

SECA

Reporter

SPRING 2006

From SECA To You

SECA is constantly looking for ways to make your membership with us more beneficial to you. We're beginning a new member benefit program in the fall that we think will be of real use to you in the classroom. SECA has approved reviewers for a new Children's Literature Review program. We'll be publishing reviews of the newest in children's books that will give you information on:

- ✓ Ways to use the book in your classroom or home.
- ✓ Information on the age-appropriateness for each group
- ✓ Strategies for integrating the book into your daily classroom activities.

The use of literature in the early childhood classroom is one of the most important things you can do to support early literacy and readiness for kindergarten. We're here to help you with that job. Look for the first published reviews in the fall *SECA Reporter*.

Are You An Unfulfilled Author?

Have you secretly been thinking about writing for publication but don't want to attempt to submit to a refereed journal just yet? Would you like to do an article about what's happening in your classroom on a daily basis? Are you a poet that's just dying to be published?

You're just the person we're seeking!

SECA is soliciting articles and poetry that would be appropriate for state newsletters and the *SECA Reporter*. (Take a look at your state newsletter to get an idea of the type of articles that are published.) We'll receive the article in the SECA office, review it and, if the article is accepted, either publish it in the *SECA Reporter* or send it to the state newsletter editors for consideration. That means you'll have your article submitted to 13 different state organizations for possible publication.

Go to www.southernearlychildhood.org to get the guidelines for submitting newsletter articles. This is one way we can share across the South and among our states. **Start writing today!**

Do You Submit Manuscripts for *Dimensions of Early Childhood*?

We're adding a new feature in *Dimensions* called "Put These Ideas Into Practice!". Our membership has told us that they would like to have practical strategies for implementing the ideas that you incorporate into your articles and we've made some changes to add this new feature.

The new manuscript guidelines ask that you produce this type of information for your article if it is accepted for publication, and we've posted that information on the SECA website. Go to www.southernearlychildhood.org and click on *Dimensions* for more information. We're truly excited about helping our members turn your research into classroom practice!

Who Is a SECA Member?

SECA represents a variety of early childhood professionals throughout the South and nation. These statistics may help you to get an idea of who belongs to SECA.

SECA represents the early childhood community.

- 38.11%** are teachers
- 5.37%** are family child care providers
- 36.69%** are program directors or school administrators
- 13.74%** are education coordinators/trainers
- 10.38%** are college educators
- 8.49%** are students
- 1.49%** are retired early childhood educators
- 1.63%** are government administrators/regulators
- 3.84%** are resource & referral specialists
- 14.87%** list themselves as "other"

SECA diversifies as the South changes.

- 12.6%** are African American
- 0.6%** are American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 1.16%** are Asian American/Pacific Islander
- 7.87%** are Hispanic
- 79.16%** are Caucasian

SECA is committed to serving the early childhood professionals of the South, and we're working to tailor our member programs to those needs.

These statistics represent the states of AL, FL, GA, KY, OK, TN, TX, VA and WV and were reported by NAEYC, our partner for membership processing in these states.

Dimensions of Early Childhood is a great resource for information on early childhood professionalism and staff development. We've put articles from *Dimensions* on a CD and now have it available through the SECA office. Check our *Dimensions* on CD ad in the 2006 Resource Catalog.



The South is Changing

The South is one of the fastest growing areas of the country in terms of Hispanic population. This population growth has great impact on our early childhood programs and schools. Do you know how much the Hispanic population in your state has grown?

State	Change in total population	Change in Hispanic population
AL	10%	208%
AR	14%	337%
FL	24%	70%
GA	26%	300%
KY	0%	173%
LA	6%	16%
MS	11%	148%
NC	21%	381%
OK	10%	108%
SC	15%	211%
TN	17%	278%
TX	23%	54%
VA	14%	106%
WV	1%	45%

What does this mean for early childhood educators in the South?

1. You will have language barriers in working with families. How will you address that barrier?
2. Cultural differences in child rearing practices may impact the types of activities that are acceptable to Hispanic parents. Do you know what those differences are?
3. Cultural diversity is a wonderful asset to an early childhood program. How will you bring that asset into your program?

SECA's position statement, *Valuing Diversity for Young Children*, is a resource for you. It can be downloaded at www.southernearlychildhood.org.

Links to Literacy: A Literacy Enrichment Program for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

In 2005, a SECA Division for Development Grant was awarded to the University of Southern Mississippi, Department of Child and Family Studies to implement the *Links to Literacy Enrichment Project*.

The goals of the *Links to Literacy Project* included the following:

- ✓ To provide opportunities that would enhance an interest in books and reading for young children.
- ✓ To provide opportunities for young children to listen to and discuss story books.
- ✓ To promote language and literacy development by engaging young children in language games and literacy related play activities.
- ✓ To provide parents with literacy materials and opportunities to enhance language and literacy experiences in the home.
- ✓ To increase awareness of literacy development by encouraging parents to read daily to their children and develop a language rich home environment.

An average of seven toddler and preschool age children and eight kindergarten children participated. The children in the kindergarten group met weekly and were provided with after-school enrichment activities and literacy experiences; the infant and toddler group met monthly and were provided with activities and materials that encouraged and promoted language and literacy in the home and community. Family literacy packets were given to parents to promote parent/child interaction and to enhance the richness of home experiences.

Parents involved with *Links to Literacy* were encouraged to read to their children daily, respond to questions, and cultivate language and literacy throughout the day. Language experiences were encouraged through the literacy rich materials included in the family literacy packet.

Parents expressed their enjoyment of reading the books provided and talking about new activities with their child. Several requested additional literacy activities and were provided with more materials and suggestions.

With the playgroup supplies and materials purchased through the grant, the monthly infant and toddler group will continue to meet, providing parents and children with educational opportunities to build language and literacy skills.

Excerpted from an article by Julie C. Parker, MS, CCLS and Anne Burgess, Ph.D., CFLE, CFCS of the University of Southern Mississippi, Department of Child and Family Studies.



A mother and children enjoy Links with Literacy activities during a group meeting.

Why I Want to Be SECA President: Statements from the Candidates for President-Elect



Beth Parr
Georgia

I would welcome the opportunity to serve as your president of the Southern Early Childhood Association. I believe that SECA serves a unique role in the early childhood community by focusing on the needs and challenges of young children living in the South. I appreciate the long history of SECA and the contributions that have been made through the years by many faithful volunteers. I think it is time for us to look closely at how we can better serve you and the children of the South.

I have been active in early childhood for over 30 years, wearing many different hats and having the opportunity to work with young children and their teachers in varied ways. I have served as a preschool teacher, a director, an infant caregiver, a trainer, an early childhood education instructor, an author, and always, an advocate. I have served in various leadership positions in the Georgia Association for Young Children, the South Georgia Christian Educators Association, and the Council on Child Abuse. Because of these experiences, I appreciate and celebrate the work you are doing in your communities. I would count it a privilege to represent you who work so hard for the children in your states.

This is a perilous time for children and their families. We have made strides in some areas but we are facing some major challenges as budgets continue to be cut. Consequently, we know that children will be the

first to suffer. In our states, we can't afford to lose ground in the fight for better futures for young children. SECA is an organization with a strong history — a legacy of concern for the education and well-being of young children in the South. At the same time, we are poised at the brink of new possibilities and challenges. I believe that SECA can make a real difference for young children and I want to be a part of that effort. It is time for all children to have access to high quality early care and learning and the opportunities for the success that it affords.



Georgia Lamirand
Oklahoma

I want to be SECA President for several reasons. First I am a good representative and have been an active member of this grand organization for the past 28 years. During this time, I have attended 18 SECA conferences in 9 of the 13 states. This has provided me with a solid foundation and a true understanding of the Association.

Secondly, I have been involved in different facets of the system. Throughout my membership, I have participated in committees, given workshops, held offices and participated in planning our local and state conferences. I have also served on three different Board of Directors, Region Six Head Start, Child Care Careers and the Southern Early Childhood Association.

Thirdly, I have the passion and desire to take SECA into the next decade of existence. I have personal commitment and support from my school, state and colleagues to give my best over the next four years.

(Lamirand cont'd)

I want to emphasize membership growth and involvement and professional development during my tenure. I will encourage each state to recruit and mentor new members. Members need to be cultivated, inspired and involved for our organization to be successful. We must also continue to mentor new leadership. Professional development is critical for the membership. We need to survey the needs and wants of our membership to insure that every conference and training opportunity is successful and well attended.

Lastly, I want to continue the traditions, the friendships, and the vision of this wonderful organization. I want to be your voice in the South! I want to make a difference to SECA and you!



Judy Whitesell
South Carolina

As a candidate for the office of President-Elect of SECA, my determination, drive and purpose must be crystal clear to you, the voting members of our organization.

First, I believe this organization has historically been a grassroots assembly of dedicated early care and education professionals.

Secondly, we have many experts in our field in the ranks among us.

Thirdly, we are welcoming and open to new members and ideas.

So, having said that, I'm certain you want to know, if I am elected, what vision do I have to lead this organization?

Like many others in our profession, I am a dreamer. I believe that SECA can continue to grow and strengthen with continued strong leadership. The goals I feel are most important are these:

1. We will reinforce our advocacy opportunities by keeping abreast of current trends and issues in each state and then creating a resource network to allow the affiliates to benefit one another by sharing our expertise gained through common experiences.
2. We will continue to study member concerns and suggestions to find a membership structure that will benefit SECA *AND* it's members. Our primary goal is to recruit *AND* retain members to grow SECA.
3. We will continue to seek collaboration with other early childhood organizations to solidify our stand and to enhance the arena of early care and education in the South. By actively networking with other organizations, we can have a stronger voice in what is best for children and families.

SECA has always had a strong voice in the lives of children and families in the South. My desire is to honor this legacy and move forward. When the ballots are distributed, please take the opportunity to peruse our statements and vote your wishes. If my "dreams" coincide with your ideas of this organization, I would appreciate your vote. Thank you for your consideration.

For information about the candidates' backgrounds and education, check out the inside front cover of the Winter 2006 *Dimensions of Early Childhood*.

What's Happening in the SECA States?

Arkansas

Arkansas recently completed a special session of the Arkansas General Assembly to provide additional funding for public schools. An additional \$144 million was allocated for the public schools and additional funds were made available for districts that are isolated or with declining enrollments. These funds include teacher raises.

On April 26, 2006, the Head Start Collaboration Office, the Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education and Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families convened a statewide meeting of early childhood professionals to look at ways that early childhood programs could better serve immigrant families in the state and to discuss what barriers still exist to access to those services. Additionally, the Division of Child Care & Early Childhood Education has recently published a calendar of family activities called, *Getting Ready for Kindergarten*, in both Spanish and English.

Florida

With the first year of implementation of Voluntary Pre-kindergarten in the state of Florida, the Early Childhood Association of Florida (SECA's state affiliate) is working to improve the standards and quality of the program as implementation begins its second year.

ECA of Florida recently participated in an advocacy day at the state capitol and is supporting a bill to develop a Commission to study the design of a Quality Rating System for the state.

Louisiana

The Superintendent of Education of the state of Louisiana convened the third statewide Early Childhood Summit on April 5-7, 2006. The Summit was designed to bring together the early childhood community in the state to determine how the state might move forward in implementing LA-4.

A report from the Summit will be produced with recommendations on the next steps to take in implementing the statewide preschool program.

Mississippi

The Mississippi Early Childhood Association is actively involved in the state discussion about placement of child care licensing. The state has recommended that the function be moved from the State Department of Health to the Department of Human Services.

MECA does not support that recommendation and has been actively working to inform legislators about the possible consequences of this move.

Virginia

The Virginia Early Childhood Association recently adopted a position statement on Universal Pre-Kindergarten. Virginia's new Governor, Tim Kaine, is a proponent of universal pre-kindergarten and VAECE is actively working to support the development of a universal pre-kindergarten initiative Virginia. For a copy of the statement, go to www.southernearlychildhood.org and click on position statements.

Need to Know What's Happening in Public Policy in Your State?

SECA keeps you connected by providing several ways for you to access your state's information.

- ✓ The *SECA Reporter* will bring you updates twice a year in the spring and fall.
- ✓ The Public Policy Page at www.southernearlychildhood.org has summaries of public policy reports and direct links to your state's website.
- ✓ On "The SECA States" page of the SECA website, you can click on your state and there's a link to your state's website.

Remember, you're only a click away!

New Study on Rural and Non-rural Child Care

Child Trends and the National Center for Rural Early Childhood Learning Initiatives at Mississippi State University have released a report examining the advantage and disadvantages of early childhood development in rural areas in the United States. The report is entitled *Rural Disparities in Baseline Data of the Early Childhood Longitudinal Chartbook*. For more information go to www.childtrends.org.

Quality Counts 2006

For the first time, the 10th edition of *Quality Counts*, released by *Education Week*, examines the progress that states have made on a core set of policy indicators related to standards-based reform. The report was first released in 1997, and an original analysis was conducted by the Editorial Projects in Education Research Center for *Quality Counts at 10: A Decade of Standards-Based Education*.

Six SECA states had gains in mathematics that significantly outpaced those for the nation both in grades 4 and 8: Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas. Oklahoma experienced growth, although lower than the nation as a whole, in both grades. Florida experienced reading gains significantly above the national average in grade 4 only.

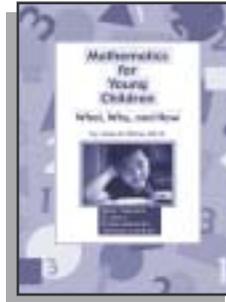
The following SECA states experienced significant achievement gap-closing in at least one area (black-white, Hispanic-white, or poor-non poor students) without a significant decline in average scores for the higher-performing group.

Grade 4 Reading: Florida, Texas

Grade 4 Math: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia.

For information on the full report, go to www.edweek.org/rc. Congratulations to the

pre-K and primary teachers who laid the foundation for these gains!



Mathematics for Young Children available from SECA

Helping Others

Two programs, NEMCSA Sterling Head Start in Sterling, Michigan and Pinellas County Jewish Day School in Clearwater, Florida taught their children the value of helping others by sponsoring projects to contribute to the Hurricane Relief Fund at SECA. Sterling Head Start collected pennies from home to donate. Pinellas County Jewish Day School baked cookies and held a bake sale for the staff and students of the school.

As the teachers from Pinellas said, "The boys and girls learned a valuable lesson during this project. Although they may be only four or five year olds, they can do something big for others in need." Our thanks go to these dedicated teachers, and the children they teach.



The Transitional Kindergarten Class of Pinellas County Jewish Day School Cookie Sale

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Save the Date!
March 29-31, 2007

**Check www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org
after June 1, 2006 for more details.**