

Heidi Thumlert
Candidate Statement

Educational Background

- Associate of Arts - Home Economics, San Joaquin Delta College
- Bachelor of Science - Child Development, California State University, Fresno
- Lifetime Early Childhood Teaching Credential, University of California, Davis
- Lifetime Part-time Community College Instructor - Early Childhood Education

Professional Experiences

I started my professional career in the classroom of a Parent Co-op. The program had a rich play-based curriculum that allowed parents to be engaged and learn about developmental appropriateness. My next position was Center Director for a nursery school. While there, I grew the program from three-days-a-week to five and added a toddler program.

I taught ECE Administration as an Adjunct Instructor at San Joaquin Delta College for several years in the early 1990s.

In 1998, I began my association with Grounds for Play, a custom design playground company, based in Arlington, Texas. As an independent consultant, I designed outdoor play environments, working with new and existing centers. I continued to collaborate with the company until the company moved its operations to Georgia and changed its business format.

Early Education Organization Participation and Involvement with AEYC (local, state or national)

My lifetime involvement with AEYC began in college with a student group. In my first job, I worked with the President of my local chapter, Central Valley, and she invited me to attend a meeting and the rest is history!

The AEYC project I'm proudest of is leading the committee that worked with Lakeshore Learning Materials to create the Outdoor Classroom Tool Box and the Recycling Tool Box. The project was based on the concept that "everything done inside can be done outside," and it was launched at Western States Leadership Network at Asilomar. CAEYC received a percentage of every box sold.

Leadership Experience

I served as President of my chapter in the 1980s, which allowed me to become a member of the Golden Hills Section. I served as its final president before reaffiliation in 2003. While working at the Section level, I became active in State Conference planning and was a member of several conference committees. I co-chaired a conference in Long Beach, and then chaired the 2007 San Jose Conference. From 2007 to 2009, I served on the Executive Board as Secretary. I am currently the State Board Region 3 Representative and Chair of the National Dialogue Ad Hoc Committee.

Diversity and Inclusion Experience

After the playground shooting at Cleveland School in 1989, I was a founding member of the committee that worked to build a children's museum in downtown Stockton in honor of all children who live in our diverse community. In 1994, I became the Acting Director before a permanent director was hired in 1995.

In 1991, I helped establish Education Through Music, the organization that created Musical Chairs concert series, and was the Artistic Director until I stepped down in 2010. This non-profit series, designed for children ages 2 to 8 years and the significant adults in their lives, is still going strong in Stockton. This has been one of the favorite projects in my career as I am a strong supporter of cultural arts for children.

Contributions to CAEYC

My long history and passion for this organization is a major contribution. I have membership experience at multiple levels, from local to state, and am grateful AEYC has afforded me opportunities to learn and hone these skills. I love collaboration and am comfortable with being both a team member and a leader. This organization has been a very important part of my professional life. I credit it with teaching me the leadership skills that I have acquired. I am in a place to give time to being your President-Elect and look forward to the opportunity to share these skills and my passion with CAEYC.

My Vision for CAEYC

I am really excited about our future. As we transition into a chapter structure, as a part of the National Dialogue, we will become more engaged and more energized, which is leading us to be a stronger leader in the field of Early Care and Education.

I will strive to help CAEYC continue to grow as a strong, diverse and inclusive organization that is at the forefront of our profession. I look forward to dynamic collaborations throughout our state that will enhance our advocacy efforts on behalf of members and continue to create opportunities for diverse leadership.

I would be honored to have the opportunity to serve as your President-Elect during this dynamic time.