Eva Carter

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing to endorse Karen Cairone as a candidate for the Emerging Leadership Award.

In my experience as serving as a member of the inaugural class of the Head Start Fellowship program and now in my current role of working with the National Tribal Child Care Center’s Peer Learning and Leadership Network, I am honored to support this endeavor of contributing to the process of growing our field of early childhood leaders. Emerging leaders such as Karen are critical at this juncture in our exciting field of early care and education. Those of us that have been in the field for a long time know how important it is to have strong, positive leaders to continue to move early childhood forward. Karen Cairone has the passion and promise to meet those needs.

I began my experience with the Devereux Early Childhood Initiative (DECI) in 1997 as a founding member of the advisory board. As DECI was putting their team together, I was impressed with their vision of recruiting a cadre of enthusiastic young professionals to be part of the team that carried DECI into the program of national significance that they are today. Karen was an outstanding member of that team. She used every opportunity to learn from those that had more experience. In addition she was an excellent team member working with others to support and advance the importance of social and emotional health for young children.

I observed Karen in those early years as a trainer and was impressed with her poise, willingness to learn and her overall commitment to the mission of DECI. She was highly motivated and professional and became a very integral member of the DECI team.

I later facilitated numerous strategic planning meetings where Karen shared her visions and insights not only for what was needed within the Devereux program but the greater needs in the field of early childhood education. She demonstrated a practical approach toward the reality of what was needed in the classroom but also the need for evidence based research.

 I know that she coordinated community meetings to help her own community become more aware of the importance of early childhood education. She has volunteered in her own children’s preschool contributing her expertise to other volunteers and assisting in classroom other than her own child’s. She has also worked with young children as a sports coach teaching them the importance of leadership and strength based relationships.

She started a blog where she shared practical ideas for other young moms and families to support their young children with activities and ideas to promote social and emotional health.

Throughout the years I have continued to be impressed with Karen’s skills and expertise in developing and implementing projects that have greatly benefited children and families across the entire country. She became an excellent trainer as well as developed skills in the production of training materials. She coordinated training efforts of certified trainers whose mission was to help providers and families who were dealing with children with challenging behaviors. She also evolved where she has authored or co-authored several publications. As she worked on building these new skills, I have been so impressed how she continually seeks out the advice and support of more seasoned professionals. She has been able to identify mentors for herself but at the same time has provided her support to others just beginning their journey in the field.

 As the current leadership in early childhood is getting closer and closer to retirement, I for one would feel reinsured to know that Karen Cairone is being recognized and supported as an individual who was leading our profession and seen as a role model for younger professionals as they enter the most important field of early childhood education.

I appreciate your consideration of Karen Cairone as one of the emerging leaders that will help to lead her peers in ECE, community members, and decision makers to support the continued growth of our field.



Eva Carter