Action for Children Names Chief Executive Officer
National Early Childhood Leader Joining Local Agency

(COLUMBUS) — Action for Children Board President Jeff Cullman today announced that national early care and education leader Dr. Eric Karolak will lead the local non-profit agency. He will become the new Chief Executive Officer on March 4, 2013, replacing retiring CEO Diane Bennett.

Karolak comes to Action for Children after serving as executive director of the Early Care and Education Consortium (ECEC), an alliance of more than 8,000 early learning programs providing care and education for nearly one million children in the 50 states and the District of Columbia. ECEC supports sound investments in early childhood education and has focused on child care assistance, professional development, prekindergarten policies and quality initiatives.

“Eric is one of the country’s strongest advocates for young children,” said Jeff Cullman, Action for Children Board President. “Children and families throughout central Ohio will benefit from his leadership and vision.”

Previously Karolak led the National Child Care Information Center, the largest federal clearinghouse and technical assistance center focused on child care and early education for low-income families. He also has worked closely with states developing the technical aspects of child care assistance programs, quality rating systems and partnerships across early childhood programs.

A Toledo native, Karolak also has served on numerous boards and advisory panels of national early childhood organizations, as well as a member of the Montgomery County (Maryland) Commission on Child Care, on the executive board of St. John Learning Center in Columbus, and on the United Way of Central Ohio’s Employment Vision Council.

“I’m thrilled to be returning to Ohio and to be joining this exceptional, nationally-recognized organization,” said Karolak. “For more than 40 years, the team at Action for Children has made a critical difference in the lives of children and families, and I look forward to continuing that record of strengthening central Ohio communities.”
Karolak holds a doctorate from The Ohio State University, and is a graduate of the University of Toledo.

Action for Children (actionforchildren.org) is central Ohio's resource and referral agency for child care, early learning programs and services for parents, professionals and the general community. The organization serves as an advocate for the rights of all children to have access to quality care and early learning programs needed for success in kindergarten, school and life.

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