



## Sarah Rittling, Executive Director First Five Years Fund

Throughout her life and career, Sarah Rittling has committed herself to advancing education opportunities for America's children and their families. Her years of political and legislative experience, her reputation as a thoughtful collaborator, and her sincere dedication to early childhood policy have helped her become a trusted national leader in children's advocacy.

As Executive Director of the First Five Years Fund, Rittling's leadership and vision are propelling the organization toward accomplishing major political and policy goals, with an acute focus on the needs of children living in poverty who would benefit most from access to high-quality early childhood education opportunities.

Under multiple administrations, Congresses, and an ever-changing political landscape in Washington, Rittling has been at the center of many important policy advancements on education issues, with a particular emphasis on early childhood education. And through it all, Rittling has developed a strong track record of bridging the partisan divide to find solutions and build consensus. In her previous role as National Director, Rittling led FFYF's bipartisan government relations efforts, managed partnerships with early childhood and other advocacy coalitions, and directed the organization's staff and operations.

Prior to joining FFYF, Rittling served as Senior Policy Advisor at EducationCounsel, an education consulting firm, where she was part of a bipartisan, education-focused team led by former U.S. Secretary of Education Dick Riley. Previously, she served as counsel to Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., on education policy before the Senate Health, Education Labor and Pensions Committee and counsel to Rep. Michael N. Castle, R-Del., on education and labor matters before the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. Under Sen. Alexander, Rittling was responsible for advancing the Senator's priorities during the reauthorization of the Higher Education, Head Start and Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Acts. While serving Rep. Castle, Rittling assisted with matters before the Subcommittee on Education Reform, including reauthorization of the National School Lunch and Child Nutrition Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Rittling also served as a legislative assistant and deputy press secretary to Rep. Christopher Shays, R-Conn.

Rittling holds a Bachelor of Arts from Syracuse University and earned her J.D. from Syracuse University's College of Law. She lives on Capitol Hill with her husband, Patrick Lyden, and their two young daughters.