In this issue:

- SECA’s Presidential Candidates
- Let’s Move: The First Lady’s Campaign
- Jamie Oliver and the Food Revolution
- Television and Young Children
- Early Literacy
- Honoring the Legacy of Dr. T. Berry Brazelton
The Future of SECA — Our Candidates for President-Elect

SECA’s Presidential Candidates

Nancy Jane Cheshire
of West Virginia

When SECA members join together, we are no longer one person working to improve the quality of care and education for young children, but we become a strong, activated group capable of achieving our goals and dreams. Each individual member is like a small piece of cloth, limited in use. However, when many small pieces of cloth are pieced together, we have a beautiful patch-work quilt with purpose. A hand-pieced quilt provides comfort and worth which one small piece of fabric can never achieve. SECA allows early childhood professionals from thirteen southern states to join together to make a difference which cannot be achieved by one individual or one state. We share common problems and challenges, but together we can make positive change for the children and families in the South and the early childhood profession.

Together, we can make a difference. SECA members have the opportunity to vote in the upcoming election and select the next President-Elect. I would like the opportunity to lead SECA in building membership, encouraging leadership development, and advocating for quality early childhood programs. I believe student chapters on college campuses provide us numerous opportunities to nurture young members and future leaders. I believe our state affiliates have talented leaders who can help SECA grow and prosper. Opportunities for networking among affiliate leaders can encourage and strengthen our association. Through the years, we have provided high quality professional development and it is important that this be supported and encouraged now and in the future. SECA provides a unique blend of southern hospitality and professional knowledge which can serve to lead our profession.

At this point in my life, I have the time, ability, desire and experience to serve SECA and its members. In July 2009, I retired from my position as an Early Childhood Professor. My earlier experiences as a preschool teacher in a faith-based program and director of a large federal child care center have helped me understand the needs of teachers and administrators.

Beverly Peden
of Mississippi

I would be honored to be your SECA President. As a children’s advocate and an early childhood trainer, I am able to devote the time necessary to represent SECA and early educators across the Southern states.

My early years in educating young children began with teaching toddlers in a Tennessee Mother’s Day Out. As a young mother of two children, the delight of discovery on the faces of those little toddlers stole my heart and my career path was chosen. After many years of teaching, I returned to college and received a degree in Child Development as well as an Elementary Education degree. Those years in the classroom helped prepare me to become a Director of a large childcare center in Mississippi.

Because there was no professional training for early educators in Mississippi, I began a director’s network of people with the same passion and goals. In 1995, we organized the first ever low cost annual training conference that included professional development for both caregivers and directors. Six hundred people attended that first local conference. Since then, I have helped to plan state and regional conferences as well as presenting in many of them.

I have served on many early childhood councils and task forces through the years, including contributing to the Early Learning Guidelines for Infants and Toddlers in Mississippi. I have been an active member of SECA since 1988 and have served in the Mississippi Early Childhood Association leadership for 22 years: in 2001, I was elected MsECA President. I have served as Mississippi’s SECA Representative since 2005, chairing two commissions: Professional Development and Membership. Working with the SECA Board has been a wonderful experience. This board has some of the most passionate and caring leaders in the South. Working with them has given me an opportunity to learn about SECA from the inside out and to get to know many of the early childhood leaders in the SECA states.

My passion for young children and those who teach them has kept me working in this field even after my retirement as a childcare director. There continues to be...
Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity: The First Lady Launches the “Let’s Move” Campaign

In February 2010, First Lady Michelle Obama launched the Let’s Move Campaign, a national effort to address the growing problem of childhood obesity in the United States within the next generation.

The Goals of the Let’s Move Campaign

• Create a healthy start on life for our children, from pregnancy through early childhood.
• Empower parents and caregivers to make healthy choices for their families.
• Serve healthier food in schools.
• Ensure access to healthy, affordable food.
• Increase opportunities for physical activity.

In conjunction with the launch of the Campaign, President Obama created a White House Task Force on Childhood Obesity that submitted a report with recommendations to the President in May 2010. The report, Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity Within a Generation, provides a national roadmap and focuses on the things that communities, government and individuals can do together.

The report includes 4 sections:
1. Early Childhood
2. Empowering Parents and Caregivers
3. Healthy Food In Schools
4. Access to Healthy, Affordable Food

A set of recommendations was developed by the Task Force to assist communities and government in meeting the goals of the campaign. One section of the report focused on what can be done to address the issue in Early Childhood and stressed several areas of maternal and child health. Recommendations included:

• Prenatal care is critical and the importance of women conceiving at a healthy weight and maintaining that weight during pregnancy should be emphasized.


continued on next page
Breastfeeding protects a baby from the risk of obesity, and hospitals, health care providers, employers and community institutions should support and facilitate breastfeeding for infants.

Chemical exposure for young children should be minimized.

The recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics that “screen time” for young children should be limited and television viewing eliminated for children under the age of 2 should be adopted by all settings that deal with young children, including child care and early childhood programs.

Physical activity and healthy eating should be an integral part of any early childhood setting.

States should adopt more stringent licensing standards and QRIS systems to support good program practices regarding nutrition, physical activity and screen time in early education and child care settings.

How Will We Know That We’ve Made Progress?

A higher percentage of women will conceive at a normal BMI (Body Mass Index) and experience an appropriate gestational weight gain during pregnancy. The US Department of Health and Human Services would monitor these statistics.

The rates of breastfeeding mothers will increase, finally reaching the goal of half of babies breastfed by 2015.

Researchers will develop a stronger knowledge of chemical exposures that may be related to obesity. This preliminary research, leading to implementation strategies should last 4-5 years.
The National Institute for Literacy has published Early Beginnings, the first publication in its Cornerstone Series, a series of early literacy publications designed to serve as a guide for early childhood administrators and professional development providers. Early Beginnings will help you:

• Learn about early literacy development,
• Review the early predictors of later success in reading and writing,
• Reflect on the knowledge and training needed by teachers to improve current practice,
• Read suggestions for planning literacy activities based on research evidence, and
• Understand what to look for in a successful classroom literacy environment.

The National Institute has made printed copies of this publication available FREE to the public as long as the inventory remains. To order on-line, go to www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs/html

Join the Movement!
We believe every kid has the right to a healthy childhood.
We can’t let this be the first generation in our history to grow up less healthy than their parents.
The ingredients... better food + more activity... are clear.
Let’s Move isn’t just noble, it’s a necessity.
It’s not just a slogan, it’s our responsibility.
Are you with us? Let’s Move!

(Solvented from www.letsmove.gov)
If you want to join the campaign or get more information, go to http://www.letmove.gov/join/index.html.
You can sign up on an e-mail list that will give you updates about the campaign and resources that are available to you.

Solving the Problem of Childhood Obesity continued...

• An increased number of states will adopt more stringent licensing standards that include nutrition, physical activity and screen time that align with Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards, 3rd Edition.

Some Resources

Text4Baby, an educational program of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition, is a free mobile information service that provides pregnant women and new parents with tips to help them give their babies the best possible start in life.

I Am Moving, I Am Learning, is a proactive approach to childhood obesity in preschool classrooms. This approach is implemented by Head Start and is available to child care programs as well.

Choose Kids is devoted to promoting healthy, active lifestyles and was founded on the belief that healthy preferences for food choices and physical activity can be developed early in life. Dr. Linda Carson of West Virginia introduced Choose Kids (and Choozy, the mascot) at the 2010 SECA conference in Little Rock.

Sesame Street for Parents offers tips for parents to help keep kids healthy.

Preventing Childhood Obesity: Helping Preschool Children Become Healthy and Fit is published by SECA and offers exercises and integrated learning experiences to keep children moving. This publication is available through the on-line store at a discount to members.

For SECA Members: Go to the “members only” section of the SECA website and download these articles from the Volume 37:1 issue of Dimensions of Early Childhood.

• Healthier Lifestyles for Young Children: Partnering with Families (Simpson, Gray, Waldrep, Gues)
• Addressing the “Epidemic” of Overweight Children by Using the Internet (Coleman, Wallinga, Bales)

The ingredients... better food + more activity... are clear.
Let’s Move isn’t just noble, it’s a necessity.
It’s not just a slogan, it’s our responsibility.
Are you with us? Let’s Move!

(Excerpted from www.letsmove.gov)
If you want to join the campaign or get more information, go to http://www.letmove.gov/join/index.html.
You can sign up on an e-mail list that will give you updates about the campaign and resources that are available to you.

The Connection Between Early Literacy Skills and How Children Learn to Be Readers, Writers and Spellers

The National Institute for Literacy has published Early Beginnings, the first publication in its Cornerstone Series, a series of early literacy publications designed to serve as a guide for early childhood administrators and professional development providers. Early Beginnings will help you:

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Chef Jamie Oliver is a British chef who has decided to try to impact the global obesity problem (It’s not just the USA that has a problem, but we’re the biggest.) and has created a campaign called the Food Revolution. His Food Revolution is “about bringing people together who care about the future of their children, about their right to good health and a proper diet... Young people today don’t know how to feed their families. Cheap processed food in schools are undermining education and health... But all of this is preventable... If we really want to tackle obesity and improve the health of this fantastic country we need to tip the balance back in favor of fresh meals... We need to fall in love with real food again.”

Jamie brought his philosophy to Huntington, West Virginia, which had the dubious honor of being the “unhealthiest” city in the nation. Working with the staff of the elementary school cafeterias, Jamie spent 3 months teaching them how to avoid processed food and offer freshly prepared and nutritious food to children. ABC Television featured his efforts on a special TV series and chronicled the challenges and opportunities that presented themselves during his time in West Virginia. Jamie offered a list of recommendations for what we can do to fight the problem:

- Love your lunch ladies.
- Put professional cooks in charge.
- Teach every child in America how to cook.
- Set up a national network of community kitchens.
- Train healthcare and social service professionals to cook.
- Inspire a new generation of home economics teachers.
- Introduce responsible food labeling.
- Cut out additives that add no nutritional value to food.
- Support cooking education.
- Appoint a food ambassador in every office, factory, warehouse and cafeteria to educate employees about food and teach them to cook.
- Sign the campaign petition at www.jamiesfoodrevolution.com/petition to show how many care about this issue.

As a complement to Jamie’s campaign, one federal agency has offered a program to turn the policies of the Let’s Move Campaign into practical solutions. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is operating the “Chefs Move to Schools” program that will pair chefs with interested schools in their communities so they can create healthy meals that meets the schools’ dietary guidelines and budgets.

If you’re interested in joining the Food Revolution, go to http://www.jamieoliver.com/campaigns/jamies-food-revolution/petition and sign on to Jamie’s campaign.

If you’d like more information about “Chefs Move to Schools” and want to help bring that program to your school, go to http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?tax_level=1&info_center=14&tax_subject=225
Television has brought the “world to our fingertips” and children have access to information and visuals that we only dreamed about 50 years ago. That said, have we gone too far in allowing young children to watch television instead of doing the things that children used to do?

Television isn’t all bad. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, “children who have learned critical viewing skills and who belong to families that actively select high-quality programs can learn from television viewing. For some children, especially young ones, TV can be a source of rote language.”


However, if your child is watching television, what is it that they are NOT doing that they should be doing to promote optimal development?
- Asking questions
- Solving problems
- Being creative
- Exercising initiative
- Practicing eye-hand coordination
- Scanning (useful in reading)
- Practicing motor skills
- Thinking critically, logically and analytically
- Playing interactive games with other children and adults (helpful for developing patience, self-control, cooperation and sportsmanship)


As early childhood educators, we know that the above list is critical to assisting children in their development and helping to prevent sedentary lifestyles that promote obesity.

Unfortunately, according to the study, Preschool-Aged Children’s Television Viewing in Child Care Settings, TV viewing in child care may double the amount of TV time for young children, with those in home-based settings watching significantly more on an average day than those in center-based care.


The American Academy of Pediatrics has made the following recommendations:
- Eliminate TV viewing for children younger than 2 years of age and, instead, encourage interactive play.
- For older children, limit TV viewing to no more than 1-2 hours per day of educational, nonviolent programs which should be supervised by parents or other responsible adults in the home or program.

Remember, young children need to keep MOVING! The first two years of a child’s life are especially important in the growth and development of their brains, and children need positive interaction with other children and adults. Learn how to develop your classroom or home schedule to include lots of active play and a minimum of TV viewing. For more information, go to http://www.healthychildren.org.

**What Can We Do?**

Nurturing Children and Families: Building on the Legacy of T. Berry Brazelton

This new publication features contributions from experts in pediatrics, psychology, nursing, early education, occupational therapy and public policy who have been influenced by the work of Dr. Brazelton. The book has been edited by Dr. Joshua Sparrow, who completed an interview for SECA Radio that began playing in May 2010.

Although this book may be of more interest to those teaching at the university level, we thought we’d share it with everyone because of the varied nature of the content and the debt we owe to Dr. Brazelton for his pioneering work on behalf of children. You’ll find an overview of the field of child development, from the explosion of infant research in the 1960’s to contemporary studies and an outline of the achievements and influence of Dr. Brazelton in continuing research, practice and public policy. For more information or to request an examination copy, visit www.wiley-blackwell.com or call 1-800-225-5945.
62nd Annual Conference of the Southern Early Childhood Association

MOVING & PLAYING
KEEPING SOUTHERN CHILDREN HEALTHY AND HAPPY

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- Don Monopoli of The Learning Station
- Rae Pica of Moving and Learning
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- 2011 Public Policy Luncheon with Dr. Joe Thompson of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Center to Prevent Childhood Obesity

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