



Barbara Yates, President and CEO, joined Think Small in February 2008. Over the past three decades, her professional and community service has been inspired by research showing that quality care and education for children in their earliest years yields tremendous human, economic and social benefits later on, especially for families living in poverty.

She has served Learning Council; sat on the Kindergarten Readiness Strategy Team for Generation Next; and served as an officer of the board of directors for the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). She has served as an advisor to the Minnesota Growth as well as served on the Executive Committee for MinneMinds. She co-led the national BUILD initiative for Minnesota and currently serves on the GenNext Leadership Council.

Previous to Think Small, she was co-executive director, with Duane Benson, of the Minnesota Early Learning Foundation. There, she built a complex multi-million dollar enterprise to study cost effective ways for children from low-income families to be ready for kindergarten. As a veteran state education official, Yates was a key learning administrator for Governors Perpich, Carlson, Ventura, Pawlenty and Dayton. She served as deputy commissioner, assistant commissioner and in several director positions for the Minnesota Department of Education.