



### President's Message

Dear Fellow AECA Members,

As I have time to reflect about the conference, I feel *elated*. I received a letter from Frank Charles Winstead, as well as Mary Jo Huff. They were extremely complimentary of the conference and the participants. I'm still in awe of those of you that stayed for the last session of each day of the conference. It just validates the professionalism in early care and education.

I have bragged on the conference committee and each of their volunteers for making the conference a success, but the main reason that the conference was a success was *all of you* that were in attendance. If you had not been in Hot Springs, it would not have been as successful. Thank you to those of you that came, participated, and shared your ideas with others. I hope that, when you got back to your school, you were able to thank the administrators who sent you. It is a large expense to cover all of your needs, but so worthwhile to the program in which you work in each day. The children will benefit from the ideas that you brought back. I challenge you to go back and share those ideas with someone that did not have the opportunity to attend. I also challenge you to follow up on the gingerbread man and quilt square projects to help with our advocacy project for the year. Please send them to Vicki Farmer, 1302 Cumberland Street, Little Rock, AR 72202 by December 20. Thanks in advance for your help with these worthwhile projects for the children of Arkansas!

I leave you with this thought... We need volunteers to help with the organization of AECA. And we would love to have fresh faces fill our volunteer positions. If you would like to help with the conference or run for an office, please email me at [vshelby@paragould.k12.ar.us](mailto:vshelby@paragould.k12.ar.us).

Have a wonderful rest of the year!  
Sincerely,

*Vicki Shelby*

Vicki Shelby, AECA President



#### In this issue:

- ☞ Pg 2: Feature Article - Conference Reflections
- ☞ Pg 3: SECA Update
- ☞ Pgs 4 and 5: Advocacy Articles
- ☞ Pgs 6 and 7: Members' Section
- ☞ Pg 8: Letter from the 1<sup>st</sup> V.P. of Publications



It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.

-Frederick Douglas

## 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

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## Conference Reflections

Michelle Wynn, Program Chair

Michelle Pounds, Conference Chair

This year nearly 1,000 participants attended the AECA conference at the Hot Springs Convention Center. The conference, held October 19-21, was a huge success! We had high quality keynote speakers, educational presentations and interesting exhibitors from across the state of Arkansas and beyond.

Both of our keynote speakers, Frank Charles Winstead and Mary Jo Huff, were remarkable. They were entertaining and encouraging. Frank Charles helped us remember those who inspired us to be in the field of early childhood education. And Mary Jo helped us remember the joys of finger play and song.

In addition to great interest sessions & keynote speakers, conference attendees also enjoyed the Literacy Lounge, Silent Auction, Fun Fair, Exhibitor Networking event, and Gingerbread/Quilt Project. The silent Auction raised nearly \$2,150 this year. The money was used to support the AECA scholarship program and the SECA hurricane relief efforts. Thanks for everyone's support with the Silent Auction.

When you think of pink and green, what do you think of? ...Shirts and bags, of course! Many participants enjoyed both of the items. We sold extra bags from registration and many providers took them for staff that couldn't attend to use as incentives for their programs.

The AECA committee is already working on next year's conference. The 2007 AECA Annual Conference will be held at the Hot Springs Convention Center October 18-20, 2007. Hope to see everyone next year!! A call for proposals is posted on the AECA website [www.arkansasearlychildhood.org](http://www.arkansasearlychildhood.org). Proposals must be received by May 31, 2007.

**We look forward to seeing *you* at the 2007 AECA Conference!!!**

Be a part of next quarter's feature article:

### *Why I Chose to Work in Early Childhood*

Just compose 1-5 sentences and include your name and location.

Then, submit them to Lindsey Smith at [lsmith@uaex.edu](mailto:lsmith@uaex.edu) or  
2301 S. University/ PO Box 391 / Little Rock, AR 72203

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



Get in on the action...

# SECA 2007

March 29-31, 2007  
Hyatt Regency Jacksonville Riverfront  
Jacksonville, FL

*Featuring*

- ❖ Pam Schiller
- ❖ Anne Mitchell
- ❖ Ellen Frede
- ❖ Kathy Thornburg
- ❖ Judy Collins
- ❖ Sue Bredekamp
- ❖ Thelma Harms
- ❖ Jose-Luis Orozco
- ❖ The Children's Dance Foundation of Birmingham

*Embracing  
the Joy of Southern  
Children & Families*

For more information go to  
[www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org](http://www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org)  
and click on "Conference"

### Join Us in Jacksonville!

Mark your calendar for the 58<sup>th</sup> annual **SECA Conference**, March 29-31, 2007, in Jacksonville, Florida. You won't want to miss this one! If you have not already received your conference brochure in the mail, visit the SECA website [www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org](http://www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org) for conference information and updates. Arkansas always has a strong contingent at the SECA Conference. Plan now to be a part of that group this year!

You'll have the opportunity to hear nationally known speakers such as Dr. Sue Bredekamp, editor of the classic *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*, and Dr. Thelma Harms, lead author of the widely used environment rating scales. There'll be something for everyone; a directors' seminar, public policy luncheon, interest sessions on a wide variety of topics, child care and student recognition day.

The conference will be held at the Hyatt, just a short walk from the Jacksonville Landing, a riverfront area with shops, restaurants, and a food court. Reserve your hotel room early to take advantage of the conference rates.

### AFLAC now available to AECA/SECA Members

As a member benefit, **SECA has joined with AFLAC** to make accident and cancer insurance available at special rates for members of the Association. Go to SECA's home page at [www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org](http://www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org) and click on a link to AFLAC to get more information and enroll in the program. We're pleased to be able to offer this as a member benefit. To receive a copy of the AFLAC/SECA brochure, contact [dianacourson@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dianacourson@sbcglobal.net).

### 2006-07 SECA Community Service Project

**SECA has adopted St. Jude Children's Research Hospital** in Memphis as our community service project for 2006-2007. If you choose to conduct a *Trike-a-Thon* or a *Math-A-Thon*, St. Jude will provide all the materials. Becky Wardlaw, former President of the South Carolina Early Childhood Association, and Denese Harris have written a short teacher's guide for the *Trike-a-Thon* to give you some ideas on how to make this a fun part of your classroom curriculum. It is posted on the *Curriculum Ideas* page at [www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org](http://www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org).

St. Jude representatives will be at the SECA conference to assist you in putting together a project.

## Share What YOU Know

AECA Advocacy Committee

There are many issues in early education: high quality environments for all children, worthy wages for staff, affordable care for families.... We have learned that these cannot be solved just by determination and elbow grease – we need help.

Former President, Jimmy Carter wrote, *The problems may seem insurmountable, but they are not. We have the tools; we have brilliant dedicated people to find answers. All we need is a sense of sharing and the will to change. The will can grow from understanding. Once we understand, we can care, and once we care we can change.*”

So, when we meet people who do not seem to value early education as we do, remember that they just don't know... yet.

### WE KNOW:

- **Learning Begins Way Before Kindergarten**
  - By the time a child enters school most personality characteristics and behavior patterns are already established (1).
  - Negative experiences, negative interaction, and lack of appropriate stimulation can have serious and sustained effects on the developing child (1).
  - “At-risk” children who do not attend high quality pre-K programs are likely to start school at least two years behind other children in their class (2).
- **Young Children Learn Best in Child-Centered Environments**
  - Children learn best when engaged with others in hands-on problem-solving activities of their choice (4).
  - Play is a valuable vehicle for learning. Free and unstructured play is essential for helping children reach important social, emotional, and cognitive developmental milestones, as well as helping them manage stress and become resilient (5).
- **Early Education is a Sound Investment**
  - A dollar invested in early education quality saves over more than nine dollars in later education, welfare, and justice system costs (3).
  - High quality preschool education increases the ability of low-income children to profit from elementary and secondary education, increasing high school graduation rates and generating economic returns for taxpayers in the form of increased income potential benefiting the state (3).
- **Working Families Need Help Paying for Early Education**
  - To purchase high quality child care for one child, the poorest 20% of families would need to spend at least 47% of their income (6).
  - 3 of 4 Arkansas children living in poverty are in families in which both parents work (6).

With a new Governor and many new legislators, it will be important for them, the families you serve, and your own communities to understand the significant contributions that early education lends to later academic success of our children and the overall success of our state. So, share with them what *you* know and then they, too, can care and *together* we can work toward the changes that can make a *real* difference to children, to our profession, and to our world.

For more information go to <http://www.arkansasearlychildhood.org/policy>

**References:** 1. Rethinking the Brain by Rima Shores, 1997; 2. C. Ramey, Preparing America's Children for Success in School; 3. 2001-2002 Entergy Corporation Community Investment Report; 4. Bredekamp and Coppel, Developmentally Appropriate Practice, 1997; 5. American Academy of Pediatrics, The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds, 2006; 6. Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families

## Quilting for a Cause

AECA Advocacy Committee

AECA is proud to sponsor an exhibition of quilts showcasing early childhood programs throughout the state of Arkansas. We are asking for representation from all types of early childhood programs including private providers, family child care, Head Start, ABC, faith-based, etc.

Please join us in this effort by completing an AECA quilt square. Your quilt square will be added to others that have been designed by many early childhood programs across the state to make a large quilt. We hope to have multiple quilts completed by January 2007. We plan to display these quilts at different locations in the state including our State Capitol, the Children's Museum in Little Rock, the Jones Family Center in Springdale, at various county fairs, and at the 2007 AECA Annual Fall Conference in Hot Springs.

We are accepting only one square per facility at this time due to limited space. We want to ensure that a variety of programs from across the state have the opportunity to be represented.

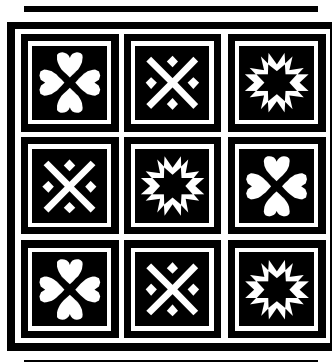
AECA is providing the fabric and underwriting the cost of making the quilts. If you have not already received the fabric for your square, contact:

Geania Dickey  
[geaniadickey@aol.com](mailto:geaniadickey@aol.com), 501-407-0720, or

Vicki Farmer  
[vickifarmer@yahoo.com](mailto:vickifarmer@yahoo.com), 501-374-0330.

**Submit all squares to Vicki Farmer, 1302 Cumberland Street, Little Rock, AR 72202**

**The deadline to submit completed quilt squares is December 20.**



## Putting Play Back into Child Care



Child care professionals recognize the fact that play is a very important factor in development for young children. In a recent report issued by the American Academy of Pediatrics, that fact is reinforced. The abstract for the report titled, **The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bonds** is below.

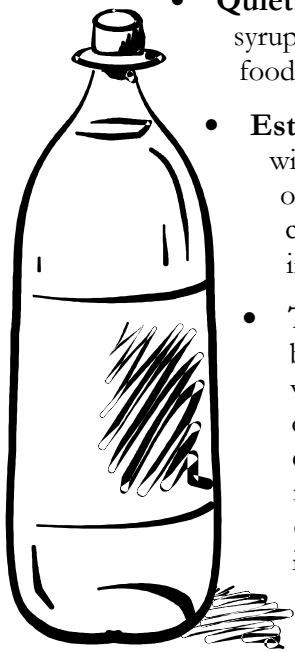
*Play is essential to development as it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth. Play also offers an ideal opportunity for parents to engage fully with their children. Despite the benefits derived from play for both children and parents, time for free play has been markedly reduced for some children. This report addresses a variety of factors that have reduced play, including a hurried lifestyle, changes in family structure, and increased attention to academics and enrichment activities at the expense of recess or free child-centered play. This report offers guidelines on how pediatricians can advocate for children by helping families, school systems, and communities consider how best to ensure play is protected, as they seek the balance in children's lives to create the optimal developmental milieu.*

For more in-depth reading of this report please visit: [www.aap.org/pressroom/playFINAL.pdf](http://www.aap.org/pressroom/playFINAL.pdf).

## Science Fun Gets Bottled Up

Natasha Crosby, NW-AECA

A great way to bring all the types of science into your classroom is through sensory bottles. These can be made from any plastic bottle (soda, water, etc) and can include contents only limited by your imagination. A few examples are:



- **Quiet Bottle** – put 1/3 cup corn syrup in the bottle, add 2 drops food coloring and 1 tsp glitter.
- **Estimation Bottle** – fill bottle with candy, natural objects or other small items. Have the children guess how many are inside.
- **Tornado Bottle** – fill bottle almost to the top with water. Add a tiny drop of liquid detergent, one drop of food coloring, a monopoly house and a pair of red Barbie shoes. Twirl in your hand and create the twister from “The Wizard of Oz”.
- **Density Bottle** – fill a bottle with hair gel. Add a marble. Children discover the properties of the dense hair gel, and the marble won’t move.
- **Density Bottle #2** – fill a bottle with clear shampoo. Add a marble. This is less dense than the hair gel, so the marble will roll a bit.
- **Density Bottle #3** – fill a bottle with water. Add a marble. Water has almost no density, so the marble rolls around very easily.
- **Rust Bottle** – add screws, bolts or nails to a bottle. Fill the bottle with water. Observe what happens.
- **Mud Bottle** – add dirt and small pebbles to the bottle, fill 2/3 full of water. Shake vigorously. Observe what happens. After a few minutes, observe the bottle again, the sediment has settled on the bottom again.

## Stuck Inside

Rita Neve, RV-ECA

They’re coming. Those days when the rain comes down in wet sheets and the children have been cooped up. Here are a few ideas for some rainy day fun.

### SNOWBALL FIGHT

Materials:

- Discarded white paper
- Book about a snowball fight such as Ezra Keats’ *The Snowy Day*
- Flannel board pieces (available at: [www.state.ar.us/childcare/storymonth.html](http://www.state.ar.us/childcare/storymonth.html))



Share the story together and discuss snow ball fights, then invite the kids to join you in a snowball fight. Turn off the heat, open the windows, dress children in coats, hats, and mittens, crush the paper into “snowballs” and have a snowball fight. After the clean up, serve hot chocolate. This ventilates the room and gives the children fresh air, activity, and lots of fun too!

### SUNSHINY DAY

Materials:

- Butcher paper
- Yellow paint
- Yellow collage materials

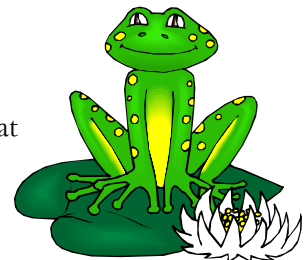


Encourage the children to make a huge sun with the paint and collage materials. Hang the sun from the ceiling or on a wall. Have a picnic on the floor under the “sun”. Serve finger foods like peanut butter sandwiches, celery, carrot sticks, etc. Be sure to include toy bugs!

### ANIMAL CHARADES

Materials:

- 3X5 index cards or pictures of animals that can be cut out
- Scissors
- Container for holding cards/cut-outs



Ask children to draw pictures of animals on 3 x 5 index cards, or provide pictures they can cut out of magazines of animals. Put index cards into container. Encourage children to draw out a card, then act out the animal pictured. The other children will guess what the animal is.

## Training in Hot Springs

Terri Helms, HS-AECA President

The **Hot Springs Early Childhood Association** would like to invite you to join them in the **Adventures of Learning**. Some of the topics discussed will be: Adventures in Language and Literacy; Adventures in Creativity; and Adventures in Nature, Science and the Great Outdoors. Meeting times are as follows:

- February 12, 2007, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- March 12, 2007, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.
- April 9, 2007, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

All meetings will be held at National Park Community College in the Student Center (vocational). CEU Certificates will be given for attendance of two hours per session. For additional information, call:

Terri Helms 501-760-2423 or Dot Brown 501-525-4829.

**CALLING ALL  
MEMBERS!!!**



An excellent opportunity awaits you! If you would like to contribute an article or share an idea for the next Update, contact Lindsey Smith at [lsmith@uaex.edu](mailto:lsmith@uaex.edu) or 501-671-2103.

## Event Reminder

Deadline to Submit Quilt Squares and Gingerbread Men

December 20, 2006

Deadline to Submit Articles and Ideas for the 2007 Winter Update

January 15, 2007

SECA Conference, Jacksonville, FL

March 29 – 31, 2007

Arkansas Children's Week

April 22-28, 2007

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**Thank you!**

The **South East Delta Affiliate** raised \$76.00 through button sales at the AECA Conference to donate to AECA.

The greatest discovery of my generation is that a human can alter his life by altering his attitudes of mind.

-William James



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To all affiliates and members,

Let your voices be heard! The AECA Update is getting a facelift and we need *your* help! A new addition to our quarterly Update is our **Members** section. If you have exciting things going on in your center, classroom, or home-based center, here is the opportunity to share those activities, stories, and advice with your peers. We will also have a section for an **Affiliate** section for affiliate representatives to submit information and articles they think are important. We will also have a **Feature** section each quarter. The 2007 Winter Update feature will be, *Why I Chose to Work in Early Childhood*.

I am certain that many of you are very busy between work and home life. The best thing about the Update is that you can contribute as little or as much as you like. Contributions can be sent to Lindsey Smith at [lsmith@uaex.edu](mailto:lsmith@uaex.edu) or 2301 South University, PO Box 391 / Little Rock, AR 72203.

I look forward to hearing from many of you!

*Lindsey Smith*

Lindsey Smith, First Vice President - Publications

