

Some ways to connect your program with the rest of the world.

- Create local partnerships with international service organizations and agencies such as the Lions Club or Rotary International. They often have opportunities for international cultural and service exchanges. Even if you can't necessarily go anywhere, they may introduce you to visitors to your community from other countries.
- Connect with Visiting Fulbright Scholars who are in your neighborhood studying at local colleges and universities. They will often come to your college to speak or be able to put you in touch with someone in ECE at their home institution with whom you can connect. If any of your faculty have terminal degrees, consider applying to be on the Fulbright Specialist roster.
- Learn the favorite social networking apps of different countries. We use WeChat for our friends in China and WhatsApp with our friends in Africa.
- Videoconference – it can be more than Facetime. Try Skype, GoToMeeting, WebEx, or Bluejeans to connect your whole class to programs and people abroad. Your college may already subscribe to one of these (Skype is free). But in between guest speaker appearances in your classroom, you need to maintain the relationships with those practitioners from other countries. Call often.
- Consider short-term study abroad courses as a way to make long-term international connections. Ask ECE students to make specific plans to visit a preschool or higher ed. Early Childhood Prep. program while they are abroad for other courses (Spanish, Geography, or Humanities). You can do this on your own vacations – it only takes a few hours out of one day and it might make you a lifetime connection.
- Speak at international conferences. I realize this is not for everyone. But it is a great way to get known. If you can't speak at a conference, try to attend one as far away as possible. Then introduce yourself to everyone you can and talk about your interest in connecting with programs abroad. You never know how six-degrees of separation might work for you.