

New President's Message

From Michelle Fazio Brunson

Greetings LAECA Members!

I am honored to begin my term as your LAECA president. Each year, I experience such joy in meeting and mentoring new members along with continuing to learn from long-time members who have made a significant difference in early childhood care and education in our state. If knowledge is power, then that power gives us the confidence we need to use our voices to act as advocates for young children who are not able to advocate for themselves. I look forward to working with you as we improve the quality of care and education young children experience in our state, which will pave the way for them to have bright futures and to act as leaders in our state down the road.

It was a pleasure seeing you and all the exciting events at the annual LAECA conference last October! A heartfelt thank you to our conference committee for the outstanding work they did to make our conference a success. I also want to thank past-president, Dr. Michelle Joubert, for her hard work and leadership the last few years. With the theme "Early Childhood Strong," we enjoyed professional development sessions given by the Kindergarten Smorgasboard, Music with Mar, and other talented LAECA members. We also congratulated Governor John Bel Edwards and First Lady Edwards, recipients of the Friends of Children award, along with scholarship winners Sarah Cox, Brittany Jefferson, Kimberly Lee, Faith Stanfield, and Jahnice Williams. The grant winner was Michelle Brunson.

I hope you enjoyed the conference and were able to network with other professionals and collect new resources and ideas to take back to your program. It's not too early to begin thinking

about this year's conference! Please mark your calendar to attend the 2018 annual LAECA conference October 18-20 in Alexandria; our theme is "Hocus Pocus, Early Childhood is our Focus!" I also encourage you to share the wonderful things you are doing in your program by submitting a proposal to present at the conference! The proposal form is available on the LAECA website at <http://www.laeca.org/newdocuments.html>.

Finally, in this issue of *Collaborations*, you will find resources related to songs, nursery rhymes, fingerplays, and transitions. Many young children find transitions difficult, and you can ease this time in the classroom with fun songs, fingerplays, and predictable activities. Thanks to our editor, Martha Garner, who works extremely hard to put together high-quality issues which aim to strengthen our practices with young children. I encourage you to share your love for LAECA with colleagues by sharing your issues of *Collaborations*, inviting them to join LAECA, and encouraging them to attend our next conference!

I am excited to be working with you,

Michelle Fazio Brunson

LAECA President