

Pat Dangler
Candidate for Vice President
NYSAEYC Governing Board

The position of supervisor to the Rochester Preschool-Parent Program is one I held for over a decade, before my retirement. The basis of this program was a focus on the education of both the child and the family as the first and primary teacher of that child. The program included professional family facilitators charged with providing weekly group discussions for everyone involved in the child's life. The topics discussed were suggested by the families and researched by the professional facilitator.

During this time and since my retirement, I have been active in several groups in the Rochester area that review research and develop programs and techniques to support the families of preschool children in the Rochester area. The areas we have researched include: dealing with childhood trauma, developing authentic family engagement in early education, and supporting administrators and teachers in developing positive relationships with the families they serve.

My goal in being a member of the NYSAEYC Governing Board is to assist in strengthening the value of the Board to the Early Childhood community. Many of the younger teachers and assistants have expressed limited interest in being a member of this valuable association. Investigations of new ways to interest these young people in working collaboratively is of great importance.

I am often able to listen to two sides of a discussion and find a middle ground that works for both sides. I am a practical person who can condense a problem to its core question. I have worked in the field for over 30 years, most of this time at a school district. I have a different perspective from people that have worked in private or non-profit childcare. I am on the Board of a small non-profit childcare center as well as on the Policy Advisory Board for the local HeadStart Program. So, I do have knowledge in these areas as well.

The Early Childhood Community in Rochester has been very collaborative for many years. While different topics have sometimes been contentious, we worked to find a way to a core set of values we could agree on.

The greatest issues that I see in the current field are the intertwined issues of recruitment, continued Professional Development and providing a living wage for the staff in the field. Many young people are choosing other careers and those that do come into Early Childhood Education often leave for positions that are "easier" and/or pay better.

NYSAEYC needs to work to put a spotlight on the positive values of being a part of the Early Childhood profession, develop engaging and up to date methods of providing professional development opportunities and advocate to increase the living wage for all who work with young children.

Pat Dangler

Heather Sweet
Candidate for Vice President
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Serving the community through CDAEYC's Week of the Young Child events over the past few years has been one way I am committed to children and families. My passion for serving children and families began many years ago through my experience as a preschool teacher. It continued to grow from there when I found myself accepting a position as Center Director/Head Teacher in an Early Head Start program. That's where my philosophy of partnering with families and supporting them in educating their children was affirmed. Through my experience in EHS, I was able to connect families with services and educational experiences they not have been able to obtain. My current position at the Capital District Child Care Council I am able to partner with teachers in their work with children and families through workshops and intensive technical assistance. In this manner I am able to reach more families. I also offer workshops for families regarding many different topics pertaining to their child's development, as well as giving them guidance in selecting a quality child care program.

One area which I have recently developed, partially because of my involvement in AEYC, is advocating for children and families. Over the past two years I have taken the opportunity to join other advocates at the Capitol in February for the annual Advocacy Day. Although I am no longer in the classroom, I feel I am more equipped and poised to have a greater impact for children and families. Being elected to the NYSAEYC Governing Board as Vice President would afford me the opportunity for reaching families outside of the capital district.

If elected to the board I will continue to advocate for the early childhood community. There are many questions about future funding for the early care community. I believe the greatest issue NYSAEYC will need to focus on, in addition to the CCDBG, is the effects of the minimum wage increase, which is great for the professionals, but will have a huge impact on program budgets and the cost of care for families.

Heather Sweet