



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Early Childhood Investment Corporation announces new CEO** *Starfish Family Services Executive to Take Helm Next Month*

LANSING -- The Executive Committee of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation today announced the appointment of Marijata C. Daniel-Echols to replace retiring Chief Executive Officer Judy Y. Samelson.

Dr. Daniel-Echols, currently Vice President of Early Childhood Policy and Programs for Starfish Family Services in Inkster, is a seasoned early childhood professional with extensive background in research, public policy, advocacy and community collaboration. She will begin October 21.

“We are delighted that Dr. Daniel-Echols will be joining our organization,” said Beverly Burns, chairperson of the Corporation board. “She has the knowledge, passion and leadership skills necessary to make a difference for Michigan’s children and families.

“Much has been accomplished under the leadership of Judy Samelson and now Dr. Daniel-Echols will continue to ensure that the Early Childhood Investment Corporation is a significant contributor to Michigan’s efforts to build a comprehensive and integrated early childhood system.”

Dr. Daniel-Echols’ extensive experience, as Director of Research at HighScope Educational Research Foundation in Ypsilanti; Senior Director of Education, Families, and Communities for the New York-based Families and Work Institute, and most recently as a Starfish Vice President, will serve to inform the work at the Investment Corporation.

At Starfish, she has been responsible for program development and innovation, community collaboration and advocacy. As Senior Director of Education, Families, and Communities at the Families and Work Institute, her work focused on professional development for early childhood educators, interactive learning opportunities for families, and birth through 3rd grade systems building. At HighScope she was principal investigator on many research and program evaluation projects and worked on the development of tools designed to measure child outcomes and early childhood program quality.

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As CEO of the Investment Corporation, Dr. Daniel-Echols will lead the executive leadership team to advance the organization’s work in early childhood innovation and design, technical assistance and consultation as well as in public education and community engagement – all aimed at increasing public and private investment in early childhood and improving outcomes and school readiness for young children.

“When it comes to policy I want to stress the importance of marrying research and practice,” she said. “In particular, we must bring what we know about innovative and best practices to life in the field and inform policymaking with real world implementation experiences from high quality programs.”

“I am energized by this opportunity to be a part of the Early Childhood Investment Corporation. This organization has an important role to play as a resource to families, practitioners and policy makers.”

Daniel-Echols is a graduate of the University of Michigan with a bachelor’s degree in sociology, a master’s degree of public policy and a Ph.D. in political science. She also holds a master’s degree in sociology from the University of California, Los Angeles.

An independent, publicly owned nonprofit, the Early Childhood Investment Corporation helps Michigan rebuild its economy by delivering better education, health and economic outcomes through effective early childhood development. The Corporation works in partnership with the Michigan Department of Education-Office of Great Start and local communities, using solid, evidence-based practices to advise public, private, state and local efforts to assure that all investments in early childhood development produce solid returns for all who have a share in Michigan’s economic future.

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