

*Deborah Russo, FL*

*2012-2014*

Deborah Russo is an active member and immediate Past-President of the National Association for Regulatory Administration; and currently a consultant working with 5 states on best practices, rules development and key indicator systems for child care licensing departments. Ms. Russo holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Miami majoring in Speech Pathology (special needs) and Education. Ms. Russo is also a certified Project Management Professional (PMP®) and was the Governor appointee for the Florida Interagency Coordinating Council for Infants and Toddlers. She was also a contributor to the national Stepping Stones (Caring for Our Children) Third Edition, as well as the development of the national Model Family Foster Home Licensing Standards.

Ms. Russo recently retired as the Director of Data Center Services and was responsible for the project oversight and management of the Department of Children and Families (DCF) information technology governance and datacenter mergers. For 15 years, Ms. Russo was the Director of the Office of Child Care Regulation and Background Screening for DCF and provided oversight for over 14,000 providers through the licensure of child care facilities, family day care homes, large family child care homes, specialized facilities for the care of mildly-ill children, registration of family day care homes, and statutorily mandated training and credentialing for child care providers. This included coordination with 6 departmental regions and 5 local licensing counties, 14 training coordinating agencies, and supervision of 2 statewide call centers. Background Screening duties include all programs serving vulnerable populations such as child care, mental health and substance abuse facilities, foster parents, relative caregivers, and the agency for persons with disabilities programs. Approximately 160,000 background screenings were processed annually.

Ms. Russo retired from the Department of Children & Families after 35 years with over twenty years of experience in the regulatory arena. Her duties required extensive knowledge in rule development, legislative implementation, and government efficiencies as well as the various programs within Child Care, including the Gold Seal Quality Care Program (accreditation), Staff Credentials (Director Credential, Child Development Associate credential, Florida Child Care Professional Credential Birth- 5 and School-Age), and the Voluntary Prekindergarten program.