



# CHILDREN... THE HEART OF THE MATTER

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## Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc.

An affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children

November, 2011 Newsletter

### FROM THE PRESIDENT Dawn Mollenkopf



Our lives are full of beginnings and endings, which are often tied together. We climb into bed after the end of a long day and waken in the morning to start a new day. In a matter of weeks, we will finish out 2011 and welcome the new year of 2012. For NeAEYC, this is also a time of beginning and ending as I complete my

two-year term as president and welcome Michele Rupiper, who will start her term as president in January.

As I reflect upon the last two years, I want to express my appreciation to Linda and the NeAEYC staff with whom I have enjoyed working with, as well as the NeAEYC board members. I believe NeAEYC is stronger than it was two years ago and will continue to serve our state well in supporting the policies, people, and programs that enable young children and families to reach their potential. I also want to express my gratitude to those of you who work daily with children and their families and touch the lives of so many around you. Your work makes a difference, even when you cannot see it.

As we close this chapter and open a new one for NeAEYC, I am reminded of the historical words of Caroline Pratt's that guided her philosophy: "I learn from children." If we continue to remember to learn from children, we will know that we will be able to navigate successfully, the next chapter in our lives.

#####

Nebraska AEYC would like to thank Dawn for her tireless leadership and support of the association. She is truly a big picture thinker and stays focused on the mission.

### Thanks, Dawn!!!!

*"No more lives torn apart,  
That wars will never start,  
And time will heal our heart.*

*Every man will have a friend,  
That right will always win,  
And love will never end.*

*This is my grown-up Holiday list."*

*Anonymous*

### Supporting Young Children During the Holidays

A recent article from Zero to Three provides some ideas to support young children during the holidays. While written for families experiencing a military separation, the information is valuable for all young families.

"Babies and toddlers take their cues from the caregivers around them; increased family tension can be upsetting for very young children. Fortunately, there are ways in which parents and caregivers can minimize stress during the holidays, both for themselves and for their very young children.

Tis the **SEASON** for families to support their babies and toddlers!

- ♥ **S is for Structure and Routine**—the holidays can be a whirlwind of events. Visits to and from relatives, late evening gathering, and last-minute trips to over-crowded shopping malls can throw a child off-schedule.
- ♥ **E is for Expectations**—The holiday season can bring with it some high, often unreasonable expectations.
- ♥ **A is for Awareness**—babies and toddlers may pick up on the "roller coaster of emotions" experienced by their parents during the holiday season
- ♥ **S is for Self-Care**—in a hectic holiday season filled with events and obligations, it can become more challenging for parents to recognize and remember their own needs.
- ♥ **O is for Opportunity**—help infants and toddlers stay connected.
- ♥ **N is for 'Nesting'**—for a very young child, the sights and sounds of the holidays can be dizzying, often leading to over-stimulation. The home can be made into a kind of retreat, a place where babies and toddlers can wind down from the frenzied pace of the season and settle in for the evening."



To read all of this article, visit the zero to three website at <http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/funded-projects/militaryfamilies/supporting>

*"It is in the shelter of each other that people live."*

*Irish Proverb*

## Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children Mission Statement

The Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc. is committed to supporting high quality care and education for young children in the state of Nebraska.

The mission of the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children, Inc. is to:

- ♥ promote professional development activities
- ♥ advocate for issues relating to children and families
- ♥ serve as a resource for local affiliates and for other agencies involved in working with and for children and families
- ♥ disseminate information supportive of quality services, education, and care for children and their families
- ♥ provide networking opportunities for early childhood professionals and families throughout the state.

### IN THIS ISSUE:

- Page 1 - President's Letter, Children & holidays
- Page 2 - Mission Statement, Board of Directors, Staff
- Page 3 - NAEYC Updates
- Page 4 - Advocacy, Legislative updates, SEC students
- Page 5 - NeAEYC board updates
- Page 6 - NeAEYC Activities—New staff member, Distinguished Service to Children Recognition, Project Homeless Connect
- Page 7 - T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA
- Page 8 - Technology, Nature Play, Accreditation
- Page 9 - Affiliate & Chapter Information, LAEYC, OAEYC, SECC Chapter
- Page 10 - ERS Training
- Page 11 - Why Play, Conferences & Upcoming Events

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2011

### Executive Committee

#### **President**

**Dawn Mollenkopf, PhD.**, Kearney  
University of Nebraska at Kearney Professor

#### **President Elect**

**Michelle Rupiper, PhD**, Omaha  
University of Nebraska at Lincoln Professor

#### **Secretary**

**Pat Enevoldsen**, Lincoln  
Southeast Community College Professor

#### **Finance Chair**

**Linda Sullivan**, Lincoln  
Family Service Association of Lincoln Finance Director

### Members

**Gina Battey**, Omaha, Child Care Teacher

**Karen Decker**, Kearney, Sugar & Spice Center Director

**Jennifer Haggart**, Omaha  
Early Childhood Consortium of the Omaha Area Coordinator

**Shelley Kahrs**, Franklin  
Franklin Elementary Schools Principal

**Crystal Kozak**, Lincoln,  
Southeast Community College Professor

**Kim Madsen, ED**, Chadron,  
Chadron State College Professor

**Linda Maslowski**, Lincoln, Independent Consultant

**Cheryl Roche**, Ogallala, Early Learning Coordinator

**Deb Ross**, Hastings,  
Child & Family Development Director

**Danielle Schwab**, Wilber, Infant/Toddler Quality Initiative  
Coordinator

**Sue Ellen Wall, JD**, Lincoln, Wall Law Office Attorney

**Kathy Zadina**, Columbus,  
St. Bonaventure Child Care Center Director

**José Zapata**, Loup City,  
Central Nebraska Community Services Executive Director

### Ex-Officio

#### **Public Policy Chair**

**Sarah Ann Kotchian, JD**, Omaha, Director of Early  
Childhood Policy & Public Services, Building Bright Futures

## Nebraska AEYC

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Lincoln, NE 68508  
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[www.NebraskaAEYC.org](http://www.NebraskaAEYC.org)

**Strengthening and supporting Nebraska's  
early childhood community since 1976**

## NAEYC UPDATES

### 2011 NAEYC Annual Conference & Expo

Orlando, Florida November 2-5



Tracy & Gina

Nebraska AEYC staff, Tracy Gordon and Gina DeFreece, spent four glorious days at the NAEYC Annual Conference in Orlando, Florida. During this time they attended a variety of sessions focusing on different aspects of their professional work. The conference was filled with general knowledge sessions as well as more in-depth discussions on topics of current interest in their own specialty areas.

Tracy noted it was especially fun to see and hear Thelma Harms (one of the writers of the Environment Rating Scales) retell stories of her own personal history and experiences in early childhood education. Tracy was also able to attend a full day meeting of the Accreditation Facilitation Projects (AFP's) with peers who coordinate accreditation efforts in

states all across the country. "It's always great to see in person, those folks who you "talk" with virtually on a regular basis. It's a great opportunity to network with others who share the same passion for accreditation as I do".

Gina was able to attend a variety of sessions relating to her work with Quality Initiatives. "I felt each of the sessions were relevant to my work with Family Child Care providers." Among the number topics presented, of particular interest were sessions such as *Beyond the CLASS: Professional Development for Directors, Teachers and Coaches*; *New Conversations: Uncovering the Five Myths that Support Racism*; *Merging Researched-Based Elements into a Daily Schedule*; and *Developing a Realistic Handbook for Family Child Care Providers*.

Dawn Mollenkopf, Board President, also attended the conference.

## Exploring Relationships—The National Dialogue

NAEYC is initiating a national dialogue to strengthen the relationship between the national office and its affiliate structure. Evidence is mounting that the current relationship is frayed. Through the use of a systematic yet authentic dialogue with affiliate leadership, we will explore the relationship that needs to be in place to move NAEYC's agenda forward to Vision 2015 and beyond. How should NAEYC and Affiliates relate to one another? Is the relationship being maximized? Is a shared sense of purpose present to bond us around common work?

<http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/affiliates/forms/National%20Dialogue/Affiliate%20Dialogue%20White%20Paper%20Final.pdf>

## 2012 NAEYC Governing Board Slate Announced

Congratulations to the following candidates for the 2012 NAEYC Governing Board election. One candidate will be selected for the Affiliate Liaison, and two others will be elected as Governing Board Members at Large. The slate of candidates is as follows:

**Affiliate Liaison** (one member to be elected to a four-year term)

These individuals are identified by the Affiliate Council for consideration by the Nominating Panel. Once elected, the person holding this seat has the same role and responsibilities as all other at-large Board members.

- ♥ **Lorraine Cooke**, Executive Director, Egenolf Early Childhood Center, Elizabeth, New Jersey
- ♥ **Gege Kreischer**, Early Childhood Consultant, Child Care Concepts, Lutz, Florida

**Governing Board at Large** (two members to be elected to four-year terms)

- ♥ **Cristina Gillanders**, Scientist, Frank Porter Graham, Child Development Institute, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC
- ♥ **Nili Juo**, Professor and Director of Early Childhood Education, Southwestern College, Winfield, Kansas
- ♥ **Tammy Mann**, President and CEO, The Campagna Center, Alexandria, Virginia
- ♥ **Angele Passe**, Education Consultant/Author, Blue Water Associates, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota

The election will be primarily held on line, in mid-January, 2012.

# ADVOCACY/EDUCATION

## RACE TO THE TOP—EARLY LEARNING CHALLENGE/THE EARLY LEARNING NEBRASKA INITIATIVE

By Sarah Ann Kotchian

Nebraska was one of 35 states to submit an application for the Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge, allowing our state the potential to receive \$50 million in federal funding over four years to enhance and develop high-quality educational opportunities for families and their children in the earliest years. Partners from across the state came together to help draft Nebraska's application, culminating in a final proposal that could transform the meaning of quality; streamline the collection, reporting and use of data; and amplify support for children, families and educators in the often difficult transition from early childhood programs into kindergarten.



Sarah Ann Kotchian  
Public Policy Chair

Nebraska's application lays out plans to increase quality and access to high-quality programs by:

- ♥ Creating a Quality Ratings and Improvement System (QRIS) that will share provider quality rating information publicly to display providers' commitment to improving upon the early learning and development of all children in their care
- ♥ Building a system to aggregate the current fragmented state data system to ensure Nebraska is meeting the needs of all children and families and to make more informed policy choices
- ♥ Developing and implementing a kindergarten entry readiness assessment to help educators individualize curriculum to help children learn more effectively, guide professional development, and offer data to ensure accountability.

If you would like to learn more, Nebraska's application can be found online at:

<http://www2.ed.gov/programs/racetothetop-earlylearningchallenge/applications/nebraska.pdf>

The US Department of Education and Health and Human Services are jointly administering the Early Learning Challenge. Awards will be announced no later than December 31, 2011.

*P.S. I would like to personally offer my most sincere thanks to the NeAEYC Board, staff and members for all the generous support, kind words, and heartfelt congratulations you have shared in welcoming my daughter Blythe this past August. She is filling our lives with love and joy beyond words. May this find you just as merry this holiday season!*

(If Nebraska receives the Race to the Top Grant, it will positively impact the availability of T.E.A.C.H. Scholarships, and could increase quality projects across the state.)

## State Legislative Updates Planned

### Nebraska AEYC is planning to provide regular legislative updates during the Unicameral sessions

We plan to begin this process in January. Our emails to you may be information prepared by First Five Nebraska, a newly formed early childhood advocacy organization. They may be information from NeAEYC about the unicameral committees, or how to communicate effectively with your senator. There may be information about upcoming hearings.

They'll be distributed to the membership, to help you be informed and to encourage your participation in the process. Our pilot flyer was distributed recently related to the Child Care Licensing Hearings.

Feedback on this new process would be much appreciated, as we continue to search for ways to better meet the needs of our members.

#### **More to come!!!**

*(We won't be distributing information regarding federal issues, as NAEYC Children's Champions, the National Head Start Association, and several other organizations already provide that information.)*



*"Rather than admit a mistake, nations have gone to war, families have separated,  
and good people have sacrificed everything dear to them.  
Admitting that you were wrong is just another way of saying that you are wiser today than yesterday."*

Don Ward

# NeAEYC BOARD UPDATES

## Thank you

To the outgoing NeAEYC board members.

The following have served for six years, three-year terms (the maximum amount of board service, under the by-laws), and will be leaving the board December 31, 2011:

- ♥ Jen Haggart ECCOA, Omaha AEYC Representative
- ♥ Linda Sullivan, Accountant, Finance Chair
- ♥ Sue Ellen Wall, Attorney, Human Resources Committee
- ♥ Karen Decker, Child Care Director, Kearney Chapter Representative

## New General, Chapter/Affiliate Board Representatives

Xing was elected to the Board of Director through a Survey Monkey vote. 77 votes were received, all in favor.

Accountant/Finance Chair: Xing Meng, CPA

- ♥ **Professional Background:** Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault coalition Accountant/Grants Manager; Nebraska Humanities Council Finance Director
- ♥ **Education:** BA, Jiangsu University of Science and Technology, China; Master of Professional Accountancy, University of Nebraska/Lincoln
- ♥ **Board and Advisory Committee Involvement:** Treasurer, Chinese Christian Church of Lincoln



The following board members were elected/selected by their local affiliate or chapter:

### Omaha AEYC: Kathleen Feller

- ♥ **Professional Background:** Associate Vice President of Early Childhood Programs/Sixpence Administrator, Nebraska Children and Families Foundation. Previously, she served as the Director of Children's Services and Curriculum Director at Child Saving Institute
- ♥ **Education:** BS in Elementary Education from Dana College
- ♥ **Board and Advisory Committee involvement:** OAEYC, current President, past Week of the Young Child chair; Coalition for the Advancement of Children's Mental Health; Spina Bifida Association of Nebraska, Past President



### Kearney Chapter of Nebraska AEYC: JoAnn Cordova

- ♥ **Professional Background:** Director at the University of Nebraska at Kearney Child Development Center; Preschool and ESL teachers for Even Start program in Lexington
- ♥ **Education:** BS in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Special Education
- ♥ **Board and Advisory Committee Involvement:** President of the Kearney Area Chapter of NeAEYC in 2006, 2007, and 2008.

### High Plains Chapter of Nebraska AEYC: Cheryl Roche

- ♥ **Professional Background:** High Plains Early Learning Connections Coordinator. Prior to this, she taught first grade and was a behavior coach at the Ogallala Public Schools. She moved to Nebraska from Colorado, where she taught first grade and kindergarten, and previously worked in child care and preschool
- ♥ **Education:** BA in Elementary/Early Childhood Education from University of Northern Colorado, Masters of Education from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts



### Southeast Chapter of Nebraska AEYC: Danielle Schwab

- ♥ **Professional Background:** Infant/Toddler Quality Initiative Coordinator., Blue Valley Community Action Partnership; Trainer, Early Childhood Training Center
- ♥ **Education:** BA in Psychology, Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove, PA; Foreign Study, La Universidd Intermaericana De Puerto Rico, San German, Puerto Rico
- ♥ **Board and Advisory Committee Involvement:** Southeast Early Learning Connection; current president Southeast Chapter of Nebraska AEYC

# Nebraska AEYC ACTIVITIES

## Part Time Administrative Assistant

We are making a few changes at NeAEYC. Pat Hoffschneider is decreasing her hours, and will be providing support to Jen Harris, Accountant. Connie Fishburn has been providing some assistance with general office tasks, and will now work with entirely with Brandee Lengel, T.E.A.C.H. Manager, serving as the T.E.A.C.H. Assistant.

We have hired a part-time Administrative Assistant, Bridget Paseka. Bridget will be working on a variety of projects. Bridget and her husband live in Lincoln. Please join us in welcoming Bridget to the Nebraska AEYC team!!!!

## Sue Obermiller Receives Distinguished Service to Children Award

**Sue Obermiller** Head Start Director for Central Nebraska Community Services at Loup City, joins a list of early childhood advocates and supporters who have received the Distinguished Service to Children Award from Nebraska AEYC.

Sue is being recognized as a tireless advocate for the children and families in her programs, as well as children and families in Nebraska and the United States. In addition to her roles on the Region VII board and the National Head Start board of directors, she has also served on the governor-appointed Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council, the Department of Education Reading First team, the Department of Education Early Learning Guidelines Leadership Team, and the Early Childhood Study team.

Sue received this recognition at the Nebraska Head Start Association Conference in Grand Island on November 4. The award was presented by Linda Zinke, NeAEYC Executive Director, and Jose Zapata, Board member.



## Project Homeless Connect



*Brandee & Cindy  
with one of the  
babies.*

Lincoln's 3rd Annual Project Homeless Connect was held on October 5, 2011 at the Pershing Center. Easier access to the event helped increase the number of guest to 276 people, a 44% increase in the number of persons over 2010 attendance.

72 organizations and businesses provide services, information, food, supplies and resources. Dozens of volunteers assisted event guests in getting their needs met. This year, the veterans affairs "Stand Down" program combined with Project Homeless Connect to provide services.

Nebraska AEYC staff provided child care for the families participating in this event. This allowed them to visit the various services without worrying about the safety of their child.



A special feature this year was blues musician John Turner, Region V Housing Coordinator. Turner wrote a song about this event, and performed it throughout the day.

## Combined Federal Campaign



Nebraska AEYC is now a part of the Combined Federal Campaign process in greater Nebraska, Lincoln, and Omaha. Staff members have participated in kick-off breakfasts and attended events to educate federal workers about the association.

If you know any federal workers that contribute through this campaign, be sure to mention NeAEYC as a recipient.



Brandee Lengel (T.E.A.C.H. Manager), her family & Judge Roger J. Heideman

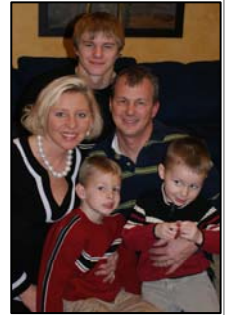
**ANNOUNCING**  
**the adoption of our son**  
**Bryce Quinn Lengel**  
**National Adoption Day**  
**November 19th, 2011**

## Student Spotlight Joni Kruntorad

Joni Kruntorad has been a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipient since the Spring 2009 term at Metro Community College and has completed 43.5 credits. Joni is currently enrolled in 9 credit hours for the Fall 2011 term and is working on several "credit for experience" classes. She has a 3.9 GPA. Joni is an early childhood educator and licensed in-home childcare provider.

Joni, her husband Jerry and their three boys, Josh 14, Calvin 6, and Jerrod 4, have lived in Elkhorn for 11 years.

Joni says, "I am a child at heart and firmly believe that children learn through play. I opened my childcare in 2007. During this time I learned about T.E.A.C.H. while attending a childcare conference. I thought it was too good to be true! Thanks to T.E.A.C.H, I am working towards my degree in Early Childhood Education. T.E.A.C.H. has provided me the ability to create a quality, developmentally appropriate program to enrich the lives of the children in my care. I always had the drive to provide the best care possible, but T.E.A.C.H. has turned my passion into a reality!"



## NATIONAL ANNUAL REPORT DATA July 1st, 2010 - June 30th, 2011

- ♥ 192 Students
- ♥ 41 Bachelor/Bachelor Gap
- ♥ 151 Associate
- ♥ 28% Minority
- ♥ 128 Sponsoring Programs
- ♥ 1718 Semester Credits Earned
- ♥ Average 14 credits earned per contract
- ♥ 6% Increase in wages for Associate Teachers
- ♥ 2% Turnover
- ♥ 8 Community Colleges and 5 Universities participated
- ♥ Average wage for Teachers: \$9.91
- ♥ GPA: AA 3.6 (B+) BA 3.2 (B)
- ♥ Graduates: 16 AA & 2 BA



## GIFTS NO CHILD SHOULD BE WITHOUT: 5 Best Toys of all Times

Geek Dad has worked really hard to narrow down this list to five items that no kid should be without. These are cheap, developmentally appropriate, time-tested and kid-approved! And as a bonus, these five can be combined for extra-super-happy-fun-time.

- 1. Stick-** This versatile toy is a real classic — chances are your great-great-grandparents played with one, and your kids have probably discovered it for themselves as well.
- 2. Box-** Another toy that is quite versatile. Note: If you're in a pinch, Laundry Basket is a similar item and can often be substituted for Box in some instances.
- 3. String-** My kids absolutely love String — and when they can't find it, sometimes they substitute other things for it such as scarves or blankets, but what they're really after is String. (Now, I should start off by saying that String is not intended for toddlers and babies: it is a strangulation hazard and your kids must be old enough to know not to put it around their necks)
- 4. Cardboard Tube-** Ah, the Cardboard Tube... The small- and medium-sized are most common, but the large versions that come with wrapping paper can be more difficult to obtain.
- 5. Dirt.** Dirt has been around longer than any of the other toys on this list, and shows no signs of going away. There's just no getting rid of it, so you might as well learn to live with it.



Information taken from website: <http://www.wired.com/geekdad/2011/01/the-5-best-toys-of-all-time/all/1>

"I am 83 years old and I have come to realize that there is always more in life to learn. I just started taking swimming lessons last year. I ask a lot of questions during my swimming lessons. You can drown yourself with problems if you do not ask questions." - Rosa Parks

## TECHNOLOGY

### facebook

#### facebook

Nebraska AEYC has established a facebook page. Various staff members are contributing regularly to this page, and we are receiving feedback from the people who "like" us.

At this time, 110 people like our page. Articles/postings have included information about the student interest forum at the national conference, information about coping with disasters, a video called Prescription for Play, and a conversation about the Importance of Preschool

## NATURE PLAY

*From A Parent's Guide to Nature Play, published by Green Hearts. [www.greenheartinc.org](http://www.greenheartinc.org)*

- ♥ **Leaf Piles:** Rake fallen leaves into giant piles and let the kids have at 'em! Better yet, let your young kids do the raking—they will actually enjoy it. After the leaves lose their appeal, put them in your shrub and flower beds to decompose and enrich the soil.
- ♥ **Fire Pit:** A backyard fire pit is the perfect place for kids to learn to tend and respect fire, under their parents' watchful eyes. Add in a few s'mores, maybe hot dogs on a stick, and a ghost story or two and presto: a great backyard activity for your whole family!

*More ideas from this Parent's Guide will be in future newsletters. Green Hearts is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to restoring and strengthening the bonds between children & nature. Ken Finch is the Executive Director.*



## ACCREDITATION



### NEBRASKA AEYC ACCREDITATION RETREAT

Nebraska AEYC will be hosting an Accreditation Retreat on Tuesday, February 7, 2012 at Mahoney State Park/Riverview Lodge. The event will be held from 9-3. All retreat materials, park entrance, snacks and lunch will be provided.

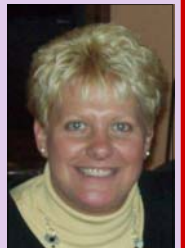
At this event, you'll:

- ♥ Learn about the 4 steps in the accreditation process
- ♥ Discuss the creation of Program and Classroom Portfolios (please bring yours to the retreat)
- ♥ Share successes and problems
- ♥ Network with others in the Accreditation process.

There is no fee for this event, but you must **register by January 31**, by contacting Pat at [phoff44@hotmail.com](mailto:phoff44@hotmail.com).

Event sponsors include: Lancaster Co Regional Training Project and Lakeshore.

Tracy Gordon,  
Special Projects  
Coordinator



\$\$\$ Donate to Nebraska AEYC \$\$\$

Nebraska AEYC is dedicated to strengthening and supporting the early childhood community. We do this through projects and services, such as T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® NEBRASKA, Quality Enhancement Projects, Accreditation support, advocacy, education, and networking.

As folks consider their options during this upcoming time of giving, we encourage you to consider Nebraska AEYC. To donate, either mail a check to our office, or donate through paypal through our website.

Happy holidays to you and your family!!

## AFFILIATE AND CHAPTER INFORMATION

### Lincoln Association for the Education of Young Children

#### Upcoming Trainings:

##### Strategies for Emotion Coaching

Date: **January 28, 2012** Time: 9:00 a.m. to noon Location: Southeast Community College

Presenter: Julie Miller, M.Ed.

This presentation is for Early Childhood Educators, Teachers, Providers and Parents. It is designed to help adults teach children to understand and deal with their emotions in an appropriate manner. 3 hours of in-service credit provided.

##### Special Care

Date: **February 26, 2012** Time: 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Location: Southeast Community College

Presenter: Pat Enevoldsen, M.Ed.

This presentation is designed to develop awareness of the importance of inclusive environments for all children. Early Childhood educators and providers will assist them in developing strategies and finding resources. Communication strategies will also be covered.



Pat Enevoldsen,  
Lincoln AEYC  
Representative



##### Building Family Relationships—Together on the Same Page

This training was held on November 12, and was attended by over 50 people. Beth Gausman, Early Childhood Education Consultant, Minnesota (and former SCC Instructor) was the trainer.

Beth Gausman,  
trainer



### Omaha Association for the Education of Young Children

Omaha AEYC continues to be a very busy chapter!! A successful networking night was held at Playtime/Schooltime Store earlier this fall. It was a great night filled with food, fun and some great prizes. All who attended had a wonderful evening.

Our **Mind in the Making** classes are still in session. A great deal is being learned by all involved. We are quite proud of this undertaking and will have more to share on this at a later date.

Our committee is nearly set and are meeting already to provide another amazing Week of the Young Child Kick Off event. Our annual event is held at the Omaha Children's Museum and we have broken several attendance records at the museum. We are gearing up for another record breaking day.

And last but not least on our agenda is our **Kaleidoscope** conference. This conference will be held on **January 28**. It gets bigger and better every year. For more information, please check out our website!! <http://www.omahaeyconline.org/>

Omaha AEYC wishes to take this opportunity to wish our dear friends across the state the happiest of holiday seasons.



Gina Battey  
Omaha AEYC  
Representative

### Southeast Community College Students attend NAEYC National Conference



Crystal Kozak  
SCC Chapter  
Advisor

Three members of the Southeast Community College Student Group recently attended the national NAEYC Conference in Orlando, Florida November 2-5<sup>th</sup>. Students enjoyed all the informative sessions, the amazing exhibit hall, networking with other student members in the Student Networking Center and sharing their passion for work with young children and families.

Student member/officer Angela Coleman had this to share of her experience – “The conference was a wonderful experience, I loved being a part of something so special, meeting new people and feeling their passion for young children and what they do. I have been so lucky to be able to go on this trip, it is something I will truly never forget. I will make it a priority to go again in the future.”



Angie Coleman,  
student officer



**CHILDREN . . . THE HEART OF THE MATTER**

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*An affiliate of the National Association for the Education of Young Children*

## **What Are The Environment Rating Scales ?**

Find out more about the Environment Rating Scales and how they can be used to improve the quality of your program and increase your knowledge of best practices for young children

At this workshop, you will have the chance to become familiar with and use one of the three tools:

Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS)

Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)

Family Child Care Environment Rating Scale (FCCERS)

**January 25, 2012**

**6:00 p.m.—8:30 p.m.**

Community Action Partnership of Lancaster/Saunders Counties

210 “O” St., Lincoln

To register contact Tracy Gordon at [tgordon@nebraskaeyc.org](mailto:tgordon@nebraskaeyc.org) or

Cindy Jennett at [cjennett@nebraskaeyc.org](mailto:cjennett@nebraskaeyc.org)

or call 402-476-2092

Registration limited—Please register by January 20, 2012

There is no charge for this workshop

Provided by Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children

## WHY PLAY?

Many early childhood teachers and child care providers are now recognizing what they have found in numerous research studies: Play is the most effective and powerful way for young children to learn. Often it is said that play is the work of childhood, the primary method for them to learn about themselves, others and their world.

When we play, we literally exercise our brain cells. The nerve cells in the brain actually thicken and grow as we learn.

### WHAT IS PLAY?

We do not have to be taught to play. It is a universal activity, although it takes many forms. Indeed, children of every culture engage in play. It is true free play that is the most influential in learning and development. This form of play has specific characteristics: It is fun, child-directed and chosen, process-oriented, and non-goal oriented.

### WHAT DOES PLAY TEACH?

PLAY ACTIVITY	WHAT IS LEARNED
Finger plays	Language development, fine-motor skills, counting, coordination, & self-esteem
Circle Games	Large motor skills, creativity, cooperation, and spatial concepts
Pretend Play	Social skills (cooperation, turn-taking and sharing) language and vocabulary development, imagination, emotional expression
Puzzles	Problem solving, abstract reasoning, shapes, and spatial concepts
Block Building	A foundation for more advanced science comprehension, including gravity, stability, weight, & balance
Sand-box play	Measuring, problem solving, and fine motor skills
Cooking	Math skills (counting and measuring), nutrition & science concepts (prediction, cause & effect)
Coloring/Painting	Creativity, emotional expression, symbolic representation, fine-motor skills

Source: <http://www.childcarelounge.com/parent-articles/play-day-care.php>

## CONFERENCES AND UPCOMING EVENTS

- ▼ **December 9-11, 2011: 0-3 National Training Institute**, Washington DC. Contact [ntiinfortntnconference.org](http://ntiinfortntnconference.org)
- ▼ **January 28, 2012: Kaleidoscope Conference**, Omaha. Contact [jhaggart@esu3.org](mailto:jhaggart@esu3.org)
- ▼ **February 22-23, 2012: Results Matter Institute**, Kearney. Contact [402-557-6880](tel:402-557-6880)
- ▼ **March 21, 2012: Early Childhood Conference**, Lincoln. Contact [csmall@esu6.org](mailto:csmall@esu6.org)
- ▼ **March 23, 2012: Infant-Toddler Symposium**, Omaha. [jhaggart@esu3.org](mailto:jhaggart@esu3.org)
- ▼ **March 31, 2012: Early Childhood Health, Safety & Nutrition Conference**, Omaha. Contact [jhaggart@esu3.org](mailto:jhaggart@esu3.org)
- ▼ **April 2-4, 2012: National After School Conference**, Dallas, TX. Contact [www.naaweb.org](http://www.naaweb.org)
- ▼ **April 14, 2012: Early Childhood Conference**, Peru. Contact [csmall@esu6.org](mailto:csmall@esu6.org)
- ▼ **April 22-28, 2012: Week of the Young Child**
- ▼ **April 30-May 3, 2012: National Smart Start Conference**, Greensboro, NC. Contact [conference@smartstart.org](mailto:conference@smartstart.org)
- ▼ **May 5, 2012: Early Childhood Conference**, Columbus. Contact [kvanness@esu7.org](mailto:kvanness@esu7.org)
- ▼ **May 21-24, 2012: Region VII Head Start Conference**, Kansas City, MO. <http://r7hsa.com/>
- ▼ **June 10-13, 2012: NAEYC Professional Development Institute**, Indianapolis, IN. [www.naeyc.org](http://www.naeyc.org)
- ▼ **June 12, 2012: Early Development Network Conference**, Kearney. Contact [Martha.nash@nebraska.gov](mailto:Martha.nash@nebraska.gov)
- ▼ **June 13, 2012: Early Childhood Conference**, Seward. Contact [annette.oliver@cune.edu](mailto:annette.oliver@cune.edu)

Please submit any articles or information by the 1st of the month of publication/distribution.

We plan to distribute the newsletters around the 15th of the following months:

**January, March, May, July, September, & November.**

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