First Lady Michelle Obama Plants the Spring 2013 White House Garden with a Little Help from the SECA States!

For the fifth year, on April 4, 2013, First Lady Michelle Obama invited a group of children to join her at the White House for the spring planting of the White House garden. The garden was started as a part of the First Lady’s Let’s Move campaign that focuses on healthy eating and activities for children.

This year, students from five elementary schools across the nation participated, and the SECA region boasted two of those schools. The Manatee County Schools in Bradenton, Florida and the Knox County Schools in Tennessee were invited to join the First Lady because of the exceptional progress that these schools have made in providing healthy school meals.

In 2010, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, a reauthorization of the federal Child Nutrition program, was passed. With that passage, nutritional standards were established that require enhanced access to healthy food for low-income children in schools. These standards were developed to improve nutrition and focus on reducing childhood obesity. The reauthorization also included an initiative to establish local farm to school networks and school gardens to increase the amount of local foods that are used in the school cafeterias. An additional initiative required expanded access to drinking water, particularly during school meals.

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 represents a major step forward in our nation’s effort to provide all children with healthy food in schools. Increasingly schools are playing a central role in children’s health. Over 31 million children receive meals through the school lunch program and many children receive most if not all, of their meals at school….. This legislation includes significant improvements that will help provide children with healthier and more nutritious food options, educate children about making healthy food choices, and teach children healthy habits that can last a lifetime. Retrieved from http://www.letsmove.gov, May 8, 2013.

The schools that were invited this year to plant the garden made significant changes in the types of food and choices provided to young students in their meals and are examples of changes that can be made to influence healthier choices for young children.

Kids Eat with Their Eyes and “Tummies” in Bradenton, Florida

The Manatee County Schools were recently recognized by Let’s Move for their progress in meeting the Healthier US School Challenge in 28 of their elementary schools. The schools use Creative Recipes to encourage their students to eat healthy.
“Kids eat with their eyes as well as their tummies,” said Sandra Ford, Manatee County Schools Child Nutrition Director and School Nutrition Association President. “Getting them to pick healthy requires that we treat them like customers and give them choices.”

The Manatee Schools offer at least one salad entrée (chicken Caesar, buffalo chicken, grilled chicken and popcorn chicken) every day. Whole grain wraps are offered every day of the week. Recipes are tested with the students before they are widely available and individual school managers will work with students to develop an offering that is appealing. Once the food option is finalized, the recipe is made available to other elementary schools within the system.


More Whole Grains, Fruits and Vegetables Served in Knox County

“The new meal standards have presented some challenges but many have significant merit to them and are beneficial to the well-being of our students. We wanted to stick to the spirit of our previous menus and not reduce meal choices. We have been successful, so far, in achieving that goal.” Jon Dickl, school nutrition supervisor for Knox County Schools

Over the last three years, Knox County has expanded “reimbursable meal choices, increased consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables (including Farm to School and locally-sourced produce) and has transitioned their lunch menus to reflect nearly all grain products as composed of 51% or greater whole grain.”

They’ve even “branded” their own pizza, Gianni’s of Knoxville. The pizza has a whole grain crust, a homemade sauce that is Vitamin A dense and low in sodium, and is topped with skim mozzarella and pepperoni.

The school’s success is attributed to parent engagement, nutrition education, and making changes over time so students and schools can adjust.


Congratulations to the Manatee County and Knox County Schools for a major step forward in the fight to eliminate childhood obesity and on their invitation to the White House!

The White House Garden will feature spinach, broccoli, kale, cauliflower, fennel, Swiss chard and several kinds of lettuce. Two kinds of wheat have been added in 2013. Excess produce will be donated to charities in the Washington, DC area.
Let's Move Childcare
This site contains a toolkit for early childhood providers to help you get started on a healthier tomorrow.
http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org/welcome.html

Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
To find a summary and text of the act, go to:

Healthier US School Challenge
The Healthier US School Challenge (HUSSC) is a voluntary certification initiative recognizing those schools enrolled in Team Nutrition that have created healthier school environments through promotion of nutrition and physical activity.

Schools in Your State That Have Met the Healthier US School Challenge

Watch the Spring Planting at the White House
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBz86YApGRc&feature=youtu.be

Healthier Generation
This organization is dedicated to eliminating childhood obesity. They have a program dedicated to Healthy Out-of-School Time.
https://www.healthiergeneration.org/

Where can you view the new digital version of Dimensions?

This new format will be in full color, have interactive links to the resources listed and will be available to you anywhere you happen to be! The new issue will be available on the SECA website at the end of July.

Do we have your e-mail address? E-mail notices will be sent when the new issue is available. If we don’t have your e-mail address call the SECA office at 1-800-305-7322 or email us at info@southernearlychildhood.org.

Anywhere you can take your smart device!

The Seca Reporter Summer 2013
New Digital Service Streams Books to the iPad for Children

Technology is here to stay and it was only a matter of time until a new subscription service for children’s literature was created.

Bookboard.com is a new digital subscription service that streams children’s books to the iPad. On its website, Bookboard.com encourages parents to “Tap into story time” and offers hundreds of books to unlock & collect. According to the site, it is designed to grow with kids’ reading levels and interests and provides a motivation for kids to read.

It’s an app on your iPad and it is designed to “give parents and kids a chance to enjoy fun, educational moments together through the magic of storytime.” It suggests that this method of reading to your children can:

• Strengthen family bonds and prepare for a lifetime of learning by reading together.
• Turn story time into an endless adventure with a variety of titles and categories to explore.
• Provide an interactive experience for readers of all ages to enjoy and simplify finding the next book.

This new service came to our attention through a communication from Dr. Michael Levine, Director of the Joan Ganz Cooney Center at the Sesame Workshop, who recommended an April 17th blog post by Jordan Shapiro at http://www.forbes.com. This blog post, written by a father, explored his use of the new service.
with his children. In the blog post, he cited the research that has been conducted by the Center in regard to the use of e-books with young children.

We featured this report, *Print Books vs. E-books*, in the Winter 2013 issue of the *SECA Reporter*.

This father drew a conclusion from his research and practical use: Both e-books and print books have value and he will continue to utilize both formats. He found when he turned on his iPad to read a story that his 7-year-old son had filed the Bookboard app in a folder called Reading and Movies, putting it in the same category as Netflix! It’s a new generation and literacy strategies are evolving as younger and younger children master the new technology.

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**For more Information**

**Bookboard Streams Kids’ Book to the iPad: But Are E-books Good for Your Children?**

**The SECA Reporter/Winter 2013 Print vs. E-Books**
http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/publications_reporter.php

**Quick Report: Print Books vs E-Books**
http://www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/publication/quickreport-print-books-vs-e-books/

**Bookboard.com** (Includes a demo video)
http://bookboard.com/

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**From the Executive Director**

As a new grandmother, I send this type of information to my daughter to keep her informed. When I suggested that she look at this but not forget about print books, her response to me was “don’t worry about us not having print books – as long as he enjoys eating them, we’ll have them around!” There are many early literacy strategies!

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*My grandson (10 ½ months) at baby-time at the library.*
Classroom Management: Improving Children’s Social and Emotional Skills

In January 2013, MDRC released a report, *Using Classroom Management to Improve Preschoolers’ Social and Emotional Skills*. This report presented the final results of the *Foundations of Learning (FOL)* Demonstration which “evaluated an intervention designed to train preschool teachers so that they could better manage children’s behavior and promote a more positive classroom learning environment. It was hypothesized that these improved skills could strengthen children’s social and emotional competence, allowing more time to be spent on classroom teaching and learning.”

The Demonstration was tested in Newark, New Jersey, and Chicago, Illinois. Teacher training, combined with weekly in-class support from a master’s level trainer, was utilized to reinforce concepts of classroom management skills. A total of 71 preschools, with 91 participating classrooms, were incorporated into the study. Some of the classrooms were supported through the FOL method; others were assigned to carry on business as usual.

There were several positive outcomes of the intervention:

1. The intervention improved teachers’ positive classroom management in areas that it targeted directly. There was some evidence in Newark that the positive gains made by the teachers during the demonstration were continued one year after the project intervention ended.

2. Problem behavior was reduced in the intervention classroom but there was no clear evidence that FOL improved children’s early literacy and mathematics skills.


- FOL improved teachers’ ability to address children’s behavior and to provide a positive emotional climate in the classroom. It also improved teachers’ management of classroom time, their use of engaging teaching methods, and the amount of instructional time that children experienced in their classrooms.

- FOL reduced children’s conflicts with teachers and peers and increased their levels of engagement in the learning tasks of preschool.

The downside of the study was this: very few of the positive intervention effects transitioned with the children into kindergarten and there was very little correlation between the teacher’s ability to effectively manage the classroom and the children’s early literacy and math skills.

Benefits to the children and teachers were observed as the skills of teachers improved and they employed more effective management techniques. Reduced conflict among children and teachers and more positive peer-to-peer interaction were achieved.
The final report listed some policy and research implications:

a) “Intensive amounts of consultation and training may not be necessary to produce measurable changes in teacher practices.”

b) “Supporting children's social and emotional competence can have positive impacts but may need to be one part of an overall strategy to strengthen preschool education.”

c) As interventions are designed, it is critical to consider the context in which preschool education is delivered and the wealth or lack of institutional resources that will be available to support this intervention.


Additional Reports

http://www.mdrc.org/promoting-preschool-quality-through-effective-classroom-management

Can Teacher Training in Classroom Management Make a Difference for Children's Experiences in Preschool? (2009)
http://www.mdrc.org/can-teacher-training-classroom-management-make-difference-children%E2%80%99s-experiences-preschool

What is MRDC?

MRDC was created in 1974 by the Ford Foundation and a group of federal agencies as a nonprofit, nonpartisan education and social policy research organization dedicated to learning what works to improve programs and policies that affect the poor.
The Fund for Teachers Supports Summer Professional Development Opportunities

Since 2001, approximately 5,000 teachers have been awarded $17.8 million in Fund for Teachers grants to pursue self-designed professional growth and development opportunities for PreK-12 teachers.

The Fund was founded by Raymond Plank, founder and retired chairman of the Board of Houston-based Apache Corporation. “Growing up in the Midwest, the most important influence in my life other than my father was a man named Noah Foss. He was a Latin teacher, a towering figure who inspired, challenged and motivated countless young men at the small country day school I attended in the 1930’s…..There are many Noah Fosses in this country, teachers who each day inspire, challenge and shape young lives in countless ways….The Fund for Teachers rewards promise, creativity and dedication. Our grants are based solely on merit. And they reflect a goal my father often spoke of—to make this world a little better off than it was before.” Excerpted from A Letter from the Founder, http://fundforteachers.org, retrieved May 9, 2013.

“Fund for Teachers fellowships have taken place in 124 countries on every continent, empowering teachers to explore countless ideas, terrains and cultures.” Fellowships have included:

- Kayaking the length of the Lower Mississippi River to conduct scientific research and develop a river ecology unit.
- Learning excavation skills on an archeological dig with the Israeli Antiquities Department in order to construct a dig site on campus to be used by K-12 students.

Fund for Teachers by the Numbers, retrieved from http://www.fundforteachers.org, May 9, 2013
• Attending the Teachers Reading and Writing Project at Columbia University to explore different theories of literacy in order to re-build an elementary reading program.

• Studying China’s ethnic minorities to gain a better understanding of what it means to be “Chinese” in order to develop curriculum at America’s first English/Mandarin dual-language school.

The fellowship application becomes available online each October. The application deadline is January. Awardees are notified in April and fellowships take place during the summer.

This year, teachers in these SECA states were awarded fellowships: Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas. (For a complete list by state, go to http://www.fundforteachers.org/introducing-our-fellows.php)

Remember, these Fellowships are available to Pre-K teachers as well as K-12.
Go to http://www.fundforteachers.org to find out whether this might be an opportunity for you!

Material and photos for this article were accessed from the Fund for Teachers website, http://www.fundforteachers.org, May 9, 2013.

Are You Our Next SECA President?

It’s time again to select our candidates for SECA President for a term beginning in 2015. The winning candidate will assume office as President-Elect in 2015, serve as President in 2016-2017, and end their tenure on the Board as Immediate Past-President in 2018.

Nancy Cheshire is completing her term as President in 2013 and will assume the office of Immediate Past-President in 2014. Kathy Attaway, currently our President-Elect, will assume the office of President in 2014.

According to SECA Election Policies, nominations may be made in the following ways:

• By state or local affiliates.
• By individuals who are SECA members.
• By individuals who are SECA members and wish to self-nominate.

The SECA Nominating Committee will interview all nominees for the position prior to the 2014 annual conference in Williamsburg, Virginia on January 16-18, 2014. This year, the SECA Nominating Committee will be composed of representatives of the following states: Texas, Oklahoma, Virginia, Georgia, West Virginia, Tennessee and Arkansas. State affiliate presidents have been asked by President Cheshire to appoint their state’s representatives.

Persons who wish to submit for consideration by the Nominating Committee should send the following to the SECA office by October 1, 2013.

• A letter of interest stating their qualifications and rationale for submitting for consideration.
• A resume or professional vita.

For more information about SECA Election policies and procedures, go to http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/leadership_pdf.php#policies. You will find the Election Policies located on pages 35-36 of the Policies and Procedures Manual. For information on the Nominating Committee, go to page 27 of the Manual.

Kathy Attaway, President-Elect 2013
Join us in historic Williamsburg Virginia for the 65th Annual Conference of the Southern Early Childhood Association!

**Theme:** Children’s Play: Past, Present and Future

January 16 - 18, 2014
The Williamsburg Lodge
Williamsburg, VA
Other Resources from SECA on the Topics in this Newsletter

The SECA Reporter, Winter 2013, Print vs E-Books,


The SECA Reporter (Fall 2012) First Lady Hosts First Ever Kids “State Dinner”


To access copies of these articles, go to http://www.southernearlychildhood.org/ and log in as a SECA member. For non-members, contact the SECA office at 1-800-305-SECA to determine availability.

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SECA serves the interests of early childhood educators concerned with child development, including university researchers and teacher educators; early childhood, kindergarten and primary-grade teachers; and early childhood program administrators and proprietors. The association has affiliates in 13 Southern states. Non-affiliate memberships are available to anyone living outside the 13 affiliate states.

For information about joining SECA, contact the executive offices at P.O. Box 55930, Little Rock, AR 72215-5930, (800) 305-7322 or on the web at www.southernearlychildhood.org

Members receive a variety of publications throughout the year, discounts in the SECA Store and conference registration fees.

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