



Future Directions: Step Two—Our Dual Affiliates

Since the release of our first document, *Future Directions: A Message from the SECA Board of Directors*, significant time and thought has been put into “what comes next” and how the transition of the current dual affiliate structure will be accomplished while maintaining the principles that SECA originally stated. In our first document, we provided these commitments to our affiliates and members.

- **“SECA is committed to the organizational structure** that has evolved over the past 67 years to serve early childhood professionals in the South. That structure will remain: SECA/state/local and we are committed to strengthening that structure. We feel that the strength of our organization lies in our connection to the grassroots and professionals who work every day with young children, families, and the emerging professionals in our field. We also feel that this structure provides a stronger collective voice on behalf of the children and families in our states.
- **We remain committed to our “Southern roots”** and supporting the well-being of children and families throughout the 14 states recognized by SECA as members of the regional association. We recognize that a “new South” is emerging and that what were considered “Southern issues” in the distant past may have changed and evolved; however, we also recognize that some issues such as generational poverty are still endemic and its effects on children and adults continue to be a “Southern issue.”
- **We recognize that there are cultural and regional differences in the ways that families raise and nurture children**, and we feel uniquely qualified to assist those families in ensuring the optimal development of their children within our communities and states.
- **Because the initial affiliation discussions occurred so far in the past, we are committed to re-affirming our relationship** and will develop new charters that reflect the evolution of the structure over that history. The Board has asked that these guidelines be utilized to develop the charter.
 - One affiliate per state in the SECA region will be recognized as our state affiliate.
 - State affiliates may choose to implement an organizational structure that will benefit them within their state. This may include local affiliates, chapters, districts or other organizational entities. That structure will be designed and implemented by the state.

- Permission will be included for states to affiliate with other organizations that serve early childhood professionals and have similar missions without the SECA affiliation relationship being jeopardized. We recognize that this will provide member options within the states.
- SECA will set dues only for the SECA portion of membership dues in a state. The states may choose to add their state (and local) dues, depending upon the state Board's determination of what dues structure will benefit both members and organizational entities. We recommend that the dues structure be developed with affordability for the grassroots member in mind.
- State affiliates may choose to operate under an independent 501(c)(3) or may choose to become an organization that qualifies for tax exempt status under the SECA umbrella.
- The affiliation and charter will be voted upon by the state affiliate and the president of the affiliate will sign the agreement, along with the SECA President."

Those principles have remained the guiding force behind discussions that have occurred within the SECA Board of Directors and in conjunction with NAEYC as we worked to develop a solution for our dually affiliated states.

A charter for a "SECA only" affiliate was adopted by the SECA Board of Directors in 2015 and has been signed by Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and West Virginia. (You will note that Tennessee has decided to become a "SECA only" affiliate and West Virginia has embraced the affiliation because they will no longer qualify as a NAEYC affiliate) We are in discussions with Alabama, Kentucky, Texas and Virginia to determine their affiliate status with SECA. (Alabama and Kentucky will no longer qualify for NAEYC affiliation.) Florida, Georgia and Oklahoma have stated their intent to remain dual affiliates.

As the time nears for those dual affiliate states that can meet the NAEYC criteria to make their decision concerning affiliation, SECA and NAEYC have developed charters that will allow that relationship to continue, albeit in a different form. Affiliates will be able to affiliate with both SECA and NAEYC and offer membership options to their members, although the current triple membership structure will be "uncoupled" and the new membership will be either SECA/Affiliate or NAEYC/Affiliate. Members will have the ability to choose which membership meets their needs and make choices about which professional resources are most useful to them.

SECA has been and will always be about "relationship building" and this focus reflects not only our Southern roots but also our understanding of our field and colleagues. **We intend to strengthen those relationships, build strong and effective associations for those professionals who work with young children, and strengthen the collective voice of our members throughout our states.** We are committed to improving the quality of programs and services that young children receive in the South and commend our colleagues for the work that they do on a local level.

SECA is committed to its mission of "advocacy and professional development" and being the Voice for Southern Children.