

2008 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE TO CHILDREN AWARD

Carol Fichter - Omaha and Nancy Rosenow - Lincoln



Carol Fichter has been providing leadership in early childhood professional development at the Early Childhood Training Center for the past 18 years...and in other settings long before that. She is a long-time leader and advocate for evidence-based practices for programs serving children birth to age 8 across home-, center- and school-based settings. With her leadership, the Early Childhood Training Center supports inclusive practices both for programs serving children of diverse backgrounds and abilities and for professional development activities that bring providers and staff together from a wide range of settings.

Carol's dedication to the emerging work to assure that young children experience a connection to nature as a fundamental part of developmentally appropriate practice is already making a difference for many children in the state, as well as for families and early childhood care and education staff. Carol has been instrumental in the work in Nebraska related to early language and literacy and early childhood mental health. She provided leadership in establishing HeadsUp! Reading and Read for Joy in the state. She played a key role in the development of Nebraska's Early Learning Guidelines and the new Core Competencies for Early Childhood Professionals.

As director of the Early Childhood Training Center, Carol is committed to leading state level work using a systems approach that involves stakeholder representatives in the planning, development and implementation of statewide efforts. Partnership work which is responsive to Nebraska's needs related to early childhood professional development and program quality includes the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), two- and four-year colleges and universities, professional organizations such as Nebraska AEYC, Nebraska Family Child Care Association (NFCCA), Nebraska Head Start Association (NHSA), Nebraska Association of Special Education Supervisors (NASES), Nebraska Association of Elementary Principals (NAESP) and more.

Carol is very deserving of the NeAEYC Distinguished Service to Children Award. Her dedication to making this world a better place for young children and their families is the heart and soul of her work.



Nancy Rosenow has been Director of the Dimensions Educational Research Foundation (which operates the First-Plymouth Early Education Programs) for 19 years. She works closely with Dimensions Foundation researchers and consultants in the development of resource materials and training. Nancy has developed a number of initiatives, including a Multicultural Education Outreach Program; a Scholarship Fund that provides tuition assistance to low-income families; and an annual Community Concert Series and Children's Festival. She also works in collaboration with area Universities and Colleges to provide off-campus teacher and student training experiences. She graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a degree in early childhood and elementary education and is an Endorsed High/Scope Foundation Trainer and a Certified Dimensions Foundation Trainer.

She has served as a Primary Program Facilitator and consultant. She was part of a team that helped bring T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® to Nebraska, and served as president of the Nebraska Association for the Education of Young Children. In Lincoln, she served as a leader of the Community Services Initiative Early Childhood team.

Nancy has been instrumental in developing the Nature Explore Outdoor classrooms. These classrooms are based on research that shows the importance of nature in the lives of children (and adults) and the positive impacts of nature on child development. These classrooms are being piloted in Nebraska and, with Nancy's leadership, are being implemented across the United States.

Nancy is always on the cutting edge of research that supports our young children in positive ways. The Nature Explore Classroom is just one example of her knowledge of what children need to be productive, well adjusted adults of tomorrow.