Announcing the SECA 2016 Family Engagement Contest!

Families and Schools: Helping Children Feel Secure, Learn and Thrive

The Southern Early Childhood Association believes that children feel most secure, learn best, and thrive when their parents and school work together. This year, A **SECA Family Engagement Contest** has been designed to encourage early childhood programs to share their achievements in developing school-family partnerships. It is our hope that we can learn from one another and further develop this frequently under-resourced area of early education. All programs serving young children are invited to participate.

The purpose of the SECA Family Engagement Contest is to:

1. Highlight exemplary strategies which have proven effective and can be used as models for programs seeking to improve family engagement.

2. Promote intentional efforts to build relationships between program staff and families through the sharing of information and ideas throughout the SECA Affiliate states.

For more information and to access an application, go to www.southernearlychildhood.org You'll find a link to the contest application on the home page of the website.

Applications must be postmarked or submitted electronically on or before *November 1, 2016*. Applications should be mailed or emailed to the SECA office at:

By Mail: Southern Early Childhood Association
2016 Family Engagement Contest
1123 S. University, Suite 255
Little Rock, AR 72204

By E-mail: info@southernearlychildhood.org
(Please put Family Engagement Contest Application in the subject line)

Awards:

Only one entry per state will be recognized and acknowledged in *Dimensions of Early Childhood*. Of these entries, one overall SECA Family Engagement Program will be selected. The winner will receive a plaque at the 2017 SECA Conference to be proudly displayed at their center or school!

Dimensions of Early Childhood

Authors are encouraged to download a copy of SECA's manuscript guidelines at http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/become_member_get_involved.php. Submit manuscripts that are typed and double spaced with references in APA style. E-mail manuscripts for review to the editor at editor@southernearlychildhood.org.

SECA serves the interests of early childhood educators concerned with child development, including university researchers and teacher educators; early childhood, kindergarten, and primary-grade teachers; and early childhood program administrators and proprietors. The association has affiliates in 13 Southern states. Non-affiliate memberships are available to anyone living outside the 13 affiliate states. For information about joining SECA, contact the executive offices at P.O. Box 55930, Little Rock, AR 72215-5930, (800) 305-7322. Members receive a one-year subscription to *Dimensions of Early Childhood* and discounts on SECA publications and conference registration fees.

Southern Early Childhood Association
1123 S. University, Ste 255
Little Rock, AR 72204
(800) 305-7322
info@southernearlychildhood.org
www.southernearlychildhood.org

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Refereed Articles

Departments

President's Message
Carol Montealegre

"Reflections: A Vision of Possibilities!"

As I humbly assume the position of President of the **Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA)**, this New Year of 2016, I contemplate the possibilities… possibilities of moving our association forward…possibilities for improving the quality of care and education of our young children in the South and…possibilities for empowering and supporting our Southern early childhood professionals who are in the trenches!

After much reflection, the well-known saying comes to mind, "To move forward, one first needs to think of *'who are we' and 'where we've come from'!*"

"Who are we?" The **Southern Early Childhood Association** is the voice for all Southern children. The "all" emphasizes the openness and inclusiveness of our association since its conception in 1947- 48, when a group of likeminded individuals met in Nashville, TN, and later in Louisville, KY, to talk about how they could improve the education for young children in the South.

Our history answers the question of *"Who are we?"* This was a sad time in our Southern history, a time of segregation. So in 1949 when this group of individuals, who wanted to improve the lives of young children, decided to have a conference; they chose the West End Methodist Church in Nashville, Tennessee as their venue. They encouraged and welcomed all who could attend! These same founders opened their homes and provided lodging to the 149 attendees of this ground-breaking conference!

Simply stated, the **Southern Early Childhood Association** is an inclusive, grassroots organization who welcomes everyone the Southern way…with warm Southern hospitality! We are an association committed to improving the quality of care and education for all young, Southern children!

"Where have we been?" Over the last 67 years, the Southern Early Childhood Association has evolved…meeting the challenges of the times and adapting to the societal changes. During the 1950 conference, nine Southern states were represented and the association was named, *"Southern Regional Association for Children under Six"*. Membership was one dollar! In 1952 the word 'Regional' was dropped and the name became and remained *"Southern Association for Children under Six" (SACUS)*, until 1992. In 1992 its official name became the **"Southern Early Childhood Association" (SECA)**.

By 1959 'state affiliates' were established, beginning with Florida, followed by Tennessee and South Carolina. In the 1960's, nine more states became affiliates; 1960-Oklahoma, 1962-Alabama, 1964-Arkansas, Kentucky and Mississippi, 1965-Texas, 1966-Georgia, Louisiana, and North Carolina. By the end of 1972,

Words from the Editor

Dr. Mari Cortez

Diverse learners diverse needs. In this issue of *Dimensions* we focus on different strategies that early childhood educators can use in their classrooms when dealing with diverse needs. Knowing about individual children is very important in particular as it deals with linguistically diverse children. For example, Kim and Plotka's article (also in Spanish) dispel myths and misconceptions about second language acquisition while Prieto and Cervantes provide examples of how to make music developmentally appropriate for Latin@ children. Different needs also include emotional needs and Harper gives us tips on how to use bibliotherapy to help teachers guide children's behavior through books. As you read these articles I encourage you to think about how you can use the information as it relates to your own situation. Remember that diversity is not exclusive it includes many aspects the most common are as culture, language, gender, socioeconomic background, and family structure, among many others.

Notas del Editor:

Estudiantes diversos necesidades diversas. En este número de *Dimensions* nos enfocamos en las diferentes estrategias que los educadores de la primera infancia pueden utilizar en sus aulas cuando tratan con necesidades diversas. Conocer acerca de cada niño es muy importante sobre todo en lo que se refiere a los niños con diversidad lingüística. Por ejemplo, el artículo de Kim y Plotka (también en español) disipan los mitos y conceptos erróneos sobre la adquisición de un segundo idioma mientras Prieto y Cervantes proporcionan ejemplos de cómo hacer música apropiada para el desarrollo de los niños Latin@s. Diferentes necesidades incluyen también las necesidades emocionales y Harper nos da consejos sobre cómo utilizar la biblioterapia para ayudar a los maestros a guíar el comportamiento de los niños a través de libros. Al leer estos artículos les animo a pensar en cómo se puede utilizar la información que se refiere a su propia situación. Recuerden que la diversidad no es exclusiva e incluyen muchos aspectos los más comunes son la cultura, el idioma, género, nivel socioeconómico, y la estructura familiar, entre muchos otros.

Best/Deseándoles lo mejor,

Mari Riojas-Cortez, Ph.D.

Editor

Música as a Cultural Tool for Enhancing the Development of Young Latin@ Children

Learn how to make music education more relevant for Latin@ children and their peers.

Linda Prieto
& Marco Cervantes

Latin@: A New Way

In Spanish, nouns have been considered either masculine or feminine and adjectives were expected to match the gender of the noun, often denoted by the "o" or "a" at the end of the word. The "@" symbol is now being used as a push back to those rigid linguistic rules and can be universally used with either masculine or feminine nouns.

The population growth of young Latin@ children is of great interest to early childhood educators across the South as Latin@s are the largest and fastest growing ethnic minority group across the nation. Much of this growth has occurred in the southeastern United States, where significant Latin@ populations now exist in communities where they hardly resided 10 to 20 years ago.

All early childhood educators should be knowledgeable about the children they teach. Given the sharp increase of Latin@ preschool-age children in the southern states, we aim to provide all early childhood educators with an example of how to make music instruction more culturally efficacious (Flores, Clark, Claeys, & Villarreal, 2007) for Latin@ children and their peers. By creating and playing percussion instruments with their students, early childhood educators can develop high-quality culturally efficacious education environments that enhance young Latin@ children's physical (e.g., motor skills), social-emotional, and cognitive development (Bergen & Coscia, 2001), as well as their cultural identity (Flores, Casebeer, & Riojas-Cortez, 2011; Riojas-Cortez &

Flores, 2009; Riojas-Cortez & Flores, 2010). For this article we selected three percussion instruments from Latin America: maracas, claves, and the güiro (*Photo 1*).

It is common to visit a Latin@ home and hear music playing (Wortham & Contreras, 2002), so our suggestions here aim to provide early childhood educators with ideas of how to make the contexts of early childhood centers more culturally relevant for Latin@ children. We share how to develop active, stimulating learning environments with a focus on culturally relevant music for young Latin@ children. We provide a backdrop for this article by sharing the role of música (music) in our own lives as children, educators, and for one of us as an artist and the other as a parent of a now five-year-old. We also include brief cultural histories of three particular instruments, simple instructions on how to make them, and how to plan an activity that involves Latin@ families. Familiar music will help children make stronger connections in the classroom thus making the classroom culturally efficacious.

The Facts

The Hispanic school-age population (ages 5 through 17) in the new settlement areas of the South grew by 322% between 1990 and 2000. Over the same period, the corresponding white population grew by just 10% and the black population by 18%. The Hispanic population of preschool age (4 or younger) increased by 382 percent between 1990 and 2000, and the number of Hispanics added was far larger than the number of whites (110,000 vs. 43,000) (Kochhar, Suro, & Tafoya, 2005, p. iv).
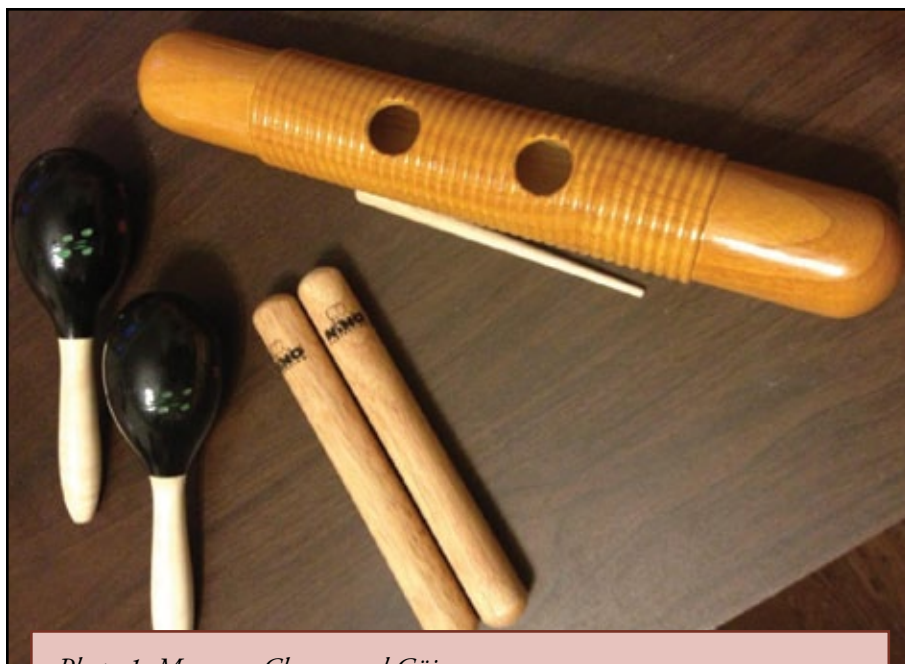
Photo 1: Maracas, Claves, and Güiro.

Photo provided by Dr. Marco Cervantes

Nuestras Vidas con Música/Our Lives with Music

For as long as I (Prieto) can remember, listening and singing along with music was a part of my upbringing, whether at home or working in the agricultural fields of California alongside my family. My father imparted upon us the cultural traditions of baladas, corridos, y rancheras mexicanas (romantic and folk ballads and the rural traditional folk music of Mexico). His singing helped the long workdays go by faster (Prieto, 2015). He recorded us singing with him or each other on cassette tapes. At the age of 11, I made my own cassette recording in secret with my then six-year-old brother that we later presented to our family as our Christmas gift to them. Now, as a mother of a five-year-old, I also expose my child to the music I grew up with, as well as Tejano music, since he was born in Texas. We sing and dance in the kitchen, and our car rides include singing along to Spanish children's music by traditional Latin@ artists like José Luis Orozco or Suni Paz.

My (Cervantes) earliest memories of music were mornings at my abuela's (grandmother's) house listening to a small General Electric transistor radio as we talked, sang, and danced to different types of Latin@ music such as cumbias, rancheras, and polkas by such artists as José José, Los Tigres Del Norte, Rigo Tovar, and Los Plebeyos. Music has been a part of my life since the time of my birth when my abuela named me Marco Antonio, after Marco Antonio Vasquez, singer of boleros (a type of Spanish music and dance) such as *"¡Y Ya!" (That's it!)* and *"Cielo Rojo" (Red Sky)*. She would sing these songs around the house often and today they bring back warm memories of her love and home. When returning to my parents' home, I listened to their vast collection of rock, R&B, soul, and disco LPs. On my own, I listened to R&B and rock radio stations and was deeply moved by the beats and rhymes of hip-hop. As I grew older and began performing as a hip-hop artist/musician, I found ways to fuse rancheras and cumbias with hip-hop music. Relocating these memories and musical forms through my research and performance helps me remain grounded to my Mexican and Latin@ musical roots and communicate the value of cultural expressions to students and audiences.

La Música

Bachata– An internationally celebrated genre of music from the countryside of the Dominican Republic, performed and popularized within Afro-Dominican rural neighborhoods.

Cumbia–A Colombian genre of Caribbean music existing in both rural and urban forms that became popular throughout Latin America's Pacific rim regions from Chile to Central America and Mexico.

Merengue–A music and dance genre from the Dominican Republic that has become a symbol of national identity and is one the most popular Latin American musical genres.

Son– A complex set of traditional Cuban styles of dance and music rooted in Afro-Cuban rhythms that have informed a wide range of Latin American music, including chachachá, mambo, and salsa.

Salsa– An Afro-Caribbean song and dance promoted and marketed by New York Latinos in the 1970's. Salsa comprises of genres including Cuban Son and Puerto Rican Bomba and Plena.

Música Enhancing Children's Development

Because we knew the importance that music played in our development as children, we decided to provide a música workshop to show children and their parents how to make and enjoy using maracas, claves, and güiros. These percussion instruments are not only common in Latin@ musical expression, but they also reflect the colonial contact between Europe, the Americas, and Africa. Thus, they present opportunities to explore the European, African and indigenous roots of Latin@ music, while also helping to develop Latin@ children's cultural identity and comfort in a new learning environment. In addition, these easy-to-replicate instruments represent ways for all young children to become engaged in the richness of Latin@ culture and raise their awareness of Latin America's historical contributions.

> ### *Affirm children's cultural backgrounds.*

Historical Background of Instruments

Before describing the details of the workshop, we provide a brief description below of the instruments' history to help you in your preparation and planning of instruction.

Maracas

Maracas are percussion instruments developed by indigenous groups in both Africa and the

Music can build a bridge between cultures, children and families.

Photo by Subjects and Predicates

Americas. They are commonly used in Afro-Latino music such as Latin jazz, salsa, cumbia, and bachata (Olsen, 1998; Hernández, 2012). Many early maracas were made from such objects as gourds, with seeds that rattled inside. Over time, musicians developed methods of making maracas, using hardened leather, wood, and other materials that could be filled with seeds or pebbles (Latin Music USA, 2009).

Claves

Claves consists of two hardwood sticks used to keep time in rhythms characteristic of West African music (Latin Music USA, 2009). Claves were formally developed in 17th century Havana shipyards from the dowels used in shipbuilding (Peñalosa, 2009). By the 1940s, claves were an essential instrument of rumba and the popular style son from eastern Cuba. They are popular Afro-Cuban salsa, jazz, funk, and rock ensembles (Olsen, 1998). Fittingly, clave is a Spanish word meaning 'code'or 'key,' and can also refer to the name of the patterns played on claves.

The Güiro

The güiro is a percussion scraper, of Amerindian origin, providing usually stressed downbeats and rhythms varied according to the dance accompanied (Olsen, 1998). The güiro's origins can be traced to indigenous groups in the Caribbean, especially the Taíno tribes of Puerto Rico and Cuba (Latino Music USA, 2009). Other variations of the güiro can be found in Colombian vallenato and Dominican merengue music (Latino Music USA, 2009).

The Música Workshop: Making Maracas, Claves, and Güiros

Our workshop included the participation of children, parents, and grandparents who do not attend the same early childhood center; yet they quickly engaged with one another before, during, and after the workshop. Thus, taking part in the creation of these instruments also impacted the emotional experience and connections made to music and the children's abilities to create and enjoy music with others. By understanding

and sharing the cultural and historical meanings of the particular musical instruments highlighted in this article, early childhood educators draw attention to providing young Latin@ children with opportunities to celebrate and learn about their own cultural backgrounds.

According to scholars, such as Hoffman (1992), "Multisensory activities require more planning and more collection of materials and realia (real objects) on the part of the teacher than do standard textbook-based instructional approaches, but the motivation and memory advantages of these activities justify the extra effort". (pp. 132-133) Thus, on the day of the workshop Cervantes brought real maracas, claves, and a güiro, allowing the children to see, touch, and listen to the actual instruments before constructing their own.

We recommend the following materials be used in the development of the maracas, claves, and güiros. (*Table 1*) Selecting items that serve as common staples throughout Latin America for the inside of the maracas, such as corn kernels, rice, and beans instead of colored beads is purposeful. We also sought items that would be easily handled by three- to six-year-old children, while developing their dexterity and eye-hand coordination. Lastly, when no longer in use, all items are either recyclable or biodegradable. Materials of different shapes and sizes can also be used for children requiring physical adaptations, such as incorporating the use of a funnel to facilitate the pouring of rice, beans, and maize into the plastic bottles or using larger plastic cups for an easier grip of the güiros.

Table 1

Materials		
Maracas	**Güiros**	**Claves**
Rice (various colors)	Empty 9-ounce plastic cups with ridges	Two 8-inch wooden dowels per child
Dried beans (various colors)	Plastic spoons	
Maize or corn kernels (various colors)		
Empty 8-ounce transparent water bottles with lids		

Instructions

If your classroom is carpeted, we suggest you lay a tarp on the floor for easier cleaning up. Otherwise, keeping a broom and dustpan on hand will suffice. To make the maracas, remove the label on each 8-ounce plastic bottle. Wash and dry the bottles, saving the lids for use later. Place the dried beans, rice, and maize kernels in bowls where the children can easily reach in and fill their maracas. Placing a tray in each student's work area can also help catch spills. Carefully monitor children because sometimes they may place these ingredients in their mouths, nose, or ears or those of their neighboring friends. We decided to begin with each dry ingredient in a different bowl in order to share with the children the name of each ingredient and their corresponding colors. However, once the children began to make their maracas, we allowed the ingredients to be mixed across bowls. Ideally, each child should have two plastic bottles and the accompanying lids, so they can make two maracas; however, during our música workshop, we found the children preferred making and using one maraca. This allowed them to fill, use, empty and refill the maracas. Some children may initially require assistance tightening the lids

Musical instruments that allow for a wide variety of sounds and rhythms can be constructed with "found" materials.

Photo courtesy of University of Louisiana at Monroe Child Development Center

on the bottles. The practice of filling the maracas and closing the lids also supports the development of fine motor skills.

The children were encouraged to hold a bottle in one hand and use their other hand to fill their maracas. We did not limit them to this method and indeed they varied in their preferences. At times they placed one bottle in a bowl and scooped the beans, rice, and kernels that way or scooped into one bottle first and used these contents to fill the other bottle. It is important to provide ample time for the children to explore the various contents and enjoy the process of filling and refilling their maracas. As the children enthusiastically filled their maracas, they giggled and shared with one another as well as with the adults present. As they did so, we reminded them of the name and color of the contents they were using, encouraged their levels of pleasure and play, and kept the music playing in the background. Once a child completed and successfully sealed the maraca, we asked them to shake the maraca for all to hear. Shaking the maracas allowed the children to distinguish the different sounds this type of instrument makes with different amounts and sizes of ingredients inside. For example, we asked, *"What do you hear?" (¿Qué escuchas?) "What does it sound like?" (¿Cómo suena?) "Does it sound the same as before?" (¿Suena igual qué antes?)* Without prompting, the children danced, jumped, smiled, and showed off their creations.

The güiros and claves do not require assembly by the children. For the güiros, you must simply show them how to hold the cup in one hand and the spoon in the other. Then they scrape the ridges on the cup with either end of the spoon to make music. If your nails are long enough, you can also demonstrate to the children the scraping process with your fingernails, thus avoiding the use of a spoon. For the claves, you can purchase wooden dowels at your local hardware store. Prieto purchased 48-inch long wooden dowels, one half-inch in diameter and sawed them into eight-inch long claves. We recommend sanding down both ends of the claves and sides to avoid splinters. To make music with the claves, the children hold one clave in one hand and strike downward with the clave in their other hand. Because no assembly is required, these instruments allow them to create music more readily while dancing. The children enjoyed dancing around the room, tapping their feet, and playing different instruments. For example, one child played the güiro while another child played the claves.

> ## *Music establishes connections for future learning.*

Reflections

In the workshop, songs from the genres of salsa, merengue, son, cumbia, and more can be used to demonstrate the sound of these instruments. They also provide students with authentic rhythmic patterns to follow. To demonstrate claves playing, use son clave and son rumba rhythms; Don Azpiazu and His Havana Orchestra: Casino Orchestra's *El Manisero (The Peanut Vendor)* (1930) and Compay Segundo's *Guantanamera* (2013)

provide excellent examples. When practicing maracas, Celia Cruz's *La Vida Es Un Carnaval* (2003) and Eddie Palmieri's *Azúcar* (1965) provide fitting salsa rhythms with which to play along. Aniceto Molina's *Cumbia Sampuesana* (2007) and Andres Landero y Su Conjunto's *Mi Machete* (2006) provide applicable backing tracks for cumbia rhythms and güiro practice. While these songs can entail complex rhythmic structures, they also allow for preliminary percussive practice that young children can follow and enjoy.

We observed the importance of constructing appropriate curriculum which "involves teachers making decisions based not only on materials but also on a holistic view of the individual needs and capabilities of the children" (Miranda, 2004, p. 53) and demonstrated the value of engaging young children in authentic activities, such as the ones described here. Although in the U.S. we often purchase new items for use in making crafts, it is important for educators to model ingenuity such as the reuse of water bottles in making the maracas. In doing so, we also help to foster children's imagination.

Although we conducted our workshop in one afternoon, we highly recommend taking time to explore and learn about these instruments across a number of days and coming back to them throughout the year. You can also build up to a community event where the children perform for their loved ones by focusing on a particular singer or musical style that is a family favorite. For example, many Latin@ enjoy the music of Celia Cruz. You can have the children dance to her award winning song *La Vida Es Un Carnaval* (2003). Remember to always be open to learning alongside the children

and their loved ones, providing an avenue to involve them in teaching dances to the students.

Engaging the Senses

As young children make and explore the use of maracas, claves, and güiros, they explore through their senses and establish connections for future learning. Lewin-Benham (2010) documents the significance of using materials that will encourage children to explore the world by engaging their senses. Children who are visually able will stimulate their sense of sight with the materials used to construct the instruments. As the instruments are assembled and used, young children are simultaneously stimulating their sense of touch and hearing as well.

Arousing Interest

While Lewin-Benham (2010) writes that young children express joy in engaging in expressive work "that is creative, original, complex, competent, and joyful" (p. 5), she also describes them as "desperate for ways to stimulate their brain" (p. 58). During our workshop, the children required little prodding to participate. One child yelled, "*¡Música!*" (Music!) as soon as he saw the materials, and when we began to play music, they were quick to dance on their own.

Two great responsibilities of the early childhood educator, then, are development of the learning environment and modeling an engagement with learning. To create a purposeful learning environment, the early childhood educator will need to intrigue and capture that child's interest. (Rushton, Juola-Rushton, & Larkin, 2010, p. 353) According to Kaufeldt (1999), "This arousal of emotions allows their attentional system to

Photo courtesy of United Way Center for Excellence, Miami, FL

Use materials that will encourage children to explore and create.

zoom in and focus on the source. We know that attracting and holding attention is the key to learning and memory" (p. 86). As soon as the children heard the music playing and saw the materials, they were eager to begin.

Involving Families

Since we also recognize the importance of establishing collaborations between families and schools, we made certain to invite young children and their parents to participate in the música workshop. One child's grandmother attended with him. Furthermore, by encouraging the use of Spanish with Latin American music and dance, we affirmed the children's cultural backgrounds during the learning process as indicated by Riojas-Cortez and Flores (2009)…*knowing how to partner and work with families allows educators to understand children's background,*

including their culture. Furthermore, understanding children's background enhances educators' facility for including children's funds of knowledge and families' cultural knowledge in their classrooms. Communication and collaboration is promoted when teachers value the input of parents and families and respect their culture. (p. 238)

In closing, we posit that early childhood educators who provide opportunities to engage with culturally relevant music, as described above, are supporting the development of physical, social-emotional, cultural, and cognitive knowledge of Latin@ children and thus promote collaboration and respect towards their families.

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About the Authors

Dr. Linda Prieto is the daughter of Mexican immigrants and began working in the agricultural fields of the central San Joaquin Valley in California with her family at the age of eight. She earned her doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction with an emphasis in Cultural Studies in Education and a Graduate Portfolio in Mexican American Studies at the University of Texas at Austin.

Dr. Marco Cervantes is an assistant professor in the Mexican American Studies program at the University of Texas at San Antonio where he researches and teaches such topics as transculturation and shared spaces, Black and Chicana/o musicology, hip-hop studies, and performance pedagogy. He also performs as a solo hip-hop artist and as a member of the Afro-Chicano hip-hop collective, Third Root.

Bibliotherapy for Classroom Management

Teachers can use bibliotherapy, the practice of helping individuals grow and develop through books, as one tool in classroom management.

Gordon Eisenman & Rebecca Harper

The focus and goal of classroom management should be first and foremost learning. When trying to prevent interruptions to learning, or dealing with interruptions to learning when they occur, teachers need to move beyond simply imposing a consequence and assuming students have learned from the interaction. Students need to be taught the skills and knowledge necessary for growth in self-control, expanding on self-regulated-learning where the teacher's role is interactive and personal, helping students reflect on and validate their experiences (McCombs, 2001). *Bibliotherapy*, the practice of helping individuals grow and develop through books, is one tool that teachers can use across the curriculum, and in particular, in the field of classroom management.

Historically, bibliotherapy dates back to the 1930s when librarians began compiling lists of written material that helped individuals modify their thoughts, feelings, or behaviors for therapeutic purposes. The underlying premise is that students identify with literary characters similar to themselves, an association that helps the students release emotions, gain new directions in life, and explore new ways of interacting (Gladding & Gladding, 1991).

At its most basic level, bibliotherapy involves selecting reading material that has relevance to the person's life situation. Often the practice will also involve writing, play, or reflective discussion. Books provide a safe medium for children to explore different concepts, feelings, and attitudes while allowing them to better understand their environment, community, and societal expectations. Students may be more willing to engage in open discussions about their thoughts and feelings through discussion of carefully selected texts.

Stamps (2003, p. 26) defined bibliotherapy as, "a strategy that helps students overcome or deal with a current problem or issue in their lives." Bibliotherapy has obvious value in that it provides the opportunity for participants to recognize and understand themselves, their characteristics, and the complexity of human thought and behavior. It may also promote social development as well as the love of literature in general, and reading in particular (Gladding & Gladding, 1991). In addition, Harvey (2010) examined how bibliotherapy could serve as a vehicle for individual change, by serving as a practice in which the reader enhances problem solving skills. Bibliotherapy reduces feelings of isolation that may be felt by people with problems. All of the aforementioned promote learning self-control, a long-term goal of classroom management.

Four Stages of Bibliotherapy

There are four stages that the student is believed to experience during bibliotherapy:

1. **Identification,** when a student identifies with a character.

2. **Catharsis,** in which the student experiences a release of emotions as he/she "follows" the character.

3. **Insight,** at which point students connect their lives to the lives of the characters in the book.

4. **Universalization,** the stage in which students realize people all over the world face similar life changes. (Stamps, 2003).

Many teachers practice bibliotherapy in some manner, often without giving their practice a formal name. However, effective follow-up activities, thoughtful questions, and focused discussion require that teachers are mindful about their use of books to address individual and group issues in classroom management. Bibliotherapy may be used individually, with small groups, or with an entire class, depending on the need and can also involve parents in the reading activities. Teachers can use children's literature to teach about difficult issues by encouraging students to make personal connections with characters in the book, thus allowing readers to evaluate their own

behavior and emotions through the experiences of the characters in the story (Forgan 2002; Iaquinta & Hipsky, 2006).

Using Children's Literature

Early childhood teachers use read alouds for a number of purposes in a variety of classroom settings. One of the benefits of children's books is their versatility. They can be used in a wide-range of subject areas to teach content standards, and are often used as models, or mentor texts, for exemplary writing. In addition to academic content, they can also be utilized to deal with common classroom management concerns and sensitive classroom issues. When introducing children's books, teachers have the option of implementing them in a whole group setting, a small, focused group, or for independent reading during designated times. The versatility of children's literature lends itself to the wide variety of situations that arise in classroom management.

Whole Group Instruction

Children's books are effective in the whole group setting for a number of reasons. Besides the numerous documented literary benefits of read aloud in the areas of fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing (Beck & McKeown, 2001; Fox, 2001; Heisey & Kucan, 2010; Trelease, 2006), whole group read aloud of children's books allows teachers to address topics that affect and/or can benefit the entire class. In addition, in the field of literacy, researchers have emphasized the need for exposure to a variety of texts, across genres, and have discussed the differentiation between window and mirror texts. (Mirror

Photo by Nancy P. Alexander

Select books to correspond to each child's individual needs.

texts are defined as those that allow individuals to see themselves in the texts, while window texts allow individuals a glimpse into the lives of those unlike themselves (Glazier & Seo, 2005). This is especially pertinent in the field of classroom management. Because the ultimate goal of classroom management is learning, teachers must address the issues or occurrences that impede or interfere with learning. Using the books listed in this article can allow teachers to address common management issues in the least intrusive ways possible, as well as to develop a sense of empathy for people and situations both similar and different from themselves.

Whole group read alouds are excellent opportunities for teachers to broach blanket issues or topics that affect a large portion of their students. Good management is invisible management and should occur with the least amount of disruption possible. Therefore, incorporating children's books that weave stories around characters, situations, or issues similar to those faced by students provides opportunities for teachers to approach matters that affect their classes without singling out specific students. Plus, by reading

a variety of read alouds, including those that deal with moral, behavioral, and social issues, teachers are able to expose students to situations that otherwise may be overlooked.

Incorporating children's books in whole group lessons is not difficult. When introducing the books, teachers may ask students to make predictions based on the title or cover. During the read aloud itself, teachers should:

- stop and ask questions regarding the reading at appropriate parts in order to clarify confusing material

- check for comprehension

- allow students to ask questions if needed

Additionally, teachers should stop at strategic points in the story to address issues that relate to problems in the classroom. Asking students to predict what a character will do in a tough situation, or what could be done to solve a problem the character is facing allows students to think through issues without the problem being personal.

When using these types of books in the whole class setting, teachers should also allow students to reflect and respond to the literature. Connections, including text to text, text to self, and text to world should be encouraged (Keene & Zimmerman, 1997). Time for class discussion following the reading should be built into the lesson as well as time for questioning, both by the teacher and from the students. Discussion following the reading is a prime opportunity for teachers to ask students to determine if the issues outlined in the book currently affect their classes. Students can brainstorm possible solutions to the problems discussed and also determine ways

they can apply what was learned in the book in their own lives, both home and academic.

Good books for whole class implementation include:

- *Have You Filled A Bucket Today?*

- *What If Everyone Did That?*

- *Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon*

- *Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage To Be Who You Are*

- *Enemy Pie*

because they address blanket, global issues that are most likely to affect the greatest number of students and have the most profound effect on the class as a whole.

> ### *Discuss and address difficult issues with children's books.*

Small Group Instruction

Traditionally, small group instruction is an excellent venue for enrichment or supplemental instruction, and allows teachers the opportunity to interact with students in a setting other than whole group. Small group instruction often takes place during guided reading blocks, a time when teachers focus on strategic activities for reading (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996). Response to Intervention (RTI) also employs small group instruction in Tier 2 of the program across academic content areas. Small group instruction is also a prime strategy for dealing with classroom management issues that might be af-

fecting a small group of students.

Small group instruction has more than academic benefits for students and teachers. One of the main benefits of small group instruction is the social nature of the approach. While small group instructional methods may differ, the key component of working with them is discussion that is prevalent throughout the multitude of strategies. Utilizing the children's books discussed in this article in the small group setting allows for social interactions and rich discussion that may not be feasible during whole group due to time constraints or other limitations.

While whole group read alouds allow teachers to address issues that mainly impact the entire class, introducing some of these books in the small group setting allows teachers to address concerns/issues that may only affect a smaller group of students. Plus, teachers can also use books that have already been introduced in a whole group setting to emphasize a point or area that a small group of students may still need. The books used in small groups may address narrower topics or sensitive topics that are better suited for small group settings as well.

Introducing a book in a small group setting is similar to that of whole group. The main difference occurs in the amount of discussion and focus of questions and conversations that emerge as a result of the book. In this venue, students are able to delve deeper into the text and develop additional connections between the material and their situations. Teachers and students may spend more time talking about the characters, situations, as well as solutions to problems and discussing ways they can implement what was learned from the books.

Books that would be beneficial in the small group setting include:

- *My Mouth is a Volcano*
- *The Frog with the Big Fat Mouth*
- *The Recess Queen*
- *Lacey Walker-Non Stop Talker*

Individualized Instruction

Effective classroom management includes the provision of individualized instruction corresponding to each individual's unique needs and ability. In the classroom, one way that teachers address individual ability levels is through the differentiation of reading materials. It is especially common in early childhood classes to see individual book boxes for students that contain "just right" books on individual student levels that can be read during independent or self-selected reading time. The books in these boxes are often literary works cooperatively chosen by both the students and teacher. Similarly, it is not uncommon to see differentiation of instruction in other academic areas as well. This differentiation could also be in the area of classroom management. Because each student has a unique set of needs, classroom management should be tailored to best fit these needs.

Implementing certain children's books with individual students allow teachers to differentiate based on specific student needs. Because some students have management issues that may be less prevalent or distinctive to an individual, the use of certain books that address selected topics are best used in an individual setting. However, it would also be pertinent to allow students to re-read certain books that may have been shared with the whole class or in a small group if the student continues to have issues with a specific topic or issue.

Providing the right types of books for individualized instruction requires the teacher to know each of his/her students. In doing so, the teacher is able to choose books that may help students to better manage their conduct and performance in the classroom. Specific books may be selected and placed in a student's book boxes if those are employed, or the teacher may simply suggest that a student read a certain title during independent reading times. As with the other instructional approaches, time must be built in for the student to discuss the book with the teacher or with peers. This allows teachers to discuss the content of the book with the student and provides the student with opportunities to relate connections made when reading.

Books that would be good to use with individual students include:

- *When Sophie Gets Angry-Really, Really Angry*
- *My Mouth is a Volcano*
- *Personal Space Camp*
- *You Get What You Get*
- *The Honest to Goodness Truth*

Photo by Nancy P. Alexander

Children can use books to deal with personal concerns like going to the dentist.

Suggested Books for Implementation

Below is a list of possible books that could be used in early childhood classrooms to address a myriad of classroom management concerns. They are grouped based on the behavior each book addresses. A brief synopsis is included as well as a suggested topic for discussion and implementation in the classroom.

Anger Issues

When Sophie Gets Angry-Really, Really Angry by Molly Bang (1999)

Getting angry is something everyone can relate to. Sophie, the main character in this book, gets angry when she does not get her way, whether it is when her sister is playing with her toys or when her mother informs her she needs to share. Sophie's temper gets the best of her initially, but time away helps comfort and relax her. Because most students experience the emotion of anger at some point, this book could serve as a good resource when addressing emotions and feelings of students.
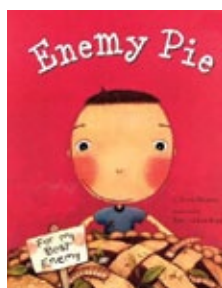
Enemy Pie by Derek Munson (2000)

Summer is going well for the narrator in this story until a new boy moves into the neighborhood and becomes the neighborhood enemy. With his father's guidance, the narrator prepares a pie for Jeremy, but additional instructions for delivery includes playtime with the enemy, which

> **Choose books that assist students in managing their conduct.**

requires the two to get to know each other. In the end, the two become friends and the enemy pie winds up being more about friendship. This book could be used in class to discuss friendship and kindness.

Bullying

Spaghetti in a Hot Dog Bun: Having the Courage to be Who You Are by Maria Dismondy (2008)

Lucy is a unique little girl and the class bully, Ralph, loves to bring this to everyone's attention. Although Lucy is unlike anyone else, she is confident in herself and knows what she stands for and what is most important. In the end, when Ralph is in need, Lucy is able to help because she knows that it is important to be kind and nice to everyone, regardless of who they are. This book is a good resource to address bullying in the classroom, as well as the importance of being confident in who you are as an individual.
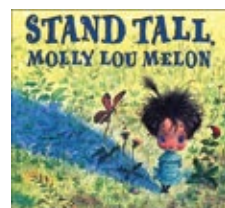
Stand Tall Molly Lou Melon by Patty Lovell (2001)

Molly Lou Melon, the main character in this book, is short in nature, has buckteeth, a terrible singing voice, and is clumsy. When Sally begins school, she is picked on by

Ronald the class bully. Every time Ronald makes a comment about her, she responds in a positive manner. In the end, Molly Lou Melon's positive attitude helps her deal with life at a new school and even helps her win over the class bully.

The Recess Queen by Alexis O'Neill (2002)

In this story, Mean Jean rules the playground – no one swings, slides, or plays before Mean Jean does. This continues until a new girl, Katie Sue, shows up and does whatever she wants at recess without Jean's permission. This new girl even asks Jean to play with her, something that no one else does, which solves the problem of the bully on the playground, by showing compassion, kindness, and the meaning of friendship.

Excessive Talking
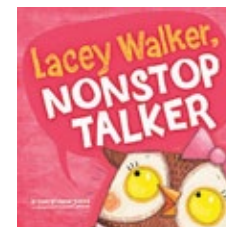
Lacey Walker, Non Stop Talker by Christianne C. Jones (2012)

Lacey Walker loves to chatter. Throughout the day she talks nonstop, whether it is at the breakfast table, in class, or in the library. Her constant jabbering continues until she loses her voice and is forced to be silent for the day. However, during this time she realizes that because she can't talk, she is able finish tasks earlier and enjoys listening to her friends. In the end, although Lacey still enjoys talking, she also realizes that it is important to listen as well. This book would be a good resource to reinforce the importance of listening.
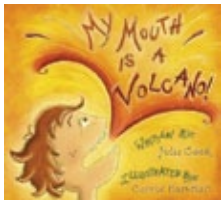
*My Mouth is a Volcano* By Julia Cook and Carrie Hartman (2005)

Louis, the main character in this story, has so much to say that he often can't control his words and when they come out. Many times, Louis interrupts others, blurts out comments, and has difficulty determining when it is appropriate to share his thoughts. In the end, Louis learns the importance of listening and waiting his turn to speak so he doesn't interrupt others with his outbursts. *My Mouth is a Volcano* can be used when teaching group norms and expectations for sharing time.

Listening Skills

Howard B. Wigglebottom Learns to Listen by Howard Binkow (2005)

Howard B. Wigglebottom is not a good listener. He often does not listen to his teacher's instructions in class, does not hear warnings or suggestions from family and friends, and does not pay attention to his friends when they are talking. After a required time out from art class, Howard realizes that he needs to work on his listening skills. The next day, Howard makes a conscious effort to be a better listener and it pays off.
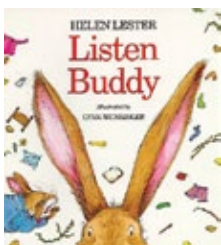
Listen, Buddy by Helen Lester (1997)

Buddy the bunny is born with huge ears, but they don't seem to help him when it comes to listening. Always

misinterpreting directions and conversations, Buddy is forever finding himself in precarious situations. An encounter with Scruffy Varmint, a cunning and conniving animal, results in Buddy almost ending up as a meal for Scruffy. Once he realizes the potential consequences, Buddy begins to focus more on listening.

Respecting Others

The Frog with the Big Mouth By Teresa Bateman (2008)

The Argentinian rainforest is the home of a frog who catches a large fly for dinner and then continually brags about his score to all those around him. As he hops through the rainforest, he regales the animals around him with stories of his monumental catch, taunting each one and asking each, *"Don't you wish you were me?"* A final meeting with a jaguar, who loves to eat frogs for dinner, sends the frog with the big mouth running for cover to escape the hungry animal.

Personal Space Camp by Julia Cook (2007)

Using outer space as a comparison, Julia Cook addresses the concept of personal space to young children. Because young children may not be self-aware enough to understand the concept of personal space and the need to respect the personal space of others, *Personal Space Camp* is a good book to integrate in the classroom when tackling this topic.
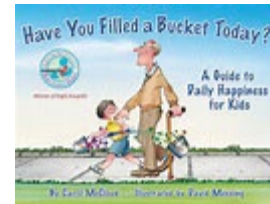
Have You Filled a Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids by Carol McCloud (2007)

Through examples of random acts of kindness, empathy, and positive actions, readers learn how these acts can have residual positive effects on those around them. This book could be used to demonstrate the importance of kindness and empathy to others.
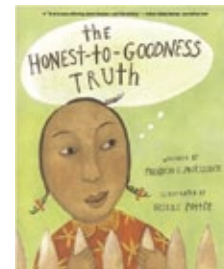
The Honest to Goodness Truth by Patricia C. McKissack (2000)

Caught in a lie by her mother, Libby vows to make a change and only tell the truth from that point on. The problem is she begins spreading the truth about everyone, regaling those she meets with stories about her neighbor's yard that looks like a jungle, a school mate who didn't have money for lunch, and her friend's socks with holes. At first, Libby can't understand why telling the truth is making everyone so upset with her, but after a talk with her mother, and a spoonful of her own medicine, she learns how to tell the truth in a way that shows empathy to others. *The Honest to Goodness Truth* could be used to address the issue of telling the truth as well as the need to be cognizant of other's feelings.

Rules and Consequences
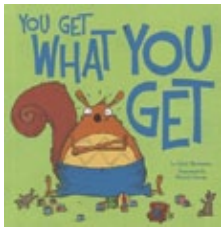


You Get What You Get by Julie A. Gassman (2013)

Sometimes young children have difficulty dealing with situations they consider unfair or when they do not get their way. Melvin the squirrel often throws a fit when he does not get his way, that is, until he learns a new rule at school. Melvin learns that this new classroom rule, "You get what you get and you don't throw a fit." applies not only at school, but at home as well. Learning to cope when you don't get your way is something children and even some adults need help with.
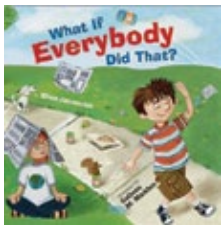
What If Everybody Did That? by Ellen Javernick (2010)

This book loosely addresses the concept of rules and guidelines for behavior through illustrations and examples of irresponsible actions and the possible consequences. With actions ranging from blurting out loud during story time to littering and rude restaurant behavior, the author poses the question, *"What if everybody did that?"* after each questionable action. By doing so, readers are able to imagine the impact of irresponsible behavior by viewing the possible consequences on a larger scale. This book could be used to help establish group norms, class rules, and expectations for behavior in the classroom.

Conclusion

The use of multiple books for a variety of problems and issues encountered in classroom management can yield a number of benefits. By exposing students to a variety of literature with unique, yet relatable characters, students and teachers are able to discuss and address difficult and important topics in the classroom setting.

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About the Authors

Gordon Eisenman is a Professor of Early Childhood Education at Augusta University (formerly Georgia Regents University). His professional interest centers on classroom management's impact on student learning. When not at work he enjoys running, reading and sports.

Dr. Rebecca G. Harper is an assistant professor at Augusta University (formerly Georgia Regents University) and educational consultant from Aiken, SC. She is a former middle grades writing teacher. She received her Ph.D. in Language and Literacy from the University of South Carolina. Dr. Harper is known for her energetic and engaging presentations as well as her passion for literacy. Her research interests include: content area literacy, student conceptualization of writing, teacher beliefs, and critical literacy.

Myths and Facts Regarding Second Language Acquisition in Early Childhood: Recommendations for Policymakers, Administrators, and Teachers

Early childhood teachers, administrators, and policymakers play a key role in addressing the needs of young English Language Learners (ELLs). Identify common myths and misconceptions about second language acquisition in young children.

Soonhyang Kim
& Raquel Plotka

The typical classroom composition in the U.S. has changed in the last three decades, and the number of students in the U.S. public education system who are English Language Learners (ELLs) has doubled during this time. Currently, 20% of students are classified as a language minority (Huerta & Jackson, 2010). The shift is most pronounced in early childhood, and in some districts close to half of all kindergarteners are ELLs (Espinosa, 2013). Increasingly, the process of learning English takes place in an early childhood setting, and the early childhood classroom constitutes the first exposure to English for many children (McCabe et al., 2013).

The typical classroom composition in the U.S. has changed in the last three decades.

Photo by Elizabeth Nichols

Early childhood teachers play a key role in addressing the needs of young ELLs, and a vast body of research is dedicated to assessing best practices for teachers. However, less research addressing the role of policymakers, program directors and administrators is available. Although teachers can make a difference in the lives of children, their influence is often limited to their classrooms and many changes that need to take place at the policy or program level are beyond the teacher's control. Moreover, it is important for teachers to familiarize themselves with the best practices at the program and policy levels, as teachers can be instrumental in advocating, informing, and proposing changes at program and policy levels. They can also help dispel common myths and misconceptions regarding second language acquisition in young children.

Common Myths and Misconceptions about Second Language Acquisition in Early Childhood

Until recently most policy and practice decisions about young ELLs in the U.S have been made based on common beliefs and myths rather than research (Espinosa, 2013). The research regarding language acquisition rejects four of the most common myths and beliefs about L2 (second language) acquisition in early childhood.

Myth 1: Non-Native English Speaking Parents Should Speak English in the Home

In the U.S. there seems to be a common belief that parents should stop talking to their infants in their native language in order to prepare them for English interactions. When parents with limited English proficiency follow this frequent advice, they lose opportunities to support their children's language development as the parent has a limited vocabulary in English. In addition to missing the opportunity to learn the home language, children are not learning to use language from a fluent adult, and therefore, they do not experience great gains in English. When parents do not use the language in which they are most proficient, in some cases language development in general is put at risk (McCabe et al., 2013).

Children develop language optimally when parents talk to them in a language in which the parents are proficient and fluent (McCabe et al., 2013). Through language, parents socialize children and share cultural beliefs and values. By decreasing the use of the home language, parents might be sacrificing the sharing of their culture and traditions with their children. By prioritizing the use of the home language in early childhood, parents and professionals can prevent overall language delays that affect school readiness and academic achievement (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Myth 2: The Process of Acquiring a Second Language (L2) is the Same as for a First Language (L1) in Early Childhood

Although there are some similarities, there are several differences among the processes of developing first and second languages. A child's goal for learning a first language (L1) is inherently different from the goal for learning a second language (L2). When acquiring a first language, a child is learning how to use language as a means to communicate with others. When learning a second language, a child is learning to communicate in a specific language in a specific context (Tabors, 2008). The process of understanding the function and use of language must be established in order to succeed at learning a particular language.

> *Teachers can help dispel common myths and misconceptions.*

First, language acquisition is a universal developmental task of early childhood, but acquiring a second language is not. For this reason, first language development is relatively unproblematic for typically developing children, and individual characteristics play a small role. However, when learning a second language, individual characteristics play a much larger role (Tabors, 2008). One characteristic that plays an important role in second language acquisition is aptitude, as people vary greatly in their abilities to learn a second language. Additionally, social characteristics, such as sociability, confidence and shyness, and the degree of willingness to take risks in social situations play important roles (Tabors). Furthermore, motivation and an individual's favorable attitude towards the dominant language make a difference in the process of acquiring that language (McCabe et al., 2013).

Myth 3: Acquiring a Second Language (L2) is Easy in Early Childhood

Acquiring a second language (L2) is a difficult task for both children and adults. Although early childhood is a prime time for a child to learn a language, the process of acquiring a second language is demanding and difficult (Tabors, 2008). Early childhood is a critical or sensitive period for the development of a first language, yet a second language can be undertaken at any age (Tabors). As with other forms of challenges, cognitive capacity and cognitive demand play an important role in this process, and in general, the older the child when facing a cognitive challenge, like learning to play chess, the easier it is for the child to learn this (Tabors). Thus, the idea that early childhood is a magical period for acquiring a second language is a myth, and the reality is that this process places a great demand on a child. The only component of second language acquisition with a critical period in early childhood is the development of a native accent (Tabors, 2008).

Myth 4: Multilingual Children Lag Behind Peers in Academic and Language Skills

Research indicates that when children are reared in high quality multilingual environments, they experience cognitive, social, and economic benefits. For example, Leikin (2013) found that multilingual young children displayed higher levels of creativity and higher levels of creative mathematical problem solving than monolingual children. Similarly, researchers have consistently found that young multilingual children exhibit better executive functions, such as attention and memory, than

monolinguals (e.g., Kalashnikova & Mattock, 2014; Lauchlan, Parisi, & Fadda, 2013). Because they are accustomed to switching between languages, multilingual children and adults tend to be faster at switching between sets of rules and symbols. These skills give multilingual children advantages in self-control, problem-solving and decision making (Kuhl, 2011). Similarly, fluent bilingualism is associated with higher academic achievement in youth (McCabe et al., 2013) and better cognitive skills in old age (Gold, Johnson, & Powell, 2013).

Brain research demonstrates that multilingual children have greater brain tissue density in areas of the brain related to memory, language, and attention with even greater density levels for children exposed to a second language before the age of five (McCabe et al., 2013). Stocco, Yamaki, Natalenko, and Prat (2014) explain that multilingualism is associated with more flexibility in transferring information to the part of the brain called the prefrontal cortex, which plays a key role in executive functions. They propose that multilingualism "trains the brain" to improve its performance under conditions of competitive information selection.

Recommendations

Myths and misconceptions perpetuate deficit perspectives regarding ELLs. Thus, we would like to suggest practical applications and recommendations for policymakers, program leaders, administrators, and teachers regarding appropriate practices to facilitate second language acquisition for young children. These recommendations lean on research that emphasizes the need for rich

Acquiring a second language is a difficult task for both children and adults.

Photo by Elisabeth Nichols

language environments to support language development.

Recommendations for Policymakers

A key policy recommendation is to disseminate information to parents before their children enter formal schooling. The research presented emphasizes the importance of developing strong language skills by exposing children to the language in which parents feel most comfortable. For instance, some immigrant parents may not be familiar with the research, and by the time the children reach a center-based setting or formal schooling, they stop talking to children in their home language. One way of minimizing this risk is by reaching parents before it is too late. A policy that focuses on pediatric primary health care might be one that will help reach parents. Health care reaches populations difficult to reach otherwise, and on average children are required to have at least fifteen visits to their primary caregiver before entering kindergarten (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2002). These visits can constitute an

ideal opportunity for the delivery of key information (McCabe et al., 2013).

Several of the policy decisions in the U.S. regarding ELLs have been made based on personal views and common knowledge. For example, it is common to think that individuals who spend time immersed in English-language speaking and listening will develop English-language skills faster. This idea endorses policies that promote second language immersion in early childhood settings, but research regarding immersion programs contradicts their advantages for young children. Young children have not yet mastered the elements of their first language and shifting to a new unfamiliar language during early childhood might negatively impact the development of language skills and academic achievement in English (Espinosa, 2013). Immersion differs significantly from simultaneous language acquisition unless this process starts at birth, when language development begins. Most children find themselves in an immersion setting after their first language is determined. One recommendation is for

policies and politicians to shift their views and promote more bilingual programs in early childhood settings, including those settings in the public education system such as state-funded prekindergarten and kindergarten programs. The advantages of bilingual education for all children are supported by research (e.g., Kalashnikova & Mattock, 2014; Lauchlan et al., 2013) and, many countries including Canada, Belgium, India, Hong Kong, and Singapore have embraced this approach.

Funding for policies that focus on early literacy helps to promote reading in homes where families may have difficulty obtaining books in their native language. One example of a successful policy initiative is the "New Mainer Book Project." This project was a result of collaboration between the Maine Humanities Council and People's Regional Opportunity Programs (PROP), a community action agency that serves one of the most diverse and populous counties in Maine. This project identified a large community of Sudanese refugees living in Portland, Maine, whose children were

in early childhood programs. This community was underrepresented in the children's literature available (Sullivan, 2005). The project team met with several Sudanese refugee women and listened to their stories, fables, folktales, myths, and anecdotal accounts. The Maine Humanities Council appointed a noted children's author to compile many of these stories into a book that reflects Sudanese experiences, tales, and values (Sullivan, 2005). The storybook was developed to be used in Maine's early childhood programs (For more information, visit http://mainehumanities. org/programs/btr-newmainers.html).

Lastly, early childhood settings include programs for infants and toddlers, and some policy recommendations are specific for this age group. Home-based services such as early intervention and home-visitation are the most common approach to serving infants and toddlers with special needs or who are at risk. Yet, one barrier to home-visitation services for ELLs is that immigrant parents might not be aware of the availability of such services. One significant issue is the fear of participation in

such services due to the potential of being found to be undocumented (McCabe et al., 2013). This fear prevents families from obtaining services for their infants and toddlers to enhance their development and language skills. Making information available to immigrant parents regarding the availability of services regardless of immigration status should be considered a policy priority for ELL infants and toddlers. McCabe and colleagues suggest exposing parents to this information through the health system, at prenatal and postnatal visits, and through mass media.

Recommendations for Early Childhood Program Leaders

Programs can better serve ELLs and their families by developing a program philosophy that describes the way the program will support quality experiences for children and their families whose first language is not English (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Programs can help by describing how first language and second language acquisition will be supported, how languages will be used in the classrooms, and by providing this information in the parents' home language. Since a rich language environment is central to language development, programs can provide professional development about the acquisition of first and second languages, combined with information about how to support home language acquisition and strengthen literacy skills at home (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). In addition, programs can assist teachers and children by acquiring children's books in the many home languages represented in the program. Program leaders report that it is helpful to shop in international children book fairs.

Photo by Subjects and Predicates

One teacher in the classsroom should be familiar with the child's first language.

Similarly, programs can support parents and children by providing translations at parent meetings, conferences, trainings and other events and ensuring that ELL parents are involved in the process of program policy development (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Providing all written communication to families in their home language or in their preferred language and having a process in place for families to communicate and give feedback in their home language will facilitate parental involvement.

Programs that support ELLs make an effort to bring the home language into the program as much as possible. One way programs can achieve this is by recruiting staff and teachers who are bilingual and by providing them with additional compensation. Similarly, programs can play a key role in assuring that staff meet the requirements for positions and by assisting potential teachers in documenting their qualifications, e.g., by getting transcripts from foreign universities and assessing their language proficiencies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). When half the children in a classroom speak a specific language, programs can hire a teacher who speaks that specific language (Cruzado-Guerrero, 2005). This would also be beneficial for the other half of the students in a class who do not speak the specific language by naturally being exposed to a foreign language at a young age. One way programs can bring home languages to the classroom is by partnering with foreign language departments of local universities and asking for bilingual students to volunteer for a few days a week in a semester as part of course requirements (Sullivan, 2005).

These recommendations might be more feasible in some areas of the country such as big metropolises with diverse populations than in other areas where it is hard to find qualified bilingual teachers. Nevertheless, given the increasing number of young ELLs in early childhood programs, it is important to make these recommendations widely known to program leaders and administrators so that some progress will be made in addressing needs of ELLs at the program level.

> **Language acquisition for children can be influenced by adult fluency.**

Successful programs reach out to the community and collaborate with community members to best address their specific needs. One example of successful community collaboration at the program level is the Kawerak Head Start serving children in Nome, Alaska and in island villages in the Bering Straits. In many villages, due to outside pressure, children's use of their native tribal languages such as Inupiaq and Yupik was decreasing significantly. Parents were concerned about the preservation of their culture through language and about the children's psychological and identity development. In response, the program has developed a curriculum called *Sharing and Learning Place* which combines Native Alaskan culture and languages with early childhood practices. Throughout the curriculum children experience authentic activities such as weather, land, sky, and water explorations, animal be-havior, ice fishing games, and basket making. Similarly, meaningful phrases in the native languages are used throughout the day (Ochanga, 2005). This is an example of a program's initiative to preserve language through curriculum.

Lastly, for infants and toddler programs, using the home language is a priority in order to provide language continuity and help infants and toddlers build their basic language skills (Wittmer & Petersen, 2010). Programs can actively recruit teachers who speak the children's first language. If this is not possible, they can make extensive efforts to ensure that the home language is represented in the program by partnering with universities and inviting volunteers.

Infants and toddlers with disabilities or considered at risk are usually served through home visitors. A key component of home-visitation programs is to build relationships of trust among staff and families (Quezada, Mukherjea, & Molina, 2005). Programs should make it a priority to ensure that home-visitors speak the child's home language to facilitate the connection between the home-visitor and the family and children. When the home-visitor can speak the home language, the services are proven to be more effective. When a home-visitor does not speak the home language, it is at least important to show respect and sensitivity to the family's beliefs and traditions (Quezada et al., 2005).

Recommendations for Teachers

This article suggests recommendations for policymakers and administrators in order to support the work of teachers in the classrooms. As the number of young ELLs increases, teachers will need the support of program leaders and policies to best

serve young ELLs. Nevertheless, there are some recommendations that can be implemented by teachers to ensure a language rich environment for young ELLs particularly by preserving and respecting the child's first language.

Teachers play a key role in creating an inviting environment for families and in making sure that families, culture, and language are respected in the classroom. Not being able to communicate can make children and families anxious, so it is especially important to create strong relationships with families of young ELLs (Wolverton, 2005). It is advisable for teachers to bring the home language into the classroom as much as possible. This can be achieved by inviting family and community members to sing songs, read books, and share favorite activities or objects in their home language. Similar to the "New Mainers Book Project" described above, teachers can encourage families to create books in their home language for the class library.

Ideally, at least one teacher will be familiar with the children's first language (Plotka, Busch-Rossnagel, & Kim, 2015). However, when this is not the case, teachers can make an effort to learn a few key sentences and terms in children's first language (Plotka et al., 2015). Teachers can rely on Google translate (but should be cautious) or other sources to be able to use a few words in the children's first language. Other supportive practices are presented in Table 1.

Teachers of infants and toddlers can benefit from the recommendations provided. Yet, because infants and toddlers are at a critical or sensitive period of learning how to use language for the first time, providing language continuity is especially

Table 1

Children's developing skills	Teachers' supportive practices
Introduce and expand vocabulary and conversation	Observe children's interest in toys or activities and use to initiate conversations (McCabe et al., 2013)
Comprehension and vocabulary acquisition	Use gestures and nonverbal communication (Tabors & López, 2005)
Emerging conversation, including nonverbal efforts	Rely on questioning to acknowledge, support, and expand communication (Tabors & López, 2005)
Responding to questions	Allow sufficient time to formulate answers; accept nonverbal responses (smiles, nods, etc.)
Turn-taking in conversation	Model in verbal and nonverbal communication

helpful (Wittmer & Petersen, 2010). For this reason it is especially important for infants and toddlers that teachers incorporate first language into their daily routines. Teachers can implement this successfully by introducing music in first language and by asking family members to record their favorite songs so they can be played throughout the day (Plotka et al., 2015).

Lastly, teachers of infants and toddlers play a key role in encouraging parents to use the first language in the home by sharing information about the need for children to develop strong skills in first language in order to develop a second language, and the need for children to have rich communication with family members. Furthermore, teachers can inform parents about the advantages of multilingualism and help dispel the myth that multilingual children lag behind their peers in schools. Teachers of very young children can make a significant difference in young ELLs' lives by reversing the common trend of families stopping conversation in first language with

their children when they enter a formal program. This way, teachers have the potential to encourage families to preserve their first language and use it to expose children to high levels of language quality, quantity, and content, thus dispelling myths and misconceptions regarding second language acquisition.

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About the Authors

Soonhyang Kim, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor of TESOL in the Department of Childhood Education, Literacy, and TESOL at University of North Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, USA. Her recent research interests are second and bilingual language/literacy development, academic oral classroom discourse, pre-/in-service teacher preparation, non-native, English-speaking teacher issue; and online teacher education.

Raquel Plotka, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Development, Learning, and Intervention at Pace School of Education. Her research is centered on social-emotional and language development in early childhood. She has studied the role of culture, media, and policy in supporting parent-child interactions in early childhood. She currently studies the effect of parent-child interactions in the development of complex narratives in multilingual Latino children.

In Memory of

Patricia Curry

   Dr. Pam Schiller

Dan Curry

   Dr. Pam Schiller

Bill Nalley

   Dr. Janie Humphries

JoAnn Thornberry Haynes (mother of Terry Green)

   Dr. Milly Cowles

Dr. Ann Levy

   the SECA FOSSILS

Emma "Jo" Whelan (mother of Kathy Attaway)

   Dr. Janie Humphries

Joyce Mobley Grymes (mother of Dr. Joanna Grymes)

   Dr. Janie Humphries

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Mitos y Hechos en cuanto a la Adquisición de una Segundo Idioma en la Edad Temprana: Recomendaciones para Legisladores, Administradores y Maestros

Los maestros de la edad temprana, los administradores y los legisladores juegan papeles vitales en la atención de las necesidades de estudiantes bilingües. Identificamos los mitos comunes y confusiones sobre la adquisición de un segundo idioma en los niños pequeños.

Soonhyang Kim
& Raquel Plotka

La composición típica del aula estadounidense ha cambiado durante las últimas tres décadas, y el número de estudiantes en el sistema de educación pública quienes son estudiantes de idioma inglés o bilingües se ha duplicado. Actualmente, el 20% de estudiantes está clasificado como miembro de una minoría lingüística (Huerta & Jackson, 2010). El cambio es sumamente notable en la edad temprana, y en ciertos distritos casi la mitad de los alumnos de kínder son bilingües (Espinosa, 2013). Cada vez más, el proceso de aprendizaje del idioma inglés está ambientado en la educación temprana, y para muchos niños, esta experiencia compone la primera exposición al inglés (McCabe et al., 2013).

La composición típica del aula estadounidense ha cambiado en las últimas tres décadas.

Foto por Elizabeth Nichols

Los maestros de la edad temprana juegan papeles vitales en las necesidades de los niños que tienen inglés como segundo idioma, y un cuerpo amplio de investigaciones se dedican a presentar buenas prácticas didácticas. Sin embargo, existen pocas investigaciones que prestan atención a los papeles que tienen los legisladores del gobierno, gerentes y administradores de programas de educación temprana. A pesar de que los maestros pueden tener un impacto en las vidas de los niños, la influencia de éstos se encuadra muchas veces en las aulas; los maestros no tienen mucha influencia en esos cambios que son al nivel político y/o local. Es además importante que los maestros se familiaricen con las buenas prácticas a los niveles políticos y locales, ya que pueden proponer cambios, sirviendo como defensores e informantes fundamentales a estos niveles. Pueden también desvanecer los mitos y confusiones en cuanto a la adquisición de un segundo idioma en los niños pequeños.

Mitos Comunes y Confusiones en cuanto a la Adquisición de un Segundo Idioma en la Edad Temprana

Hasta hace poco la mayoría de las decisiones políticas y prácticas acerca de los niños bilingües estadounidenses se ha basado más en creencias comunes y mitos que en la investigación (Espinosa, 2013). La investigación en cuanto a la adquisición lingüística rechaza cuatro de los mitos y creencias más comunes sobre la adquisición de un segundo idioma en la edad temprana.

Mito 1: Los Padres No Anglo-parlantes Deben Hablar Inglés en el Hogar

Existe en los Estados Unidos una creencia común en la cual los padres deben de cesar de hablar en su idioma materno; porque esto les prepararía para interactuar en inglés con sus niños. Cuando los padres con una capacidad reducida para hablar el inglés acatan a este consejo común, estos padres demuestran un vocabulario restringido, y pierden oportunidades para apoyar el desarrollo lingüístico de sus hijos. Además de fallar en aprender el idioma hablado en la casa, estos niños no aprenden como hablar de un adulto con fluidez, y por eso, no logran dominar el inglés. Cuando los padres no hablan el idioma que más dominan, en ciertos casos el desarrollo lingüístico general se arriesga (McCabe et al., 2013).

Los niños desarrollan de manera óptima un idioma cuando sus padres les hablan en un idioma que dominan (McCabe et al., 2013). Los padres socializan a sus hijos a través del lenguaje, compartiendo valores y creencias culturales. Cuando el idioma materno no es utilizado, todas estas destrezas de socialización se sacrifican. El priorizar el uso del idioma hablado en la casa durante la edad temprana, los padres y profesionales pueden prevenir las demoras en el desarrollo lingüístico, demoras que afectan las habilidades de integración escolar y el logro académico (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Mito 2: El Proceso de Adquisición de un Segundo Idioma Equivale a Aquel del Idioma Materno en la Edad Temprana

Aunque existen semejanzas, hay también varias diferencias entre los procesos de desarrollo lingüístico de un primer idioma y un segundo idioma. La meta del niño cuando aprende el idioma materno se difiere intrínsecamente del aprendizaje de un idioma extranjero. Cuando un niño adquiere el idioma materno también va aprendiendo como utilizar el lenguaje para comunicarse con los demás. Cuando un niño aprende un segundo idioma, ese niño también aprende a comunicar en un idioma en un contexto específico (Tabors, 2008). El proceso de entender la estructura y los usos lingüísticos se debe establecer para mejor lograr éxito en el aprendizaje de cierto idioma.

> **Los maestros pueden desvanecer los mitos comunes y las confusiones.**

La adquisición del primer idioma es una tarea de dessarrollo universal en la edad temprana, pero la adquisición del segundo idioma no lo es. Por esta razón, el desarrollo lingüístico del idioma materno no suele afligir a los niños que se están desarrollando típicamente.

Sin embargo, cuando se aprende un segundo idioma, las características individuales juegan un papel mucho más importante (Tabors, 2008). Una característica que juega un papel importante en la adquisición del segundo idioma es la aptitud, ya que la gente varía mucho en sus habilidades para aprender un segundo idioma. Además, las características sociales, como la sociabilidad, la confianza y la timidez, y el grado de disposición a asumir riesgos en situaciones sociales juegan un papel importante (Tabors , 2008). Por otra parte, la motivación y la actitud favorable de un individuo hacia la lengua dominante hacen una diferencia en el proceso de adquisición de ese idioma (McCabe et al., 2013).

Mito 3: Es Fácil Aprender Otra Idioma en la Edad Temprana

La adquisición de un segundo idioma es una tarea difícil, tanto para niños como para adultos. Aunque la edad temprana es un momento ideal para el aprendizaje de un idioma para los niños, el proceso de adquisición de un segundo idioma es exigente y difícil (Tabors, 2008). La edad temprana es un período crítico o sensible para el desarrollo del idioma materno, sin embargo, un segundo idioma puede realizarse a cualquier edad (Tabors, 2008). Al igual que con otras formas de desafíos, la capacidad cognitiva y la demanda cognitiva juegan un papel importante en este proceso, y en general, cuando el niño se enfrenta a un desafío cognitivo, como aprender a jugar al ajedrez, más fácil es para que el niño aprenda esto si es un poco mayor de edad (Tabors , 2008). Por lo tanto, la idea de que la edad temprana es un periodo mágico para la adquisición de una segundo idioma es un mito, y la realidad es que este proceso supone una gran demanda en un niño. El único componente de la adquisición de un segundo idioma con un período crítico en la edad temprana es el desarrollo de un acento nativo (Tabors, 2008).

Mito 4: Los Niños Multilingües Se Quedan Atrás de sus Compañeros en cuanto a las Habilidades Académicas y Lingüísticas

La investigación indica que la crianza de los niños en ambientes multilingües de alta calidad resulta en beneficios cognitivos, sociales y

económicos para éstos. Por ejemplo, Leikin (2013) encuentra niveles superiores de creatividad y resolución de problemas matemáticos en los niños multilingües que en los niños monolingües. De manera similar, los investigadores encuentran consistentemente que los niños multilingües exhiben mejores funciones ejecutivas, como la atención y la memoria, que sus compañeros monolingües (e.g., Kalashnikova & Mattock, 2014; Lauchlan, Parisi, & Fadda, 2013). Debido a que están acostumbrados a cambiar entre los idiomas, los niños multilingües y los adultos tienden a ser más rápidos en el cambio entre conjuntos de reglas y símbolos. Estas habilidades dan a los niños multilingües ventajas en el autocontrol, la resolución de problemas y la toma de decisiones (Kuhl, 2011). De manera similar, el bilingüismo con fluidez se asocia con el logro académico superior en la juventud (McCabe et al., 2013) y mejores habilidades cognitivas en la vejez (Gold, Johnson & Powell, 2013).

La investigación neurológica revela en los niños multilingües una densidad mayor de tejido cerebral en áreas dedicadas a la memoria, el lenguaje y la atención; este efecto aumenta aún más si el niño está expuesto antes de cumplir cinco años (McCabe et al., 2013). Stocco, Yamaki, Natalenko y Prat (2014) explican que el multilinguismo se asocia con más flexibilidad en la transferencia de información a un área del cerebro llamada la corteza cerebral, la cual juega un papel vital en funciones ejecutivas. Los autores proponen que el multilinguismo 'entrene al cerebro' a mejorar su desempeño bajo condiciones de selección de información competitivas.

La adquisición de una segunda lengua es un reto tanto para los niños como para los adultos.

Foto por Elisabeth Nichols

Recomendaciones

Mitos y conceptos erróneos perpetúan perspectivas de déficit con respecto a los niños bilingües. Por lo tanto, nos gustaría sugerir aplicaciones prácticas y recomendaciones para los legisladores, líderes de programas, administradores y maestros sobre prácticas adecuadas para facilitar la adquisición del segundo idioma para los niños pequeños. Estas recomendaciones se apoyan en la investigación que hace hincapié en la necesidad de entornos lingüísticos ricos para apoyar el desarrollo del lenguaje.

Recomendaciones para Legisladores

Una recomendación clave es la difusión de información a los padres antes de que sus hijos empiecen la educación formal. Las investigaciones ya compartidas enfatizan la importancia de desarrollar la destreza lingüística con la exposición al idioma en el cual se sienten más cómodos los padres. Por ejemplo, es posible que algunos padres inmigrantes no estén familiarizados con las investigaciones pertinentes; cuando llegan

sus hijos a la escuela u otro ambiente pedagógico, paran de hablar con sus hijos en el idioma materno. Una manera de aliviar este riesgo yace en la comunicación con los padres antes de que sea demasiado tarde. Una ley que se pone en contacto con los padres tal vez sea una que se centra en la asistencia médica inicial para los niños. La asistencia médica alcanza a populaciones difíciles de alcanzar de otra manera, y se requieren quince visitas del niño con el pediatra antes de que empiece el kinder (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2002). Estas visitas crean oportunidades ideales para la entrega de información clave (McCabe et al., 2013).

Varias decisiones políticas en los Estados Unidos en cuanto a los niños bilingües se han basado en los puntos de vista personales y conocimiento común. Por ejemplo, es común creer que los individuos que están expuestos intensivamente a un ambiente de pura habla inglesa desarrollarán más rápidamente sus habilidades con ese idioma. Esta idea respalda las leyes que promueven la inmersión de segundo idioma durante la edad temprana.

Pero la investigación sobre los programas de inmersión contradice las supuestas ventajas para los niños. Los niños aún no han dominado el idioma materno y el enfoque en un segundo idioma durante la edad temprana podría mal afectar al desarrollo de habilidades lingüísticos y el logro académico en inglés (Espinosa, 2013). A menos que este proceso empiece cuando nace el niño – o sea, cuando empieza el desarrollo lingüístico – la inmersión difiere considerablemente de la adquisición lingüística simultánea. La mayoría de niños se encuentra en una situación inmersiva después de que condicione el idioma materno. Se recomienda que los políticos y las leyes cambien de punto de vista y promuevan más los programas bilingües en ambientes de primera infancia. Esta recomendación también incluye ambientes de educación pública como programas preescolares y de kínder financiados por el estado. La investigación respalda las ventajas de la educación bilingüe para todos los niños (e.g., Kalashnikova & Mattock, 2014; Lauchlan et al., 2013) y muchos países, incluso a Canadá, Bélgica, la India, Hong Kong y Singapur, han adoptado este tipo de pedagogía.

La inversión para leyes que se enfocan en la alfabetización inicial ayuda a la promoción de lectura en aquellos hogares donde las familias tengan dificultades en obtener libros en el idioma materno. Un ejemplo de una iniciativa exitosa es el "New Mainer Book Project." Este proyecto es una colaboración entre el Consejo de Humanidades en Maine y Programas Populares para la Oportunidades Regional (PROP), una agencia de acción comunitaria que sirve uno de los condados más diversos y populosos. Este plan identificó una comunidad de refugiados sudaneses, viviendo en Portland, Maine, cuyos hijos estaban inscritos en programas de la edad temprana. Esta comunidad fue poco representada en cuanto a la literatura infantil disponible (Sullivan, 2005). El equipo de trabajo se encontró con unas refugiadas sudanesas y escucharon a sus cuentos, fábulas, leyendas, mitos y anécdotas. Un autor de literatura infantil célebre, bajo nombramiento del Consejo de Humanidades de Maine, recopiló muchos de estos cuentos en un libro que reflejó las experiencias, relatos y valores sudaneses. Este libro de cuentos fue creado para uso en los programas de la edad temprana en Maine (para más información, visite http://mainehumanities.org/programs/btr-newmainers.html).

Por último, los ambientes de la primera edad también incluyen programas para bebés y niños pequeños, y algunas recomendaciones políticas se refieren específicamente a estas edades. Servicios en el hogar como la intervención inicial y las visitas a casa constituyen las estrategias más comunes para servir a los bebés y niños pequeños con necesidades especiales o que son socialmente desfavorecidos. Pero una barrera a los servicios en el hogar para los niños bilingües es la falta de conocimiento de los padres en cuanto a la disponibilidad de estos servicios. Un problema significativo es el temor de poder revelarse como indocumentado en recibir estos servicios (McCabe et al., 2013). Este temor impide que las familias utilicen estos servicios para mejorar las habilidades lingüísticas de sus bebés y niños pequeños. El acto de hacer más evidente a los padres inmigrantes esta información sobre la oferta de servicios a pesar de la situación inmigratoria se debe considerar una prioridad para los bebés y niños pequeños que aprenden el idioma inglés. McCabe y sus colegas sugieren exponer a los padres a esta información a través del sistema médico, durante las visitas prenatales y postnatales y a través de medios de comunicación masiva.

Recomendaciones para Gerentes de Programas de la Edad Temprana

Los programas deben de desarrollar una filosofía del programa para servir mejor a los niños bilingües y a

Foto por Sujetos y Predicados

Al menos un maestro en el aula debe estar familiarizado con el idioma materno del niño.

sus familias. La filosofía debe de trazar como el programa apoyaría experiencias en la edad temprana de alta calidad (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Los programas pueden ayudar describiendo cómo se apoyará la adquisición del primer y segundo idioma, cómo se utilizarán los idiomas en el aula, y como proporcionar información en el idioma del hogar de los padres. Ya que un ambiente rico en lenguaje es fundamental para el desarrollo del lenguaje, los programas pueden ofrecer desarrollo profesional acerca de la adquisición del primer y segundo idioma junto con la información sobre cómo apoyar la adquisición de la lengua materna y fortalecer las habilidades de alfabetización en casa (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Además, los programas pueden ayudar a los maestros y a los niños mediante la adquisición de libros infantiles en los muchos idiomas de origen representados en el programa. Los libros pueden ser adquiridos en ferias internacionales de libros infantiles y los líderes del programa pueden dar más información sobre esto.

De manera similar, los programas pueden respaldar a los padres y sus hijos con la provisión de traducciones en reuniones con éstos, las conferencias, el entrenamiento y otros eventos, asegurando que los padres de los niños bilingües esten involucrados en el proceso de desarrollar leyes pertinentes (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). La involucración de los padres se puede facilitar por medio de la comunicación escrita en el idioma preferido y teniendo un proceso en orden para que los padres puedan comunicarse y dar comentarios en su idioma.

Los programas que apoyan a los niños bilingües deben hacer un

esfuerzo para incluir tanto como sea posible el idioma del hogar. Una forma en que los programas pueden lograr esto es mediante la contratación de personal y los maestros que son bilingües y poniendo a su disposición una indemnización adicional. Del mismo modo los programas pueden desempeñar un papel clave en asegurar que el personal cumple con los requisitos para las posiciones y ayudando a los maestros potenciales en la documentación de sus calificaciones, por ejemplo, al obtener las transcripciones de universidades extranjeras y la evaluación de sus competencias lingüísticas (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009). Cuando la mitad de los alumnos en un aula habla cierto idioma, los programas pueden

> *La fluidez lingüística de los adultos puede influir la adquisición lingüística de los niños.*

contratar un maestro que habla ese idioma (Cruzado-Guerrero, 2005). Esto también sería beneficial para la otra mitad de estudiantes – quienes no hablan el idioma en discusión – porque serán expuestos a un idioma extranjero a una temprana edad. Una manera en que los programas pueden incorporar idiomas del hogar en el aula es a través de la colaboración con departamentos de idiomas en universidades locales (Sullivan, 2005). También pueden pedir por unas semanas en el semester voluntarios bilingües, quienes cumplirán las exigencias curriculares de este modo.

Estas recomendaciones serán más factibles en ciertas áreas del país – por ejemplo en locales con poblaciones diversas – que en lugares donde es difícil encontrar maestros bilingües. Sin embargo, dado el número creciente de niños bilingües en programas de la edad temprana, es importante que sean ampliamente conocidas estas recomendaciones a los gerentes y administadores de programas. Con esto, avanzará la atención programática a las necesidades de los niños bilingües.

Los programas exitosos hacen alcances a la comunidad y colaboran con sus miembros para atender mejor a las necesidades específicas de cada comunidad. Un ejemplo de la colaboración comunitaria exitosa – al menos al nivel programático – es el Kawerak Head Start que sirve a los niños en Nome, Alaska y en las aldeas isleñas del estrecho de Bering. En muchas aldeas, debido a la presión ajena, el uso de lenguas nativas como el inupiaq y el yupik ha bajado significativamente. Los padres estaban preocupados tanto por la preservación de su cultura mediante el lenguaje como por el desarrollo psicológico e identificativo de sus hijos. En respuesta, el programa creó un plan de estudios llamado Sharing and Learning Place, el cual combinó practicas de la edad temprana con idiomas y culturas nativos de Alaska. Durante todo el currículo los niños experimentan actividades auténticas, como exploraciones del medio ambiente, el compartamiento animal, juegos de pesca en hielo y tejeduría de canastas. De manera similar, se usa a lo largo del día frases significativas en los idiomas nativos (Ochanga, 2005). Esto es un ejemplo de la iniciativa de un programa para conservar el idioma mediante el currículo.

Por último, el uso del idioma del hogar en los programas para bebés y niños pequeños es una prioridad ya que esto provee continuidad lingüística y ayuda a los bebés y niños pequeños a construir habilidades lingüísticas básicas (Wittmer & Petersen, 2010). Los programas pueden reclutar activamente a maestros que hablan el idioma materno de los niños. Si esto no es posible, pueden hacer esfuerzos extensos para asegurar que las colaboraciónes con universidades y voluntarios facilite la representación del idioma del hogar en el programa.

Para bebés y niños pequeños con discapacidades o considerados en riesgo por lo general se sirven a través de los visitadores en su hogar. Un componente clave de los programas en casa de visita es la construcción de relaciones de confianza entre el personal y las familias (Quezada, Mukherjea, & Molina, 2005). Los programas deben priorizar la habilidad de los vistantes en casa de hablar el idioma del hogar; esto facilitará la conección entre el visitante, la familia y los niños. Según la investigación, son más eficaces los servicios cuando los visitantes en casa hablan el idioma del hogar. Y si esto no es posible, es importante que los visitantes muestren respeto y sensibilidad a las creencias y tradiciones de la familia (Quezada et al., 2005).

Recomendaciones para Maestros

Este artículo hace recomendaciones a los legisladores y administradores a fin de apoyar el trabajo de los maestros en el aula. Con el aumento de niños bilingües en el aula, los maestros necesitarán el apoyo de legisladores y administradores para servirles mejor. Sin embargo, existen

Tabla 1. Prácticas de Apoyo para los Maestros

Habilidades del niño en desarrollo	Prácticas de apoyo para los maestros
Introducir y aumentar el vocabulario y la conversación	Observar los intereses de los niños en cuanto a los juguetes y actividades, y utilizarlos para iniciar conversaciones (McCabe et al., 2013)
La comprensión y la adquisición de vocabulario	Utilizar la comunicación no verbal y los gestos (Tabors & López, 2005)
La conversación emergente, incluso la comunicación no verbal	Depender de las preguntas para reconocer, apoyar y expandir la comunicación (Tabors & López, 2005)
Responder a las preguntas	Dejar tiempo suficiente para formular respuestas; aceptar comunicación no verbal (sonrisas, inclinaciones de cabeza, etcétera) como respuesta
Turno de habla	Demostrar mediante la comunicación verbal y no verbal

recomendaciones que pueden implementar los maestros para asegurar un ambiente lingüístico amplio para niños bilingües; esto se hace especialmente con conservar y respetar el idioma del hogar.

De hecho, los maestros juegan un papel vital con la construcción de un ambiente atractivo, y también en el respeto que éstos proveen a las culturas y lenguas de las familias en el aula. La incapacidad de comunicarse hace ansiosas a las familias y a sus hijos, y por eso es importante crear relaciones fuertes con las familias de los niños bilingües (Wolverton, 2005). Se aconseja que los maestros involucren lo más posible al idioma del hogar en el aula. Esto se hace pidiendo de la comunidad canciones, lecturas u otras actividades en el idioma del hogar. De manera similar al programa "*New Mainers Book Project*," los maestros pueden animar a las familias a escribir libros para la biblioteca escolar en el idioma del hogar.

Idealmente y al menos, el idioma materno del niño debe de ser conocido por un maestro del niño (Plotka,

Busch-Rossnagel, & Kim, 2015). Pero cuando esto no es posible, los maestros pueden esforzarse en aprender términos y frases claves en el idioma materno del niño (Plotka et al., 2015). Para esto, los maestros pueden cautelosamente referirse a Google Translate u otra fuente. Otras prácticas de apoyo se ven en la *Tabla 1*.

Los maestros de bebés y niños pequeños se pueden beneficiar de las recomendaciones proporcionadas. Sin embargo, ya que los bebés y los niños pequeños están en un período crítico o sensible de aprender a usar el lenguaje, por primera vez, dando continuidad al idioma materno es especialmente útil (Wittmer & Pedersen, 2010). Por esta razón es especialmente importante para los bebés y los niños pequeños que los maestros incorporen el idioma del hogar en las rutinas diarias. Los maestros pueden implementar esto exitosamente con la introducción de la música en el idioma materno, y también con pedir a los familiares que graben sus canciones favoritas para ponerlas a lo

largo del día (Plotka et al., 2015).

Por último, los maestros de bebés y niños pequeños juegan papeles vitales en animar a los padres a utilizar el idioma materno en el hogar. Hacen esto cuando comparten información sobre la necesidad de los niños pequeños de desarrollar habilidades en el idioma materno; esto les ayuda también a desarrollar habilidades en el segundo idioma. También lo hacen cuando enfatizan la necesidad de la comunicación amplia con los miembros de la familia. Además, los maestros pueden informar a los padres de las ventajas del multilinguismo y desvanecer el mito de que los niños multilingües se quedan atrás de sus compañeros. Los maestros de niños pequeños bilingües tambien pueden influenciar que las familias no paren de hablar en su idioma materno cuando los niños empiezen la educación formal. De este modo, los maestros tienen la oportunidad de animar a las familias a conservar su idioma materno y utilizarlo. Así podrán los maestros disipar los mitos y confusiones en cuanto a la adquisición de una segundo idioma.

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About the Authors

Soonhyang Kim, Ph.D., es una profesora auxiliar de la enseñanza de inglés para extranjeros en el departmento de educación, alfabetización y la enseñanza de inglés para extranjeros en la Universidad de Norte Florida, Jacksonville, Florida, EEUU. Sus intereses investigativas recientes incluyen el desarrollo de alfabetización y lenguaje de segunda lengua, el discurso oral académico en el aula, las formaciones iniciales de maestros, asuntos de maestros que hablan inglés como segunda lengua y la formación de maestros en línea.

Raquel Plotka, Ph.D. es una profesora auxiliar del desarrollo, aprendizaje e intervención en la primera infancia en la Escuela de Educación Pace. Su investigación se centra en el desarrollo socioemocional y el desarrollo lingüístico durante la primera infancia. Ha estudiado los papeles de la cultura, los medios de comunicación y la ley en cuanto al apoyo de interacciones entre los padres e hijos durante la primera infancia. Actualmente estudia el efecto de las interacciones

SOUTHERN EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSOCIATION
CALL FOR PROPOSALS
68th Annual Conference – Biloxi, MS
March 9-11, 2017

Proposals ARE Due June 1, 2016

Theme: Strategies for the New South

"My education, my work, and my passion are to help people from all races who are trapped in poverty. I want them to have genuine options for lifelong success. This can only happen if the voices of those struggling with poverty can be heard and their perspectives understood. Poverty is resolvable, however, making a difference for people who live in the crisis of poverty requires a paradigm shift, a shift that moves us beyond stereotypes and judgement to a deeper understanding of the causes of poverty and its impact on human beings. With this awareness, we can work together to provide genuine opportunities for people to move out of poverty." -- Donna Beegle

For generations, children in the South have faced higher challenges due to greater levels of poverty. Infant mortality, stress, obesity, and challenges to brain development, learning and emotional health have plagued each of our states. As child development and early education professionals, we envision a **New South**, one in which each child has every opportunity to reach his/her potential. As we work with children and families, we stand at the very foundation of the solution.

The 2017 SECA Conference will offer a variety of speakers and workshops about preparing professionals for the challenges of generational poverty. We encourage proposals that are specific to the challenges of children in poverty, as well as those supporting best practices for all children. We are also seeking proposals specific to **children with special needs, working within faith- based programs, home visiting**, and **out-of-school time programs**. Proposals should include evidence and research supported practices.

For a copy of the complete *Call for Proposals* and submission information, go to
http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/conference-information/ See you in Biloxi!

SECA's Commitment to Play and Outdoor Learning

A Wealth of Professional Resources

From *Dimensions of Early Childhood* & *Dimensions Extra*

The 2013 and 2014 issues of *Dimensions of Early Childhood* and *Dimensions Extra* featured articles on the programs recognized for Exemplary Outdoor Classrooms. Each issue of the journal highlighted programs and *Dimensions Extra* provided additional resources that could be accessed to assist in developing outdoor classrooms.

Copies of these journals are archived at
http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/members_only.php
for SECA members.

The 2016 SECA Exemplary Outdoor Classroom

This article was prepared by Glenda Bean, SECA Executive Director

Highland Plaza United Methodist Preschool

In 2013 SECA began a series of contests to identify and highlight the wonderful outdoor classrooms that have appeared in our early childhood programs throughout the South.

Our first year focused on an **overall outdoor classroom** and **Highland Plaza United Methodist Preschool in Chattanooga, TN** was selected as the recipient of our overall award. This program, through innovation, vision and just plain hard work, created a magical and educational space for young children to explore and learn. (If you'd like more information on the classrooms that were recognized in 2013, access the three issues of *Dimensions of Early Childhood, Volume 41*. You'll need your member ID to enter the "members-only" section of the website where these issues are archived.) Highland Plaza United Methodist Preschool received equipment from Nature Explore in recognition of their outstanding efforts.

Our second contest focused on **Creating a Nature Inspired Outdoor Learning Environment on a Shoestring Budget.** This contest recognized that many early childhood programs with limited financial resources create wonderful outdoor spaces for young children. Our winner that year was **Agapeland Play Space in Marion, South Carolina.** (If you'd like more information on the classrooms that were recognized in 2014, access the three issues of *Dimensions of Early Childhood, Volume 42.*) Agapeland was the recipient of Outlast equipment from Community Playthings in recognition of their outstanding efforts.

Agapeland Play Space

Now Let's Tour the 2016 Exemplary Classroom!

The material and photos contained in this segment were submitted by Cindy Ligon, Director, on behalf of McKendree United Methodist Church Day Care.

The original rooftop space

Raising the Roof Fundraiser

Our final contest focused on **Creating a Nature-Inspired Outdoor Learning Environment for Urban Spaces.** The award recipient for 2016 is a program that's truly urban…it sits within the downtown heart of Nashville, Tennessee.

The ***McKendree United Methodist Church Day Care*** is housed on the first floor of McKendree United Methodist Church's Christian Life Center, a 4 story structure. The rooftop terrace was designed for an occasional visit from the day care children but was not originally intended for daily use. In 2011, a small committee from the church and daycare began to dream together. They prayed for a day when the children had a beautiful, stimulating, and nature-inspired space to play outdoors. They imagined an urban organic garden atop the building that could help feed the hungry and provide children with hands-on gardening and science experiences. Their dreaming led to a formal campaign called, ***Raising the Roof***.

After raising seed money of $5,000, the committee began the transformation of a lackluster rooftop with the addition of garden beds. They worked with other urban gardeners and collaboratively had workdays involving the church and the child care program. The initial rendering of the space was created by a landscape architect.

The next steps included adding the play areas—mud kitchen (a parent built it by hand), music center, art area, etc. and having the sun sails installed.

The Classsroom Defined

Creative Gross Motor Areas

Water is a mainstay in the outdoor classroom and it has been expanded to include a terrific large motor tool. This water pump is powered the old-fashioned way—by hand! The children (even the toddlers) are able to work the handle to move the water from container to container.

The program offers loose parts of building materials, such as lumber scraps, for the children to use. Children push, pull, and drag the big pieces as they build and, sometimes a long board becomes a balance beam.

Stumps have been added to the playscape, encouraging children to climb to various heights as they develop balance and coordination. Stump Standing is a popular activity!

The Art & Music Areas

A large canvas piece remains hanging on the fence year round. Children add to it over time and the rain washes it clean. The staff offer clay, finger paints, and other messy mediums and easels dot the roof top.

A large tubular chime instrument "grows" from a planter and invites children to experiment. A large keyboard adds another dimension to the orchestra. Vibrantly painted rhythm boards produce distinct sounds and a hanging wooden xylophone adds more fun.

A

Dirt- Digging, Mud and Water

These areas provide rich sensory experiences for the children. A trough is provided with a rich mixture of sand and dirt and attracts children of all ages. The mud kitchen area provides many opportunities for digging. When winter arrives, outdoor play continues as snow and ice become natural materials for pretend cooking!

Something New on the Roof!

This segment of the article was contributed by Vicky Flessner, Co-owner and Designer, C.O.R.E. Associates, Children Outdoors Ready to Explore, a Subsidiary of Ponds and Plants, Dayton, Tennessee

C.O.R.E. Associates - Children Outdoors Ready to Explore met with some unusual challenges when it came to the installation of this year's Exemplary Outdoor Classroom contest prize. We were delighted and honored to be asked to provide the prize this year. Little did we know that we would be transporting the Rock Band up to a fourth story rooftop playscape in downtown Nashville! Before we created the Rock Band, we checked on the size of the door opening for the elevator trip. However, it did not occur to us that the door into the building would actually be smaller. Despite its awkward shape and weight, we were able to put the Rock Band up on its side and get it up to its new home.

The children now enjoy making loud booming rhythms to compete with the high rise construction going on all around their rooftop garden. The gong commands attention and the chime was made with Tennessee wood right in Nashville.

Our Thanks to C.O.R.E. Associates of Dayton, Tennessee and congratulations to Cindy and the staff of McKendree United Methodist Church Day Care.

President's Message, continued

Virginia and West Virginia had affiliated, thus, all 14 Southern states were affiliated to SACUS.

'Lessons learned' over the past 67 years have been many and consistently taught by "likeminded individuals" coming together to improve the education and lives of young, Southern children! In reflection, I am reminded of one of the basic tenets in the strength-based approach to Early Care and Education; "Identify and build on young children's strengths." As early childhood professionals, let's not only *talk the talk*, but lets' walk the walk… let's identify and build on SECA's strengths!

*"How can the **Southern Early Childhood Association** continue to move forward?* Based on the association's strengths, several possibilities come to mind:

1. Build on our grassroots efforts by working more closely with all 14 states and their local affiliates/chapters to serve and increase membership, continuously supporting seasoned members and welcoming our new professionals in the field.

2. Provide specific networking opportunities across the 14 states, building stronger relationships, which are keys to encouraging active involvement from our membership.

3. Empower and support all **SECA** affiliates in their state, local and federal advocacy efforts through consistent and intentional outreach.

4. Support grassroots efforts to grow and mentor leadership in all of our, diverse, local and state communities.

5. Reach out to underserved communities; develop a working plan to mentor,   support, and, thus, empower these members in their efforts to improve the quality of programs that serve their young children.

This edition of *Dimensions of Early Childhood* highlights **SECA's** efforts to support underserved communities in the South, dual language learners. As the data on demographics reflects, the number of immigrants in the South is high, reflecting a variety of different backgrounds and cultures. Not only are these immigrants learning their first language/dialect, they are also learning English. Both articles, *Myths and Facts Regarding Language Acquisition in Early Childhood* and *Música as a Cultural Tool for Enhancing the*

Development of Young Latin@ Children, are featured to offer support to early childhood professionals who work with second language children and their families.

With the input from the leaders and membership of the **Southern Early Childhood Association's** 14 states, I am confident that these possibilities and many, many more can be realized! In accordance with our association's inception; likeminded individuals, coming together with the goal of improving young, Southern children's lives, CAN make a difference! Together we WILL move 'early care and education' mountains!

As President of the **Southern Early Childhood Association**, I welcome and am open to all of your suggestions and ideas. To turn *possibilities* into *realities*, all stakeholders are needed! I look forward to listening to, and working with, each of you and the specific groups you are part of! My deepest "Thank You" is offered to each of you for providing this opportunity to me.
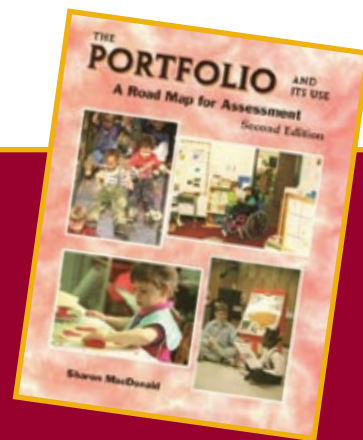
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Meet the 2016 Candidates
for *SECA President-Elect!*

It's time again for our members to select the next leader of the Southern Early Childhood Association. Voting will open in September 2016 and we want to make sure to introduce you to our candidates through a variety of means during the next few months.

We'll begin with a brief look at their backgrounds and professional histories in this issue of Dimensions of Early Childhood. You'll find articles in other SECA publications that outline their philosophy and goals for SECA, and we will post videos of the candidates on our YouTube channel by March 15, 2016. (You'll receive notification when those videos are available.)

Take time to get to know our candidates….your vote will help to set the direction for the Association in 2018 & 2019. Candidates are listed alphabetically.

Dr. Susan Barnes (Virginia)

FROM SUSAN: " In my work as a preschool and kindergarten teacher, as well as an early childhood teacher educator, I have gained a deep appreciation of the impact of quality early childhood education….I will continue to serve young children, their families and their teachers through the work of SECA, promoting quality care and education for all young children."

Susan is an Associate Professor in Early, Elementary and Reading Education at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia. She currently serves as the Virginia (VAECE) representative on the SECA Board of Directors and as Chair of the SECA Editorial Committee.

She received her undergraduate education at The University of Michigan and her Ph.D. in Assessment and Measurement from James Madison University in 2010. The focus of her studies has been Assessment and Research and her dissertation was entitled "Using Computer-Based Testing with Young Children." She serves as an external evaluator for The University of Virginia Blandy Experimental Farm Math and Science Integration Project.

Susan currently serves on the Executive Committee of the Virginia Association for Early Childhood Education (VAECE) and as a board member of the Valley Chapter of VAECE. She also served as an on-line course development team member for the Virginia Department of Education in 2012-2013.

Professional and community memberships include the National Science Teachers Association, the National Council of Measurement in Education, Smart Beginnings of the Shenandoah Valley and the Epsilon Pi Tau International Honor Society. In 2011, she was recognized with the Mildred Dickerson Outstanding Service Award.

Jo Carroll (Louisiana)

FROM JO's NOMINATION: "Jo Carroll has worked with a wide range of programs and people. She consults and provides technical assistance and professional development training to child care providers, Pre-K and elementary teachers and university early childhood education programs. Jo gets along well with people and has demonstrated the ability to manage and lead a large group of diverse people."

Jo began her career as an infant teacher in Ruston, Louisiana, moving on to become an early childhood teacher/early interventionist in the Caddo Parish Schools. She transitioned to a position as an Early Childhood Coordinator in DeSoto Parish and then began her current position as an Early Childhood Network Coach with the Louisiana Department of Education. She holds a M.S. degree +48 hours and an Early Childhood Education and Early Intervention Certification in Louisiana. Additionally, she serves as an Adjunct Instructor at Louisiana State University/Shreveport in Early Childhood Education
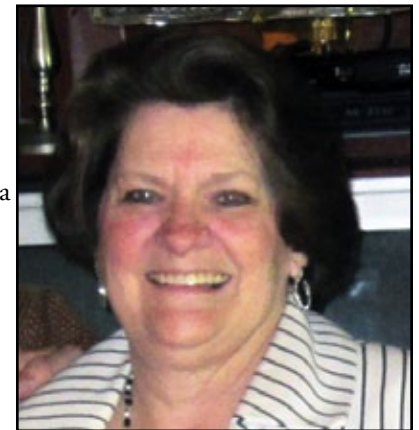
Jo attended her first SECA conference in New Orleans in 1976 and has been an energetic and resourceful member of SECA's Louisiana affiliate, the Louisiana Early Childhood Association (LAECA), since that time. She has served as President of the Louisiana Tech University Student Organization, on the LAECA board, program chair of the state conference and President of LAECA.

She currently serves as the Louisiana (LAECA) representative on the SECA Board of Directors and as a member of the Membership Commission of the Board. She also regularly contributes to Collaborations, the journal of the Louisiana Early Childhood Association.

SECA Conference 2017!

**Beau Rivage Casino & Resort
Biloxi, Mississippi
March 8-11, 2017**

Strategies for the New South