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Business and civic leader Michelle L. Collins to receive Spirit of Erikson Institute Award
Early Childhood champion will be honored at Erikson's "Shaping Identity" luncheon on October 25

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Business and civic leader Michelle L. Collins, president of consulting firm Cambium, LLC, will receive the Spirit of Erikson Institute Award at the organization's "Shaping Identity" luncheon on Thursday, October 25 at the Radisson Blu Aqua Hotel (221 N. Columbus Dr., Chicago). Erikson is the premier early childhood development organization committed to ensuring that all children have equal opportunities to realize their full potential. Collins has championed this cause throughout her life with superior volunteer accomplishments and resolve that have brought about significant and lasting change for the children, families, and communities.

A lifelong Chicagoan with degrees from Harvard and Yale, Collins' accomplished career spans decades and includes a wide variety of philanthropic work for numerous nonprofit organizations, including over 20 years as an Erikson trustee with a recent term as board chair. "During Michelle's term as chair, her vision helped Erikson develop new educational programs and research initiatives that support the critical needs of front-line educators who are impacting the early childhood field," says Geoffrey Nagle, Erikson's president and CEO.

Shaped by her mother's work as a teacher of young children and her personal experiences as an aunt, Collins is a firm believer that every child deserves quality child care and equal opportunities to realize their full potential. "How much better off society would be if every child had quality child care and could reach their full potential," Collins says. "Early childhood doesn't seem to get as much value in the world as it should. When you think about the field, from an organizational or institutional standpoint, we need lots of expertise solving problems. We need people in finance, people in engineering, and people in a variety of different fields to bring those skills together, take what we know about early childhood, and elevate it to a new level."

Collins clearly sees the role Erikson plays in that elevation. “Erikson’s work is such an important part of a child having a productive life,” she says. “Why not give children a good start? Our future depends on it.”

The Shaping Identity luncheon will also feature a presentation by award-winning author, international thought leader and TED Talk sensation Andrew Solomon on *Far from the Tree: Parents, Children and the Search for Identity*. To purchase tickets to the Shaping Identity Luncheon or to make a donation, visit:

<https://www.erikson.edu/about/philanthropy/join-us-for-our-2018-shaping-identity-annual-luncheon/>.

***Erikson Institute** educates, inspires, and promotes leadership to serve the needs of children and families. We have the premier graduate school dedicated to child development. We provide direct services to our community’s most vulnerable children and families. We are leaders in influencing early childhood policy. We work tirelessly every day so that all children can achieve optimal educational, social, emotional, and physical well-being. At Erikson Institute, we know that investing in the early years of children will last a lifetime.*

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