

**THE ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**CASE NO. 26-2
(Court Administration)**

**ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER
NO. 26-09
(Companion to CASE 23-01,
AO NO. 23-02)**

**IN RE: APPOINTMENT OF JUDGE
MICHELLE ALVAREZ BARAKAT AS
JUDICIAL DESIGNEE FOR CASES
ASSIGNED TO THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD COURT OF THE UNIFIED
FAMILY COURT DIVISION**

WHEREAS, Rule 2.215 of the Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration grants the Chief Judge the authority to adopt administrative orders necessary to ensure the efficient operation of the court system; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined, that in the interest of judicial economy, the Chief Judge finds it necessary to establish procedures for the expeditious and efficient resolution of cases involving children up to three (3) years of age in our dependency system ("Early Childhood Court Cases"); and

WHEREAS, specialized training of the judiciary is required in order to efficiently and appropriately manage Early Childhood Court Cases; and

WHEREAS, the **HONORABLE MICHELLE ALVAREZ BARAKAT** has received such requisite training;

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chief Judge of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, under Rule 2.215 of the Florida Rules of General Practice and Judicial Administration, it is hereby **ORDERED**:

1. **Case Transfer.** All cases initially filed in a dependency judicial section of the Unified Family Court Division which are eligible and accepted for transfer to the problem-solving Early Childhood Court shall be assigned by the Clerk of Court to the **HONORABLE MICHELLE ALVAREZ BARAKAT** (Judicial Sections FCJ011, D011, and J011), located at the Miami-Dade Children's Courthouse, in and for Miami-Dade County, Florida.

2 **Requisite Training.** Any judge assigned to the Early Childhood Court, either as a primary judge or as the back-up judge, will have six (6) months from the date of assignment to complete training on legal and constitutional issues in Early Childhood Courts, trauma-responsive courts, evidence-based treatment to include parenting practices, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and the impact of trauma on the child and the parents, and other advances in the Early Childhood Court field available at that time.

3 **Unavailability.** In the event the Honorable Michelle Alvarez Barakat or an assigned back-up judge is unavailable, the Administrative Judge of the Unified Family Court Division shall determine who shall handle the Early Childhood Court Case(s) in her stead.

4 **Related Cases.** If related cases are identified in the Unified Family Court Division or other divisions of the Circuit at the time of or after the transfer and assignment of Early Childhood Court Cases to the Honorable Michelle Alvarez Barakat, the transfer and disposition of such cases shall be governed by the procedures established for handling related cases in the Circuit, as applicable.

5 **Reassignment.** Any cases previously assigned to Judicial Sections FCJ011, D011, and J011, shall be reassigned by the Clerk of Court by blind file to a judge assigned to the Unified Family Court Division.

This Administrative Order shall become effective on March 17, 2026, and shall remain in effect until further order of the Court.

DONE and ORDERED in Chambers at Miami-Dade County, Florida, on this 26th day of February 2026.

**ARIANA FAJARDO ORSHAN, CHIEF JUDGE
ELEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF FLORIDA**