



Michigan Association for the  
Education of Young Children

Candidate Name: Mary Turner

Employment Information: Owner of Mimi's House Family Childcare

1) Why are you interested in serving on the Michigan AEYC Governing Board?

I am excited to join the governing board of the Michigan AEYC to advocate for children and promote excellence in childcare. With over 20 years of experience as the owner of a quality family childcare, I have seen firsthand the significant benefits of providing children with ample opportunities to engage with nature. This engagement fosters not only their physical well-being but also their emotional and cognitive development.

My passion motivates me to share my insights and experiences with others in the field, inspiring them to incorporate nature into their caregiving practices. If elected to the board, I will devote my heart and hard work to this position. I aim to influence policies and initiatives that enhance the quality of childcare across Michigan, ensuring that every child has the opportunity to thrive in a nurturing and enriching environment.

2) Please share any relevant professional and/or volunteer experiences within the past five years that would be applicable for this role.

My passion for providing children with ample opportunities to engage with nature has driven me to earn several certifications and accolades in this field. I hold a Nature Explore Outdoor Classroom Certification for my childcare program, as well as a Michigan Naturalist Certification and a Pollinator Champion Certification. Additionally, I have completed extensive training on topics related to children's experiences in nature. I was a major contributor to the book "Scribble Arts" by MaryAnn Kohl, which highlights my dedication to integrating artistic expression with natural exploration. Last fall, I was honored to receive the Michigan Grow More Award for my contributions to agricultural education, nutrition, and gardening initiatives. I also had the privilege of writing an article in the Spring 2025 edition of Exchange Magazine on the topic of extending and enhancing outdoor play. Currently, my childcare program is rated "Demonstrating Quality" through Great Start to Quality, reflecting my commitment to providing a high-quality learning environment and fostering deep connections.

3) Please share your knowledge, skills and abilities that would contribute to serving on the Michigan AEYC Governing Board.

I believe that my extensive field experience, combined with a solid educational background, would make a valuable contribution to the Governing Board. I work well as a team player and am currently in the process of becoming a trainer on MiRegistry to use as a tool for advocacy. Additionally, my personal background of having a bi-racial family and having experienced childhood housing and food insecurity aligns with the diversity goals of the Governing Board.

4) Please share your experience related to governance and leadership that would be applicable to this role.

I frequently coach and support various early childhood programs. My recent coaching has focused on the topics of children in nature and farm-to-early-childcare practices.