

Shu-Chen (Jenny) Yen NAEYC Personal Statement
Member At Large Candidate

NAEYC Vision: *All young children thrive and learn in a society dedicated to ensuring they reach their full potential.*

(500 words)

I strongly believe in and celebrate NAEYC's vision and long-standing commitment to achieve the American dream of equity for all young children. The coronavirus pandemic has widened social and racial injustice and inequities among families, especially for marginalized and minoritized communities. Research shows that low-income and lower-middle-class parents and parents of color experienced significantly more hardships than higher-income families. What can we do to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds? There is a strong body of evidence showing that high quality, early ECE intervention is the key to disadvantaged children's later school readiness and success.

I believe that knowledgeable ECE educators can reverse the effects of this achievement gap for disadvantaged children. However, we ALL must work hard to provide essential resources, training, professional development opportunities, and appropriate compensation for our workforce to effectively transform lives. I have contributed and will continue to advocate passionately for children and ECE professionals, and especially for all minoritized and underserved communities.

As a woman of color, who is also first-generation, a dual language learner, and as an immigrant, I experienced many obstacles and uphill battles as an Asian American. Over my 25 years in the ECE field, I have dedicated my professional and personal life to staying deeply connected to NAEYC's fundamental mission of supporting and advocating for high quality, equitable early childhood education so that ALL children, no matter their background, can succeed.

My journey has included serving as an assistant teacher, infant-toddler teacher, Montessori preschool teacher, researcher, and higher education instructor, as well as being active in key leadership positions as Vice President and Secretary of CAAEYC, co-founder of NAEYC's Asian Interest Forum, member of NAEYC committees including the NAEYC CEO Search Committee, Affiliate Advisory Council, Nominating Committee, and the Strategy and Innovation Committee. In addition, I also have created free online resources translated into multiple languages (e.g., Spanish, Chinese, Japanese) so that ECE educators, families and children all around the world might access story resources to help young children better understand and cope with real-world tragedies and natural disasters such as hurricanes, COVID, and even wars (<https://socialstorycenter.com>).

I am humbly seeking your vote for my candidacy as NAEYC's At Large member because I want to be a change agent for the ECE field by working to address two pertinent issues: mentoring the next generation of ECE teachers and professionals and working to ensure language equity for children and our ECE field. I share the concern of many NAEYC Interest Forum facilitators in the urgent need for mentoring the next generation by identifying diverse leaders in the pipeline and supporting them through the process of applying for state and NAEYC leadership positions. I also would like to ensure language equity is a priority to help NAEYC sustain and expand its work in becoming a high-performing inclusive organization. Thank you for your consideration and I pledge to listen and work closely with you as dedicated members of NAEYC. Collectively, we can achieve an inclusive and equitable environment for our professions and ALL children.