



OUR SECA LEADERS

# SECA Leadership Letter

## How to Help Staff Manage Their Careers

Many programs no longer view employee contracts as a way of doing business. Employees are no longer guaranteed lifetime employment as in previous generations. As supervisors of employees, a director’s job is to assist them in making good career choices. It builds loyalty and trust and makes for more credible and developmentally appropriate practice. Here are some suggestions that can be easily started within your program.

- **Host monthly development days with staff.** Set aside one day a month to discuss one-on-one where they are in their careers, where they want to go, what skills and additional education they need to get there, and what opportunities and resources are available in your area to help them to get there. Take notes to track progress.
- **Start a Professional Development Day.** Assign each staff to read an article from an early child education journal or publication. Once a month have a “reading meeting”. Ask staff to relate any interesting stories, trends, or innovative products or methodology they discovered in their reading.
- **When anyone on your staff attends a Conference, bring it back with you.** Take detailed notes and turn them into a presentation for staff meetings. Bring them up to date on hot topics, trends and products. This is also an effective way to help you to remember the material.
- **Ask staff to host in-house seminars.** Employees can benefit from learning from each other and sharing techniques and skills. Ask lead teachers to present training to new staff on various aspects of early childhood education.
- **Be a mentor.** You can’t be a mentor to everyone, but you can help staff members find other staff members within your program and local community who can be mentors.

Written by: Susan Carrigan

Inside this issue:

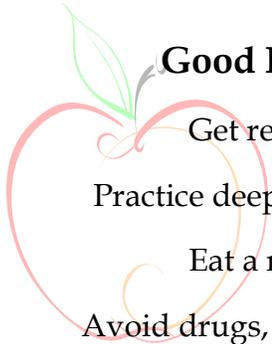
How to Help Staff Manage Their Careers	1
Ways to Control Stress	2
<i>Taking Aim On Leadership</i>	3
Board Café	3
Louisiana’s Pre-K Program Summary	4

The *SECA Leadership Letter* is produced by the Leadership Commission of the SECA Board of Directors as a service to our state affiliate leaders.



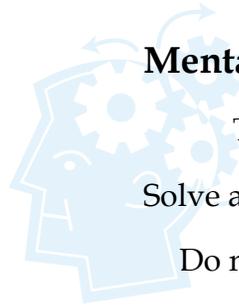
# Ways to Control Stress

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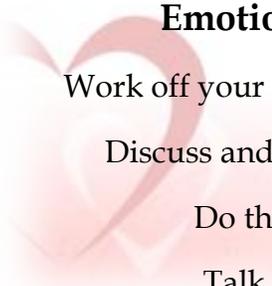
## Good Health (Body)

- Get regular exercise
- Practice deep breathing exercises
- Eat a nutritious diet
- Avoid drugs, alcohol and cigarettes
- Learn to relax



## Mental Health (Mind)

- Think Positive
- Solve a problem as it arises
- Do not carry a grudge
- Be with positive, happy, loving people
- Respect yourself and others



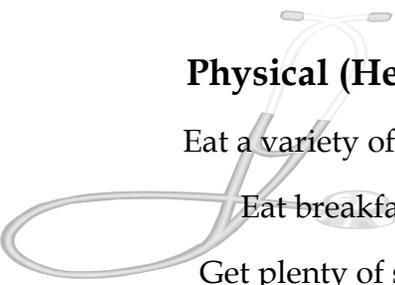
## Emotional (Feeling)

- Work off your anger in a positive way
- Discuss and face things you fear
- Do things you enjoy
- Talk out problems
- Don't dwell on your weaknesses
- Feel proud of your accomplishments



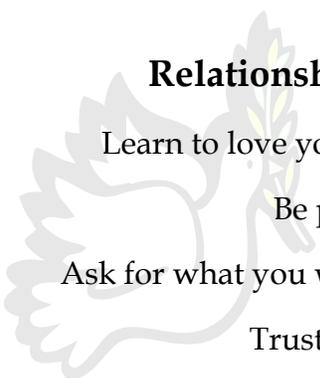
## Spiritual

- Help someone
- Do things that make you feel good inside
- Forgive others and yourself
- Learn to let go
- Pray, Meditate
- Keep a gratitude Journal



## Physical (Health)

- Eat a variety of foods
- Eat breakfast
- Get plenty of sleep
- Do muscle tension, relaxation exercises



## Relationships (Social)

- Learn to love yourself and others
- Be polite
- Ask for what you want, but don't force
- Trust others

## Board Cafe

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Looking for interesting articles and web sites for non-profit organizations? The following articles are currently posted on the "Blue Avocado" website at: [www.blueavocado.org](http://www.blueavocado.org).

1. *What Are the Board's Responsibilities for Volunteers?*
2. *Thinking the Unthinkable: Maybe We Should Shut Down*
3. *How to Take A Public Policy Stand With Sample Criteria*
4. *Non Profit Embezzlement: More Common and More Preventable Than You Think*
5. *What Do I Say to a Donor or Funder?*
6. *Abolish Board Committees?*
7. *Model Whistleblower Policies for Non Profits*
8. *Speed Up the Board Recruitment Process!*
9. *The Secret to a High Impact Annual Report*
10. *The Board Builds It's Sense of Self: Body-Building for Boards*
11. *A Board Member's Guide to Non Profit Insurance*
12. *Should the Board Hold Executive Sessions?*



## *Taking Aim on Leadership* by Peter Capezio and Debra More House

### A Book Review

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In their book, *Taking Aim on Leadership*, the authors provide methods for self-directed leadership. The purpose of this book is to provide hands-on experiences to assist all staff to lead – act, influence and motivate – from anywhere within your program. Self-directed leadership allows all staff members to solve problems in their jobs and classrooms. This model helps staff to increase their mutual commitments to your program, solve problems and achieve their goals and mission. This self directed leadership provides everyone with an opportunity and the challenge to become an expert, a coach, an innovator, and a mentor within their jobs.

Leaders create the condi-

tions for success, set the pace and create expectations, for high quality, customer satisfaction and exemplary performance. This process takes continuous assessment and ongoing learning.

Previous generations followed their director: people today are being asked to solve problems more independently and use resources throughout their organization. "Today's leaders are being made by those who deliver the work," according to the authors. Directors serve staff members; staff members serve children and families; families serve children, staff and directors. Centers and programs that are serious about their future are taking time to create a climate of collaboration.

*Taking Aim on Leadership* focuses on the identifying the characteristics of self-directed leaders. It demonstrates how one can improve their skills through activities, practice opportunities, and checklists. Reading this book will give you insight into the requirements for leaders in the 21st century that are prepared to lead others into the future. The goal of this book is to help us become self-directed leaders who take action, inspire others, and contribute to the motivation process.

"Regardless of who your followers, if you are in front – this book is for you!" Peter Capezio

*Taking Aim on Leadership*, 2001, National Press Publications, Kansas City, MO.

Southern Early Childhood Association



*“The Voice of Southern Children”*

Southern Early Childhood Association  
PO Box 55930  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
1-800-305-7322

*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.*

*Many thanks to our Leadership Commission members who produce this newsletter!*

**2009 SECA Leadership Commission**

*Susan Carrigan (OK), Chair*

*Toni Cacace-Beshears (VA)*

*Judy Carnahan-Webb (TX)*

*Cindy Ramagos (LA)*

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

## Louisiana's Pre-K Summary

The results of evaluations of Louisiana's Pre-K program have been consistent for the past seven years. These results have demonstrated that quality early childhood programs have impacted children's academic success significantly. Children identified as "at risk" have shown the most significant gains according to the data from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Using the ECER's Scale to demonstrate the quality of care, and the environments provided for children in these programs, the LA-4 programs have received above aver-

age ratings in the areas of space and furnishings, personal care routines, language reasoning, interaction, program structure, and parents and staff. A compilation of assessment scores for 96 randomly selected classrooms resulted in an overall score of 5.62 on a scale of 1-7. This places LA-4 programs in the good to excellent range.

High quality programs have a positive effect on Louisiana's children. Children from this program have demonstrated an improved performance when compared to their non-public pre-

kindergarten peers. Students tested better on the LEAP scores when tested in the fourth grade. There is a statistically significant reduction in the overall percentage of children placed in special education in kindergarten and first grade. And there was also a statistical reduction of children retained in kindergarten.

To learn more about the impact of pre-K programs in Louisiana log on to:

<http://ccd-web.louisiana.edu>