



**azaeyc**

Arizona Association for the  
Education of Young Children

## 2022 ANNUAL REPORT:

### Advancing an Equitable Early Childhood Profession



## OUR MISSION

*Arizona AEYC promotes quality early learning for all children, birth through age 8, by connecting practice, policy and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate and work on behalf of young children.*

# A Year of Progress: Reflecting on 2022

**Early care and education is essential to creating vibrant, thriving communities.** Early childhood educators — including infant and toddler teachers, preschool teachers, and family child care providers — are the workforce that supports *all* of Arizona's workforce. Because of their essential work, Arizona's children have meaningful places to learn and grow, and families can get to work or school to contribute to the economy.

At Arizona AEYC, we envision an Arizona where **every child and family has equitable access to quality early learning** and **every educator is well-supported and well-compensated** for their important, complex work. In our 2022 Annual Report, we share our progress towards that vision.

Becoming a member of Arizona AEYC means receiving the wealth of benefits of NAEYC membership *and* also being an active contributor to the collective movement to advocate for the early care and education profession. We are proud to be an organization that is made for, of, and by our early childhood membership.

On behalf of our Governing Board and staff, we thank our members, collaborators, and funders who have made this year's progress possible. Arizona AEYC looks forward to continuing to build a better, more equitable Arizona for our young learners, their families, and educators.

With gratitude,



**Mona Qafisheh, M.Ed., C.P.M.**  
Governing Board President  
Arizona AEYC



**Dr. Eric Bucher**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Arizona AEYC





*From Phoenix to Flagstaff and Pascua Yaqui Tribe to San Luis, more than 60 participants from Arizona attended the NAEYC Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. in 2022. (Above photo) Several of the 2022 NAEYC Conference Arizona participants including Arizona AEYC CEO Dr. Eric Bucher and Southern Arizona AEYC Executive Director Kelly Ann Larkin, M.A.*

## **Arizona AEYC ANNUAL REPORT**

The Arizona AEYC Annual Report highlights our organizational impact and accomplishments for the early childhood profession between January-December 2022. AzAEYC is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt non-profit membership association and State Affiliate of NAEYC.

### **2022 Fast Facts: Our Equity Values in Action**

**\$1M**  
**in grants**

During 2022, Arizona AEYC secured a total of **\$1,087,500 in grant funding** in collaboration with community partners to support projects between 2022-2024 including professional development, early childhood advocacy, and resources to help child care providers save time and money and improve quality.

**2/5**  
**direct funding**

Nearly 40% (or 2/5) of our 2022 budget went **directly to early childhood professionals** through training stipends, scholarships, professional development resources, technology access, support for conference expenses, and early learning supplies.

## 2022 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- Cultivate **leadership and innovation** through projects that advance equity for the workforce, profession, and systems of early learning.
- Reflect **excellence** in all aspects of organizational health and vitality.
- Ensure **equitable access** to quality early learning for children birth through age 8.
- Advocate for the **early childhood profession** and secure public funding to ensure worthy wages and benefits.
- Be a **highly-valued, credible, visible** membership organization and systems partner.

## AREAS WE SERVE

Arizona AEYC serves the counties of Apache, Coconino, Gila, La Paz, Maricopa, Mohave, Navajo, Pinal, Yavapai, and Yuma in collaboration with our local Northern, Valley of the Sun, and Yuma chapters.



*Cochise, Graham, Greenlee, Pima, and Santa Cruz are served by our sister affiliate, Southern Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children (SAZAEYC).*

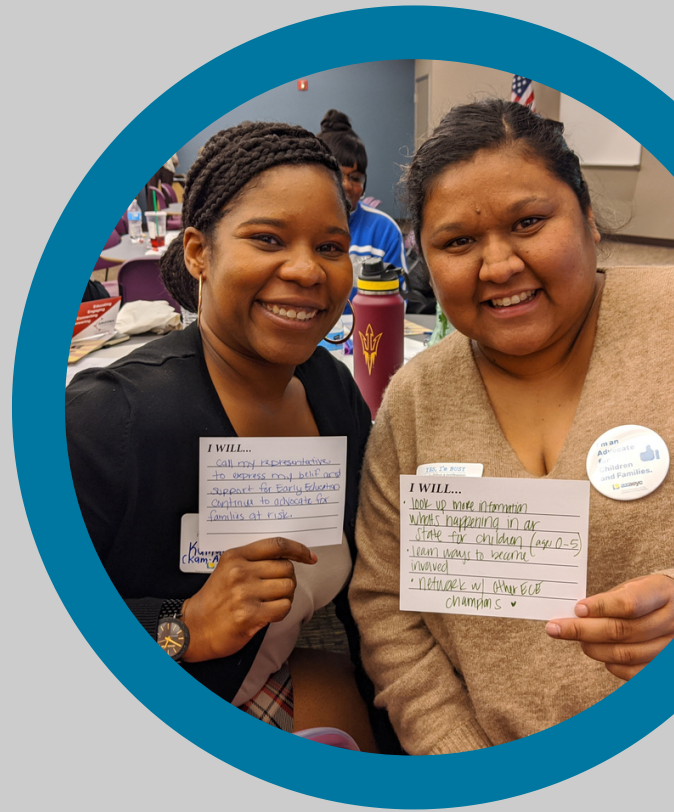




## OUR MEMBERSHIP

This year, we supported a membership of over **500 early childhood educators and champions** across the state.

We work to advance a **diverse, dynamic early childhood profession** and elevate the voices and stories of early childhood educators.



*Wherever you are in your early childhood career and educational journey, there's an Arizona AEYC membership for YOU.*

### **Entry Level - \$30/year**

Designed for students and new professionals. Access to online content, digital resources, insurance, and member-only event discounts.

### **Standard Level - \$69/year**

Subscription to award-winning periodicals, complimentary e-book, event/conference discounts, cost savings, digital content + more.

### **Family Level - \$35/year**

Designed for members outside of the early learning profession such as parents and community advocates. Access to online content and digital resources.

### **Premium Level - \$150/year**

Unparalleled access to NAEYC's robust suite of member benefits including periodicals, complimentary print books + e-book, online learning, digital content, and VIP events.

## OPERATIONS & FINANCIALS

**Transparency in Our Operations:** Our 2022 operating budget was \$544,897. About 1/2 of the expenses were pass-through funds for collaborative partnerships and funds to directly support early childhood professionals.

**Compensation:** We commit to paying our staff a worthy wage of at least \$25 per hour, compensate staff for all hours worked including paid professional development time, and do not allow unpaid labor. We also continue to seek public investments that will ensure that all early childhood professionals earn competitive salaries and benefits commensurate with the complex, important work they do.

*Arizona AEYC earned the 2022 Gold Seal of Transparency through [Candid/GuideStar](#), a non-profit reporting database.*

Gold  
Transparency  
**2022  
Candid.**



## OUR STAFF



**Dr. Eric Bucher**  
Chief Executive  
Officer



**Julie Capistran**  
Administrative  
Assistant

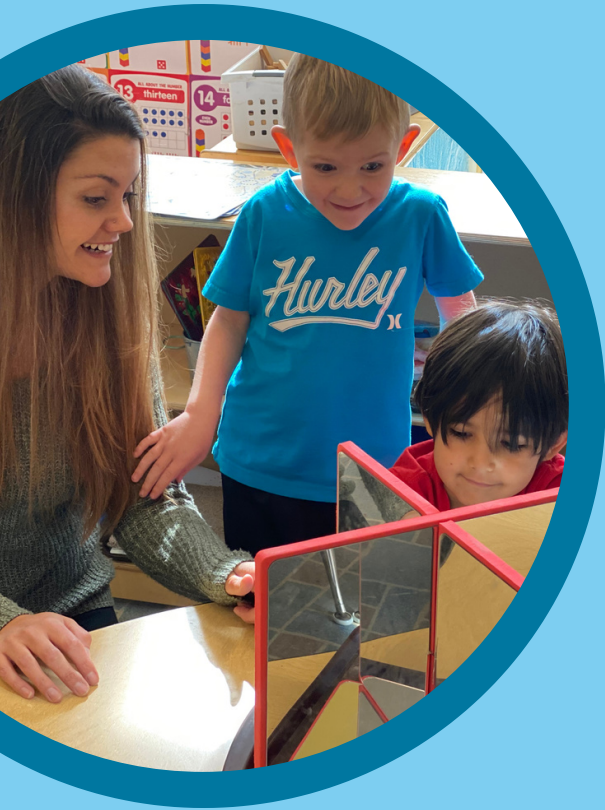


**Jo Chavez, M.B.A.**  
Communications &  
Media Specialist



**Linda Pauley, M.Ed.**  
Business  
Administrator

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD



Preschool educator Cynthia Rush explores mirrors and natural materials with children in an NAEYC-accredited early learning program.

Our signature "Stories from the Field" initiative lifts up the experiences and voices of early childhood educators and showcases the importance and impact of early care and education in local communities.

In 2022, we published **8 interviews and video clips** featuring Arizona early childhood educators. The majority of these stories elevated the voices of Black, Latine, and Indigenous educators and those who have been marginalized.

### Meet Kara Begaye: Diné Early Childhood Educator

Kara Begaye comes from a family of educators and works as a preschool educator at Dilcon Community School on the Navajo Nation – the same school she and her siblings attended. In our Stories from the Field interview, Kara shares her family's history in education, describes her experience as an early childhood education student, and gives advice for other early care and education providers.





# WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD



(Left photo by Katie Kurtin) First-time mom Katie Kurtin, M.Ed., shared their journey into motherhood and their hopes and dreams for their infant Teddy. (Middle and right photos by Sena Ceklic) Kindergarten teacher Sena Ceklic, M.Ed., investigated rights and responsibilities with 5- and 6-year-old children using an inquiry-based approach focused on documenting children's ideas and theories.

Each year during the annual [NAEYC Week of the Young Child®](#) (WOYC), Arizona AEYC amplifies the essential work of the early childhood workforce. This year, we highlighted stories that represented **children's rights** to joy, quality early learning, and equity and **teachers' rights** to worthy wages for the complex work they do — among many other rights. We collaborated again this year with First Things First, SAZAEYC, and other community partners to celebrate.

In 2022, we featured an interview with a Head Start parent, the learning journey of a first time mom, an early childhood student's goals for advancing research on evidence-based practices for Indigenous children with disabilities, and our first ever Spanish publication with a family child care provider.



# WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

AzAEYC's WOYC Facebook posts **reached 8,000 people** in just a week! On Twitter, there were **3,324 impressions**.

More than **25 proclamations were signed** by local, state, and tribal elected officials including the Governor.

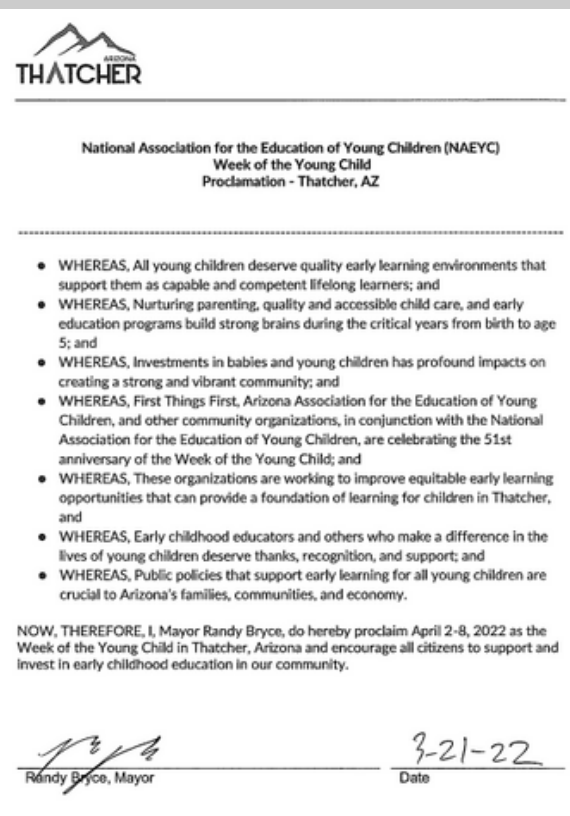
The proclamations highlighted WOYC and **the rights of children, families, and educators** to equitable early childhood education and urged public investments to improve access to quality child care.



(Above photo by City of Tolleson Public Affairs)  
Mayor Juan F. Rodriguez proclaimed April 2-8, 2022 as WOYC in the City of Tolleson.



Jack, a young child in Thatcher, AZ, and his family joined the Town Council and Mayor Randy Bryce for the signing of the 2022 WOYC Proclamation. (Photo courtesy of First Things First Graham/Greenlee Region)



# EARLY CHILDHOOD SCHOLARSHIPS

Annually, we award the "Honor the Past & Reimagine the Future" [Early Childhood Scholarship](#) to Arizona college students studying early childhood education with an interest in equitable early learning experiences, public policy, and advocacy efforts on behalf of young children and families. In Fall of 2022, Arizona AEYC awarded two \$1,250 scholarships.

## Meet our 2022 Scholarship Recipients



**Erin Butler** (*left photo*), candidate for a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood & Early Childhood Special Education interested in creating inclusive, culturally responsive environments for children with disabilities

*"I used the scholarship to help me with necessities. I paid rent. I bought groceries. And then, I bought materials, that I can incorporate into my student teaching assignments." - Erin Butler*

**Xue Xia** (*right photo*), candidate for a Doctorate of Education in Curriculum whose research focuses on children's play, educational equity, and teacher professional development



Help make a difference by contributing to the annual Arizona AEYC scholarship. Your donation of any size will help early childhood students meet their personal and educational goals.

[donate.azaeyc.org](https://donate.azaeyc.org)



## AZTOOLKIT

Child care providers deserve support and bandwidth for their business and administrative tasks — in order to be able to spend more time providing quality experiences for children, families, and their staff.

AZToolkit is a one-stop web platform that helps child care providers meet the daily demands of the business side of child care through resources needed to successfully save time, maximize funding, and share resources. AZToolkit includes more than 1,800 tools and resources for finances, human resources, recruitment and retention, staff training, and more — all in one place.

**2.9K**  
**subscribers**

AZToolkit had nearly **2,900 subscribers** in 2022 such as child care directors, early childhood teachers, and early childhood coaches who access AZToolkit's resources to help them save time, save money, and improve quality.

**15K**  
**page views**

AZToolkit webpages were **viewed 15,000 times** in 2022 with the most popular pages being "Grants & Funding", "AZToolkit Job Bank", and "Forms, Policies & Templates".



*Child care providers, Arizona AEYC board members, and Southern Arizona AEYC staff met with U.S. Representative Tom O'Halleran for a virtual early childhood roundtable discussion to share their stories about the impact of the pandemic on our communities. (Photo courtesy of Lauren Hogan).*

## EARLY CHILDHOOD ADVOCACY

Arizona AEYC is the leading advocacy voice for children, families, and the early childhood profession in Arizona. We provide training and technical assistance to develop the advocacy skills of educators and parents and strengthen their voices as champions for children. We also facilitate meetings with state and federal elected officials to secure public investments in child care.

**13**  
**legislator**  
**meetings**

Held **13 meetings with U.S. Congressional Representatives and state legislators** in 2022 to advocate for emergency support for child care and significant, sustained public investments in ECE.

**150+**  
**participants**

Provided **advocacy training and support for more than 150 participants** in 2022. Sessions focused on how to connect with lawmakers and strategies for increasing public awareness around the importance of child care.

**\$8B**  
**investment**

Activated champions through grassroots engagement to advocate with elected officials. This **resulted in an \$8 billion federal investment in the Child Care & Development Block Grant** (30% more than 2022) plus increased awareness around the challenges child care faced during the pandemic.

# PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

We provide professional development for educators, administrators, parents, and community champions. Topics include early childhood leadership, building stronger business practices through AZToolkit, and diversity and inclusion.

In 2022, Arizona AEYC was awarded a grant from state federal relief funds to facilitate 5 communities of practice on the new NAEYC *Developmentally Appropriate Practices* book using the [Project ECHO®](https://aзаeyc.org/dap-echo) virtual model which is designed to increase equitable access to quality professional development and build knowledge by leveraging the strengths of local communities. Participating child care sites receive 18.5 hours of professional development, NAEYC memberships for all staff, educator books, classroom materials, and stipends for paid professional learning time.

[aзаeyc.org/dap-echo](https://aзаeyc.org/dap-echo)

**175+**  
**participants**

Reached more than **175 participants** through our professional development sessions in 2022.

**25+**  
**hours**

Provided more than **25 hours of professional development content**. Webinars this year included "Becoming an HR Expert: Tools & Templates on AZToolkit" and "Arizona Child Care Stabilization Grant - Your Questions Answered about the Grant Report & Innovative Ways to Invest in the Child Care Workforce".





## OUR CHAPTERS

(Left photo) A young child waters a newly planted garden bed at a preschool.

(Middle photo) Chapter board members and Arizona AEYC staff complete an installation of an outdoor learning space with a children's book lending library. (Right photo) Chapter board members facilitate a Light That Fire session with early childhood educators and CTE students.

Arizona AEYC has three chapters in our service region that engage educators and the community through local, grassroots activities.

**Valley of the Sun Chapter of Arizona AEYC** is a 501(c)(3) non-profit that was incorporated in 1974 with the mission of serving children, families, and educators in Maricopa County. In 2017, Valley of the Sun became a chapter of Arizona AEYC and supports the early childhood profession through two signature projects:

- **Light That Fire** professional development sessions for new early childhood educators and Career & Technical Education (CTE) students focused on building leadership skills and professional connections.
- **Flip This Playground** which installs outdoor libraries, unique gardens, music centers, and outdoor learning spaces at Title I preschools and within communities for families in low-income households.

**1,000+**  
children

Installed 3 new outdoor gardens in 2021-2022 which reached more than 1,000 children (preschool-3rd grade)

**60**  
participants

Supported 60 educators and students through 2 Light That Fire sessions in 2022

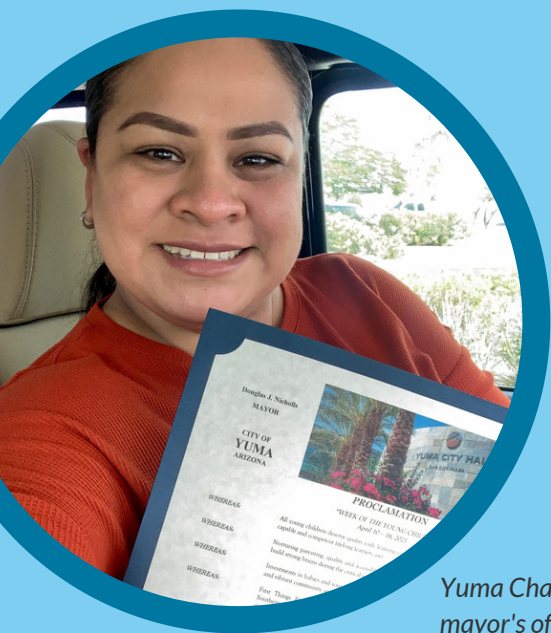
## OUR CHAPTERS

The Northern Chapter of Arizona AEYC serves Apache, Coconino, Mohave, Navajo, and Yavapai Counties.

In 2022, the Northern Chapter provided [NAEYC memberships](#) to students in early childhood degree programs, supported child care providers through [NAEYC early learning accreditation](#), and met with federal Congressional representatives to advocate for public funding for child care during the pandemic.



Early childhood educator Stephanie Welsh documents a child's ideas at an NAEYC-accredited early learning program in Flagstaff, AZ.



The Yuma Chapter of Arizona AEYC serves La Paz and Yuma counties.

In 2022, the Yuma Chapter planned and delivered early learning activities for children and their families during the [Week of the Young Child](#) celebration and met with with elected officials in the region to increase awareness of the importance of quality child care.

Yuma Chapter board member Lizbett Rodriguez picks up the WOYC proclamation from the Yuma mayor's office.

# 325+ hours

Arizona AEYC board members contributed more than **325 volunteer service hours** in 2022 participating in community events, leading professional development, and connecting with local educators and parents. This is equal to **\$9,734** worth of in-kind donations.



# COMMUNITY COLLABORATIONS

Arizona AEYC collaborates with other agencies to leverage our collective strengths and knowledge, maximize resources and funding, and sustain our initiatives. The majority of our funded projects are implemented in collaboration with partner organizations to boost the impact for the early childhood profession. Here are just a few of our accomplishments in 2022 thanks to these strong community partnerships.

**100+**  
**hours**

Provided more than **100 hours of technical assistance with 200 child care providers** to apply for and successfully use Arizona Department of Economic Security child care stabilization grants

**2x**  
**increase**

**Doubled the number of collaborating partners** on our signature annual Arizona Early Childhood Public Policy Forum — helping extend our reach, develop the voices of educators and parents, and foster grassroots engagement

*(Left photo) Arizona AEYC partnered with the Arizona Early Childhood Alliance again in 2022 to deliver children's artwork of the desert to state legislators as part of the 2022 Early Childhood Day at the State Capitol event. (Right photo) Arizona AEYC board members presented on equitable early learning environments at the Arizona Head Start Association annual professional development conference.*





## 2022 GOVERNING BOARD

Our [Governing Board](#) is comprised of early childhood professionals that represent the diversity and strengths of the Arizona early care and education field. Governing Board members are community volunteers who are elected into two year terms by our membership.



**Mona Qafisheh, M.Ed., C.P.M.,**  
*President*



**Kamaie Clark, M.Ed.,**  
*President-Elect*



**Camille Lachar-Lofaro, M.A.,**  
*Treasurer*



**Penni Case, M.Ed.,**  
*Secretary*



**Josephina Garcia,**  
*Vice President of Advocacy*



**Cotillion Sneddy,**  
*Vice President of Membership*



**Clare St. Catherine,**  
*Vice President of Professional Development*



**Sonia Soto, B.A.,**  
*Member-at-Large*

**[azaeyc.org/join-our-board](https://azaeyc.org/join-our-board)**

## 2022 GOVERNING BOARD

(continued)



**Susan Randolph,**  
Member-at-Large  
(Teacher)



**Beth Frost,**  
Northern Chapter  
Co-Chair



**Jini Maxwell,**  
Northern Chapter  
Co-Chair



**Lisa Cobb,**  
Valley of the Sun  
Chapter Chair



**Patricia Miranda,**  
**B.A.S.,**  
Yuma Chapter Chair



**Karen Coleman,**  
Member-at-Large  
(Appointed)



**Jennifer Sullivan,**  
Member-at-Large  
(Appointed)



**Dr. Eric Bucher,**  
Ex-officio Member

Media inquiries: [news@azaeyc.org](mailto:news@azaeyc.org) | To learn more or  
partner: [info@azaeyc.org](mailto:info@azaeyc.org)

© 2022 Arizona Association for the Education of Young Children.

All photos in our Annual Report feature real Arizona early childhood educators, parents, and children. Photos are from Arizona AEYC unless otherwise credited.



**azaeyc**

Arizona Association for the  
Education of Young Children

An Affiliate of **naeyc**<sup>®</sup>



**[www.azaeyc.org](http://www.azaeyc.org)**