



National Association for the
Education of Young Children

Executive Director

Position Profile

February, 2013

This profile provides information about the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the position of Executive Director. The profile is designed to assist individuals in assessing their interest in and qualifications for the position.

The search for the Executive Director of NAEYC is being conducted by Association Strategies, Inc., 1111 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria, VA 22314. Applicants should submit a cover letter and resume to the Association Strategies, Inc., website: <http://www.assnstrategies.com>. To learn more about NAEYC, go to <http://www.naeyc.org>. The deadline for applications is March 8, 2013; candidates are urged to submit materials at the earliest date possible.

Executive Director Position Profile

For the National Association for the Education of Young Children

Position Overview

The National Association for the Education of Young Children, a 501(c)(3) professional association of 80,000 members including early childhood teachers, administrators, families, adult educators and policymakers, is seeking candidates for the position of Executive Director. The Executive Director, who reports to a 17-member Governing Board, provides strategic vision and leadership to the organization; management and oversight of all NAEYC operations; implementation of Board policy; and responsible stewardship and development of the organization's financial resources. The Executive Director represents and promotes NAEYC, which serves as the voice of the early childhood profession, young children and their families, and provides services to a diverse community of stakeholders. NAEYC believes high-performing organizations are inclusive and continually seeks to be enriched and strengthened by the wisdom of diversity. NAEYC is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Profile Methodology

The profile for the position of Executive Director of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) was developed using organizational data; discussions with key leaders and staff; and responses to an online survey of volunteer leaders. The survey was conducted to identify and prioritize the skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and qualities required in an executive director. Information regarding programs and services, organizational and cultural factors, and challenges and opportunities for NAEYC was also developed from the survey responses and discussions as well as from existing information compiled by NAEYC staff and volunteers.

About the Organization

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) is the nation's leading membership organization for those working with and on behalf of children from birth through age eight in early childhood education settings, higher education, and government agencies. NAEYC convenes thought leaders, teachers, practitioners, researchers and other stakeholders and sets standards of excellence for programs and teachers in early childhood education. NAEYC programs and services promote broad implementation of these standards by accrediting programs for children and professional preparation that meet NAEYC standards; supporting effective teachers and programs through an extensive portfolio of professional development resources; affiliate networks and networking opportunities for early childhood teachers, para-educators, administrators, college faculty

and others; and advancing leadership and systems support and advocacy to create a well-financed, high-quality system of early childhood education for all young children in child care, Head Start and schools.

NAEYC members include nearly 80,000 thought leaders, practitioners, and students from every state and more than 120 countries, including teachers, administrators, families, educators, and policy members committed to bringing high-quality early care and education to all young children. Most members join NAEYC through an affiliated network of more than 300 local and state early childhood organizations that share NAEYC's vision and mission.

Founded in 1926 as the National Association for Nursery Education (NANE), NAEYC emerged through reorganization in 1964, coinciding with the launch of the federal Head Start Program and a new public focus on early childhood education. By the time NAEYC marked its 75th Anniversary in 2001, NAEYC was reinventing its accreditation system, developing position papers on topical issues, and restructuring its affiliate system. In 2003, NAEYC created the Global Alliance to foster communications and build understanding among organizations around the world with common missions. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., NAEYC is a 501(c) (3) organization that offers a range of programs and services to its members and those committed to improving the lives of young children.

Strategic Organizational Focus:

Mission:

NAEYC's mission is to serve and act on behalf of the needs, rights and well-being of all young children with primary focus on the provision of educational and developmental services and resources.

Goals:

NAEYC expresses its mission in terms of three broad goals:

- 1) Improving professional practice and working conditions in early childhood education.
- 2) Supporting early childhood programs by working to achieve a high-quality system of early childhood education.
- 3) Building a high-performing, inclusive organization of groups and individuals who are committed to promoting excellence in early childhood education for all young children.

Vision Statement:

NAEYC's efforts are designed to achieve these ends:

All children have access to a safe, high-quality early childhood education that includes a developmentally-appropriate curriculum, knowledgeable and well-trained program staff and educators, and comprehensive services that support their health, nutrition, and social well-being in an environment that respects and supports diversity.

All early childhood professionals are supported as professionals with a career ladder, ongoing professional development opportunities, and compensation that attracts and retains high quality educators.

All families have access to early childhood education programs that are affordable and of high quality and actively participate in their children's education as respected reciprocal partners.

All communities, states, and the nation work together to ensure accountable systems of high-quality early childhood education for all children.

Strategic Objectives:

NAEYC achieves its goals by:

- ✓ Providing professional development opportunities and resources for those who work for and with young children;
- ✓ Convening individuals and groups with diverse perspectives to generate new knowledge and understanding of issues affecting the education and development of young children and their families;
- ✓ Setting and publicizing standards that promote excellence in early childhood education and early childhood professional preparation;
- ✓ Implementing systems to recognize early childhood education programs and early childhood professional preparation programs that meet NAEYC standards and guidelines;
- ✓ Building public understanding and support for activities and services that promote the healthy development and learning of all young children and their families;
- ✓ Advocating for public policies and funding to support a comprehensive system of high quality early childhood education for all young children and families; and
- ✓ Fostering the development of a network of high-performing, inclusive organizations that share the goal of promoting excellence in early childhood education for all young children.

NAEYC Vision 2015:

The NAEYC Governing Board has adopted a set of goals for its Vision 2015, with annual benchmarks and indicators for measuring success. The goals are:

1. NAEYC is influential and impacts local, state, and national early childhood public policy and early childhood professional practice.
2. NAEYC has aligned its standards for early childhood programs, practices, and professional preparation with its policy stances. NAEYC has made significant progress toward evaluating the

extent to which its aligned standards lead to improvements in children’s development and learning.

3. NAEYC demonstrates a strong commitment to continuous improvement with respect to organizational wellness and organizational excellence. NAEYC’s commitment to purpose, action, and analysis, and feedback is evident in the domains of Diversity and Inclusivity, Governance, Management and Staff Leadership, Facilities, Finance, Human Resources, Programs, and Critical Relationships and Strategic Alliances.
4. NAEYC is a model of diverse leadership and leadership development.
5. NAEYC has a “connected network” of 250,000 people; alliances with other organizations enhance this network.
6. NAEYC promotes the expanded development of the professional status of individuals in the various roles represented in the early childhood field through ongoing professional development, professional certification/licensure systems, and equitable compensation.

Structure, Governance and Staff: The Executive Director reports to a 17-member Governing Board. Under the direction of the Executive Director, the 100-member professional staff administers the programs, services and activities of the organization within a \$20 million annual operating budget.

NAEYC works together with its network of more than 300 Affiliate Groups in communities, states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. Territories to advance their shared mission on behalf of young children and the early childhood profession and to further strengthen their commitment to be increasingly high-performing, inclusive organizations. Affiliate Groups provide members with many different opportunities to engage in professional development, advocacy and networking activities with colleagues at all levels. Affiliates are represented by the Affiliate Council, an NAEYC advisory body that provides leadership and guidance to further strengthen the capacity of the NAEYC Affiliate Network. A major focus for the Association, initiated in 2011, is the National Dialogue, designed to explore the optimal relationships between NAEYC and its Affiliates. The Dialogue, involving in-depth meetings at NAEYC conferences as well as regional meetings, led to a set of recommendations by the Affiliate Council for Board consideration and implementation.

Key External Interactions: In addition to working closely with the Governing Board, staff and volunteer leaders, the Executive Director represents NAEYC’s interests through interaction with a wide range of entities, including federal and state policymakers and regulatory agencies; early childhood and higher education institutions and their leadership; the corporate community that supports and provides resources in education; and numerous associations and organizations that promote the well-being of young children, support families, and are dedicated to promoting high standards for the education of young children. These include but are not limited to:

- Political leaders who set educational policy at all levels
- U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Agriculture, and Labor
- State and local governmental agencies
- Business leaders and individual corporate leaders
- Nonprofit organizations and foundations that focus on early childhood and K-12 education and teacher preparation
- Research organizations and individual researchers with expertise in child development
- Associations in the early childhood and K-12 education field
- NAEYC Affiliate Groups

Programs, Services and Resources

Members give NAEYC high marks for its vast offering of programs, services and resources, particularly the NAEYC Accreditation and Standards Programs; Annual Conference and Exposition and its programming content; an extensive library of publications and communications; professional development opportunities; and NAEYC Public Policy and Advocacy initiatives. Key programs and services include the following:

1. Accreditation of Programs for Young Children: The NAEYC Academy sets and monitors standards for high-quality early childhood education programs and accredits programs that meet these standards.
2. Accreditation of Higher Education Programs: The *NAEYC Professional Preparation Standards* describe what early childhood professionals are expected to know and be able to do, creating a shared national vision of excellence. The *NAEYC Commission on Early Childhood Associate Degree Accreditation (ECADA)* awards accreditation to associate degree programs that meet the NAEYC professional preparation standards, additional supportive skills and the ECADA eligibility requirements. NAEYC awards national recognition to initial and advanced early childhood programs that meet the NAEYC professional preparation standards and are housed in schools or colleges of education that are accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).
3. Conferences and events: The NAEYC Annual Conference and Exposition is the organization's premier annual event, attracts thousands of attendees, and includes hundreds of education presentations and exhibits.

4. National Institute for Early Childhood Professional Development: The Institute is designed for teacher educators, program administrators and others who provide professional preparation and ongoing professional development experiences for the early childhood workforce.
5. The NAEYC Center for Applied Research is dedicated to strengthening the connections between early childhood research, practice, and policy. One of the primary goals of the Center is to encourage and support communication about research in early childhood development and education. Trend Briefs, issued jointly by the Center and the NAEYC Academy for Early Childhood Program Accreditation, share data collected through the NAEYC Accreditation process and connect the findings to early childhood research trends to tell the story of successful approaches used by high-quality programs.
6. The Early Childhood Workforce Systems Initiative assists states in developing, enhancing, and implementing policies for an integrated early childhood professional development system for *all* early childhood education professionals working with and on behalf of young children. An integrated system helps develop and retain a competent and stable early childhood workforce—a skilled cadre of effective, diverse, and adequately-compensated professionals. NAEYC is also working to support more effective early childhood professional development systems as a partner in the National Center on Child Care Professional Development Systems and Workforce Initiatives, jointly funded by the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families' Office of Child Care and Office of Head Start.
7. Public Policy Forum: Each spring teams of NAEYC members from almost every state come to Washington D.C. for the annual NAEYC Public Policy Forum to meet with their U.S. senators and representatives and high level national advocates.
8. Publications and resources: NAEYC publishes several periodicals and publications:
 - a. *Young Children* is a professional, peer-reviewed journal that keeps members and their colleagues informed about best practices for and latest research-based ideas in early education.
 - b. *Teaching Young Children* offers practical, research-based information for preschool educators who prefer practical information offered in a brief, direct, and friendly writing style with colorful photographs and illustrations.
 - c. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, NAEYC's scholarly journal, explores the latest research on early childhood development and practice.
 - d. *Voices of Practitioners: Teacher Research in Early Childhood Education* is NAEYC's peer-reviewed, professional online journal.
 - e. Books – NAEYC publishes high-quality, cost-effective books, booklets, and brochures dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children ages birth to eight.

9. Professional Development resources: NAEYC's professional development resources and training programs are designed to meet the varied needs of the early childhood field. Designed for practitioners as well as early childhood adult educators (faculty and trainers), the resources employ a variety of delivery methods – web- and computer-based, face-to-face, online, and training-of-trainers (TOT) programs.

As is often the case with large and diverse organizations, members anticipate opportunities to see programs or services expanded or strengthened. These include opportunities to expand membership recruitment and retention; enhance the professional development offerings; offer downloadable, digital publications and web-based tools to strengthen communication among members; market and deliver new products needed in the marketplace; and deliver innovative and best practice information. It is a goal of the Association's members to be increasingly relevant and to continue building its well-respected advocacy efforts and increase /strengthen the coalitions in which it is working, broaden its grass roots advocacy, and seize on the opportunity to provide its leadership and expertise in the ongoing national conversation at both the federal and state levels regarding early childhood educational standards, school environments, funding, and achievement measures. Currently, NAEYC has one on-staff registered lobbyist for federal relations. NAEYC believes it is uniquely positioned as the visible voice for early childhood education and early learning professionals.

Organizational Culture

The culture of NAEYC is an important part of the value that the Association provides to its members and to the early childhood development and education community.

The NAEYC staff is described as a hardworking, dedicated group of professional, skilled, cooperative team members who are committed to the mission and vision of the Association, despite the challenges of working to support a financially-challenged profession. NAEYC leaders are characterized as passionate, diverse, dedicated, and serious about achieving the goals of the Association. Members are eager to find ways of improving the lives of children and the state of education for children and bring that same passion for learning and innovation to the work of NAEYC. The culture reflects a high desire for involvement and engagement, along with serious concerns for the effects of financial shifts in education overall – particularly noticeable at the very time that economic advancement demands that students are able to be highly competitive, productive and better educated. Members are engaged in the Affiliate Groups and are appreciative of the opportunities provided at all levels to share and gain knowledge, particularly given their own tightened budgets.

The NAEYC Governing Board seeks an executive director who will partner with the Board to further these objectives and assume a strong role in leading the staff to achieve operational goals, while retaining a strong focus on the external environment and organizations that impact budgets, policies, and new programs for early childhood education.

Challenges and Opportunities

Stakeholders agree that the rapidly changing environment, particularly in terms of financial pressures and changes in education funding and expectations, create opportunities if the Association can move effectively and efficiently to take advantage of them. These same factors are cited as presenting challenges to NAEYC's financial viability, ability to remain relevant, and membership recruitment success. Specific challenges include:

1. Organizational revenue growth and stability in a challenging economy
2. Dynamic funding at federal, state and local levels that require new partnerships and changes in funding for existing programs and declining funding available to support professional development activities;
3. The member base of NAEYC includes those who are poorly compensated for their work, and, hence, there is little opportunity to find more resources from membership;
4. Growing public expectations that entities engaged in the education of children will become more accountable for results, coupled with the challenge that student outcomes at an early age are hard to measure accurately;
5. A key challenge presented by the comparatively low wages, low education, high turnover, and a lack of respect for early child care professionals; and
6. Concern that NAEYC has not yet achieved its full potential as the central voice for early childhood education when compared with larger social service and educational organizations.

As with most challenges, there are also significant opportunities for the Association, including:

1. Opportunities for alliances and partnerships, including international relationships and federal and local initiatives with groups who have shared concerns in early childhood education and on behalf of families;
2. Efficiently and effectively leveraging the extensive members' knowledge, expertise and capabilities to respond to the emerging issues facing members and the profession;

3. Building upon the leadership position of NAEYC in the community with new programming initiatives to create a stronger, more unified message for policymakers, both in the U.S. and internationally, on the value of effective, evidence-based early childhood education;
4. Growing acknowledgement by the public that early education is worth the investment; and
5. NAEYC Developmentally Appropriate Standards and Accreditation are a gold standard for the field.

Executive Director Position

Responsibilities: The Executive Director is responsible for providing leadership for the organization, in collaboration with the Governing Board, on matters of governance, mission, vision and strategy; developing and managing the professional staff; maintaining and protecting the financial stability and resources of the Association; overseeing all NAEYC activities and operations to ensure accomplishment of the organization's goals; serving as the primary liaison with policymakers, influential agencies and organizations; maintaining a positive public relations program; and serving as the official spokesperson for the Association. The Executive Director ensures that NAEYC activities and programs further the vision and mission of the Association as advanced by members.

Education and Experience: The ideal candidate will have a degree in education/early childhood education or development, business, or equivalent experience and education; a minimum of six years of executive or senior-level management experience in an association, foundation, or education –related entity; and successful experience in effectively managing and promoting the influence, role and profile of an organization. Previous experience as an executive director is an asset but is not required. Having an advanced degree or the Certified Association Executive credential is also considered an asset.

The ideal candidate will demonstrate experience and success in the following areas:

1. Creating high-performing organizations that are inclusive and continually seek to be enriched and strengthened by the wisdom of diversity;
2. Developing effective relationships with external stakeholders, funders, and partner organizations;
3. Developing and implementing strategic business plans and initiatives, and identifying and prioritizing short- and long-term organizational goals, needs and resources;
4. Effectively managing and providing stewardship of organizational financial and other resources;
5. Employing effective public relations to raise the profile and reputation of an organization among external and internal audiences;

6. Leading and managing a large, visible and complex organization, including providing leadership in the areas of its governance issues and structures;
7. Understanding and providing leadership to ensure that programs, activities, and member benefits meet the needs of members and stakeholders;
8. Establishing and strengthening operations, communications systems and processes in a complex and diverse organization;
9. Developing and managing the financial assets of the organization to create a sustainable and stable environment for achieving the mission;
10. Developing and leveraging a high-functioning professional staff and the volunteer structures to achieve organizational objectives and creating an effective working relationship with the Governing Board; and
11. Marketing the value of a membership organization.

Skills and Abilities: The following skills and abilities are important to the candidate's success in the position of Executive Director:

- Visionary leadership and foresight, in order to capitalize on opportunities, identify challenges, anticipate and respond to course changes warranted by a dynamic environment, and identify/secure the resources necessary to ensure organizational success;
- Strong interpersonal, written and oral communications skills in multiple media, with the ability to listen to diverse stakeholders and deliver clear and effective messages to them;
- Ability to build consensus among diverse constituencies and related organizations in order to further common goals and objectives and to leverage resources and influence;
- Understanding of best practices related to organizational management and early childhood education and ability to think creatively to utilize innovations in organization management;
- Analytical problem-solving skills and the ability to think critically, weigh options presented for decisions, and create a culture that invites ideas and feedback;
- Demonstrated strengths in prioritizing tasks effectively, taking initiative, seeking efficiencies, and using resources effectively; and
- Ability to travel to national and international destinations for meetings.

Personal Characteristics and Behaviors: The Executive Director will possess the following personal characteristics and behaviors:

- Honesty, authenticity, and high level of self-discipline, with a strong work ethic;
- Charisma, ability to inspire, enthusiasm, passion and ability to motivate others;
- Comfort in working with and through others and willingness to share credit for successes;
- Curiosity and eagerness to learn new ideas, trends, methods;
- Effectiveness and efficiency in decision-making;
- Process-driven, attentiveness to detail and analytical thinking;
- Openness to working with and learning from diverse individuals who have backgrounds and skill sets different from his/her own; and
- Comfort with being empowered and accountable for measurable results and outcomes.

Measures of Success

The Executive Director's success in the position will be measured by demonstrated progress in the following areas:

- Understanding the needs, activities, and culture of members, staff, vendors, and stakeholders of NAEYC;
- Building and maintaining relationships with policy leaders and strategic partnerships with related organizations to expand NAEYC's reach and relevance;
- Assuming a leadership role in transforming the influence, role and profile of NAEYC and serving as an ambassador for the Association and the early childhood education profession;
- Presiding over financial growth and stability; and
- Working collaboratively with the Board to create an organizational vision and Strategic Plan aligned with the needs of the Association and its members and achieve the Plan goals and objectives.