

Liliana Perez
Candidate Statement
Board Officer Position: Secretary
Term: 2025-2027

My vision for CAAEYC is to continue providing physical and virtual spaces and opportunities for early childhood educators to gather, learn, teach, and advocate for quality early learning and our profession. For CAAEYC to nurture and support our chapters and committees, which are fueled by dedicated volunteers that make our voices heard, our struggles seen, and our efforts recognized.

I have over 10 years of experience working with and advocating for children, families, and the early care and education workforce. My past roles include being a lead teacher in a preschool classroom, coaching and training early educators as a quality career coach, doing outreach/communication and advocacy for Connections for Children, a childcare resource and referral agency. Currently I serve as Program Director of Sandbox Collective, a family childcare program; I am also an Adjunct Professor in the Early Childhood department at Santa Monica City College.

In the Spring of 2024, I decided to invite one of my students, a family childcare provider that had been in business for over 20 years, to present at the CAAEYC conference with me. Even though this student had never attended a CAAEYC conference, she agreed to become a NAEYC member and join me as a presenter in a workshop on Family Child Care. After our successful workshop, I posed the idea about creating Family Child Care committee for our local Southern California Chapter and having her Chair the committee. She agreed! The leadership positions I have experienced have all been possible because I have had people in my circle that believed in me. Therefore, the leadership accomplishment I am most proud of is supporting and helping this incredible family childcare owner into leadership roles where she can share her experience and mentor others.

Supporting diversity and inclusion is embedded in my daily experience as an educator. In my childcare program, classrooms and community work, I welcome people of all structures, cultural experiences, and value systems. I strive to be culturally competent in how I think and behave towards others. I practice and teach the importance of taking time to understand, respect, and celebrate differences. For example, during my term as President for the Southern California Chapter I led a wonderful group of diverse leaders from different communities in Los Angeles. During my term we were charged with implementing our new strategic plan, which meant changing the structure of our organization. During this transitional phase I met with each of our group leaders and community groups to make sure they felt heard throughout this process. Although I did not always agree with their suggestions, I wanted to understand what was important to them and how we could integrate what they valued into our strategy for strengthening the organization.

Early childhood is not just my career, it is embedded in all aspects of my life – I provide direct services to children and families, I participate in training and educating the upcoming workforce, and I am a new mama. I have a deep passion and commitment to continue uplifting and advocating for this profession because the people who work it are my friends and my family (my mom and sisters are educators). I will bring my time, resources, and energy to supporting this organization. I will share my knowledge and experience but most importantly I am excited to learn and grow as a leader.