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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: OKLAHOMA INSTITUTE FOR CHILD
ADVOCACY NAMES TERRY SMITH NEW CEO**

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OKLAHOMA CITY -- Terry Smith has been named the new President and Chief Executive Officer of the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy (OICA). The announcement made today by Kristin Alex Davies, President of the OICA Board of Directors, ends a lengthy search for a new leader for the state's only multi-issue child advocacy organization.

"Smith's commitment, expertise, and vision surpassed the Executive Committee's expectations by providing a blueprint for the future of Oklahoma's children," said Davies. "This blueprint will be the foundation upon which OICA will expand our statewide network, ensuring that every child will have a voice through the Institute's civic engagement at local and state levels."

Smith has worked with Oklahoma children, youth and families for over 30 years. He has served as a Juvenile Justice Specialist, District Supervisor, Deputy Director and Training Director for the Oklahoma Office of Juvenile Affairs. He also managed the State and Federal grants department and developed Medicaid funding systems for youth in the juvenile justice system.

"It is a true honor for me to be selected as the President/CEO of the Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy," said Smith. "I look forward to advancing the important needs of Oklahoma's most vulnerable citizens in the upcoming days and years. OICA has been a catalyst for change on behalf of the children, youth and families in Oklahoma for over thirty years." Smith added.

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"Whether advocating for policy, program or community mobilization, OICA has been on the forefront of these issues. It is critical that the Institute continue to lead and connect children's agencies, legislators and, most importantly, citizens to ensure every Oklahoma child has the opportunity to develop into a safe, healthy and productive member of society. I am committed to advocating on behalf of the children, youth and families of Oklahoma," Smith said.

Smith has also worked in the private sector for non-profit and for-profit children's agencies who serve both children who have been abused/neglected and youth who have committed crimes.

In addition, Smith has had the opportunity to work for the Chickasaw Nation as the Director of the Family Resource Center, where he developed behavioral health programs and services for Chickasaw children and families.

He was also a key leader in the development of the Oklahoma Transformation State Plan established by the Innovation Center of the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Smith holds a Bachelors Degree in Sociology from the University of Central Oklahoma and a Masters Degree in Public Administration from the University of Oklahoma.

The Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy (OICA) began in 1983 as the result of an investigative report by the national news media, titled *Oklahoma's Shame*. The report exposed the cruelty and abuse experienced by Oklahoma children in the state's custody. Following publication, child advocates came together to create an organization whose mission was to ensure the protection of Oklahoma's children.

OICA advocates for policies that improve the lives of children and families by being their voice at the State Capitol and in the communities where they live and learn.

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OICA also produces the KIDS COUNT Data Center which provides up-to-date data on multiple levels - community, county, state and national. Each year the KIDS COUNT Data Book provides Oklahoma's state ranking in four main areas of child well-being compared to the other states. Each of the four areas - economic well-being, health, education and family/community - is supported by a series of key indicators for each area and provides a snapshot of trends over time.

For three decades, it has been the mission of the Institute to inform and educate state policymakers and other citizens on the importance of investing wisely in children and families, with the belief that when Oklahoma's children flourish, the entire state and its economy benefit.

For further information, Contact the Institute for Child advocacy, 3909 North Classen Blvd. Suite 101, Oklahoma City 73118. Phone 405-236-5437. Or visit the web site at OICA.org.