

Michelle Soltero
Candidate Statement

“Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time.” Marian Wright Edelman

Michelle Soltero serves as a Program Associate II at WestEd, Center for Child and Family Studies. This coming October, she will celebrate 20 years with the organization. Michelle works on multiply projects which includes: The Program for Infant/Toddler Care, Partners for Quality and First 5 California’s IMPACT [Improve and Maximize Programs So All Children Thrive] project under the California Quality Rating Improvement System. In addition, she is an adjunct child development instructor for Grossmont-Cuyamaca College District in San Diego County.

Michelle earned a Master of Arts Degree in Human Development from Pacific Oaks College and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Child Development from San Diego State University. In 1990, she was selected as a part of the first cohort of the California Association for the Education of Young Children, Leadership in Diversity.

Michelle’s board service includes California Association for the Education of Young Children [CAAEYC], San Diego – Imperial Chapter of CAAEYC. Previously served on state and local chapter as a board member and or committee member; State President, Local Affiliate President; Regional Representative, Nominations and Elections; Public policy; Accreditation and Chapter Affiliate Relations. She also has served local non-profits boards such as Chicano Federation of San Diego and MAAC.

Previously she also served NAEYC Governing Board, San Diego Association for the Education of Young Children and most recently on NAEYC Council Accreditation of Early Learning Programs.

I am honored and it is a pleasure to accept the nomination for the candidacy of CAAEYC Secretary. My vision for CAAEYC is to continue growing as a professional membership organization. CAAEYC is poised to keep the membership informed and abreast of the latest innovative early childhood practices for young children and their families as well as the profession through the annual state conference and the Professional Development Forum. In addition, we must explore and use technology in ways which we can advance the CAAEYC mission and support innovative practices for educating our profession.

CAAEYC has a role in the early care and education system in California. I envision stronger collaborative partnerships with higher institutions and alike mind organizations in supporting working professionals and the ongoing recruitment efforts of new members who to the field of early care and education.

Membership growth is critical to well-being of our Association. I believe there is strong relationship between the health of the chapter affiliates as it relates to meeting the needs local

members and future pools when seeking members to serve the state and local chapters. This is an area that we can continue to grow and support leadership development throughout the association.

Under NAEYC's leadership, the *Power to the Profession* has taken shape with input from teachers across the country. Teachers are essential in meeting the educational needs of young children and their families. We need more teachers who are ready, educating young children within a responsive and supportive ECE system with an ever a changing field as result of new research, policy and innovative practices. This is a niche where CA AEYC can expand ways in supporting teachers with their journey as early childhood professionals.

CAAEYC is positioned in advocating best practices with strong history of public policy efforts. CAAEYC must maintain a progressive approach and create opportunities to educate our members about emerging public policy efforts, encouraging them to be part of the public policy process and help inform their local legislators about local needs of the community and build a strong unified voice for quality Early Childhood Education practices to support young children's learning and development.

If I am elected, I am looking forward to serving on behalf CAAEYC members, California's Early Childhood Profession, the children and their families.