



Jill Uhlenberg



Jill Uhlenberg received a Friend of Young Children Award from Iowa AEYC this year for her contributions to the field of early childhood education throughout her career.

Friend of Young Child Bio and Synopsis

Dr. Jill Uhlenberg has dedicated her life to the early childhood field for a span of forty years, starting as an early childhood classroom teacher then moving to the University of Northern Iowa, where she has been a cornerstone for the Early Childhood Program. Jill's professional career has directly affected the entire age span of early childhood, birth through age eight. She touches every person she encounters with compassion, patience, and

devotion.

At the University of Northern Iowa's Child Development Center (UNI-CDC), she moved from long-term substitute teaching to Program Coordinator. She served for 15 years in that position before moving to UNI's Department of Curriculum and Instruction (Early Childhood Education division). She held virtually every office for the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers including president, secretary, treasurer, newsletter/journal editor, and conference co-chair. In recognition of her outstanding service she received the National Coalition for Campus Children's Centers Director of the Year Award. Jill's service to the National Association for the Education of Young Children has included three years as Accreditation Commissioner for the National Academy of Early Childhood Programs and Accreditation Validator where she completed 78 program validation visits in six states, and at three US Army Europe (USAREUR) sites. During her long career, Jill has taught approximately 1,373 undergraduate, masters, and doctoral education students at UNI. Her teaching, mentoring, and guidance is currently impacting over 27,000 Iowa children each school year. She always makes everyone feel welcome and genuinely wants to help any student, faculty, or staff that comes to her for guidance.

Jill has served on numerous boards and committees at the local, state, and national level. she served as treasurer for the Black Hawk Chapter of Iowa AEYC, and helped organize numerous conferences and workshops. She authored 19 book chapters and articles related to various early childhood topics. Jill also helped secure millions of dollars in grant funding for CEESTEM education at UNI, and helped establish the UNI Ramps and Pathways Curriculum utilized nationwide. She has been an invited clinician at numerous early childhood conferences at the regional, national, and international level.

Although she is retiring from her UNI professorship, she plans many more years of service to Iowa's young children as a volunteer with the Regents' Center for Early Childhood Development.

Jill's Member Spotlight Q&A

How did you get started in your profession?

My first efforts in regard to early childhood were in Germany, as a newlywed Army wife. I worked to establish an on-base child care program for children of service members. Once I had children of my own back in Iowa, my interest grew to include teaching preschool, and then working on a master's degree in early childhood at UNI. The more experience I gained, the more I wanted to help other teachers.

Why did you become a member?

I joined NAEYC because it was the largest and strongest organization for early childhood teachers. Besides the benefits for members, it also provides a place for classroom teachers to share their experiences with other teachers. Over the 28 years of membership, I was fortunate to attend numerous conferences and institutes, as well as presenting at 23 national, regional, state, or local affiliate conferences.

What are some accomplishments you are particularly proud of?

Even though I have retired from UNI officially, I am enjoying my volunteer work with the Regents' Center for Early Developmental Education, planning professional development and grant-writing. I am also enjoying time with my six grandchildren and gardening.

What is your favorite children's book, and why?

My favorite children's book is a classic: Caps for Sale, by Esphyr Slobodkina. I love sharing this book with children and engaging them in participating with the monkeys' responses to the peddler.