



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADER SUSAN STONER RECOGNIZED**  
**The Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education (MNAFEE) to present**  
**the Award in Honor of Lois Engstrom, Founder Figure in**  
**Minnesota's Early Childhood Professional Field**



St. Cloud, Minnesota, April 13, 2023 **Susan Stoner, retired Early Childhood Family Education Coordinator from Mounds View, was honored with the Lois Engstrom Leadership Award for 2023.**

Ms. Stoner's career spans forty years beginning in the University of Minnesota Lab School where she worked first as a teacher and then director. In 1979 she became an early childhood teacher and parent educator in the Mounds View CQE (Council on Quality Education) project. Four years later she became coordinator and continued her work until her retirement.

She has also demonstrated her commitment to parent education, Early Childhood Family Education and/or early childhood programming in public schools through her involvement in The Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education (MNAFEE) where she was a board member since the early years of the organization. She has served on the Advocacy Committee and continues her work with MNAFEE on the Conference Committee because she believes that the best way to offer excellent programming to families is to provide administrators, parent educators, and early childhood teachers with the latest research and information and the opportunity to network and learn from others. She also served on other state organizations including the Minnesota Council on Family Relations where she was part of the group who published *Ethical Thinking and Practice for Parent and Family Life Educators*, and the Minnesota Community Education Association. She served on the MDE Curriculum Committee and was instrumental in developing the Parent Education Core Curriculum Framework.

While coordinator, Ms. Stoner developed innovative programs requiring collaboration with the wider school district and community. Examples include home visiting often in conjunction with Public Health nurses, initiating ECFE classes at churches and apartment buildings, collaborating with ABE for a Family Literacy and Even Start program which was recognized within the state and nationally, and working with the district's Early Childhood Special Education coordinator to provide inclusive educational opportunities for all children and their parents. Ms. Stoner calls the opportunity to learn from one another a win-win for everyone!

Families in Mounds View and professionals across the state experience a lasting impact as a result of Ms. Stoner's dedication.

**About the Lois Engstrom Leadership Award:** Lois Engstrom was instrumental in the design, development and statewide expansion of the public school Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) program for all families with children from birth to kindergarten and their parents. She provided wise and inspirational leadership for this and other family and early learning initiatives including School Readiness over 25 years in her position at the

Minnesota Department of Education. After retirement she shepherded founding of the Minnesota Association for Family and Early Education (MNAFEE) and helped build it into the organization it is today.

The Winner of the Lois Engstrom Leadership Award:

- Is a current or past member of MNAFEE
- Has five or more years of demonstrating strong leadership in the field of family and early education, particularly as it pertains to parent education, Early Childhood Family Education and/or early childhood programming in public schools in Minnesota
- Shows a career-long commitment to the field of family and early education, particularly as it pertains to parent education, Early Childhood Family Education and/or early childhood programming in public schools
- Has made a significant impact on the lives of young children, parents and/or families, and/or professionals in the field.
- Has had a statewide impact through their efforts to improve the lives of children, parents and/or families, and/or professionals in the field.

Ms. Stoner was recognized at the MNAEFE Annual Conference on April 13, 2023 in St. Cloud.