



# The Leadership Letter

## How to Build Board Strength

As state Board Members we all face the challenge of recruiting, mentoring, and sustaining board membership. At each Southern Early Childhood Association's Conference we have the opportunity to meet with each other face to face and really discuss some of the issues face to face. I am often asked what the benefits of SECA are. To me it is this opportunity to share on a personal, grassroots level, not only the problems we face but solutions for those problems. I thought I would share some of these discussions in this issue of the Leadership Letter. Who is responsible for the Board doing a good job? You might say the president and you would be right. But ultimately, it is the responsibility of every member of the Board to see that every member does a good job.

Some states are experiencing board members who do not follow through on their commitments or duties. Many states provide intense orientation describing the duties and functions and responsibilities of each office. SECA has prepared several modules which could help local chapters and affiliates to become more educated in Board structure and responsibility. Other states have Affili-

ate notebooks for each officer. In my home state of Oklahoma we have we have CD's of board Policy and Procedures. We submit all of our reports on line so when we meet we are already familiar with the reports and can discuss and vote more quickly. We move our meetings around the state so we share the travel costs. We typically try to schedule meetings around Affiliate Conferences so we have State Board Members at the local level.

We have discussed how to build Board Leadership. Our members have began to visit local colleges and Universities to speak with student groups before they graduate. Some colleges have their own affiliate student group. Students today have several early childhood groups to choose from, with personal contact, they are more apt to select ours. Part of getting students to perceive value in early childhood organizations is offering them a student rate, establishing student groups, partnering student meetings with district meetings, mentoring new members by providing support from current members.

To join in future discussions, attend the Affiliate Training Reception at the 2011 SECA Conference in Savannah Georgia!

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### Leadership Commission Members

- *Terrie Buckner, GA*
- *Katie Shaughnessy-Williams, KY*
- *Susan Carrigan, OK*
- *Cindy Ramagos, LA*

## What You Missed by Not Attending the 2010 Conference

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1. President Obama's plan for early childhood education
2. How to relate to people from generations different from yours
3. The correlation between outdoor play and a child's ability to read
4. How to go green in your classroom with the use of a global education kit
5. Hearing stories of how teachers have impacted children's lives that would reduce you to tears
6. A chance to view the latest products from vendors in the field
7. Opportunities to network and learn from professionals
8. Inspiring information on how to help America's children become less obese and more active

## Board Cafe

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Looking for Interesting information for non-profit organizations and Boards?

Here is what is currently on the Blue Avocado website:

- *Treasurers of All-Volunteer Organizations: Eight Key Responsibilities*
- *Exceed! Basic Fundraising Software for Non-profit Organizations*
- *Attack of the Tax Exemption Killers*
- *Nonprofit Jargon Watch*
- *What to Do When You Really, Really Disagree with a Board Decision*
- *Nonprofits and Copyrights: What You Need to Know*
- *Recruiting for Board Diversity: Part Three in Diversity Series*



## Happy, Healthy, Successful Children

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As leaders of professionals within our states, it is important that we advocate for change and promote early development within our individual states. We are all charged with promoting early development, engaging and supporting families, developing excellent and effective programs for young children and providing caring communities for young children. Joan Lombardi in her address to the Smart Start Conference spoke to this very issue. For those of you who did not have the opportunity to hear her presentation, here are some of the highlights:

### Overview:

Federal Initiatives: American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, this funding year will see an additional 4 mil-

lion dollars. An additional one billion dollars will go to Head Start with an additional 9.3 billion over the next three years.

### Developing an Early Head Start road map to excellence

- Rebuilding training and technical assistance programs
- Revising early childhood standards
- Supporting collaboration with early childhood programs
- Promoting continuity with quality Pre-K (aligning curriculum)

### Developing Child Care pathways to innovation

- Expand access to services
- Improve quality: professional development

- Assure continuity—licensing, quality rating, and improvement systems.

**Partnerships** across the systems: Head Start, Child Care, Public Education, Private Programs, Labor, Housing, and additional Department of Health and Human Services agencies.

### Early Childhood Systems

Quality standards and supports

- Providing basic level of protection for all children
- Developing quality rating for all states
- Insuring infrastructure at the community level
- Providing ongoing resources to providers
- Promoting public understanding

## Happy, Healthy, Successful Children (cont'd)

### Early learning and Development guidelines

- Focusing on all domains of development
- Aligning birth to eight
- Integrating into teacher preparation
- Developing ongoing assessments
- Paying attention to the needs of limited-English-speaking children

### Professional Development ("the heart of quality")

- Promoting an articulated set of credentials
- Encouraging mentoring and coaching
- Improving recognition and compensation
- Building the capacity of higher education focus on

### profession

- Nurturing new leadership

### Family engagement

- Building on family strengths
- Promoting family involvement
- Reaching out to fathers
- Making connections across generations

### Health promotion

- Assuring health and safety for all children
- Promoting good nutrition
- Limiting screen time
- Interacting with nature

### Coordinated Data

- Common data elements across programs, communities, states
- Putting data to use to improve programs
- Promoting connections and

### sharing across programs, common cause

- Assuring support in every community
- Supporting each other and building leadership

Families have a primary decision-making role in the care of their own children as well as the policies and procedures governing care for all children in their community, their state, and the nation. We must develop family-driven models based on research, service, and advocacy. We are charged with collaborating with the key players within our communities, disseminating information, insuring efficacy of families as providers, being agitators for policy, and helping families be informed tax payers. Through partnership and relationship transition occurs.



### **SOUTHERN EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION**

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*The Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA) is a regional organization committed to promoting quality care and education for young children and their families. SECA is committed to providing leadership and support to individuals and groups by:*

- *Enhancing the quality of young children's lives through early childhood care and education.*
- *Supporting families in their roles of caring for their children.*
- *Fostering the professional growth and status of individuals working with young children and their families.*

[www.southernearlychildhood.org](http://www.southernearlychildhood.org)