



Pennsylvania Association for the
Education of Young Children

For Immediate Release

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Lehigh Valley Early Care and Education Legend Honored at Statewide Gala in Hershey

Rebecca Lentz Gorton Receive Voice for Children Award from the Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children

HERSHEY, PA (March 31, 2023)— Rebecca Lentz Gorton, a Lehigh Valley resident, received the Voice for Children Award at the annual statewide gala of the Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children (PennAEYC).

PennAEYC's Voice for Children Award is the only statewide award in Pennsylvania recognizing the grassroots leaders whose work impacts the quality of care for young children in diverse settings. The "Voice" Award celebrates not only the individual award recipients, but the early childhood profession.

"With our Voice for Children Award, PennAEYC recognizes the critical role advocacy plays in high-quality early care and education settings and celebrates those who speak on behalf of Pennsylvania's children," said Jen DeBell, Executive Director of PennAEYC. "As the "Voice" for early childhood care and learning, community advocates are an invaluable component to assuring all Pennsylvania's children get the start they deserve in school and life."

Rebecca Lentz Gorton is administrator emerita at Northampton Community College. She began her career in education teaching pre-k to grade five in private and public schools and served as a program/education director of Head Start in the Lehigh Valley. Gorton was on the teaching faculty in the Early Childhood Department at Northampton Community College prior to becoming the department director from 1999 to 2011.

Gorton is a founding member of Lehigh and Northampton chapter of PennAEYC. She established a business-education partnership with Crayola which led to the development of Art as a Way of Learning professional development program, and partnership with Bright Horizons online Child Development Associate programs. Under Gorton's guidance, Northampton Community College's Early Childhood Program was in the first cohort of National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) associate degree accreditations.

Gorton has served on numerous statewide, regional, and national boards and committees all geared toward ensuring the development and continuation of high-quality education opportunities for children and educators. Gorton served as commissioner of Middle States Association for Elementary School Accreditation where she also accredited programs in China, Egypt, Saudi Arabia. She served as a Commissioner on the NAEYC Higher Education Accreditation System.



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“Rebecca’s accomplishments are a result of her passion for early childhood and for training educators in curriculum, the arts and credit articulation. Rebecca work continues to impact current and inspire future early childhood care and education professionals for years to come,” said Anu Sachdev, Early Childhood Adjunct Professor at East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania.

The evening also featured a keynote address from Michelle Kang, chief executive officer of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, a global association dedicated to high-quality early learning for all children, who stressed the importance of the work early care and education professionals do each and every day and its positive impact on children and families and our communities.

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The Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children is a statewide, nonprofit membership organization of over 3,500 early childhood care and education professionals. As the Pennsylvania affiliate of NAEYC, we are part of a network that includes 52 affiliates and nearly 60,000 individual members nationwide. Through policy development, advocacy and professional development and supports for early childhood professionals we work to achieve the vision that each and every Pennsylvania family will have access to high-quality, affordable early childhood care and education opportunities for their children provided by a profession that is valued, well-compensated and supported. PennAEYC is a proud principal partner of the Start Strong PA and Pre-K for PA nonpartisan, statewide advocacy campaigns to increase access to high-quality, affordable child care and pre-k.