Recently I attended the NAEYC Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., where we were told that approximately 13 million children in the United States are in regulated early childhood education and care programs. If one assumes an average ratio of 1:10, teacher to child, then there are approximately 1.3 million early childhood education professionals providing direct services to children daily in our nation.

These statistics led me to think about the number of early childhood professionals working in the 14 southern states that SECA serves. Assuming the four regions of the nation are fairly evenly represented, that means there are about 350,000 early childhood teachers in the Southern states.

On January 1, 2002, I became President of the Southern Early Childhood Association, which is the professional association for the South. We presently have about 16,000 members. Why aren't more of the 350,000 people who are teaching preschoolers in the 14 Southern states members of their professional association? The 16,000 members we have represent about 4.6% of the individuals working in the field in our region.

I hope you are asking yourself why such a small percentage of individuals are members of SECA. And I hope this article will motivate those of us who belong to SECA to make more of an effort to encourage our colleagues to join this association.

The primary reason to be a part of a professional association is the ability to advocate for the needs of children, their families, and early childhood staff with a collective voice. An advocacy organization in Tennessee has as its motto “Many Voices Speak as One.” Perhaps SECA should adopt as similar perspective as we work to improve compensation and benefits for employees and the quality of care in programs for children.

As I travel to states representing SECA, one of the most common responses I get, when introduced as the SECA President, is how much teachers enjoy Dimensions. How user-friendly the articles are, and how teachers can take the information and go directly to their classroom and put it to practice. There are many other reasons to join SECA. We have a wonderful conference held in a different Southern state each year. Our Resource Catalog gives members easy access to current and relevant position statements as well as many professional publications.

One of my top priorities is to spread the word about the necessity of professional association. I hope to convince a sufficient number of those 95.4% non-SECA members to join with us so we can truly speak with one voice for children, early childhood programs, and their staff.
SECA RECALLS 2001 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Because of the extraordinary events of the last few months and the uncertainties of mail delivery throughout the United States, the SECA Board of Directors has taken the unusual step of recalling an election and issuing a new ballot for President-Elect.

This step has been necessary because of the uncertainty of delivery of ballots to all SECA members and the desire on part of the Board of Directors to ensure an equitable and fair election for the next SECA President. A second ballot was mailed at the end of December in the SECA Reporter. The new voting deadline for sending your ballots to us is March 1, 2002. Only ballots marked second ballot and postmarked by the March 1, 2002, deadline will be counted.

YOU CAN VOTE AGAIN. ALL PREVIOUS BALLOTS WILL BE DISCARDED AND WILL NOT BE COUNTED. MAKE SURE YOUR VOTE COUNTS BY SENDING IN THE SECOND BALLOT.

E. Anne Eddowes, Editor
Southern Early Childhood Association
8500 W. Markham St., Suite 105
P.O. Box 55930
Little Rock, AR 72215-5930
(501) 221-1648 • fax (501) 227-5297
e-mail: SECA@aristotle.net
Web: www.southernearlychildhood.org

SECA RECALLS 2001

Moving???
If you are moving or have a change of address, please notify the SECA office immediately. We want to make sure you receive your Dimensions and SECA conference and membership information on time!