

Altoria E. White
Director, Strategic Communications
Episcopal Children's Services
(904) 726-1500 (O) | (904) 612-5982 (C)
altoria.white@ecs4kids.org

NEW CEO NAMED AT ONE OF FLORIDA'S LARGEST YOUTH SERVICE NON-PROFITS

Dr. Natalya Bannister Roby to Lead Episcopal Children's Services



JACKSONVILLE, Fla., January 11, 2024 – Episcopal Children's Services (ECS), a leader in early childhood education in North and Central Florida, is pleased to welcome Dr. Natalya Bannister Roby as the new Chief Executive Officer, effective January 16, 2024. ECS is a leader in early childhood education, serving thousands of children and their families throughout the state of Florida. With a budget of \$100M+, the agency offers early childhood education and holistic family services, including Head Start and Early Head Start programs, while also delivering School Readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten services to the community.

Dr. Bannister Roby brings a wealth of experience, knowledge, and a proven track record of transforming organizations through her purpose-driven culture efforts. Her leadership philosophy, as shared in her [TedxUF](#) talk, emphasizes "The Power of Leading with Love." This unique approach demonstrates her commitment to fostering positive, inclusive, and compassionate work environments. With a career of servant leadership, Dr. Bannister Roby has held key leadership positions at organizations in North and Central Florida. Her experience includes working with Boys & Girls Club where she garnered national attention for her award-winning programs and most recently at the PACE Center for Girls' national office, leading center operations throughout Florida. Throughout her career, she has successfully navigated challenges while driving growth, innovation and championing inclusion and belonging.

"I approach this work with my whole heart. It is a calling," she said. "Throughout my professional journey, I have witnessed the importance of early childhood education and prevention as crucial elements in fostering stronger and healthier communities. Together, we can secure a brighter future for children and families across Florida."

With a Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership, specializing in Executive and Organizational Leadership, Dr. Bannister Roby brings a wealth of knowledge to her role as Chief Executive Officer. Her

academic background not only enhances her strategic decision-making but also reflects her commitment to continuous learning and improvement.

ECS Board President Thabata Ford welcomes a new beginning. "I have extended a warm welcome to Dr. Bannister Roby on behalf of the Board of Trustees," she said. "Her leadership will undoubtedly guide us to new heights, and we look forward to achieving great success in the years to come."

Chair of the CEO search committee, Fr. Wiley Ammons is anticipating a bright future for the agency. "We are delighted to have Dr. Bannister Roby join the ECS team. Her enthusiasm, mission mindset, and heart-led leadership will be a gift for our students, parents, and staff alike," commented Fr. Ammons.

Dr. Bannister Roby is also looking forward to the new beginning, making an impact and reaching new heights. "I am honored to lead Episcopal Children's Services as we embark on this exciting next chapter. Building upon Connie Stophel's strong foundation, our commitment to children achieving their full potential remains our top priority. I am eager to collaborate with the entire team at ECS to craft innovative strategies addressing the unique challenges of children and families who need us most," said Dr. Bannister Roby.

Connie Stophel served as ECS' Chief Executive Officer for the past two decades and has been with the organization for 34 years. The agency extends its gratitude to Connie Stophel for her valuable contributions and leadership during her long career in public service and commitment to the non-profit community.

Dr. Bannister Roby will be responsible for overseeing the strategic vision of the organization and day-to-day operations of ECS. She will be working closely with the existing leadership team and the Board of Trustees to build on the strengths and opportunities in this next chapter for ECS.

About Episcopal Children's Services

Offering early childhood education and holistic family services, Episcopal Children's Services provides School Readiness, Head Start, and Early Head Start programs to more than 27,000 children and their families in 14 counties in Florida, including Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Citrus, Clay, Dixie, Duval, Gilchrist, Lake, Levy, Marion, Nassau, Putnam, and St. Johns counties.

ECS uses research and best practices to help families ensure their children enter school ready to learn. Talented, dedicated teachers and staff work proactively with children from birth to age five and their families to build a strong educational foundation.

###