



The Early Childhood Options' Board of Directors is delighted to announce the appointment of Catherine Schaaf as the new Executive Director. Catherine brings a wealth of experience and a strong commitment to ensuring that all young children and early childhood educators are valued, healthy and thriving. "I am honored by this opportunity to continue the mission of Early Childhood Options, to improve the quality, affordability, and accessibility of early childhood education in Summit County. We have made a lot of progress this year with the launch of Universal PreK, and our own Summit Tuition Assistance programs, Summit PreK (SPK) and First Steps. This is in addition to our other excellent programs, Head Start and Early Head Start; and Quality Initiatives with Right Start, SPK and Colorado Shines. I look forward to moving the work ahead, building strong relationships with all community members involved."

Catherine came to Summit County in 2006, after graduating college in New Hampshire. Catherine has more than 18 years of experience in the early childhood field - She began her career as a teacher at the Carriage House Early Learning Center in Breckenridge, then worked at Summit County's Family and Intercultural Resource Center as a parent educator. Catherine first joined the Early Childhood Options team in 2013. In 2018 Catherine took on the role of Program Director, overseeing Quality Initiatives, Strong Future-SPK and Tuition Assistance.

Catherine is expected to start in her new role on September 5, 2023. To ensure a smooth transition, Catherine will be working with the outgoing Executive Director, Lucinda Burns, throughout September.

"On behalf of the board", states Board Vice-Chair Kelly Renoux, "we are excited as Catherine has extensive experience in early childhood programs, as well as a passion to serve our community. She has been a key employee with us for over 8 years, and we are confident in her ability to continue Early Childhood Options' great work. We are especially excited as she has already been working on the launch of our new county-wide tuition program. Lucinda leaves huge shoes to fill, and we thank her for everything she has done for the young people of our county; we are excited for Catherine to usher us into new territory!"

Catherine Schaaf can be contacted at Catherine@earlychildhoodoptions.org, 970-406-3067.