



## SARALYN GRASS

Saralyn Grass is a graduate of the Florida State University College of Education, earning her Ed.D. in Program Evaluation in 2014. She is currently the Chief Programs Officer for the Kids Hope Alliance in Jacksonville, FL. Her professional career, both before, during and after her graduation, has focused substantially on early childhood education.

Grass began her doctoral education at Florida State University in 2007, having recently earned her M.S. in Human Development from Virginia Tech in 2005, focusing on children with special needs and community agencies. Prior to that, she

earned her B.S. in Psychology from the University of North Florida. During her time at Virginia Tech and Florida State, she was involved in numerous research projects, resulting in publications in peer reviewed journals like *Family Relations* and presentations at numerous early childhood conferences and seminars.

While in Tallahassee, Grass most recently served as the Executive Director for the Association of Early Learning Coalitions, focusing on expanding the advocacy for every Early Learning Coalition across the state of Florida. Prior to that, she was the statewide director of Help Me Grow, a program designed to promote early identification of developmental, behavioral and/or educational concerns in children – linking them to community-based services and supports at no cost to parents and caregivers. She also was the Vice President and Chief Programs Officer for the Children’s Forum, overseeing and guiding programs designed to positively impact early education and out-of-school-time facilities throughout the state.

Her professional efforts have resulted in numerous awards and recognition. Most notably, she was recognized as one of the “25 Women to Know in Tallahassee” by the *Tallahassee Democrat* in 2017. She won a Pinnacle Award from *850 Business Magazine* in 2016, honoring women who represent a moving force in the business community. She was named a Golden A.C.E. (Authentic Community Engagement) in Entrepreneurship by the Tallahassee Network of Young Professionals as a Top 20 Under 40 in 2016. Additionally, she helped steer GrassLands Brewing Company, a small business she co-founded with her husband, to win the Entrepreneurial Startup Business of the Year award in 2014 by the Tallahassee Chamber of Commerce.

Grass is committed to community engagement and believes in the power of networking for the greater good of those that need help the most. She is a volunteer Guardian ad Litem (which resulted in her and her husband’s adoption of a 16-year old girl in 2016), serves on numerous boards, including The Children’s Campaign and previously the Northwest Regional Council for Leadership Florida, and is the Regional Vice President of the Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent Association.

Grass currently resides in Jacksonville, FL with her husband Gabe, daughter Cheyanne and their three cats (Sushi, Cici and Delilah).