



Connecting Men on the Internet

How the NAEYC Men's Education Network Interest Forum Grew Using the ECEMEN-L Listserv

IN WRITING A BOOK on men teachers, where can a researcher find other early childhood men to read his manuscript and give feedback? How can a male teacher in Europe contact American colleagues? When a male teacher loses his job amid issues of gender bias, where can he share his story?

All these men use the ECEMEN-L Listserv—formerly the NAEYCMEN-L list—to connect with other men in early childhood education.

In the 1990s, in workshops, seminars, and men's caucus meetings, more than 50 men and women began to regularly dialogue on topics related to men in early childhood education. At the 1999 NAEYC Annual Conference, several men started talking about the possibility of an electronic Listserv to connect men. They approached the ERIC Clearinghouse

on Elementary and Early Childhood Education (ERIC/EECE), at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, about sponsoring NAEYCMEN-L.

Launched in December 1999, the Listserv attracted 15 subscribers the first month. In August 2002, when the name of the list was changed to ECEMEN-L, the list had 61 members. The vast majority of the members are male, but several women also have joined.

Members use the list to exchange information and discuss concerns. Members also have been polled on key issues facing men involved in the early education field. They exchange stories about, and find new ways to deal with, gender-related problems for men. They also share information gleaned from NAEYC Annual Conferences.



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A 10-question survey was posted on the Listserv in March 2002. The response rate was 42 percent (25 of the then 59 members). The results revealed:

- Members frequently read the list discussion. Nine said they review the discussions every day, and 13 others said they check in at least once a week.
- Eight respondents said they have worked in the early childhood field for 10 years or less, and eight others said they'd been in the profession for more than 20 years.
- Seven members use the list for research, 14 to learn more about early care and education, and 19 to network with colleagues.
- More members learned about the list from attending the NAEYC Annual Conference than from any other method.

Respondents were also asked to comment on the list. It is apparent from these comments that the ECEMEN-L Listserv is a source of support, inspiration, networking, and research. One subscriber pointed out, "It has supported me in the work that I do every day and given me opportunities to support other men in the field." He also said it helped him "stay in touch with other men I see only at the NAEYC conference."

The Listserv has an electronic archive of messages that may be accessed by subject, author, date, or thread. Prospective members can review recent discussions to determine if they would be interested in subscribing.

Like most other Listservs, ECEMEN-L has policies that govern its use. These include policies on advertisements, job and conference postings, and netiquette. It's helpful for new list members to read these policies and for veteran members to revisit them once in a while.

- To get more information, go to <http://ericeece.org/listserv/ecemen.html>.
- To see a complete report of the list survey results go to <http://ericeece.org/listserv/naeycmen-surveyresults.html>.
- To subscribe, e-mail the Listserv's administrative address, listserv@listserv.uiuc.edu, and send the following command in the body of the text (not in the subject line): Subscribe ECEMEN-L [your first name] [your last name] (for example, Subscribe ECEMEN-L John Doe).
- To communicate with list members (after you have subscribed to the list), send your message to the discussion address ecemen-l@listserv.uiuc.edu.
- To encourage other men to join the conversation, download this article, make copies, and distribute them to male early childhood students and professionals.

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