



Spring 2007

AECA Update

Dear Members,

What a time we had at SECA! I was so proud to walk into sessions and see special faces in the room from our AECA membership. I looked up in the Memphis airport and saw Glenda Nelson from West Memphis. We ended up traveling the rest of the way to Jacksonville together. Johnnie Bridges from North Little Rock received the 2007 Helen Harley Scholarship Award to help with the trip. Lindsey Smith from Little Rock was my roommate, so I was able to get to know her and Johnnie more on the trip. It is wonderful to sit down and talk to Arkansas professionals that love working for kids.

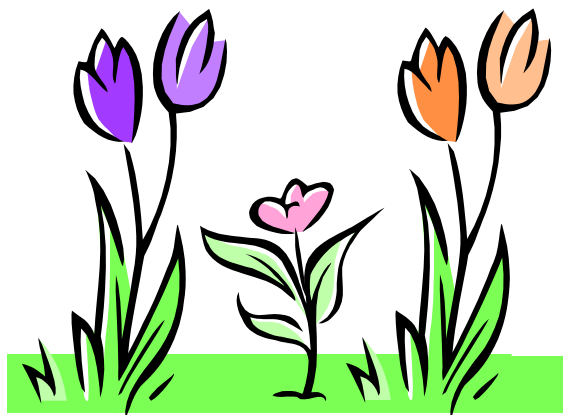
I was fortunate to hear Dr. Thelma Harmes as well as Sue Bredekamp. I felt like I received a good dose of "high quality" information during the SECA conference week. Many of the officers from the different states worked together to network about ways to make our state organization stronger. I was also fortunate to hear Anne Mitchell and Judy Collins who had been consultants with the Quality Rating Scale. Since Arkansas has been investigating this process for several months, it was helpful to set in a room with other states to see how their projects worked.

This issue of the AECA Newsletter will be very important. A group of dedicated individuals who work with young children and families have agreed to be nominated as officers and are willing to serve on the AECA Executive Board. Each of them brings experience, expertise, and commitment to the roles for which they have been nominated.

Have a great rest of the year!

Vicky Shelby

Vicky Shelby
AECA President



If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in. -- **Rachel Carson**

In this issue:

- ✓ Pg 2 & 3: Nominated Officers
- ✓ Pg 4: Feature Article – Advice for New Early Childhood Providers
- ✓ Pg 5: Advocacy Article & SECA Ad
- ✓ Pgs 6 and 7: Members' Section
- ✓ Pg 8: Letter from the 1st V.P. of Publications

AECA UPDATE

is a newsletter of the Arkansas Early Childhood Association, an affiliate of the Southern Early Childhood Association. Membership is open to those interested in the development of young children.

2006-2007 Executive Board

President

Vicki Shelby - Paragould

President-Elect

Traci Johnston – Little Rock

Immediate Past President

Janet Perkins - Bentonville

Secretary

Joanna Grymes - Jonesboro

Treasurer

Michelle Stephens – Bentonville

Historian

Mary Calcote – Bentonville

First Vice President- Publications

Lindsey Smith – Little Rock

Second Vice President- Membership

Barbara Gilkey – Little Rock

Members-at-Large

District #1

Susan Lindblom - Batesville

District #2

Johnnie Bridges–N. Little Rock

District #3

Deb Kee – Bentonville

District #4

Susan Smith - Hamburg

SECA Representative

Diana Courson - Magnolia

Candidates for Election to the AECA Board

President Elect



Barbara Gilkey

- ✿ Director of Arkansas State HIPPPY for the past twelve years
- ✿ Holds a Masters in Early Childhood Education
- ✿ Holds a BA in Social work
- ✿ Trainer for Arkansas HIPPPY, HIPPPY USA, & Pre-K ELLA
- ✿ Previously served as Coordinator of the North Little Rock School District HIPPPY program
- ✿ Background includes experience in social work and foster parent recruiting
- ✿ Co-authored "The Impact of the Home Instructional Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPPY) on Social Performance in 3rd and 6th Grades." (*Early Education & Development, Volume 13, Number 3, July 2002*)

First Vice President – Publications



Lindsey Smith

- ✿ Child Care Program Technician for the U of A Cooperative Extension Service
- ✿ Coordinates the Guiding Children Successfully child care training program
- ✿ Serves on the Arkansas Association of Family and Consumer Sciences website/newsletter committee
- ✿ BA in Child and Family Science from Harding University
- ✿ Served as 1st VP for Publications 2005 - 2007

AECA Mission Statement : Enhancing the lives of children, families and early childhood professionals in the state of Arkansas.

Treasurer



Dawn Jeffery

✿ Early Childhood Director for Southside School District in Batesville

✿ Special Education teacher for Southside School District in Batesville

✿ Has worked as a public school and private speech therapist

✿ MS in Early Childhood Special Education

Member at Large #2



Johnnie Bridges

✿ Owner and director of London Bridges in NLR

✿ CDA Student at Pulaski Technical College

✿ Child care mentor in Pulaski and Jefferson Counties

✿ Registered trainer for AECPPDS

✿ Serves on the Advisory Committees for Pulaski Tech and the Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Committees

Member at Large #3



Deb Kee

✿ Director of Early Childhood at Bentonville Public Schools

✿ Part-Time Faculty at NWACC

✿ 26 years of early care and education experience

✿ MSE in Early Childhood

✿ Elementary Administration Certified

✿ AECA Conference co-chair in 2003 & 2004

✿ AECA Member-At-Large 2005-2007

✿ Verified Registry Trainer

SECA Representative



Joanna Grymes

✿ Teaches early childhood education courses at Arkansas State University

✿ Provides professional development on topics in early childhood

✿ Current chair of the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System Steering Committee

✿ Co-Coordinator of the Arkansas Better Chance Work Sampling System Implementation project

✿ Has been actively involved on the state board as well as in her local affiliate, NE-AECA

Cut Here ✂

If you would like to vote for someone other than the candidates listed. Please fill out this ballot and mail to Arkansas Early Childhood Association / PO Box 2898 / Little Rock, AR 72203.

President-Elect Name: _____

Member at Large #2 Name: _____

1st Vice-President Name: _____

Member at Large #3 Name: _____

Treasurer: _____

SECA Representative Name: _____

***By voting for this candidate, you are verifying that the candidate is a member of AECA, has demonstrated abilities in the areas of management and administration, and that the candidate has agreed to have his/her name placed on the ballot.

Meet your new Historian!

Joy Smith has agreed to serve as Historian for the remainder of this term. Please join us in welcoming her to the board.



- ✧ Program coordinator for Batesville School of the 21st Century
- ✧ Works in multiple program areas linking communities, families, and schools while focusing on young children ages 0-5 through the Parents as Teachers Program
- ✧ Attended the University of Arkansas, and is certified through the Parents as Teachers National Center in St. Louis, MO as a Program Administrator and Parent Educator
- ✧ Has worked within multiple community based programs advocating for children and their families

- ✧ Currently serves on a Tri-state leadership design initiative working toward improving the quality of life
- ✧ Participated in a live television panel discussion on AETN to answer questions and provide information about the importance of family support programs

Advice for New Early Childhood Professionals

Dot Brown, HS-AECA
President of Early Childhood Services, Inc.
More than 40 Years Experience

Begin by asking yourself one question: “*Do I see myself in this profession five years from now?*” If the answer is a resounding “*Yes!*” then consider this advice:

- Chart your professional development pathway. Start with where you are now and have a vision for where you want to be a year from now, two years from now, five years from now.
- Explore the professional development options that are available to you: credentials, certificates, endorsements, degrees. Choose those options that will move you along your professional development pathway.
- Align yourself with other early childhood professionals.
 - ◆ Become a member of the Arkansas Early Childhood Association and attend the annual conference. Say “*Yes!*” when asked to serve as a conference volunteer.
 - ◆ Childhood Professional Development System Registry. Consult the Registry for professional development opportunities in your area.

- ◆ Choose a professional role model. Get to know that person and learn all you can from her.
- ◆ Be a role model and/or a mentor to others in the profession.

- Take pride as you say to community members and families of children you serve, “I am proud to be an early childhood professional. I am prepared for and enjoy what I do. I am making a difference in the lives of children now and in the future.”

I Meant To Do My Work Today

by Richard Le Gallienne

I meant to do my work today,
 But a brown bird sang in the apple tree,
 And a butterfly flitted across the field,
 And all the leaves were calling me.
 And the wind went sighing over the land,
 Tossing the grasses to and fro,
 And a rainbow held out its shining hand--
 So what could I do but laugh and go?

We Did It! We met our goal of \$100 million

AECA Advocacy Committee

Arkansas should be proud of our investment and the number of children we will be able to serve in our Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) programs. We know that MANY families cannot afford high quality programs and “at-risk” children who do not attend high quality programs are likely to start school at least two years behind other children in their class. That not only hurts the children who are behind, but also those who will be asked to slow down so that their friends can catch up.

The Arkansas Early Childhood Association (AECA) has served as the lead organization for the Invest Early in Education Coalition. The goal of Invest Early in Education was to increase funding for ABC programs in order to provide services to qualifying families not currently being served and to have those services provided by high quality programs of all types—faith-based, for profit, etc.... we have done that! The children in our ABC classrooms will be receiving a good start because of your support. For the past five years early educators in Arkansas continually informed their legislators of the importance of high quality early education. Our legislators now understand the need and are informed about what components are considered best practice. In return, they are providing more financial support than we have *ever* had - CONGRATULATIONS!

Kite Days

by Mark Sawyer

A kite, a sky, and a good firm breeze,
And acres of ground away from trees,
And one hundred yards of clean, strong string
--O boy, O boy! I call that Spring!



Save the Date!

Make plans now to join us in Hot Springs on October 18-20, 2007 for the annual AECA conference. The conference theme is “Making Connections for Children: The Essential Piece.” We have two exciting keynote speakers, Dr. Jerry Aldridge and Sue Trainor, and a variety of interest session speakers. Keep checking the website www.arkansasearlychildhood.org for all the details. We'll see you in Hot Springs October 18-20, 2007!



An Early Childhood Teacher's Journey

Laura Geng, NW-AECA

Teaching children is one of the greatest joys of my life. Out of all the career fields out there I chose early childhood education because I wanted to make a difference in the world. Yes, I could have made more money in business or at some other desk job but then I would be missing the little things that make my day so special. For example, when I walk down the hall and the children smile and run to give me a hug. The early childhood education field is always in need of leaders and I'm not just talking about managers, supervisors, and directors. Although it is always nice to make that promotion to the management team of a childcare center there are lots of other ways that teachers can lead in this ever changing field.

I started out as a new teacher just like everyone else. I had no experience and even called my mother-in-law to tell her that I was never having children after my first day at work. But with time that feeling passed and the little hints and tricks that help teachers everyday were starting to come more naturally. I learned that temper tantrums will pass and that if a child eats play dough they will live through it. Before I knew it the first year passed and I felt more confident in my teaching skills.

During my second year I started to find my niche with the older preschoolers at my center. I was promoted to lead teacher at the center where I worked which was exciting and nerve-wracking at the same time. Through the nerves and fears I had a fellow co-worker who helped me get through it. New and experienced teachers alike always need mentors to talk to and give them encouragement. It means a lot to a teacher that is struggling to have someone to talk to and help them make their classroom a better learning environment for the children. To become a mentor there are trainings that you can take or you can just lend an ear to your co-workers. I found the trainings rewarding because it gave me the tools that I needed to help my fellow teachers.

In my third year I really focused on training to become a better teacher for the children in my class. I was taking every class under the sun. This year was also when I got my CDA and learned a lot about teaching and myself. Getting my Child Development Accreditation is one of the highlights of my early childhood career. I highly encourage anyone who does not have their CDA to get one. It is a national credential and gives teachers an added level of professionalism to their teaching.

Year four brought more trainings and I kind of started to wonder if this was all there is. It wasn't that I didn't love my class or wanted to give up teaching. I just kind of needed something more. That was when my supervisor suggested that I conduct a training on group time. Now at first, the thought of this had me shaking in my boots but after the initial shock wore off I really learned a lot. Trainings are something that we all like to take and learn new information about everything from what to place in an art center to how I can help a child with biting. Teachers can also become certified trainers through Arkansas State University Professional Registry as well.

Year Five I couldn't believe that I had been in childcare five years. I was at a crossroads that year because growing up I had always wanted to teach elementary school but now I was head over heels in love with teaching preschool. I decided on my own to go ahead and take Director's Orientation. It was something that I knew would be useful if I ever wanted to go into management. Once I attended the first training I was hooked. I started to look for more trainings that were on the management side. I wanted to be prepared for when a management position became available. By lucky coincidence the management position at my center opened. I took a big gulp as I turned in my application and resume. Unfortunately, I was not given the position at that time but I resolved that it wasn't the right time for me and I went back to my class and continued training and helping other teachers around me.

In year six my time had come. The management position was open again and with a little hesitation I re-applied. I was scared to death that I would once again be turned down. However this time I was able to happily accept the job of Teacher Resource Lab Coordinator. I was over the moon and then it hit me. I'm in management. What a strange and wonderful world that is. Now that I've reached that next level I find myself wanting to take more of an advocate role along with my other responsibilities. I'm looking around for issues that not only would help children but that I can be passionate about.

With all the different leadership roles in early childhood education teachers now have more career options than just teaching. They could start out as a teacher and then become a trainer, mentor, advocate or manager. The key is to stick with it. If your dream is management take those opportunities to be a leader when you can get them. You never know who will be watching and remembering you when that management spot opens. But while you're waiting for that management opportunity, try to spread your teaching wings by becoming mentor or a trainer. You'll never know what great things may come unless you try.

Win a Free Membership!

Would you like to be entered in a drawing for one free AECA membership for a year? Be sure to submit an article for the next newsletter. It could be short activities for circle time, learning outside, transitions, small group time, or learning centers. When submitting your activities or ideas, please include your Name, Mailing Address, Phone Number, and Affiliate Name. The winner will be announced in the Fall 2007 edition of the AECA Update. Entries should be submitted to:

Lindsey Smith
PO Box 391
Little Rock, AR 72203
Or Email: lsmith@uaex.edu

Entries should be submitted no later than **August 5, 2007.**

You're Invited!

The AECA Summit
Saturday, August 25, 2007
8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

During the AECA Summit we will:

- ◆ examine the current organizational structure of the association
- ◆ set long term goals for the future of the organization
- ◆ discuss how we can best meet the needs of our membership and early childhood professionals in our state

AECA needs YOU to attend and represent your local affiliate and/or area of the state. For more details and a registration form, call 501-771-1680 or visit the AECA website www.arkansasearlychildhood.org.

We hope to see you at the AECA Summit!

Calendar of Events

Update Articles Due.....August 5, 2007
AECA Board Meeting.....August 24, 2007
AECA Summit.....August 25, 2007
AECA Conference.....October 18-20, 2007

Attention Affiliate Leaders!!!



Have you submitted a list of your officers to the AECA office recently? If not, please do so as soon as possible. The mailing address for the AECA office is PO Box 2898 / Little Rock, AR 72203. You may also email the information to aeca1@aol.com.



P.O. Box 2898
Little Rock, AR 72203

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 02485
LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

To all affiliates and members,

Spring has finally sprung and this newsletter is full of not only useful but inspirational articles and quotes submitted and selected just for you!

The Update is a medium for our members to voice their ideas and opinions. So, if you would like to share activities, stories, tips, etc. with your peers, here is your opportunity! Affiliate leaders can also use the Update to advertise project reminders and upcoming events such as affiliate meetings and area conferences and trainings.

The 2007 Summer Update feature will be, "*Activities for a Sunny Day.*" I look forward to your ideas and activities for teaching in the great outdoors (or indoors). If you have stories or poems or books to recommend those would be welcomed as well. I would love to hear from you! Remember, you can submit as little or as much as you like. Contributions can be sent to Lindsey Smith at lsmith@uaex.edu or PO Box 391 / Little Rock, AR 72203.

I look forward to hearing from many of you!

Lindsey Smith

Lindsey Smith, First Vice President - Publications

