

Winter 2009

AECA Update

Dear Members,

A lot of activity has occurred since our conference in October and we feel it is important for you to know that your board members and our new association manager have been busy.

Right after the conference a team appointed by the board reviewed job applications for the new association manager. Lindsey Smith was selected for that position and is doing an amazing job. The position of First Vice President for Publications was filled by Jennie Gates. Jennie teaches at Arkansas State University in Beebe and had expressed an interest in working with the board. In the few days since becoming our new First Vice President, we already know that we are in good hands and communication with our membership will not be disrupted. Geania Dickey consented to continue serving as Public Policy Chairperson and other members are expressing interest in serving. This is fantastic and exactly what we need. Growing new leadership across the state and hearing from people who want to serve is a major goal.

We have a balanced and approved budget and the organization while not wealthy is doing well as we keep a watchful eye on our limited resources. Dues have increased and it is important that you are aware of this change as it does affect registration fees for the conference as well as renewals.

Our biggest challenge is figuring out how to re-energize the local affiliates and what can be done differently to benefit members. The affiliate report form used recently by affiliate presidents in attendance will be sent to each president. This is to be completed and returned listing all officers along with their contact information. The membership committee headed by Kate Runder, Second Vice President for Membership and all four of the Members-at-Large will solicit input and meet to consider what the association leadership can do to help in this effort.

The board has many exciting ideas with opportunities to make some real differences. We realize however that it takes time and human capital to convert ideas into reality. Come join us and work with us as we embark on the continued journey of progress by making a meaningful difference in our association.

Sincerely,

Barbara Gilkey

Barbara Gilkey, AECA President

Our AECA office is MOVING!

During the winter board meeting it was decided that the AECA office currently located in North Little Rock would be vacated in favor of moving to the Plaza West Office building in Little Rock. The move will allow us to access files and records more easily, save a few dollars each month on our rent, reduce travel time to and from the office and most importantly...it has an elevator that will be especially appreciated on those hot and muggy days when boxes are being loaded for the state conference and other meetings.

2008-2009 Executive Board

President

Barbara Gilkey
Little Rock

President-Elect

Tina Ross - Little Rock

Immediate Past President

Traci Johnston
Little Rock

Secretary

Jamie Morrison
Greenbrier

Treasurer

Dawn Jeffrey - Southside

Historian

Joy Smith - Batesville

1st VP Publications

Jennie Gates - Beebe

2nd VP Membership

Kate Runder - Little Rock

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District #1

Kathy Pillow-Price
Batesville

District #2

Johnnie Bridges
North Little Rock

District #3

Deb Kee - Bentonville

District #4

Angela Vann - Magnolia

SECA Representative

Joanna Grymes
Jonesboro



A very special thank you to Traci Johnston, Immediate Past President for leading efforts to collect items for patients at Arkansas Children's Hospital. Also a huge thanks to those of you that donated items at the conference and to the board members who lovingly put together the isolation kits. On March 4th, 2009 Traci Johnston and Barbara Gilkey delivered the kits to Arkansas Children's Hospital. What a great opportunity for us to give back!

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

ARKANSAS EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION
48th ANNUAL CONFERENCE
October 8-10, 2009
Hot Springs Civic and Convention Center

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The AECA Conference is an opportunity to interact and network with early care and education professionals around the state. Interest Sessions are for child care providers and educators in the early childhood field. Interest Sessions are one hour in length and should focus on practices, trends and issues in early care and education, birth to age eight. There are 10 competency areas your proposed Interest Session may fall under.

Competency Areas:

1. **Child Growth and Development**
2. **Creating Caring Communities to Support Learning and Development**
3. **Supporting Learning and Development through Curriculum Planning and Implementation**
4. **Assessment and Evaluations**
5. **Family**
6. **Community**
7. **Professionalism**
8. **Program Management**
9. **Communication**
10. **General Knowledge**

Based on past evaluation responses, the following topics have been requested.

- **Nutrition**
- **Infants & Toddlers**
- **Special Needs**
- **Challenging behaviors**
- **CDA**
- **Themed curricula/Unit experiences**
- **Train the Trainers**– These sessions will be for trainers only and will address facilitating adult learning.

For more information about the 2009
 AECA conference visit:
www.arkansasearlychildhood.org

EXPENSES

No AECA Funds are available for presenter expenses. **All presenters must pre-register for the conference.** One presenter for each session is provided complimentary registration. AECA does not furnish audio-visual equipment.

PROCEDURE

1. Proposals for presenting an interest session should include:
 - A. Title of presentation
 - B. Lead Presenter: Name, Address, Summer Address (if applicable), Telephone numbers, Email address, Employer name.
 - C. Co-Presenter(s): Name, Address, Telephone numbers, Email address, Employer name
 - D. Target audience
 - E. Competency area addressed
 - F. Whether you would repeat this session
 - G. List of learning objectives and/or outline of session topic and format (200 words or less)
 - H. 20-30 word session description that will go in the conference program
2. Submit a copy of your proposal either electronically (preferred) to: tjohnston@pulaskitech.edu or mail to: Traci Johnston, AECA Program Chair
 P.O. Box 2898
 Little Rock, AR 72203
3. Proposals must be received by **April 13, 2009.**
4. Letters of acceptance will be mailed by **June 15, 2009.**

News from SECA

Joanna Grymes, 2008 – 2010 SECA Representative

Please sing along with me, to the tune of Mary Had a Little Lamb:

**SECA is in Little Rock, Little Rock, Little Rock
So much to do just ‘round the block
When SECA’s in Little Rock.**

**We expect to see you there, see you there, see you there
Much to do and much to share
When SECA’s in Little Rock.**

**We’ll have great events for you, events for you, events for you
Presidents and heifers, too
When SECA’s in Little Rock.**

That’s right -- the SECA conference will be in Little Rock, January 21 – 23, 2010!

We will be at the Peabody Hotel and the Statehouse Convention Center, just steps away from the River Market, the Clinton Presidential Library, the Historic Arkansas Museum and the Heifer International Complex. We want to showcase Arkansas’ deep commitment to quality early childhood programs, rich cultural heritage, and gracious hospitality to our friends and colleagues in the South.

The SECA office will take the primary lead in conference planning, but there will certainly be opportunities to be involved, and I hope you will be. The SECA office and the SECA Board are in the process of deciding on the theme and keynote speakers for the conference. If you have ideas of ways to showcase Arkansas, or early childhood programs in Arkansas, please contact me and I will make certain that information is moved forward. Please feel free to tell me ideas you have or if you are interested in assisting with the conference. You can email me at grymesj@astate.edu.

We will keep you “in the loop” about this exciting conference as decisions are made and activities planned. We do “expect to see you there,” where there will be “much to do and much to share, when SECA’s in Little Rock.”

**SAVE THE DATE
SECA Conference
January 21-23, 2010
Little Rock**

Hot Springs

Early Childhood Association

Affiliate of Arkansas Early Childhood Association (AECA)

Family Play Day
Saturday, April 18, 2009 – 10:00 a.m.
 – 2:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
Christian Life Center
Hot Springs, AR
Theme: Together We Learn

- Family Play Day, in celebration of Arkansas Children's Week, is an event that is free, fun and educational for families and their children, ages 1 to 6, in the greater Hot Springs area.
- The event features play, learn and fun stations, plus stations sponsored by area community organizations and agencies.
- Services such as speech, hearing, developmental, vision and dental screening for children are available to families.
- Families receive a gift bag that includes a quality children's book, discount coupons, and information about area recreation and education venues. They also have an opportunity to register for and win a large number of door prizes.
- Family Play Day is sponsored by the Hot Springs Early Childhood Association with the support of area organizations, agencies, businesses and early care and education programs serving children and families.
- Information provided by Dot Brown – HSECA Treasurer

Arkansas Children's Week April 18-25, 2009 "Together We Learn"

Celebrate!

Arkansas Children's Week!
Kick-off

FREE CONCERT!



Featuring.....
The Kiddos
 of Siloam Springs, Arkansas

Saturday, April 18th
 10 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church Gym

For more information call (870) 741-1141 or (870) 741-9823

Sponsored by: The Ozark Mountain Early Childhood Association and area Child Care Centers

Don't forget!

You can find your membership expiration date located to the right of your name on the addressed portion of this newsletter.

When renewing your membership, please be sure to use the form that has 2009 on it. You can find AECA membership forms on-line at www.arkansasearlychildhood.org/membership.htm

Remember, dues are now \$30 for all regular members and \$25 for all student members.

Encouraging the Home Language

by Darlene Kurtz of Welcome the Children Project and AECA Member

Spoken language in Arkansas has changed a lot in the last decade. We likely were accustomed to hearing only English spoken most everywhere we went, but now we are likely to overhear other languages spoken in grocery stores or convenience stops in many cities and small towns across the state. Enrollment numbers indicate that Arkansas preschool centers receive children who are not speaking English. Well, not fully fluent in English *yet!* With your ability to model English and teach inclusively these children become proficient right before our eyes - and ears.

But what is meant when today's linguists tell educators to 'encourage the home language?' How does an English-speaking teacher who doesn't know the other language *encourage* it? I invite you to consider the following:

- Does the center have staff (or adult volunteers) who are skilled and willing to serve as translators of written documents and interpreters to verbally communicate between the two languages?
- Does the program have its forms translated for parents?
- Does the center schedule its interpreters in advance for parent meetings?
- Are children able to speak spontaneously to their peers in their home language without being admonished?
- Are (some) books and materials that are sent home with children also available in Spanish (or another language) with some frequency?
- Does the center have cassette tapes / CDs that accompany stories and activities in the home language so that parents can enjoy them with their child at home? If not available through the book publisher, locate an individual who is comfortable reading stories in the home language and create a recording with help from someone with technical experience as needed.
- Assess your center's level of hospitality extended to non-English-speaking families. A smile in any language from the office staff is readily appreciated. Walk them to the room they are looking for and have extra chairs available.
- On Parents' Night - High school students or other volunteers could offer simple hallway and restroom directions, if not in the home language then holding signs with arrows and pictures of the places to visit inside the building.

These are just a few ideas. If you have additional tips that you have tried and would like to share with others, please email them to me at kurtzdarlenej@uams.edu or mail to Welcome the Children, 2001 Pershing Circle, Suite 300, North Little Rock, AR 72114. I would love to hear from you!

SPRING RELATED ACTIVITY FOR PRESCHOOL CLASSROOMS

Activity: Life of a Tree

Contributed by Dot Brown, HSECA

*Adopt a tree on or near your school's grounds. A tree that sheds its leaves each fall is best.

*Keep a journal about the Life of a Tree. Take photos and involve children in writing stories about the tree. Write about the suggested activities that you and the children do. Let children dictate to you what they want to say about their tree.

*Eat snack, sing songs, play and tell stories around the tree.

*Explore parts of the tree: trunk and leaves that fall, for example.

*Have children observe and explore the tree. Ask questions to guide their discovery. Can they reach around the tree? How many arms does it take to reach around the tree? What does the bark feel like? How would they describe the tree's leaves? How do the leaves change throughout the school year?

*Suggest that children look for signs of animal activity in or around the tree; signs such as empty nutshells or animal footprints.

*Read with children what you have written in the journal about the tree. This can be done every couple of weeks as you and the children add information about your experiences with the tree.

*Invite children to draw pictures of their tree.

Teacher Note: This activity can take place over a period of a year. This will allow the children to observe the changes, especially if the tree sheds in the fall.

Children's books about trees:

- *A Tree is Nice* by Janice May Udry, illustrated by Marc Simont
 - *A Busy Year* by Leo Lionni
- *The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree* by Gail Gibbons

Activity from *Adventures in Learning Curriculum* for Children from 3 to 5.
Focus Area #7 – Things that Grow, Topic of Study - Trees

To access Adventures in Learning online go to
<http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/adventuresinlearningcurriculum.html>

Winter or Spring Hokey Pokey

Robin Jones, NWAECA-President

“You put your hat (mittens, scarf, etc.) in,
You put your hat out,
You put your hat in,
And you shake it all about”



“You put your rain boots (umbrella) in
You put your rain boots out,
You put your rain boots in,
And you shake it all about”





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Dear Member,

This is my first newsletter for AECA! Please bear with me as I learn how to format and present the information in the best way possible! I appreciate all of the great submissions! AECA is hoping to reach out to our student members. If you are a college student and a member of AECA, please send in articles, pictures and/or updates on what you're doing in the field of Early Childhood Education. I would love to start a student spotlight for each newsletter!

If you would like to contribute to the next Update, please submit your entry no later than April 15, 2009. Remember, you can submit as little or as much as you like. Contributions can be sent to Jennie Gates at jkgates@asub.edu or PO Box 391, Little Rock, AR 72203.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Jennie Gates

Jennie Gates, First Vice President - Publications

