

# AECA Update



Dear Members,

I am looking forward to serving as your AECA President this year. One of my goals for the year is to look at the current structure of our organization, which includes our local affiliates. I want the association to meet the needs of our members. We started working towards this goal in August at the AECA Summit. The Summit was well attended and we made progress, but still have a long way to go. The notes from the Summit are located on the web-site for your review. You can go to [www.arkansasearlychildhood.org](http://www.arkansasearlychildhood.org) and click on AECA Summit. The AECA executive board has created two working committees to address specific issues. I strongly encourage you to join a committee and get involved. This organization is for you and we want to hear from you. More information on each committee and the contact information for the committee chairs are also located on our web-site. Find out more and let the committee chair know you want to join their committee and get involved.

One of the enjoyable parts of being AECA President is the annual conference. This past AECA conference was held in October and was a huge success. We had close to 1,000 attendees with over 75 interest sessions. Our two keynote speakers were outstanding and left us feeling motivated and inspired. If you attended, I hope you had a valuable learning experience. If you were unable to join us this year, make plans to join us next year October 8-10, 2008, in Hot Springs.

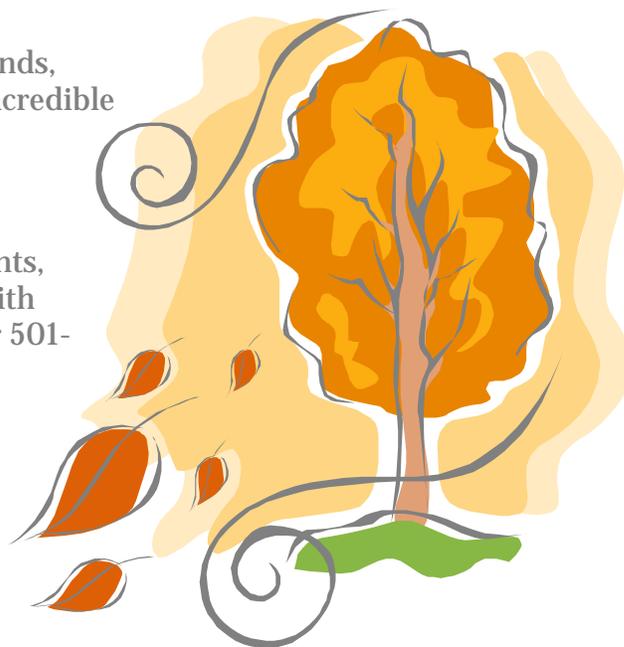
I want to send a special thank you to Michelle Pounds, Michelle Wynn, and Julie Williams for doing an incredible job planning and organizing the conference. I appreciate them and all the many volunteers who made the 46<sup>th</sup> annual conference a huge success.

I would love to hear from you! If you have comments, concerns, or ideas please feel free to share them with me. You can contact me at [tjohnston@uaex.edu](mailto:tjohnston@uaex.edu) or 501-671-2364.

Sincerely,

*Traci A. Johnston*

Traci Johnston, AECA President



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SECA Representative

Diana Courson - Magnolia

## Now Hiring

### AECA Conference Chair & Program Chair

**Do you have experience planning conferences/events?**

**Do you want to become more involved in AECA?**

**Do you love the conference and have  
great ideas for next year?**

The AECA Executive board has two positions open to coordinate the annual conference. The Conference Chair and Conference Program Chair will be selected by the Executive board and will each be paid a stipend (\$500-year one, \$1,000-year two, \$500-year three).

The conference chair has the responsibility for coordinating the work of our volunteers for all conference activities, such as registration, silent auction, non-commercial exhibits, and special events. The program chair recruits, selects, and schedules presenters for interest sessions during the conference. **Each position is a three-year commitment.** The first year you will shadow the current conference coordinators. The second year the two positions work together as a team. The third year you are training the new conference coordinators.

If you are interested in applying for one of these conference positions, call the AECA office, 501-771-1680, to request more information. You may also mail your résumé to the AECA office, P.O. Box 2898, Little Rock, AR 72203. **Résumés will be accepted until December 30, 2007.**

## Stuff the Sleigh

We would like to encourage you to get involved with Stuff the Sleigh this holiday season. Stuff the Sleigh was created to bring back the magic of Christmas to foster children throughout Arkansas. We would like local affiliates to get involved and collect toys to bring to Stuff the Sleigh which will be held the first full week in December. During the week, anyone can bring a new, unwrapped toy for children ages birth through 18, or a monetary donation to the site to help “stuff the sleigh.” The specific locations for Stuff the Sleigh have not been announced. Please continue checking our web-site at [www.arkansasearlychildhood.org](http://www.arkansasearlychildhood.org) for additional information. Start collecting your new toys today and bring them to a “Stuff the Sleigh” location near you!

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

## New From SECA

By Diana Courson, 2005 – 2007 SECA Representative

### SECA Board of Directors

It has been an honor to serve you on the SECA board of directors for the past three years. I am proud to represent such a strong state affiliate. On January 1, 2008, Dr. Joanna Grymes begins her term on the SECA board. I look forward to continuing to work with you through AECA to promote high quality services for children and families.

### Come to Covington!

The 2008 SECA conference is scheduled for March 27-29 in Covington, Kentucky. The keynote speakers and interest sessions promise exciting learning opportunities for everyone. Hotel and registration information is now available on the SECA Web site, [www.southernearlychildhood.org](http://www.southernearlychildhood.org). We're looking for a strong contingent of conference participants from Arkansas. I'll see you there!

## SECA 2008 General Session Features

**Friday, March 28, 2008**  
**10:15 – 11:45 am**

### Dr. Sue Bredekamp, Keynote Speaker Recipient of the 2008 SECA Friend of Children Award

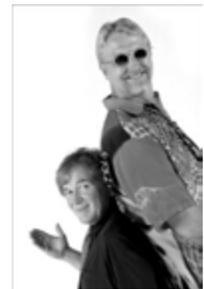
**Dr. Bredekamp** is the Director of Research at the Council for Professional Recognition in Washington DC and serves as a consultant on topics such as early literacy, curriculum and professional development. From 1981 to 1998, she served as Director of Accreditation and Professional Development at NAEYC. She is the primary author of NAEYC's highly-influential and best-selling publication, *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs*.



**Friday, March 28, 2008**  
**3:15 – 4:30**

### Trout Fishing in America, Special Guests

**Trout Fishing in America**, the name taken from a Richard Brautigan novel, seems almost as intriguing as a picture of this musical duo. Ezra Idlet (guitar) stands six feet nine inches and Keith Grimwood (bass), five feet, five and one half inches. Their infectious mix of folk/pop and family music is tempered by the diverse influences of reggae, Latin, blues, jazz and classical music. Their recordings have garnered three National Indie Awards and multiple Parents Choice Gold and American Library Awards as well as three Grammy nominations. Visit their website [www.troutmusic.com](http://www.troutmusic.com) for more information.



**Saturday, March 29 2008**  
**8:30 – 9:45 and 2:00 – 3:00**

### Dr. Becky Bailey, Keynote Speaker Spend a Day with Becky Bailey

**Dr. Bailey** is an award-winning author, teacher and internationally recognized expert in child and developmental psychology and the founder of Loving Guidance, Inc., a company dedicated to creating positive environments for children, families, schools and businesses. Dr. Bailey will provide both the Saturday morning and Saturday afternoon keynotes. The morning session is entitled, "Upset: The Key to Teaching Responsibility" and the afternoon session is entitled "If I Could Only Find the Right Consequence: Secrets and Myths About Effective Consequences."



## **A Message from the 2007 Conference Chairs**

**By Michelle Wynn, Program Chair, and Michelle Pounds, Conference Chair**

This year more than 1,000 participants attended the 46<sup>th</sup> annual AECA Conference October 18-20 at the Hot Springs Convention Center. It was a huge success!

We had excellent keynote speakers, informative interest sessions and a variety of exhibitors from across the state of Arkansas and beyond. Both of our keynote speakers, Dr. Jerry Aldridge and Sue Trainor, were remarkable. They were not only enlightening, but entertaining and encouraging!

In addition to great interest sessions & keynote speakers, conference attendees also enjoyed many other events. Friday, participants enjoyed snacks while visiting many exhibitors at the Networking Event. Participants also placed their bids on a variety items at the Silent Auction. On Saturday, Round Table discussions provided an opportunity to discuss relevant issues in a more relaxed atmosphere. And as always, there were door prizes!

This year's conference coincided with the annual Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure in Little Rock. To give participants an opportunity to support this worthy cause, several **Pink** opportunities were available. Silent Auction encouraged participants to "Power Up the **Pink**" by including pink items in their donations. A **Pink** booth was set up in the exhibit hall to collect donations and provide participants with important breast care awareness information. A **Pink** banner was hung behind the booth, on which participants could write a memorial, tribute or message of hope. A Memory Walk was held Saturday morning and a moment of silence was observed during the General Session on Saturday.

The AECA committee is already working on next year's conference. The 2008 AECA Annual Conference will be held at the Hot Springs Convention Center October 16-18, 2008. A call for proposals is posted on the AECA website [www.arkansaeearlychildhood.org](http://www.arkansaeearlychildhood.org). Proposals must be received by May 21, 2008.

We look forward to seeing you at the 2008 AECA Conference!!!

## **Congratulations to this year's award winning members!**

### **Maggie Reynolds/Deltha Sharp Scholarship**

AECA is pleased to announce that Debbie Mays of Siloam Springs was awarded the Maggie Reynolds/Delta Sharp award to attend the 2008 Southern Early Childhood Conference in Covington, KY. Debbie is a family child care provider and is professionally active at both the local and state levels, including being identified as an Arkansas Outstanding Early Childhood Professional and as a Terri Lynn Lokoff award winner. In her application, she stated that she wanted to "see what is offered outside the state and bring it back." We thank Debbie for her commitment to children, families, and AECA. We also look forward to what she will bring back to Arkansas from the SECA Conference.

### **Outstanding Member of the Year**

AECA is proud to identify Geania Dickey as the 2007 Outstanding Member of the Year. Geania is being recognized for the professional contributions she has made to AECA and to early childhood in Arkansas. The leadership she has provided to the Invest Early grassroots advocacy campaign has helped Arkansas continue to provide high quality early care and education services to increasing numbers of children. Geania works for Arkansas State University. Her work with directors through Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Credential/Certificate helps strengthen the infrastructure needed at each program to support quality experiences for children and families. Geania also coordinates the Governor's Work-Life Balance award, which recognizes employers for practices that support families and a healthy balance between family and work. AECA is fortunate to have involved professionals such as Geania to provide leadership and support to the organization.

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## Feature: What I Learned from the Conference

### Making Time for Rhymes

Tammy Allender, WRECA

I have been working with young children for 11 years and have always heard that Mother Goose or Nursery Rhymes were a great curriculum. I couldn't understand how to use them. At this year's conference in Hot Springs I found out just why Nursery Rhymes are so good. I learned how to incorporate Nursery Rhymes daily into what I am already teaching. It is the perfect literacy activity for our everyday schedule. The interest session, "A Garden of Nursery Rhymes," gave me a sample of a schedule of how to use these rhymes and then a web site to access all kinds of things to go along with it, like ABC books, rhyme cards, sequences activities, and many more things to go with it. Of all the sessions I have been in the 11 years I have been going to work shops, I think this one was one of the best. It could also have been because I took Pre-K ELLA this summer and was looking for things I could do with literacy.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed the sessions on "I've Got Worms", "Share, Be Nice..." and the speakers but I got more out of the Nursery Rhymes than any of the others.

All in all we had a great conference and I look forward to being there again next year!

### Transformational Teaching

Debbie Mays, NWECA

I am a family childcare home provider. I have about twenty years experience and I LOVE my job. This year, I have moved into a new realm of advocacy and mentoring, but still work full time with sixteen at-risk preschoolers in my quality care home. In addition to all that, I enjoy being a mother, grandmother, and an active member of a Baptist church. I also go to school part time.

As I listened to Dr. Aldridge's key points, it was as though he was talking directly to me. Although quality can take many different forms, I know what it is "not." Annually, I visit schools to get ideas and learn. I usually observe children on carpets for LONG periods of time or cubbies filled with worksheets. I struggle to educate my parents that transmission teaching is not appropriate for preschoolers. Many times they assume that their child is "missing out" or will not be as "ready" as the other children who have this type of pre-k setting. I do teach differently and that is okay.

As I drove home from one of my visits I saw my husband, who works with me full time, on the porch with a four-year-old little boy climbing onto his lap to tell him a secret. The boy had made a sign for the playhouse that said "no girls allowed." I realized at that point what the difference was. As if that wasn't enough validation, the boy's mother arrived at the same time. With tears in her eyes, she hugged me and said how much she will miss us when her son goes to "big school" next year and how grateful she is that he had three years with us. – When you fill your day with worksheets and long circle times or flashcards- there is no time for stories and hugs and silly signs that children make.

Another example – One day we walked to the donut shop. We talked about people and places that provide food. I was reminded as we walked about Dr. Aldridge's emphasis on teaching children where they live and what they know. As we walked we learned about crossing the street safely. We saw trees that had orange leaves instead of green. We saw numbers on houses and mail boxes and the many different colored cars.

"It sure is cold outside this morning; it must be fall - not summer. We will have to start wearing warmer clothing", I explained as we walked. We held hands and sang songs to develop community in our classroom. We saw one little girl's mom and dad in their van. (When we got back to the house we called them to say we loved seeing them on our walk and asked where they were headed.) When we got to the donut shop we counted children so we would know how many donut holes to get and we talked about having good manners while we were there. As we walked past the school the older children waved and we showed them how we could jump over each line in the side walk and land on two feet. We noticed as we walked that the grass in certain yards felt different. We now enjoy many days of transformational teaching *and* learning!

## A note of thanks from our 2007 award recipients

### Look out SECA here I come!

Debbie Mays, 2007 SECA Scholarship Recipient

Honored, surprised, excited and hopeful are all words to describe what I felt when I walked into the conference hall at AECA to find out that I had won the Maggie Reynolds/ Deltha Sharp Scholarship. Going to AECA is a wonderful experience. I can't imagine what a regional conference will be like! I have already taken a peek at some of the things they have planned and know that "Trout Fishing in America" from right here in NW Arkansas will be there. I expect to come back with new ideas, a fresh insight into Pre-K today and hopefully a few new friends that share the same love for children as I do. Thank you, AECA Executive Board and Members for this great opportunity to experience training to make me a better provider for the little people who spend each day with me. Day by day, training by training, member by member - we will make a difference in the world - one child at a time.

### With Many Thanks

Geania Dickey, 2007 Outstanding Member

It is an *honor* to be named as the 2007 AECA Outstanding Member! In fact, it was so much so, and such a surprise when it was announced at the conference, that I was speechless and for those of you who know me that is not typical. After the shock wore off I thought of things I wished I had said and asked for permission to submit this to the newsletter to share those thoughts.

This award means more to me than I can say. Not the plaque itself but because it is presented by an organization that means so very much to me. I was a "grown-up" and a Mom before I was called to the field of early education. But once there, I knew with certainty that it was where I was supposed to be. I feel the work we do is the most important work on the planet. We have the unique opportunity to shape the world each and everyday. I believe the most important job an adult has is helping a child reach their full potential – we do that! And as if that wasn't enough, in my time in this profession I have had countless opportunities to meet and work with the most caring and knowledgeable professionals anyone could ever hope to associate with. It is my view that AECA represents the best of the best of those professionals. So many AECA members do so much everyday to improve the lives of children, so to be singled out among you and to be honored by this organization is overwhelming.

Most of the work I have done on behalf of AECA falls under the category of Advocacy. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve AECA as the Public Policy chair for the past five years but I have never done any of that work alone. It was the efforts of many dedicated members that produced results for our work; those willing to share their time and talents to spread the word about the importance of high quality early learning experiences for children. I accept this award on behalf of their work and although it will be located in a place of prominence in my office it can never mean as much to me as the pleasure I have received having had the opportunity to get to know and work with so many exceptional people and knowing that work has made a difference for children.

### Thanks!

A big thank you goes out to everyone who participated in this year's Pink ribbon sale and silent auction bidding during the conference. We were able to donate **\$321.00** to the **Susan G. Komen Foundation**. We were also able to raise **\$2,062.00** for the **Maggie Reynolds/Deltha Sharp Scholarship Fund**.

### Training Alert!

#### Hot Springs Early Childhood Association

**Date:** February 11, 2008

**Time:** 6:30 – 8:30

**Location:** St. Michael's Catholic Child Care, 1125 Malvern Avenue, Hot Springs

**Topic:** Keeping Children, Staff, and Families Safe – Part I

**For more information contact:** Terri Helms at 501-760-2423 or Dot Brown at 501-525-4829

#### Northwest Arkansas Early Childhood Association

**Date:** February 7, 2008

**Time:** 6:30 pm

**Location:** Butterflies and Frogs, 2733 McConnell, Fayetteville

**Topic:** Health and Wellness of Infants and Young Children

**Featured Guest:** Brenda Zedlitz, Community Clinic at St. Francis House

**For more information contact:** Michelle Wynn, NWAECA President, at 479-751-3463 or [mwynn@jtlshop.jonesnet.org](mailto:mwynn@jtlshop.jonesnet.org)

#### River Valley Early Educator's Meeting

**Date:** December 4th, 2007

**Time:** 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

**Location:** Cook Elementary School, Fort Smith, AR

**Featured Guest:** Representative from the Morgan Nick Foundation

**For more information contact:** Cindy Johnston at 479-629-0224 or [cjohnsto@fortsmithschools.org](mailto:cjohnsto@fortsmithschools.org)

### Thanksgiving Mix

Tammy Dawson and Penny Hitt, MID-AR ECA

Need an assessment for all the things the children have learned about Thanksgiving? Try a Thanksgiving mix. Children can measure and discuss what they have learned about Thanksgiving.

#### Ingredients

5 cups of Bugles®

4 cups Chex® wheat cereal

3 cups candy corn

2 cups mixed nuts

1 cup sunflower seeds

2 cups raisins

3 cups M&Ms®

4 cups Gold Fish®

5 cups thin pretzel sticks

#### Representation

The cornucopia – horn of plenty a representation of an overflowing fullness and abundance from the land

The amber waves of grain

The harvest of corn

The fruit the trees have already provided

The seed of the new harvest

The fruit of the vine

The beautiful colors of the fall seasons

The abundant supply of fresh meat

The plentiful supply of wood used to build and heat homes

Measure all ingredients in large bowl and stir until well mixed. Make sure each child gets to add an item and discuss what they have learned.



NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
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LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

The leaves are turning beautiful colors. Cooler air is filling our days. The bugs of summer's past have begun to go away. For many, fall provides a time of rest and relief from the busy hot days of summer. For others, fall is the time for harvesting and storing in preparation for winter. There is so much information to share with our children during this time of year. Between collecting fallen leaves, singing songs about pumpkins, and counting the squirrels as they scamper around; the great outdoors gives us an endless variety of objects, textures, sounds, and smells which inspire our conversations about fall. Whether you are a transformational teacher or working your way to become one, now is the perfect time to get outside and help the children in your care realize how special fall really is.

This quarter's Update is filled to the max! Thank you so much to all of you who contributed to this quarter's Update. It was a big job and you did it excellently! I would love to hear from some of our other members as well! If you would like to share *any* classroom ideas for the next Update, please don't hesitate to contact me at 501-671-2103 or [lsmith@uaex.edu](mailto:lsmith@uaex.edu).

Happy Fall!

*Lindsey Smith*

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President - Publications

