

Thank you to all that nominated me to thread, AAEEYC, my husband and son for being here but mostly making do without me as I pursue my work with children and families.

I am honored to be included as one of the well-respected recipients of this award. My respect to Cindy [Harrington] and [the other] award recipients.

I hope to indulge your attention for just a couple more minute. On behalf of all children and their parents in the great state of Alaska, thank you for your support, advocacy, teaching and loving care.

You do so sacrificially of your time and financial potential.

You may not realize how important you are to each life you touch.

Certainly your paycheck and benefits do not reflect your importance, but you do it anyways. You choose to do it.

It was Henry B. Adams who said “a teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.” But to each child you embrace, it changes their life!

There is no greater work we can do! We matter!

We matter to that child who has never felt unconditional love.

We matter to the single mom who is at her wits end trying to make it on minimum wage.

We matter to the dad who doesn't know to how properly bath his infant daughter but we patiently and respectfully show him how.

We matter to the SA child who knows he can count on us to provide a nutritious snack, a friend, and a safe, loving environment instead of an empty house.

We matter in countless other ways that will never be acknowledged or expressed in gratitude.

I am honored to be one of you.

You ... me... us... We are the pioneers in our field! And in so many ways our field is setting the bar for all others.

Be encouraged!

Our philosophy and best practices are strong – the best in the nation!

We are the groundbreakers, the agents of change making the future, defining the future for children and families.

Let us not grow weary in doing good. Let us not give up the good fight.

Albert Einstein said “try not to become a person of success, rather, try to be a person of value.” You matter! You are valued!

Thank you for travelling this journey with me and with the past and future Cindy Harrington Award winners! Have a great conference!