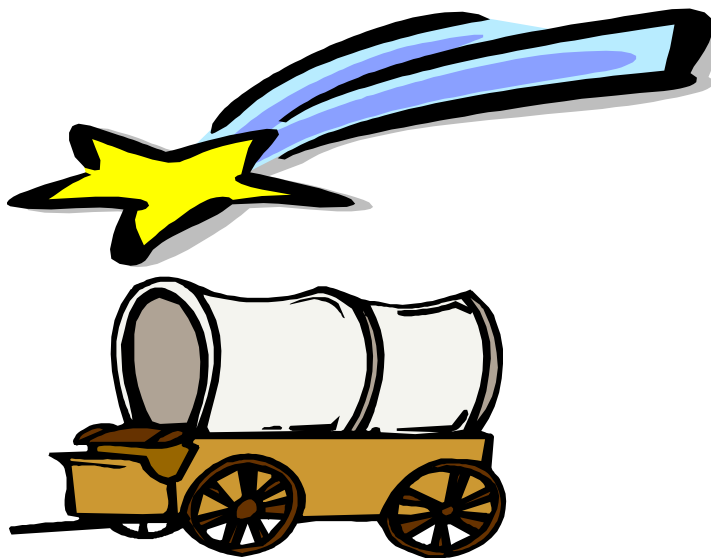




SUMMER 2004

SECA REPORTER



*“Hitch Your Wagon to a Star.... A
Southern Voice for Children”*

Join us in Dallas, Texas, on March 3-5, 2005 for the 56th Annual
Conference of the Southern Early Childhood Association!

Call 1-800-305-SECA for more information or go to
www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org.

SECA 2005—A Chance to Show Your Star Power!

We're planning a *BIGGER* and *BETTER* SECA for 2005 in the great state of Texas! Texas is famous for a *BIGGER* than life attitude and warm hospitality, and we think it's the perfect place to celebrate our profession with a conference dedicated to education, fun and networking.

Some preliminary information to help you plan for SECA 2005:

- ✓ The conference will be held at the **Intercontinental Hotel** in Addison (northern Dallas), Texas. All events will be held in the hotel. You can fly into either DFW or Love Field and have a short taxi or shuttle ride to the hotel.
- ✓ Special room rates have been secured for your stay at the Intercontinental at **\$119.00** per night. These rates will be available until February 2005, so be sure to book soon to ensure you receive the discounted rate.
- ✓ Special airfare deals are available through our conference partner, Delta Airlines.
- ✓ The hotel is located about 5 minutes from the wonderful mall, the Galleria, and there's a shuttle from the Intercontinental Hotel to the Galleria. You'll find hundreds of shops and restaurants to fit every taste and budget.

- ✓ The North Dallas area boasts every type of restaurant in the hotel vicinity, some in walking distance, others only a short cab ride away.

The conference program is changing this year to better meet your professional needs. In 2005 we'll have these special events going on in Dallas.

- **Trainers Day**---This will be a day designed to bring together those of you who work as trainers, give you ideas and allow you to network with trainers from across the South. We'll have sessions for both novice and experienced trainers and encourage anyone who trains staff in early childhood programs to join us. You don't need to be an early childhood educator to participate in these sessions.
- **Providers Day**---We're developing a special day on Saturday just for our providers. We know you sometimes have difficulty getting out of your programs during the week, so we're going to make Saturday a special day, just for you. We'll even have a "special gift" just for our providers that day!
- **Director's Seminar**---Our always popular Director's Seminar will be designed in 2005 to meet the needs of both starting and experienced

directors. We'll provide the latest in administrative and organizational information and provide lots of opportunities for networking.

- **Special Educational Tracks---** We'll have groups of sessions dealing with obesity in children, early literacy, English as a Second Language, infant & toddler programs, just to mention a few.

Registration forms will be mailed to all SECA members during October 2004.

You can access the following information by October 1, 2004 at www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org.

- Exhibitor information.
- Housing and travel information.
- A conference schedule and complete listing of all conference sessions.

The US Early Childhood Education Workforce: How Does Our Pay Stack Up with Other Professions?

The Center for the Childcare Workforce recently released a new report entitled, *Current Data on the Salaries and Benefits of the US Early Childhood Education Workforce*. The Center for the Child Care Workforce is a project of the American Federation of Teachers Educational Foundation .

These reports have been issued for the last several years and have compiled statistics from every state to compare the

salary and benefits available to persons working in the early childhood education field. The reports have confirmed the following findings:

- Wages are low.
- Benefits are minimal.
- Turnover rates are high.

At the same time, they have also helped to establish the link between high quality care and education for young children and appropriate salaries and benefits for those adults who work with them.

This report notes a significant shift in priorities related to early childhood education during the last five years. Those years have seen an increased investment in early care and education, rising teacher qualifications and the implementation of enhanced recruitment and retention strategies. Despite these developments, the report also highlights that investments made specifically to the workforce have remained minimal. Wages remain low and turnover continues to rise.

To access the complete report, go to the website of the Center for the Childcare Workforce at www.ccw.org. For a summary of some of the report's findings about the SECA states, go to our Public Policy page at www.SouthernEarlyChildhood.org and click on the document, *Early Childhood Wages*.

Go to page four (4) to read a Letter to the Association that highlights these issues for an individual program.

Letter to the Southern Early Childhood Association

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a childcare owner and director writing to talk about an important issue I feel strongly about. I have been in business for 15 years and have not seen a very big pay increase for my staff. The state requires my girls to have high school diplomas, continuing education classes, and now they are requesting staff to have A.S. degrees in Early Child Care Education. I feel that the pay scale needs to grow with education level. I feel we need to educate the public on how important our teachers are to their young children, and that children learn more from 0-3 than any other time in their life. And I feel our teachers need to be compensated. We have single moms that enter this field to make money, teach children, and to be with their own child, and the pay scale is very low for single parent homes. Our staff have the same education level as teachers' aides in the public school system and they receive much more pay and also benefits. I wish in some way, shape or form that someone can do something to help the childcare industry to pay their staff what we feel our staff is worth. If you have any information about grants or anyplace to get additional dollars for staff, please let me know.

Deborah Schooley
Tender Care Daycare & Preschool
Florida

Backup Child Care: The Newest Trend in Corporate Child Care Benefits

According to the Child Care Action Campaign, employers lose about \$3 billion annually from childcare related absences. The National Conference of State Legislatures estimates that every year, 80% of employers experience shortened workdays because an employee's childcare arrangements fall through.

Backup childcare as an employee benefit has increased over the last few years. From 5 percent in 1993, 15 percent of employers in 2002 offered backup childcare as an employee benefit. Employers typically purchase slots in a center and make them available to employees when needed. Some companies provide this benefit at no cost to the employee: others require a nominal co-pay.

Providing backup childcare has benefits for both the employee and the employer. The employee eliminates the need to use vacation days to provide care when regular care breaks down and the employer provides an equal access benefit that is measurable in terms of decreased employee absences.

Employers are eligible for a 25% tax credit (up to \$150,000) for qualified childcare expenses (enacted in 2001).

Source: Benefits Selling Magazine, August 2004

Turning a Corner in Parent Education: Sharing the Journey to a Place of Positive Discipline

Moms and Dads entered the room slowly. Some were smiling, some seemed a little nervous. Why? It was a class on discipline! It takes courage to examine parenting skills and more courage to change. In our society many families learn how to discipline children in isolation, relying on their own family experiences and the media to provide them with parenting models. How can an early childhood program help?

Rome wasn't built in a day and neither was our parent education program. This article presents a brief summary of the process that led to the development of a significant parent education component of our weekday early childhood program in which parents work as assistants in the classrooms.

A Community of Reflective Educators

A few years ago our faculty decided to write statements of our beliefs about curriculum and discipline for the school manual. We added professional standards and developed a vision statement for our school. The documents were developed in a series of meetings facilitated by an outside consultant. The lively discussions united the staff. It was fun, energizing *and* difficult, but it was worth the effort. The School Manual gives parents a clear

understanding of who we are and what guides our decisions.

The Parent-Teacher Partnership in Discipline

An important part of our belief system is the value of partnership between families and the school. When parents work in the classrooms, it is mutually beneficial. To promote consistency in the classroom, we began to teach parents about our positive approach to discipline. Three years ago, we initiated an intensive training program for newly enrolled parents and open to returning families. The three-session seminar takes place in the fall. Teachers attend and the community begins to form.

The benefits of this shared learning experience emerge in the ongoing dialogue about discipline and guidance. Parents in the classroom observe teachers using positive guidance. They ask questions and develop their own strategies to use in the classroom setting and at home. When teachers must be accountable for, and clarify, their strategies, the reflection sharpens their skills.

Mentoring Reflective Parents

Parents need support to master positive guidance strategies. Last year our Parent Committee (a fundraising group) sponsored a seminar entitled, "The Parenting Journey," facilitated by the Director and a teacher. In this forum, parents read a selected book on positive

discipline and participate in discussions and role-playing activities designed to develop their parenting skills. The response was positive and very encouraging, AND, parents wanted more!

This year, we offered a Parent Coffee and Fellowship, facilitated by the school director. The monthly event provides opportunities for parents to collaborate and support each other's efforts to practice positive discipline in the classroom and in their homes. Parents begin to build a strong community of support.

Satisfaction on Every Side!

A dynamic partnership between school and parents can result in a community that nurtures and guides children in kind and effective ways. Positive discipline is intentional and reflective. Parents and teachers who think about discipline—the purpose, the methods—are teaching their children to be reflective about and responsible for their own behavior. Reflective individuals form a reflective society—the ripples are never-ending.

Nancy G. Lusk, M.Ed.
Vienna Baptist Children's Center
Four-Year-Old Teacher

Jessica Shields Flowers, M.Ed.
Vienna Baptist Children's Center
Director

The Vienna Baptist Children's Center of Vienna, VA, was a recipient of a Division for Development grant that is provided each year by SECA to support exemplary early childhood programs in the region.

Resources Recommended by Vienna Baptist to Help You Build a Parent Program

Bailey, B. (1997) *There's gotta be a better way: Discipline that works.* Oviedo, FL: Loving Guidance, Inc.

Bailey, B. A. (2000) *Easy to love, difficult to discipline: The seven basic skills for turning conflict into cooperation.* NW: William Morrow and Co.

Covey, S. R. (1989) *The 7 habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change.* NY: Simon and Schuster.

Gilbert, R.M. (1999) *Connecting with our children: Guiding principles for parents in a troubled world.* NW: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Parent, M. (2001) *Believing it all: Lessons I learned from my children.* Boston: Little Brown & Co.

Division for Development Grants

The Division for Development of the Southern Early Childhood Association awards grants each year to support exemplary early childhood programs in the Southern region. A committee of early childhood professionals guides the grant process and will be issuing a request for proposals on **October 1, 2004**. Check the fall issue of *Dimensions of Early Childhood* for information about how to access the grant application.

Redirecting Children's Behavior

Balancing a family, job and an education is a great challenge. To assist students currently enrolled at East Tennessee State University, the Little Buccaneers Student Child Care Center provides part-time care for children of students while they attend class. Many of these students are young, single, new parents, and the first generation from their family to attend college. These parents experience a great amount of stress as they juggle school, family and sometimes work.

We believe all parents want close, loving and empowering families that are a source of rejuvenation, fun and encouragement. The goal of this Division of Development Grant was to provide the *Redirecting Children's Behavior* parenting course to families at no cost. Providing these classes will help our families become confident,

effective and capable. Ultimately, this will benefit the children in our care.

The Child Study Center provides quality care to children in the community and serves as a lab school to the Department of Education at East Tennessee State University. The *Redirecting Children's Behavior* course developed by the International Network for Children and Families was taught by Sharon Slagle, Head Preschool Teacher at the Unicoi Community Learning Center in Erwin, TN, to twenty families from the Little Buccaneers Student Child Care Center and the Child Study Center. The course was held for two hours a night, one night a week, over five weeks. Each parent received a free *Redirecting Children's Behavior* textbook and workbook.

The focus of each class included:

Session One

Sibling & Peer Rivalry
Negotiation & Cooperation
Conflict Resolution
Birth Order & Behavior

Session Two

Respect & Responsibility
Self-Motivation
Parenting Methods
Healthy Decision Making

Session Three

Child Misbehavior
Techniques to Deal with Misbehavior
Building a Child's Self-Confidence

Session Four

Teaching Self-Control
Holding Children Accountable
Natural & Logical Consequences of
Behavior

Session Five

Winning Cooperation from Other
Parents
Planning Family Meetings
Open Communication

By the end of the course, we recognized the need for continued opportunities for these families to meet together. Two support groups were formed, one at each center. Both groups provide continued support with information and discussion about topics related to families, children, life-skills and other areas of interest.

Stacy Larsen

Family Support Specialist
Little Buccaneers

The Little Buccaneers Student Child Care Center at East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN, and the North Florida Association for the Education of Young Children, Jacksonville, FL, were recipients of the 2003 Division for Development grants.

Circle Time Workshop

In an effort to promote school readiness in our community, the NFAECY (North Florida AEYC) applied for a Division for Development grant to support nine two-hour workshops in 2004 and compile a resource booklet entitled, *Join the Circle*.

Our affiliate, like many others, has great plans “to change the world” and early education in our state of Florida. We just don’t have the pocketbook or the time to do all of the things we want to do! Thanks to SECA, our project was excitingly accepted.

It took from July to December in 2003 to compile, format, edit and type our book. We had originally planned for our book to be a booklet about ½ page in size and approximately 30-40 pages, but while creating it, we found that we had so much information to go in it that we made a full sized spiral bound, 103 page book! Our book, *Join the Circle*, has been a labor of love for the children in our area and is a wonderful resource book for early education teachers.

Our book contains a table of contents listed by months and name of activity, membership information, information about our professional organizations, circle time tips, recommended books, gathering songs, educators’ quotes, and oodles of great activities.

We are very thankful to SECA for recognizing our plans as worthy and ambitious enough to receive a grant.

You have given us confidence and encouragement to pursue other community projects that will assist the children, family and early childhood educators in the North Florida area.

Charlene Gross

Past-President
North Florida Association for the
Education of Young Children.

