

SECA 2024 President Elect Candidates

Please share some of your accomplishments in the early childhood profession.

Dr. Jeffrey Leffler, MS



Throughout my career in early childhood education, I have had the privilege of serving in diverse roles and making significant contributions to the field. Here are some of my accomplishments:

1. **Founding Director of Two Child Care Programs:** As the founding director, I created nurturing, high-quality environments for young children. Through innovative programming and family engagement, I helped establish these programs to serve the local community.
2. **Coordination of Statewide Early Childhood Initiatives:** In Mississippi, I worked with stakeholders to improve early childhood education quality and accessibility. My efforts expanded programs and services, benefiting countless children and families.
3. **Executive Director of the Center for Child Development:** At the University of Southern Mississippi, I led two model childcare programs, research, training, and outreach initiatives promoting young children's well-being. The center grew into a hub for excellence under my leadership.
4. **Faculty Member in Early Childhood Education:** At Mississippi State University, I mentor future educators, conduct research, and contribute to academic discourse on early childhood development. My teaching and scholarship prepare the next generation of professionals.
5. **President of the Mississippi Early Childhood Association:** I led advocacy for policies and practices supporting young children's and families' well-being. Through strategic initiatives and partnerships, I elevated early childhood education's profile in Mississippi.
6. **Board Membership and Awards:** Serving on the board of the Southern Early Childhood Association and receiving the MsECA award for my contributions to children's welfare in Mississippi are testaments to my dedication. These honors inspire me to strive for excellence.
7. **Leadership Roles in National Organizations:** As chair of the Council for NAEYC Accreditation of Early Learning Programs and a member of NAEYC's strategy and innovation committee, I shape the future of early childhood education nationally. These roles allow me to advocate for high-quality standards and innovative practices.

Overall, my accomplishments reflect my passion, expertise, and dedication to improving outcomes for young children and families. I am proud to have advanced the field and look forward to continuing to make a difference in the lives of children for years to come.

Dr. Judy Prine, MS

I have served as an Early Childhood Education professional at several levels. At the university level, I taught in a university early childhood program and served as the director of a university early childhood education laboratory school. At the community college level, I established a career/technical education school's early childhood education program, served as the director of the laboratory school, and taught courses in the career/technical education program. As an early childhood education professional, I served as the director of a faith-based early childhood education center and taught kindergarten at a faith based elementary school.

As an early childhood professional, I served as the President of our local early childhood education association and as the President of the Mississippi Early Childhood Association. Additionally, I have served in several elected and appointed positions with SECA, MsECA, and other local early childhood education organizations. I have worked as a consultant with a local school district to administer a research grant for the transition of students from private childcare centers to public kindergarten programs.

I am a national and state credentialed childcare director. I served in an appointed position for 6 years on the Mississippi State Department of Health's childcare advisory council.



We'll periodically publish candidates bios, articles, videos on the SECA website at www.seca.info/presidentelect.

Candidates are listed in alphabetical order.

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