LEADERSHIP IN EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, & Taya Noland
Southwestern Oregon Community College & Portland State University

LibreTexts™

Leadership in Early Care and Education

This text is disseminated via the Open Education Resource (OER) LibreTexts Project (https://LibreTexts.org) and like the thousands of other texts available within this powerful platform, it is freely available for reading, printing, and "consuming."

The LibreTexts mission is to bring together students, faculty, and scholars in a collaborative effort to provide an accessible, and comprehensive platform that empowers our community to develop, curate, adapt, and adopt openly licensed resources and technologies; through these efforts we can reduce the financial burden born from traditional educational resource costs, ensuring education is more accessible for students and communities worldwide.

Most, but not all, pages in the library have licenses that may allow individuals to make changes, save, and print this book. Carefully consult the applicable license(s) before pursuing such effects. Instructors can adopt existing LibreTexts texts or Remix them to quickly build course-specific resources to meet the needs of their students. Unlike traditional textbooks, LibreTexts' web based origins allow powerful integration of advanced features and new technologies to support learning.

LibreTexts is the adaptable, user-friendly non-profit open education resource platform that educators trust for creating, customizing, and sharing accessible, interactive textbooks, adaptive homework, and ancillary materials. We collaborate with individuals and organizations to champion open education initiatives, support institutional publishing programs, drive curriculum development projects, and more.

The LibreTexts libraries are Powered by NICE CXone Expert and was supported by the Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot Project, the California Education Learning Lab, the UC Davis Office of the Provost, the UC Davis Library, the California State University Affordable Learning Solutions Program, and Merlot. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1246120, 1525057, and 1413739.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation nor the US Department of Education.

Have questions or comments? For information about adoptions or adaptions contact info@LibreTexts.org or visit our main website at https://LibreTexts.org.

The LibreTexts name, logo, and book covers are trademarked by LibreTexts, Inc. (a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization) and protected against unauthorized use.

This text was compiled on 08/27/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

Introduction

About the Authors

Chapters

Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

1: Ethical Leadership

2: Educator Development and Professional Development

3: Motivation and Teamwork

4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

Licensing

Index

Glossary

Detailed Licensing

Index

Glossary

Detailed Licensing

This page titled Leadership in Early Care and Education is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, & Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in ***Back Matter/Detailed Licensing****.*

This page titled Licensing is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

Introduction

Welcome to Leadership in Early Care and Education! We hope you find this text helpful, thought provoking, and affirming. We created this text to support learning in a couple of different. This text can be used from start to finish, or as modules that you (the instructor or the student) select based on your learning outcomes.

We created this text with these principles in mind:

- Anyone can be a leader at any time. Leadership is not title specific and the field of Early Care and Education needs leaders from diverse background, experiences, and expertise.
- Leadership has an inherent set of responsibilities and leaders need to understand what those are and how to navigate them.
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion are important topics and leadership should be grounded in them.
- Reflection is a key part of professional practice and should be encouraged and supported at all levels.
- It is important to represent a variety of contexts, individuals and scenarios.
- White space is important. How we interact with learning materials is important. We hope you will find our design effective.

Leaders in Early Childhood Education and K-12 Education exist at levels and take many different paths to leadership. Some receive formal education and while many find themselves in leadership roles because they have the most tenure. Most become leaders through a combination of education and experience – and all are woefully underprepared for what they experience.

These modules were designed to empower leaders at all levels and in any educational context. We realize that is a lofty goal and we felt it was important to aspire to ensure that all leaders could see themselves in the scenarios and strategies we share. We have been in leadership roles and know how challenging and complex leadership in education can be.

We created these modules with the understanding of the importance of several key leadership influences. We felt it was critical that the topic of leadership be intertwined with the topic of Ethics. Leaders set the tone and provide opportunities for ethical behavior to thrive or to be silenced. We also developed this course material with an emphasis for diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is essential that leaders represent the stakeholders, families, and communities they serve. It is equally important that leaders are culturally responsive and tackle topics such as bias and systemic racism.

These modules are developed to celebrate the diverse leaders in the world of education and to empower new and existing leaders. Leadership can happen any place, in any position, and at any time. We are excited to support all students; wherever they may be on the leadership journey!

This text is part of a collaborative process and we want to encourage continued collaboration from our colleagues, students, and stakeholders. If you have information that you think is important to include please contact Tammy Marino at tammy.marino@socc.edu. Let's have a conversation!

Dr. Sally Guyon, Dr. Tammy Marino, Taya Noland, and Dr. Maidie Rosengarden

Licenses

Advocacy: Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further © 2021 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, all images © 2021 by Sarah Greer are licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, third-party texts quoted in these materials are included on the basis of fair use as described in the Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Open Education.

Communication & Conflict Resolution © 2021 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, all images © 2021 by Sarah Greer are licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Portions of *The Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment* are used by permission from The National Association for the Education of Young Children. Unless otherwise indicated, third-party texts quoted in these materials are included on the basis of fair use as described in the Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Open Education.

Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education © 2021 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, all images © 2021 by Sarah Greer are licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Portions of *The Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment* are used by permission from The National Association for the Education of Young Children. Unless otherwise

indicated, third-party texts quoted in these materials are included on the basis of fair use as described in the Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Open Education.

ECE Advocacy © 2021 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, all images © 2021 by Sarah Greer are licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, third-party texts quoted in these materials are included on the basis of fair use as described in the Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Open Education.

Educator & Professional Development © 2021 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, all images © 2021 by Sarah Greer are licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Portions of *The Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment* are used by permission from The National Association for the Education of Young Children. Unless otherwise indicated, third-party texts quoted in these materials are included on the basis of fair use as described in the Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Open Education.

Ethical Leadership © 2021 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, all images © 2021 by Sarah Greer are licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Portions of *The Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment* are used by permission from The National Association for the Education of Young Children. Unless otherwise indicated, third-party texts quoted in these materials are included on the basis of fair use as described in the Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Open Education.

Leadership: An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education © 2021 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, all images © 2021 by Sarah Greer are licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, third-party texts quoted in these materials are included on the basis of fair use as described in the Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Open Education.

Motivation and Teamwork © 2021 is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Unless otherwise indicated, all images © 2021 by Sarah Greer are licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 4.0. Portions of *The Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment* are used by permission from The National Association for the Education of Young Children. Unless otherwise indicated, third-party texts quoted in these materials are included on the basis of fair use as described in the Code of Best Practices for Fair Use in Open Education.

References

CAPS Independent Advocacy. (n.d.). *Collective advocacy*. Retrieved February 13, 2021, from http://capsadvocacy.org/collective-advocacy/.

Densten, I. L., & Gray, J. H. (2001). Leadership development and reflection: What is the connection? *International Journal of Educational Management*, 15(3), 119 – 124.

Guyon, S. K. (2019). *Experiences of early childhood educators working with Teaching Strategies GOLD®: A narrative inquiry* [Doctoral thesis, Portland State University]. PDXScholar. https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/open_access_etds/5336/.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Advocate. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved February 6, 2021, from: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/advocate.

Pierson, R. (2013, May 3). *Every kid needs a champion* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/SFnMTHhKdkw.

TEDxAdelaide. (2018, January 30). *Five steps to becoming an advocate* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/nIo31mMB4P8.

Torres, X. (2019, September 12). *The power of advocacy* [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/xjutWPTA4wo.

Zero to Three. (2016, March 12). *You have what it takes! advocacy tool*. https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/494-you-have-what-it-takes-advocacy-tool

This page titled Introduction is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

About the Authors

Dr. Sally Gunyon

Dr. Sally Gunyon earned her Education Doctorate at Portland State University in 2019. She has been working in the field of Early Childhood Care & Education for 15 years, specializing in children age 0-47 months. She is a Lecturer at Cal Poly Pomona, is the Early Childhood Education Coordinator at Umpqua Community College and teaches at Portland State University in the Early Childhood master's program. Dr. Guyon has spoken at both national and international conferences. Her research interests are in promoting leadership in Early Childhood Care & Education, creating antiracist learning environments, and amplifying the voices of children, families, and educators in creating ECCE policy.

Dr. Tammy Marino

Dr. Tammy Marino earned her Education Doctorate in Organizational Leadership at Northcentral University. She has her MBA in Organizational and Leadership Development with a focus on training and adult development. She has been working in the field of early care and education for over 30 years; supporting professionals and programs with consulting, coaching, and training. Dr. Marino is a national and international speaker with a focus on leadership development and presented over 35,000 hours of leadership and development training and coursework. Since 2009 she has been teaching at institutions of higher education in early childhood and elementary education programs. Dr. Marino has been teaching at Southwestern Oregon Community College since 2016 and at Clackamas Community College since 2009. She is passionate about leadership and professional development and designing and providing learning programs that are culturally and linguistically responsive.

Taya Noland

Taya Noland grew up on the Oregon Coast where she began working in early care and education while still in high school. She received a degree from University of Oregon, and then went on to become an English Teacher, receiving graduate degrees in Creative Writing and English Literature at University of Idaho and Portland State University, and taught writing and literature courses at the college level for more than ten years. During this time, however, she kept circling back to early learning and finding herself teaching preschoolers as well as college students. She eventually decided to combine her two career paths and now works at Southwestern Oregon Community College as the director of Care Connections Child Care Resource and Referral, a program that provides professional development and quality supports to early care and education providers on the south coast of Oregon. She lives with her husband and 10 year old daughter, their two dogs, Tulip and Pepper, and three cats, Thorn, Thistle, and Commander Kitty.

Maidie Rosengarden Ed.D.

Dr. Maidie Rosengarden is from Hudson, Ohio. She holds an undergraduate degree from Kent State University (Kent, Ohio) and Graduate degrees from Belmont University and Trevecca Nazarene University (Nashville, TN). Dr. Rosengarden spent the first part of her career working in the arts, developing a strong interest in collaboration, creativity, and leadership. A passion for arts education and how young children learn led to teaching at the pre-school and K-8 grade levels. Dr. Rosengarden went on to earn a Doctorate in Education with a focus on collaboration in the classroom. Since 2004 she has been teaching at institutions of higher education in early childhood and elementary education programs. Dr. Rosengarden has been teaching at Southwestern Oregon Community College since 2014 and lives in Coos Bay, Oregon.

Dedication: To Sally, Sarah, Tammy, and Taya: Thank you.

About the Illustrator

Sarah Greer

For the last 10 years, Sarah has been working with fortune 100 companies undergoing large scale transformations in the face of numerous disruptions. Utilizing large scale illustrated frameworks, Sarah helps support the groups by designing meeting flows and putting them in the appropriate environments to help ensure success during the team's time together. Sarah also creates visuals with clients that support strategy, messaging, and collaborative discussions.

Sarah and her husband own and live on their 100 plus acre horse farm in Middlefield Ohio, where they are raising their three

children.

This page titled About the Authors is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

Southwestern Oregon Community College & Portland State University

Leadership in Early Care and Education

Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, & Taya Noland

This text is disseminated via the Open Education Resource (OER) LibreTexts Project (https://LibreTexts.org) and like the thousands of other texts available within this powerful platform, it is freely available for reading, printing, and "consuming."

The LibreTexts mission is to bring together students, faculty, and scholars in a collaborative effort to provide an accessible, and comprehensive platform that empowers our community to develop, curate, adapt, and adopt openly licensed resources and technologies; through these efforts we can reduce the financial burden born from traditional educational resource costs, ensuring education is more accessible for students and communities worldwide.

Most, but not all, pages in the library have licenses that may allow individuals to make changes, save, and print this book. Carefully consult the applicable license(s) before pursuing such effects. Instructors can adopt existing LibreTexts texts or Remix them to quickly build course-specific resources to meet the needs of their students. Unlike traditional textbooks, LibreTexts' web based origins allow powerful integration of advanced features and new technologies to support learning.

LibreTexts is the adaptable, user-friendly non-profit open education resource platform that educators trust for creating, customizing, and sharing accessible, interactive textbooks, adaptive homework, and ancillary materials. We collaborate with individuals and organizations to champion open education initiatives, support institutional publishing programs, drive curriculum development projects, and more.

The LibreTexts libraries are Powered by NICE CXone Expert and was supported by the Department of Education Open Textbook Pilot Project, the California Education Learning Lab, the UC Davis Office of the Provost, the UC Davis Library, the California State University Affordable Learning Solutions Program, and Merlot. This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. 1246120, 1525057, and 1413739.

Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation nor the US Department of Education.

Have questions or comments? For information about adoptions or adaptions contact info@LibreTexts.org or visit our main website at https://LibreTexts.org.

The LibreTexts name, logo, and book covers are trademarked by LibreTexts, Inc. (a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization) and protected against unauthorized use.

This text was compiled on 08/27/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Licensing

Introduction

About the Authors

Chapters

Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

1: Ethical Leadership

2: Educator Development and Professional Development

3: Motivation and Teamwork

4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

Licensing

Index

Glossary

Detailed Licensing

Index

Glossary

Detailed Licensing

This page titled Leadership in Early Care and Education is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, & Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

Licensing

A detailed breakdown of this resource's licensing can be found in ***Back Matter/Detailed Licensing****.*

This page titled Licensing is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland.

CHAPTERS

Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education
1: Ethical Leadership
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
3: Motivation and Teamwork
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further
Licensing
Index
Glossary
Detailed Licensing

This page titled Chapters is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland.

Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

Learning Objectives

- Objective 1: Describe leadership models found in early childhood care and education programs.
- Objective 2: Identify specific roles in early childhood care and education systems as leadership roles.
- Objective 3: Identify behaviors, skills, and beliefs that articulate personal leadership preferences.

Leadership and Power are Intertwined

If you have had a job at some time in your life, you may have found yourself wondering, “Who is in charge here?” You may have even found yourself saying, “If I were the boss, I would do things differently!”

Understanding how power is distributed amongst people is an important key to understanding the elusive and often confusing job of a leader. Power sometimes comes with a title and sometimes with a personality, and often both! There are many different types of power and people use power (both personal and professional) to be productive, and sometimes to meet their own personal motives.

Understanding and defining what “bosses” do is an area of study that is constantly evolving and changing. Thoughtful and creative people have been writing and talking about “leadership” for many years.

Leadership in education is a fascinating and complex area of study that is getting plenty of attention in current times! In the field of early childhood care and education, leadership is particularly complex. Why? Because, as we will explore together in this section (spoiler alert), *everyone is a leader in early care and education*. When we enter the field of early care and learning (just as when medical professionals enter the field of health care) we take an oath to lead, and to be mindful of the ethical responsibilities that require us to lead, no matter how “low” we are in the staff structure.

Let us begin with some groundwork. Think about jobs you have held – the person leading you (manager, parent, lead teacher) had power, and they used different techniques and strategies to get you to do whatever the job required, and earn whatever was offered to you in exchange for your work.

How people in charge *use* power, and what *they believe* about the actions their role as a leader requires, is where we can identify a range of leadership skills, styles, and behaviors. Leadership and power are braided and blended together.

In recent years there has been a significant trend towards sharing power in educational settings, rather than creating a "top-down" structure of leadership. This is called the "stakeholder" model in which influence and power is redistributed amongst all and shared with the idea that *sharing* of power among stakeholders can and will encourage active participation in productive decision-making and increase student achievement in schools.

What does the term stakeholder mean in education? Stakeholders in the setting of early care and education are *everyone*—parents, children, cooks, licensors, and *you*. You have a "stake" in working for positive outcomes for the children you teach and families you work with. You know that when you do your part productively the whole community is improved and hence your life and well being is improved.

You are a stakeholder! No matter what your role is with children. Without you leading, (along with others) the organizations we work in would struggle to keep going effectively and productively. In early childhood care and education, everyone is a leader with power and responsibility to practice skills and behaviors that demonstrate a leadership style.

> When power and leadership is *shared*, people who work in and attend schools, can be more successful, and student achievement can increase.

To put it simply, shared models of leadership are the current trend in education and have the potential to improve outcomes for everyone.

Your Call To Reflect

Think about power—who do you feel has power over you and why? If you are a manager or leader, do you feel you have power over others? Think about "bosses" you have had in the past. Reflect on a person whom you liked working for—write down two actions or behaviors they implemented or demonstrated that caused you to feel good about you and your work. Reflect on a person you did not like working for—write down two things (actions or behaviors) that caused you to feel bad about yourself and your work.

A footnote about power in early care and education

Remember – children are mostly powerless. Aside perhaps from the elderly, children are our society's most vulnerable population. Have you considered how much power you have in relation to children? How does that make you feel?

Examining Two Different Leadership Models

First, let us review the traditional model of leadership with which most people are familiar.

The Traditional Leadership Model

The traditional leadership model can be described as:

✔ Organizes the leadership as a pyramid or top-down graphic with more workers at the bottom and few at the top.

✔ Views organizations as mechanisms where people are assigned a part of the work like a wheel in a machine.

✔ Makes decisions from a top-down perspective (the person at the top is the ultimate authority).

✔ Operates with the assumption that people need to be told what to do (they will not or can not think for themselves).

✔ Believes that the one person (at the top) has the skills and talent to create success for all.

Your Call To Reflect

Can you think of a school or business you are aware of that follows this model? What evidence is there that the organization follows a traditional leadership model? In the setting (business or school) that you are thinking of, is the model successfully implemented? Are there implementations of the traditional model that are not successful? Can you describe them? Who has the power in a traditional leadership model?

What Might This Model Look Like in Early Care and Education?

You ask great questions! Before we move further let's take a look. The traditional leadership model in early care and education might look like this:

Scenario

Director Marcy is well organized, always on time, and makes sure all details are handled. She can come across as stern sometimes with parents and staff. Marcy organizes the classroom calendar and instructs lead teachers on which curricular themes to plan for each month. She has a process for scheduling staff (based on length of employment) that she uses regardless of the personal needs of staff members. When a staff member shares a concern, or makes a complaint, Marcy decides on a solution and informs the impacted staff of her decision.

Staff Input on Marcy's Leadership:

- Cook Mindy reflects, "I don't mind Marcy, except I wanted to implement some fun recipes for the kids and she said no. Hey, it's a job, I get bored, but I know what I'm supposed to do so it's all cool, I clock in and clock out."
- Lead Teacher Juanita comments, "I want to do my own planning, I don't like the curriculum Marcy makes us teach—in fact, I really just do the minimum with her plans—Teacher Heather in room B agrees with me and we basically ignore her planning emails, I don't know if Marcy notices. I think Marcy is a micro-manager. But I love my job and my classroom!"
- Dad Richard asks, "Who is Marcy? The lady at drop off with the clipboard? She keeps the line moving along for sure, I always get to work on time. I don't know what they do in that school, but that's ok, our son Mark is happy!"
- Teacher Assistant Jenny states, "I have been here for fifteen long years, and my knees can't take it anymore, I arrive in time to monitor the playground and leave before clean-up at the end of the day—I don't care if Heather doesn't like it, I've earned a break—what's fair is fair, I've earned the right to have the schedule I need."

Your Call To Reflect

What do you perceive might be positive about Marcy's choice of a traditional leadership model? Negative?

The Collective Leadership Model

Now let us review a second leadership model. The collective leadership model contrasts with the traditional leadership model as it challenges the ideas of traditional leadership. Collective leadership recognizes that people influence each other, influence systems and processes (created and used by people) and examines the social process that is inherent between groups of people. Let us look at how Collective Leadership compares to Traditional Leadership.

	Traditional Leadership	Collective Leadership
View of people in the organization.	Views organizations as mechanisms where people are assigned a part of the work like a part in a machine.	People in organizations are seen as systems rather than individual parts.
Structure of Organization.	Organizes the leadership as a pyramid or top-down graphic.	Organizes leadership as a web of connected networks of people without a "top".

	Traditional Leadership	Collective Leadership
Who makes decisions?	Makes decisions from a top-down perspective (the person at the top is the ultimate authority).	Decision making is shared or rotated amongst stakeholders.
Assumptions about people's abilities.	Assumes people need to be told what to do.	Assumes people are inherently capable and can make decisions and/or lead.
Beliefs about success.	Believes that the one person (at the top) has the skills and talent to create success for the organization.	Believes that organizational and individual success comes from the perspectives, efforts and skills of diverse stakeholders.

Your Call To Reflect

Can you think of a school or business you are aware of that follows this model? What evidence is there that the organization follows a collective leadership model? In the setting (business or school) that you are thinking of, is the model successfully implemented? Are there implementations of the collective model that are not successful? Can you describe them? Who has the power in a collective leadership model?

What Might This Model Look Like in Early Care and Education?

The collective leadership model in early care and education might look like this:

Scenario

Director Steve schedules both staff and one-on-one meetings regularly. Staff take turns leading meetings, presenting "Well done!" awards, and bringing forward "Concerns" that are shared from other staff weekly and anonymously. Steve facilitates creative problem solving between staff and in team meetings, though sometimes he has to make an "executive decision" if there isn't a reasonable solution. Each month a staff member brings an article for shared learning to the building meeting and it is discussed together. Steve leaves classroom planning up to each teaching team. Each year Steve carefully creates the schedule, doing his best to meet the needs of each staff member while honoring the requirements of their jobs. Most of the time it works out pretty well, although sometimes resentments between staff build when schedules don't seem fair.

Staff Input on Steve's Leadership:

- Cook Avis states, "I love my job! I am able to use recipes that are healthy and the kids love! Sometimes I try to get out of going to the "community learning meeting" —but I get it, my input is important too. All these meetings do take up time and I'm pretty busy with my family."
- Lead Teacher Charlotte comments, "I like to do my own planning with my group of children, and I'm good at it – it doesn't take me very long which irritates the heck out of Teacher Jim in room B – he always complains when I leave early, but hey—Steve approves my plans!"
- Dad Julio claims, "Steve is awesome, he always stops to chat and ask about the new baby. Sometimes the car line gets a bit backed up, but we survive it! We try to stay aware of what Julio JR is studying in his class – we came in and taught the children how to make tortillas last month!"
- Teacher Assistant Cheyenne says, "I am not sure what I am supposed to be doing all the time, and the other assistant does things differently than I was taught, it's frustrating to not know what to do and Charlotte and Jim don't always agree on what I should do, so sometimes I just guess. I suppose I should ask someone about it but I'm not sure who."

Your Call To Reflect

What do you perceive might be positive about Steve's choice of a collective leadership model? Negative?

Which Model for Early Care and Education?

You can probably identify places you have worked or are aware of that appear to be in one model or the other. Furthermore, you might see positive and negative in both models.

For our purposes we want to know, "What leadership model is appropriate for early care and education?" Not only what is appropriate, but how can leadership and power be shared and used effectively in our world of early learning if collective leadership is the identified trend that promotes success for children and schools? We also cannot help but wonder if there are times when the traditional leadership model is appropriate! This is a good question to get on the table for consideration.

Another spoiler alert for you, both models present challenges, and everyone *sometimes* wishes they could exist in the traditional model, and simply tell people what to do, or the collective model so they can influence a decision. Note that the traditional leadership model is deceptive—rarely do people simply do as they are told. Often in traditional leadership the power that is perceived at the top is taken by those at the bottom who might then demand change. Conflicting beliefs cause difficulties that make the workplace at the least frustrating, and at the most seemingly impossible. In the collective leadership model, much time is needed to hear the perspectives of the stakeholders and solve problems collectively. Trust is needed for relationships to be built, and relationships require listening. Often, in a collaboration, everyone gets "a bit" of what they want, but not everything — a reality that can leave everyone unsatisfied. Further, there are times when stakeholders feel that "someone should just make a decision!"

Your Call To Reflect

Is it possible that both models sometimes feel right, depending on the role you are in, or wish to be? Which model reflects your personal values? Which model reflects your professional values? Does conflict exist there? Could it? Might you change your thinking about these models depending on your role? **What does this tell you about your needs in the workplace?**

As your colleagues working and studying in early care and education, we have noticed some key differences that the collective model of leadership offers that indicate the need for us to pursue implementing it in our workplaces – even when it is challenging.

- First, the model reflects intentionality—a concept we use in all our work with children, and want to use with colleagues. In classrooms we consider all children when we plan curriculum, work with families, and work side-by-side with colleagues. Working with children is a team effort—although we know there are many times when final decisions must be made.
- Second, assisting children, families, and colleagues to learn how to think critically, solve problems, and communicate are central to our work. The collective leadership model offers a process for early care and education leadership that allows all stakeholders to engage meaningfully and share in the creation of success in a learning process. A goal we have for children most certainly!
- Third, collective leadership asks stakeholders to *change their thinking* about their role, and perhaps **themselves**. This is not always easy! A goal in collective leadership is for people to be motivated both by the external rewards of the job and their internal feelings of accomplishment. Working together toward a shared vision, everyone uses their varying talents and skills to contribute to the success of the organization. In fact, collective leadership recognizes that sustained success is not possible without the contributions of diverse stakeholders.
- Fourth, one of the beauties of the collective leadership model in early care and education is the *flexibility* it offers. A complexity of early care and education is the many roles found within, and the multiple relationships between stakeholders. All stakeholders are important, and all are connected. It can be hard to perceive these connections, especially when people are accustomed to (and may only know) traditional leadership models. Often staff in early care and education grow, develop, and are promoted upwards in the leadership structure quickly. When this happens, relationships shift and change, and flexibility is important for navigating these changes.
- Finally, the collective leadership model aligns with the emphasis in early care and education on diversity, equity, and inclusion. It also aligns with our shared vision of "Power to the Profession" (NAEYC) in which the workforce in early care and education is compensated equitably, professionalized, and developed effectively (we all share a passion and desire for helping all children reach their potential.)

Why do not more Schools use a Collective Leadership Model?

Good question!

There are many answers for this one! First, remember what was said earlier about the practice of traditional leadership. In America, the educational system was built and is maintained on the traditional leadership model—created in the industrial age, where traditional leadership was the accepted practice in business and society. The traditional leadership model is still general practice in our public school system.

Further, as you may have experienced, leaders in education are faced with very real shortages of time and money. Lack of resources makes investing in collective leadership a challenge. Finally, an important answer to "Why do not more schools use a collective leadership model?" lies in one of the paradoxes of being human—change is all around us every day, but, in most cases, we do not like change. We struggle to identify and let go of our mental models. What do we mean by mental models? Mental models (held by everyone) are deeply held beliefs about the world around us, sometimes we are not aware we have them! Mental models often shape how we think and behave in our personal and professional lives.

Everybody has some mental models, biases or beliefs about what leaders should or should not do—and sometimes we pick the model that works best for us in the moment, depending on our role as a "boss/leader" or when we are a "worker/follower."

As you can see, both of the models we have introduced you to present issues a leader is tasked with sorting out. In both models there appear to be satisfied employees and employees with frustrations. It may depend on whose shoes you are wearing!

Your Call To Reflect

What are your mental models about leaders? Mental models, often based on assumptions, are sometimes hard to uncover in ourselves. Earlier you identified leaders and jobs that worked for you, and did not work for you. You identified an organization you feel is led in a traditional model. Look back at your reflections – do you see mental models influencing your thinking? Imagine yourself in two very different stakeholder roles (perhaps manager and classroom assistant). Can you imagine how each leadership model might affect the behavior of the stakeholder?

We learned at the beginning of this section that we are all stakeholders and all leaders in early care and education. We also learned that institutions of education are changing—finding the collective model more effective, productive, and enriching for all of the people it serves.

When we dig more deeply into collective leadership, we notice it is more complicated than at first glance. If everyone is a leader:

- What *actions and skills* do we learn *as leaders*, to be active members in a collective leadership?
- What *behaviors* do we *practice*, (while still being our authentic selves) which will promote collective leadership effectively?
- Finally, what *decisions* do we make that will reflect our *commitment* to collective leadership, *regardless* of our stakeholder role?

As stated earlier, there is plenty of quality information available about leadership and how to become an effective leader. It takes time and practice to learn, and requires change in ourselves to develop into the leaders we want to become. Change is hard and human beings get frustrated when things change, or they realize that *they, themselves* need to change.

Consider a few of the many stakeholders in early care and education:

Families Teachers Siblings Home Visitors

Boards Directors Cooks Teaching Assistants

Coaches Janitors Educators Librarians

Policy Makers Funders Children Evaluators

Consultants Administrators Grandparents Trainers

We might think it would be easy for all these stakeholders to eagerly embrace collective leadership, see and feel the equity found within it, and willingly work for change. ***Remember,*** the traditional model of leadership has been around a long time, and most people may have experienced only the traditional model, and in truth, as you have considered, there are times when we might prefer the traditional model.

Collective Leadership: A Deeper Look

Let's dig into the collective leadership model and untangle some of the concepts it presents.

Concept #1: Removing Boundaries and Sharing Decision Making

Concept: To create our vision and move towards that vision we must work together not only in the defining of our vision but in our understanding of how we work together. We must first consciously remove boundaries or barriers that did not allow some stakeholders to lead or work together equitably. We must create conditions for stakeholders to feel motivated and valued as part of the process.

In action: We identify where there is inequity between stakeholders, discuss how to achieve equity and then inspire one another toward shared achievements. We define success and use reflection to analyze the processes we used to get there so we can make improvements moving forward.

Consider this scenario for early care and education:

Scenario

Home care providers Sunny and Talal hold parent meetings twice per year. They like to get families together so that they can build relationships over a potluck dinner and learn about what children are studying in the classroom portion of Sunny and Talal's home.

The home has a large grassy field next to the classroom. The classroom windows look out on the large field. Sunny and Talal have a small fenced play area with a climbing structure with wood chip ground cover and sand box behind their home where children spend outside time.

Mom Mary stands in the classroom looking out the windows. Then she comments to Talal, "Too bad you can't use that lovely field as an outdoor play area—who owns it?" Talal replies, "Well actually we own it, but we couldn't afford to purchase the proper fencing when we opened. We had hoped to do that in about five years when we have more equity built in this property." Dad Jason has wandered over and heard this exchange. He mentions, "You know Talal, my brother in law has a fencing company, and I bet we could get a discount." Mary adds, "Would you be open to some fundraising?" Talal replies, "Well yes, I guess, but wow, I never considered those options. Why would parents want to invest in our property?" Mary comments, "Let's bring it up and see what people say."

When the families all sit down together, Mom Mary tells the families about the conversation. Another Mom comments, "So, how do we fundraise for someone's home business?" A grandparent, Verlene adds, "I'm not a parent, but it would be a wonderful thing for them to do for the children Sunny and Talal care for each day, and for future children – like a legacy. My husband is a retired contractor, and built many fences. Could we do some of the work ourselves?"

Sunny offers, "You know, maybe we could borrow part of the money required on our home line of credit – that way we are assuming some responsibility as well." Talal gets a paper and pencil and starts taking notes as the parents and family members start brainstorming.

Concept #2: Relationships and Work/Life Balance

Concept: In collective leadership time is spent understanding the relational processes between people that encourage leadership in a group, and how communication and planning help all stakeholders to understand and navigate professional relationships. An invitation to bring wholeness to the table is part of the process. Stakeholders work to engage and encourage relationships that include a focus on mind, body, and spirit, and they identify the real benefits to the organization when focused attention is placed there. Engaging in work/life balance is an important part of the work, not just an afterthought.

In action: Time and energy is dedicated to communication, building relationships, and learning about each other. Best practice is identified and utilized as stakeholders learn how to navigate decision making together. Stakeholders are engaged in connecting to all parts of themselves and actively supporting the "wholeness" of others and the organization. Success in relationship building and satisfaction in personal growth and self care result in excitement about work and commitment to a larger vision.

Consider this scenario:

Scenario

Teacher Asha brings a book about practicing yoga with children to morning circle time. She teaches the children one pose and helps them take some deep breaths. After circle time Teacher Ken rolls his eyes to Teacher Jane and comments, "Kids can't do yoga, I hope she doesn't want us to eat bean sprouts next!" Teacher Jane smiles and says, "Now Ken, yoga is really kind of fun, have you ever tried it? I was going to do a yoga class but never signed up—I think this might be fun—come on, have an open mind." She laughs and gives Teacher Ken a fist bump.

At pick-up time, Molly tells her Aunt Sarah that they did yoga today. Aunt Sarah approaches Teacher Jane and exclaims, "Molly told me about the yoga! I am a yoga teacher, I would love to come and do some yoga with all of you!" Teacher Jane says, "That is wonderful! Let's pull in Teacher Asha and talk about schedules." One thing leads to another and Aunt Sarah is visiting the classroom regularly practicing yoga with children.

Director Bill visits the classroom and notices how calm everyone seems as they practice deep breathing. He asks Aunt Sarah if she would like to do some yoga with staff at in-service next month; she says she is happy to do so. The yoga session is such a hit that the teachers ask her if she would be willing to practice with them once a month for the last 20 minutes of their team meeting. During this time Teacher Asha has adopted some additional healthy practices in her personal life and has lost 10 pounds. Teacher Jane asks Asha to share what she is doing as she wants to become more fit as well. Teacher Ken finds himself doing deep breathing at home when he is irritated about something, he smiles to himself thinking, "Now for the bean sprouts, I'll tell Asha it's working!"

Concept #3: Connecting Experiences/Collective Knowledge

Concept: The idea that one person holds all the knowledge is refuted with the idea that everyone has something to add that will improve an idea or plan. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A collective intelligence exists that is deeper than individual intelligence, and when stakeholders connect with intentionality and deeper inquiry the result is better than what might have been designed previously by only one person.

In action: Time, energy and respect are utilized strategically to create opportunities for stakeholders to share and work together. These activities result in new connections and new learning. These activities are documented and used to lead stakeholders to new ways of doing things or "course correcting" plans and visions.

Consider this scenario:

Scenario

The laboratory school on the campus has a pre-k classroom. The classroom has a sensory table, and teachers place dry materials and wet materials in the table each week on a rotating basis. One week new teacher's assistant Jamal places rice in the sensory table. He found the bag of rice in the store room and assumed it was available for use in the classroom.

Cook Chanel pops her head into the morning team meeting – "Did anyone see the large bag of rice? It's missing." Jamal says, "I used it for the sensory table—I'm sorry I thought it was a classroom supply." Lead Teacher Malik comments, "I was taught that it is not ok to place food items in the sensory table— some families may not have enough to eat— it's really disrespectful to throw away food."

A discussion ensues:

"I got it on sale, we'll never use it all anyway." Cook Chanel

"What if we then use it for compost in the garden?" Teacher Summer

"I'm confused—we used macaroni yesterday to make the Coquille Tribe Indian necklaces." New Teacher Assistant Jamal

"That is a project in the Coquille unit that student teacher Natalie is teaching—it's really cool, I think her Grandfather is an elder." Teacher Malik

"It was old macaroni I brought from home, so it's ok, no one would want to eat it." Teacher Summer

"You can eat old macaroni, it won't hurt you." Cook Chanel

Director Laurie has stepped into the office, "Hi everyone, sounds like we've got some great topics to discuss —first, food in the sensory table is definitely a topic we should talk about—I'd like to hear more from everyone about food and how we can respect our families, and our school community, and what your thoughts and beliefs are about how we use food in our center. Second, I want to talk about the necklace project—some Indian tribes assign special significance to the materials they used to make items to wear or keep —the Hopi Indians assigned meaning to marks and materials in their jewelry. How are we teaching about these items, and let's talk about how to make sure we are making connections for children and families that are respectful and informed. I am so glad Natalie is interested in teaching about the Coquille Tribe! Let's pull her into our next team meeting."

Concept #4: Collaborative Decision Making

Concept: When people are willing to make some leadership decisions together instead of someone imposing decisions on others, better outcomes can result for more stakeholders.

In action: People deliberately create and engage in opportunities for meaningful connections with each other that center on key processes and decisions. As stakeholders build and maintain relationships, collaborative decision making can occur naturally and be sustained. People learn how to make agreements, give and take, and design accountability structures and processes that sustain momentum in important decision making.

Consider this scenario:

Scenario

New Director Abby sends out an email to all staff that states that she will be doing the new staff schedules this week and sends them out. At the end of the week on Friday the schedule is shared, with a hard copy placed on everyone's desk. Teacher Dan comments, "Awesome, I got the late shift—perfect." as he collects his coat to leave. Teacher Yvette slams her desk drawer, "Abby gave me the early shift, she knows I have to drop my son off at school and can't get here on time. I don't want him on the bus with the older kids. I'm going to have to talk with her about this." Teacher Assistant Finn claims, "Well I can't work over lunch, I have class—so this won't work." He throws it in the trash can and leaves. Classroom Assistants Jenny and Piper don't have anything to add as they leave for the day.

By Monday, staff are stewing internally. Teacher Dan is certain he'll get bumped to early shift and is feeling resentful, Teacher Yvette is worried about her son, and Assistant Teacher Finn feels like no one cares about his life. Director Abby notices that Monday and Tuesday staff seem a bit disgruntled, and in Wednesday's team meeting there is a stony silence when she enters the room. Teacher Yvette starts with, "Abby you told us that when we had a concern we should speak up, so I am—the new

schedule is not going to work for me." She crosses her arms, and looks to Finn for support. Teacher Dan looks uncomfortable and states, "Well I like it, and we have an agreement to rotate shifts whenever we can so that everybody gets the shift they want some of the time." Jenny and Piper exchange glances as if to say, "Here we go! They are going to argue!"

After an uncomfortable pause Director Abby reflects, "Thank you for telling me that you are concerned, Yvette. I meant it when I said I want to be accountable. But, I am the director, and my schedule policy is clearly stated in the employee handbook." She looks around at the frowning faces in the room, and realizes that she may have a problem on her hands that will be hard to untangle. "I have to admit, there is no way to make everybody happy with the schedule—that's why I have a policy. I'm going to have to think about this before I make any changes."

During the following week Abby does not mention the schedule and she feels angry about it. "I'm the boss!" she thinks to herself. Teachers Dan and Yvette avoid each other and Finn feels disconnected. At Wednesday's team meeting Abby is again greeted with an uncomfortable silence when she enters the room.

Teacher Dan states, "Ok, I know we are all thinking about the schedule. Look, we need to work it out somehow. Abby, you did make an agreement to work with us on issues." Director Abby says, "I did, and I meant it." Assistant Finn exclaims, "Well I have to say I feel a bit disrespected. Everyone knows I have class at lunch, and now I'll have to drop it or quit." Abby looks surprised, "Finn, I didn't know that was ongoing—I'm sorry, I don't want you to quit, you are a really important part of the team." Classroom Assistant Piper offers, "You know, if Finn and I started early, he could still go to class. I would actually rather start early anyway." Teacher Yvette says, "That works for Finn but it doesn't solve my problem, I can't get here and get my son to school on time." She stares meaningfully at Teacher Dan who looks at the floor. Director Abby states, "Well ok, how about this—I will come in early so Yvette can start a bit later. That way everyone gets what they want until summer session. Yvette, would you be willing to start early in summer?" Yvette replies, "Sure! I can do that." Teacher Dan states, "Well I would be willing to change shifts later in the year if it's necessary, but thanks for letting me have the late shift now." Abby reflects, "Thanks for bringing this forward, let's work on more shared decision making together."

Concept #5: Flexibility and Continuity

Concept: Organizations are complicated, and even seemingly straightforward work is complex. Paying attention to how problems emerge and change, and how people adapt to solutions (intended or unintended) provide opportunities for understanding how the organization is growing, learning, and developing. Avoiding rigid structures, allowing for creativity and spontaneity and then tracking the progress of situations or problems promotes the design of better practices.

In action: Practices can be both planned and spontaneous. Allowing people to generate ideas and try new processes can result in learning that can benefit the organization. Allowing for creativity, and tracking the progress of problem solving will provide an institutional history from which to learn.

Consider this scenario:

Scenario

It is a team meeting day for the teachers in the pre-k room. Lead teacher Jeremy reflects, "I wish we could get our assessments completed on time this year. If we could do that we would have all the time we need for our water unit, I hate that it gets cut short every year, the children love it." Jeremy gives a heavy sigh and frowns down at his clipboard. Teacher Assistant Cooper comments, "Well I admit that I drag my feet on them, it's my least favorite activity."

After a short silence, Teacher Assistant Sylvie states, "I'm not sure I understand why we don't get them done on time each year, Cooper I don't think it's because you do them more slowly, it seems like we always run out of time." She smiles at Cooper.

Director Emma comments, "How can I help? I can see this is bothering you." Classroom Assistant Pam says, "Well I learned how to do the physical assessments last year. What if we were able to find someone else to do the breaks in the infant toddler room? Then I could spend almost two hours each day doing some of the assessments." Jeremy exclaims, "That's right! That's a great idea Pam – Emma, do you think we could do that?" Emma replies, "I don't see why not if I get on the phone right now for a substitute – I'm not sure I can guarantee 2 hours a day though." Cooper smiles and states, "Well I like the water

> unit too so I can commit to moving faster on mine. Let's get out the sprinkler this year!" Teacher Jeremy laughs, "Only if you take charge of it!" Director Emma states, "OK, help me make sure I understand what we are saying here, and let's make some commitments together and individually to get this figured out – great thinking!"

Again, when we dig more deeply into collective leadership, we notice it is more complicated than at first glance. The "actions" described above feel slippery – they feel hard to link to actual skills we can learn. Often when we become employed in early care and learning, regardless of our position, we think the expectations of us will be made clear by someone further up the chain of authority—as we know, that doesn't always happen.

> You, **just as you are** authentically, have leadership skills. Some are your gifts, some you learned. Some you might practice more often, some you might decide you need to let go of. **You are in charge** of deciding what to do and how and when to take your own leadership skills to whatever the next step is for you in your work and development.

You have reflected on models, stakeholder roles, and leaders. You have probably already realized that the skills and behaviors of leadership are often skills we (and you) already possess. Sometimes they are skills that get rusty and sometimes they are skills we over use.Good news – you can start where you are, and you have many wise guides with help to offer!

Your Call To Reflect

Can you recall a time you used skills or behaviors you possess intuitively, or learned from someone else, to step in and lead? This might be an event from your professional or personal life. What were the skills or behaviors you used? Were you aware you were leading at the time?

Remember the big idea about people not liking change we mentioned earlier? Well, people don't like it when other people disagree with them either – so another spoiler alert: collective leadership requires an understanding of professional ethics. Have you ever left work thinking to yourself, "That's it, I'm quitting!" because someone did something you did not like or agree with? If quitting your job would be a bad idea for your grocery budget, say hello to practicing your leadership skills.

Authentically Practicing Leadership Skills

At this point, you might be saying "Hey, just provide me with a list of skills and I'll do them when I get promoted, or get the job I want!"

Spoiler Alert and Big Idea: Leadership skills and behaviors are not by-products of getting a promotion or a job. Leadership skills and behaviors are a choice regardless of your current job.

We know that it is a ***myth*** that job skills come only from getting "better jobs". In fact, the ***truth*** is that all of your life experiences provide you with information about leadership skills and behaviors.

You may be thinking, "But which behaviors and skills are effective, and when to use them?" Collective Leadership looks complicated! Let us take a look at some leadership skills and behaviors that are effective and can be practiced in the journey of collective leadership.

Four Basic Leadership Skills

Let's begin with some foundational skills that you can practice regardless of your role, and that probably include skills you already possess intuitively.

Skill #1: The Skill of Influence

To influence is to have the ability to effect change in someone. Choosing to use a particular influential approach helps you communicate your vision or goals, organize people, and build commitment from stakeholders. At a basic level, influence is getting someone to do what you want them to do. But genuine commitment from other people is often required for you to accomplish

more complex tasks, hence there are a variety of strategies for influencing people. Ultimately, influence is a tool that helps you to get things done and achieve outcomes you want or have to make happen.

Influencers can force and compel using coercion, or can more subtly influence through trust, emotion, and logic. When a leader needs action and compliance is critical, obligation through a mandate is required. When there is resistance or unwillingness to comply, coercion is the influential approach that may be chosen. These are often found in employee handbooks, contracts, and job descriptions.

For example:

- When the fire alarm goes off all staff are to assist children as they exit the building, regardless of the lunch and break schedule.
- Employees who are late (more than 15 minutes past the start of their shift) more than three times without notifying the director will be terminated.

When choosing to use influence it is critical to know your stakeholders. Each person has special concerns and issues, so various groups and individuals will require different approaches for influencing. Early in your career, influence is about working effectively with people over whom you have no authority. It requires the ability to present logical and compelling arguments and engage in give-and-take communication. In more positions of authority influence is focused more on steering long-range objectives, inspiration, and motivation in the people you manage.

Three skills to practice that are influential:

- **Logic** – Logic appeals to people's rational and reasonable thinking. You present an argument for the best choice of action based on organizational benefits, personal benefits, or both, appealing to people's minds and reasoning.

  Example

  At the staff meeting Bus Driver Ann points out that she is almost always on time, and if a staff member was at the curb when she pulls up, it would save time unloading children from the bus, and afternoon snacks would not run late every day, causing the break schedule to back up.

- **Emotions –** Emotion connects an idea or a message to an individual's goals and values. An idea that promotes a person's feelings of well-being, service, or sense of belonging tugs at the heart and can garner support.

Example

Staff in the Butterfly classroom have made a pact to support each other in planning for healthy dinner preparation each evening, so using group texting, everyone reports on what they made for dinner after work. Nathan is always tempted when he drives past a fast food restaurant, but he feels obligated to support his colleagues so doesn't stop and pick up a hamburger.

- **Cooperation –** A cooperative or collaborative appeal can create a feeling of teamwork, a sense that alliances are being built and stakeholders are not alone. Offering strategies for working together to accomplish a mutually important goal extends a hand to others in the organization and is an extremely effective way of influencing others.

Example

At the staff meeting Teacher Assistant Joel points out that if all three staff assist in clean-up for 15 minutes after the last child leaves, everyone will be able to leave on time. Staff Heather and Dawn are on board, as they often have to stay late waiting for clean up to finish. They are happy to help in order to leave on time.

Your Call To Reflect

Which of these three feels natural to you? Can you think of a time you were an unintentional influencer? Can you think of a situation in which you could choose an appropriate and intentional influential tactic and use your influence as a leader?

As you match influential skills to situations you wish to improve you are building the next level of influencing skills:

- **Organizational Intelligence:** When you practice a variety of influential skills, learning more about the people around you, what they care about, what bothers them, and how they prefer to communicate, you will begin to understand how to get things done and work with the reality of your organizations individuals and quirks in order to lead effectively.

Example

The Blue classroom team likes to do lesson planning together, so the schedule is arranged for them to have some time each week together. The Yellow classroom team likes their lead to do all the planning, so they provide him with a few extra hours once a week while they stay in the classroom. Director Ann allows for the teams to organize differently even though it makes more work for her.

- **Serving Authentically:** Through the intentional actions you choose as you practice leading, you will find what best matches who you are authentically. Your "youness" will be noticed, and you will credibly promote yourself—while also promoting what's good for the entire organization.

Example

Director Heather notices that Teacher Assistant Jeremy (an extroverted young college student) is always making suggestions that the team likes, and in fact they have begun asking him his opinion. She wonders if he would like to move into a lead teacher role.

- **Building Trust:** Leadership involves guiding and helping people through risk and change. Trust is essential to this guidance. All the leadership skills discussed here have the potential to build trust, and the wise leaders look to trust as foundational to success.

Example

A new assistant joins the Green classroom team, and Lead Teacher Jim organizes a welcome lunch for her, so that all can begin to form relationships.

- **Building and Maintaining Networks:** No leader is truly acting alone. Leaders are empowered by their connections with others and look for others to connect with. As you recognize the support and collaboration others provide to you, and you build trust and understanding, you and those around you will feel satisfied. Networks of people with shared ideas and goals get things done!

Example

Family Home provider Mandy organizes with her assistants and two regular parent volunteers a few days in which they all receive some professional development paid for by her business—they have asked to learn more about lesson planning, and so she organizes the time for them to attend and provides a nice lunch for them.

Skill #2: The Skill of Agility or Being Nimble

Being agile or nimble means to be able to move quickly, to have flexibility, and to pivot when needed. When you are agile in your learning, you choose to seek out the lessons of experience, remember those lessons, and value them in your growth as a leader. This calls for recognizing when new behaviors, leadership skills, or attitudes are needed and accepting responsibility for developing them. Learning agility involves learning from mistakes, asking insightful questions, and being open to feedback. It includes taking advantage of opportunities to learn, and responding with as much intentionality as possible to new situations. For leaders, learning agility is also about inspiring learning in others and creating a culture of learning throughout the organization – modeling for the leaders you are growing. A key word for this skill is accountability.

In early care and education, stakeholders are often asked to behave in an authoritative approach that requires significant learning agility. Regardless of your role, to be the authority is to take the lead, make a final decision, take command, act as an authority figure in a situation. Authority figures are perceived as powerful, regardless of the accuracy of their knowledge. Most structures that involve people (businesses/institutions) have structures of authority, in which some people manage or have authority over other people.

In early care and education, adults are perceived as the authority figures by children. Often teachers are perceived by parents as authority figures. Authority and power are closely linked, with authority figures granted power by systems or by other people. All stakeholders have the choice to act with authority, and behaving with authority is a choice.

Choices to consider as you learn who you are as a leader include:

1. Seek out new and different experiences. Remain open minded and broaden your perspective, even when you feel vulnerable.
2. Accept and welcome challenges or the unfamiliar. Find the willingness to move out of your comfort zone. Dig deep and allow these experiences to change you!
3. Reflect and internalize these new experiences. When you take the time to truly internalize you are then able to recall and share later. Process your learning so next steps become evident.
4. Be open to criticism and create a strategy for taking in feedback from others and being accountable when needed. View feedback as a gift of learning. You may not like it, and it may be uncomfortable, but there is value in it for you nonetheless.
5. Move on! Many of us feel the need to get things done quickly, and feel the pressure to act, causing us to over think at times, or hesitate. It's ok to be creative! You can use accountability later if something doesn't work out.

Skill #3: The Skill of Communication

Communication is one of the most basic leadership skills all of us need to develop and refine during our professional careers. Communication is consistently rated among the most important skills for leaders to be successful. Communication is also embedded in a number of other leadership skills and behaviors,

Communication begins with practicing the art of active listening. The active listening skill set involves these 6 active listening skills:

Pay attention: When you are talking with a colleague formally, or even informally, don't cut others off, appear distracted, finish their sentences, or start formulating your answer before they've finished speaking. Pay attention to your body language as well as your frame of mind when engaging in listening. Be focused on the moment, and behave from a place of respect as the listener. Set a comfortable tone that gives your colleague an opportunity to think and speak. Allow "wait time" before responding. If you can't be attentive, be up front and set up another time to meet.

Withhold judgment: Active listening requires an open mind and lack of prejudice. As a listener and a leader, be open to new ideas, new perspectives, and new possibilities when practicing active listening. Even when good listeners have strong views, they consciously suspend judgment, reserve criticisms, and avoid arguing or articulating their point right away. This takes practice!

Reflect: When you're the listener, don't assume that you understand your colleague correctly — and don't assume that they are aware that you are actively listening. Mirror your colleagues' information and emotions by periodically repeating key points to assure them that you are paying attention. Reflecting is an active listening technique that indicates to your colleague that you are not only paying attention but understanding their points.

Clarify: Do not hesitate to ask questions about any issue or statement that is confusing or unclear when engaging in active listening. As the listener, if you have doubt or confusion about what your colleague has said, say something like, *"Let me see if I'm clear. Are you talking about ...?"* or *"Wait a minute. I didn't follow you."* Open-ended, clarifying, and probing questions are important active listening tools that encourage the person to do the work of self-reflection and problem solving, rather than justifying or defending a position, or trying to guess the "right answer." Examples include: "*What do you think about ...?"* or *"Tell me about ...?"* and *"Will you further explain/describe ...?"* When engaging in active listening, the emphasis is on asking rather than telling. It invites a thoughtful response and maintains a spirit of collaboration during the interaction.

Summarize: Restating key points or ideas as the conversation proceeds confirms your grasp of the other person's point of view. It also helps both parties to be clear on understanding and perhaps next steps. Briefly summarize what you have understood while practicing active listening, and ask the other person to do the same, especially when strong feelings are involved.

Share: Active listening is first about understanding the other person, then about being understood as the listener. As you gain a clearer understanding of the other person's perspective or problem, you can consider when to introduce your ideas, feelings, or even suggestions. You might talk about a similar experience you had or share an idea that was triggered by a comment made in the conversation. Depending on the situation this may help the conversation to shift into problem solving. As the listener, continue to question, guide, and offer, but be careful about solving problems before allowing colleagues the opportunity to be problem solvers themselves.

Active listening is one of many communication skills you can practice as you choose to pursue your own growth as a leader. You want to think with clarity, express ideas, and share information with a multitude of stakeholders. You can choose to learn how to handle the rapid flows of information in your workplace, and among all the stakeholders you work with. Effective communication and effective leadership are closely braided together. Leaders need to be skilled communicators in a variety of relationships at many levels, especially in early care and education.

Skill #4: The Skill of Self-Awareness

Self-awareness means understanding your strengths and weaknesses, along with a willingness to consider your mental models, biases, and triggers. As we discussed earlier, gaining self-awareness is anything but simple, and change can be hard to implement. Your ability to be self-aware is one of the critical leadership skills for sustainable and long-term effectiveness as a leader. Self-awareness is a challenging skill to develop, and it serves as the foundation to many other skills we have discussed.

Your effectiveness as a leader is less impactful or more impactful based on how well you understand yourself, your awareness of how others view you, and how you choose to navigate the resulting interactions between you and your colleagues. Here are basic behaviors you can implement as you focus on your awareness of yourself.

- **Your Own Wisdom.** There are insights from your experience that you can apply to the challenges you face with others. You bring your life experience and your learnings from others in your life to every situation. Insights from your life won't come to mind immediately, but as you practice reflecting on how you are going to choose to lead, and what has been productive (or not) in the past you find that your own wisdom will help you. This requires practicing deep reflection as part of your self awareness – looking for bias, mental models, and assumptions.
- **Your Professional Identity.** This is about who you are in your current professional setting. Just as you have a personal identity, you can develop a professional identity that demonstrates leadership. Your professional identity influences how you are leading whether you're aware of it or not. In our diverse world it's critical to understand our own identity and how it shapes interactions with others. Knowing your own professional identity may help you find common ground with others that leads to stronger relationships.
- **Your Professional Reputation.** This is how others perceive you as a leader and professional based on your current and previous behavior. Your professional reputation is what others think of you as a colleague, a leader, a stakeholder. Understanding your reputation helps you comprehend how you may be perceived and judged by others. Knowing how you're perceived is sometimes difficult and requires trying to see yourself through other lenses. You can choose to change your current behavior, and you can influence how you would like others to think of you if you choose to change. This will take self-awareness, and trusted mentors.
- **Leadership Potential.** How do people know the leadership skills and behaviors you're capable of, and how do you communicate your potential? What aspirational set of leadership skills and behaviors do you want colleagues to see in and from you? Defining how you'd like to be perceived allows you to choose what to work on, and where to start. Strong leadership skills can only be developed if you're self-aware, willing to consider your leadership reputation, define your professional identity, and be reflective. For those who work at it, greater self-awareness will pay off no matter what your role.

Bringing it all Together

In this section we have examined how power is interwoven with leadership, introduced the current trend of stakeholders as sharing power and leadership in education for increased student and institutional success, described two leadership models, and examined many specific skills that you can practice as a leader in early care and education. We introduced the reality that all of us are leaders in early care and education, and you have reflected on how your role in the field and in other work settings has created mental models for you depending on your position and perceptions.

We have introduced you to the collective leadership model as the one best suited for early care and education and offered some foundational skills you can choose to practice to promote that model.

We provided a scenario for each element of collective leadership earlier in this module. Can you see yourself in any of the scenarios? Might you, without knowing it, have been a contributor to collective leadership? Perhaps in a scenario like any of those written, you chose to use a leadership skill or behavior to make things better for you, or for a colleague. We think you probably have done one or the other, and that as was stated earlier, you already possess some of the skills described here.

It is our hope that at this point you see yourself as a leader in early childhood care and education, no matter what your current role, and that the collective leadership model makes sense to you as an effective and satisfying model for building and growing successful, intentional stakeholders.

Whatever your current role is, we know you will continue to grow and develop. Take the skills and behaviors provided for you here and create a plan for using them, every day. Start small and track your progress as you see results. Take some time to reflect on what puzzles you in your working relationships, and look for some help from other resources. Weekly jotting in a notebook will keep you on track, and you will see your persistence paying off. We will be with you on your journey!

Citations

- O'Neill, Cassandra, Brinkerhoff, Monica (2018). *Five Elements of Collective Leadership for Early Childhood Professionals*. Redleaf Press and NAEYC: St. Paul: MN, Washington DC.
- Leading Effectively Staff (2020). *4 Keys to Strengthen Your Ability to Influence Others*. Center for Creative Leadership. https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/4-keys-strengthen-ability-influence-others/
- Leading Effectively Staff (2020). *The Core Leadership Skills you Need in Every Role*. Center for Creative Leadership. https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/fundamental-4-core-leadership-skills-for-every-career-stage/
- Leading Effectively Staff (2020). *4 Sure-Fire Ways to Boost Your Self Awareness*. Center for Creative Leadership.https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/4-ways-boost-self-awareness/
- Leading Effectively Staff (2020). *Use Active Listening to Coach Others*. Center for Creative Leadership. https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/coaching-others-use-active-listening-skills/
- Leading Effectively Staff (2020). *Why Communication is So Important for Leaders*. Center for Creative Leadership. https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/communication-1-idea-3-facts-5-tips/

This page titled Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

1: Ethical Leadership

Learning Objectives

- Objective 1: Describe the ethical responsibilities that guide programs for early care and education and the professionals that work in them.
- Objective 2:Use the NAEYC code of ethical conduct to guide decision making[TM1] .
- Objective 3: Recognize how culture, bias, and belief systems impact and influence ethical dilemmas.

Running an Ethical Program is Complex

What are ethics? From a practical standpoint it can be difficult to connect to the concept because they are ideals and principles we aspire and work towards. Ethics can be easy to read about and then set aside as something you don't really need or might come back to some day. However, ethics are something you use everyday in decision making, relationships, and interactions with children, families, colleagues, and your community.

As an early care and education professional, I would frequently be faced with any of the following ethical scenarios:

1. Responding to a parent when they ask me to keep their 3 year old from napping because they are not sleeping at night.
2. Unpacking a child's lunch that included a sandwich made out of chocolate chips, marshmallow crème and sprinkles—every day. Yes every day!
3. Overhearing a team member complaining about another team member.
4. Being asked by my supervisor to "just do this today because licensing is coming by."

How did I navigate these challenges? Sometimes not too well. But once I learned there was a tool to use, the National Association for the Education of Young Children's Code of Ethical Conduct, I was much better prepared to recognize and respond to ethical dilemmas when they occurred! The NAEYC created the Code of Ethical Conduct to guide professionals in how to navigate ethical situations and dilemmas. Let's first dive into some definitions and foundational concepts.

Commonly Used Words

Ethics, ethical responsibilities, and ethical leadership are big topics that we will introduce in this module.

Ethics are moral principles that govern a person's behavior or the conducting of an activity.

Ethical responsibilities is the ability to recognize, interpret, and act upon multiple principles and values according to the standards within a given field and/or context.

Ethical Leadership is defined as "leadership demonstrating and promoting 'normatively appropriate conduct through personal actions and interpersonal relations'."

Is there a connection between values, morality, and ethics? Generally, the words are used interchangeably. There is, however, a difference:

- Values are the qualities we believe intrinsically to be desirable and that we prize for ourselves
- Morality is usually more theoretical; it is a philosophical concept that is about our beliefs about right and wrong
- Ethics are the practical application of morality in daily life. The term ethics refers to a conscious deliberation regarding moral choices.

The difference is that of theory and practice. If a person has a moral character, he or she will generally deal with other people in an ethical manner.

Example

I'm considering stealing a cookie. I value honesty, and morally I believe stealing is wrong. My personal ethics then guide me that because I value honesty, I decide not to steal the cookie. If I did steal the cookie, I would be acting outside of my values. Easy—right? Only if you are planning on stealing a cookie. Our personal values, ethics, and morality are developed based on our experiences as we grow. If each professional applied their personal code of ethics to their work with children and families it would be very difficult to navigate.

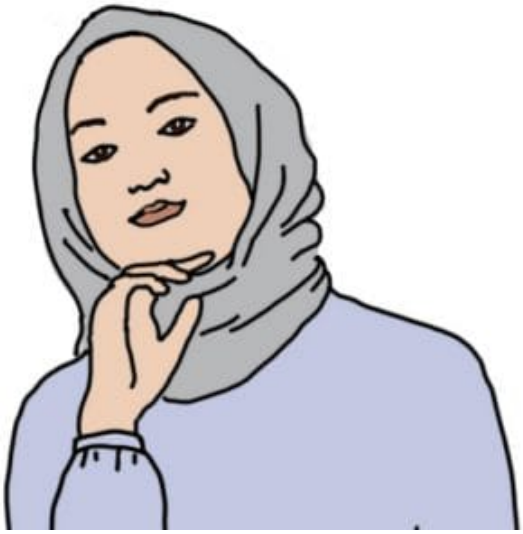
NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct

A code of ethics is adopted by a profession to assist the members in distinguishing right from wrong within the context of early childhood education and independent of personal values and belief systems. While it may seem that right and wrong or very concrete and easy concepts, in the work with children and families it is not always an easy choice to make. For leaders, the decisions can be even harder and often leads to a choice that makes someone unhappy. Remember, the Code of Ethical Conduct is based on our profession, not our personal values.

The National Association for the Education of Young Children has created and shared the Ethical Code of Conduct and the Ethical Code of Conduct for Administrators to guide the decision making of ECE professionals. But what is our code of ethics? And why is it important to our profession? Great questions!

The Code of Ethical Conduct is sectioned by category of responsibility. Ethical responsibilities to children, families, colleagues, and community. (code of conduct will be hyper linked here). As you work through this module, you will notice that each section is divided into Ideals and Principles to offer guidance in our work with children and families. Take a look at the Ethical Code of Conduct and familiarize yourself on how it is organized and what the profession has determined is important to know and understand.

Deeper dives can be found on the NAEYC website. There are many resources available and you are encouraged to see the resources at the end of the modules for further study.



Seven Videos on the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zUsoH1QYBXs&list=PLKHYPqmkLJq20IMUPWMF8FPQdVvb0UZ2f

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

NAEYC recognizes that those who work with young children face many daily decisions that have moral and ethical implications. The NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct offers guidelines for responsible behavior and sets forth a common basis for resolving the principal ethical dilemmas encountered in early childhood care and education. The Statement of Commitment is not part of the Code, but is a personal acknowledgement of an individual's willingness to embrace the distinctive values and moral obligations of the field of early childhood care and education.

Your Call to Reflect

After reading the Code of Ethical Conduct and watching the videos, think about the challenges listed at the beginning of this module. Would the Code of Ethical Conduct have been helpful? Why or why not?

Many of the decisions you make on a daily basis are fairly easy or follow a specific program policy. Some decisions are tougher and can involve values and beliefs systems or cultural differences, which can lead to an ethical dilemma. Ethical dilemmas occur when it is not clear what the best solution is and choosing one solution violates the other.

Example

A parent may ask you to keep their 4 year old awake during nap time because they are not going to bed until late in the evening. We have an ethical responsibility to support the development of children (allow them to sleep when they need to) and we also have an ethical responsibility to honor families as a child's first teachers and to listen and respect their input into how their children are raised. Tough decision! This is where the Code of Ethical Conduct can help you.

The Code of Ethical Conduct reads:

- P-1.1—Above all, we shall not harm children. We shall not participate in practices that are emotionally damaging, physically harmful, disrespectful, degrading, dangerous, exploitative, or intimidating to children. This principle has precedence over all others in this Code.
- P-2.4—We shall ensure that the family is involved in significant decisions affecting their child.
- P-2.2—We shall inform families of program philosophy, policies, curriculum, assessment system, cultural practices, and personnel qualifications, and explain why we teach as we do—which should be in accordance with our ethical responsibilities to children.

In this example, the Code of Ethical Conduct would offer guidance as to how to communicate with the family about what is developmentally appropriate for the child and what your program policies are. You could empathize with the family and share your understanding about how difficult it can be when children don't sleep. You could share that your program policies state that children are offered rest time and if they fall asleep they are not to be woken up. You could discuss different options (if any) and select a choice that honors the family and adheres to the ethical code of conduct. One solution could be a family member picking up the child during nap time and returning them in the afternoon after nap is over.

Ethical situations are a challenge in every early care and education setting. This is why it is critical that professionals understand the different terms, how they connect, and how the Code of Ethical Conduct can support professionals in navigating ethical situations.

The Code of Ethical Conduct is not just about situations with children and families. It is also used to support leaders in understanding their ethical responsibilities. As a leader you have the opportunity to influence other people's behaviors and share your knowledge and experiences. This means that you must be careful and consider your actions through the lens of ethics.

Ethical Leadership

Your Call to Reflect

What do you think is important for a leader to be? What values do you hold for yourself and others in leadership positions?

Leaders by their very nature wield power over others in some capacity. Even in a Collective Leadership Model, you are often able to make decisions, allocate resources, and behave in ways that greatly impact other people. This power can be tempting to use in ways that may not be ethical; e.g., to favor one person's needs over another or to demand compliance over a questionable policy.

Three key questions for ethical leadership include:

1. What is the relationship and balance of power between me as a leader and those I have influence over? Do I have too much power as a leader? Do others feel they have input in decisions I make that impact them?
2. Do I sometimes feel tempted to ignore a rule or offer an exception?
3. Am I trustworthy? Do I follow through on what I say and am I there to support my team members?

Key Takeaways

Trust is a critical responsibility for a leader. When you and your team members trust each other, there are fewer ethical situations. Why? Because you demonstrate behavior that is respectful, collaborative, and transparent. Your fellow team members reflect that behavior back in their interactions with you and others. Communication is open, honest, and authentic.

Communication is one of the areas where ethics and leadership can get caught up in culture, values and beliefs. In some cultures, it is a cultural norm to:

- To be untruthful, be vague or less than forthcoming with all of the truth to spare someone shame or embarrassment or be very direct and open.
- To appeal to another person's emotions to get what you want or to be factual and analytical with your request.
- To keep secrets or to share everything with others.

In the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct supplement for Early Childhood Program Administrators, there are a couple of key principles that can offer guidance in these situations:

- P-3.1—We shall provide staff members with safe and supportive working conditions that respect human dignity, honor confidences, and permit them to carry out their responsibilities through performance evaluation, written grievance procedures, constructive feedback, and opportunities for continuing professional development and advancement.
- P-3.2—We shall develop and maintain comprehensive written personnel policies that define program standards. These policies shall be given to new staff members and shall be easily accessible and available for review by all staff members.

In each case, leaders must carefully weigh the policies of the program with the individual skills and competencies of each team member. Educating other professionals about the Code of Ethical Conduct is a great place to start!

Your Call to Reflect

Think of different people you have worked with who demonstrate one or more of these cultural values and beliefs listed. How might you approach each situation differently as a result of learning about the Code of Ethical Conduct?

Ethics and Confidentiality

Why is it important to maintain confidentiality when working with children and families? What type of information is important to keep confidential?

Confidentiality is critically important when working with children and families. Confidentiality is defined as keeping information secure and separate, only available for those who need to have it. There are several principles in the Code of Ethical Conduct that speak directly to confidentiality.

The following principles from the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct relate directly to confidentiality.

P-1.4–We shall use two-way communications to involve all those with relevant knowledge (including families and staff) in decisions concerning a child, as appropriate, ensuring confidentiality of sensitive information.

P-2.12–We shall develop written policies for the protection of confidentiality and the disclosure of children's records. These policy documents shall be made available to all program personnel and families. Disclosure of children's records beyond family members, program personnel, and consultants having an obligation of confidentiality shall require familial consent (except in cases of abuse or neglect).

P-2.13 We shall maintain confidentiality and shall respect the family's right to privacy, refraining from disclosure of confidential information and intrusion into family life. However, when we have reason to believe that a child's welfare is at risk, it is permissible to share confidential information with agencies, as well as with individuals who have legal responsibility for intervening in the child's interest.

P-2.14–In cases where family members are in conflict with one another, we shall work openly, sharing our observations of the child, to help all parties involved make informed decisions. We shall refrain from becoming an advocate for one party.

P-3A.2–When we have concerns about the professional behavior of a co-worker, we shall first let that person know of our concern in a way that shows respect for personal dignity and for the diversity to be found among staff members, and then attempt to resolve the matter collegially and in a confidential manner.

As you can see, confidentiality encompasses your work with children, families, and coworkers. Most organizations have confidentiality policies that include written and verbal confidentiality. Those policies may include:

- Keeping children's files in a secure location.
- Keeping staff files in a secure location.
- Not posting sensitive information (such as medical info) in public view.
- Not providing children's last names on written labels.
- Directing staff to not have conversations about children or families within hearing of other staff, children or families.
- Directing staff to not have conversations about children or families with others who are not engaged with the family or child.

It is critically important to know what your organization's policies are regarding confidentiality!

Your Call to Reflect

Maintaining confidentiality can be challenging sometimes. It can be incredibly difficult for educators to avoid talking with their friends or partners about sensitive situations at work. We care about the children and our close relationships with them. Think about a time you had to maintain confidentiality for sensitive information. What actions did you take? How did these actions align with the Code Of Ethical Conduct?

Ethics and Culture

Culture reflects the agreed-upon set of morals and beliefs that indicate how people within a specific group interact. As you interact with different groups, you bring your personal set of values and beliefs to these relationships. The more individuals engage, the more opportunities for values and ethics to come into conflict. Therefore, as a profession, it is critical that professionals adhere to the Code of Ethical Conduct.

But that is not always easy! Personal biases, beliefs, and experiences influence our judgement and how we interact. Portions of the Code of Ethical Conduct can be open to interpretation by individuals, making it challenging to know what is the "right" thing to do.

Questions you must ask yourself...

- Are you willing to ask questions to better understand cultural differences?
- Are you willing to educate yourself on the cultures of the families you serve?
- Are you willing to confront your personal biases and work towards resolving them?
- Are you willing to speak out when a policy or procedure seems unfair?

Understanding that an acceptable behavior in one culture may not be acceptable in another can go a long way toward untangling complex ethical challenges. It is up to you as a leader to commit to ethical behavior that is reflective and respectful.

How do culture and values impact ethical dilemmas? Great question! Let's dive deeper in a few examples.

NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct says:

I-2.5—To respect the dignity and preferences of each family and to make an effort to learn about its structure, culture, language, customs, and beliefs to ensure a culturally consistent environment for all children and families.

Example

Let's say the cultural norms of one family were that children did not make eye contact with adults unless spoken to directly. Another family's culture promotes making eye contact and initiating conversation with adults. How would you honor the first family's culture while at the same time supporting the second family's culture? At first glance it may seem easy–simply allow each child to behave in a manner that suits them. Unfortunately, if you are teaching in a classroom that supports American culture, the first child may feel they are wrong for not making eye contact. They may not get the same level of attention and developmental support as the second child. Why? Because American culture tends to pay less attention to those who don't speak out. It is subtle, and often overlooked, but it is there. Is it ethical to provide the student who seems the most "engaged" with a higher level of engagement? Is it ethical to push away your doubts or uncomfortable feelings about teaching the student who seems "quiet?" Tough questions that must be answered if you are going to be an ethical leader.

Your Call to Reflect

What are the cultural norms that influence your communication with others? How do you feel about the examples? Do they resonate with you? Why or why not?

Ethical leadership can look different from leader to leader and organization to organization. That is why it is so important to keep ethics as a constant guide and learning tool!

The following ethical leadership commitment statements can assist you in navigating this complex concept:

- I will advocate for truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, and reason as essential to the integrity of communication.
- I will support freedom of expression, diversity of perspective, and respect.
- I will strive to understand and respect other communicators before evaluating and responding to their messages.
- I will promote access to communication resources and opportunities as necessary to contribute to the well-being of families, colleagues and communities.
- I will promote communication messages of caring and mutual understanding that respect the unique needs and characteristics of those I work with and serve.
- I will condemn communication that degrades individuals through distortion, intimidation, and coercion, and through the expression of intolerance and hatred.
- I will commit to the courageous expression of personal convictions in pursuit of fairness and justice.
- I will advocate for sharing information, opinions, and feelings when facing significant choices while also respecting privacy and confidentiality.
- I will accept responsibility for the short- and long-term consequences for my communication and expect the same of others.
- I will be trustworthy and offer and expect respect from those I work with and serve.

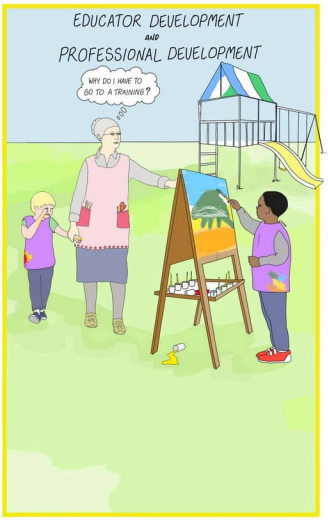
When we make a commitment to ethical leadership, we are acknowledging the complexity and "messiness" that comes with honoring diverse views, respecting each person, and doing the "right" thing. We know that we will make mistakes and learn about ourselves and others in the process.

Citations

- Code of Ethical Conduct and Statement of Commitment | NAEYC. (2011). NAEYC. https://www.naeyc.org/resources/posi...thical-conduct

This page titled 1: Ethical Leadership is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Southwestern Oregon Community College via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

2: Educator Development and Professional Development



Learning Objectives

- Objective 1: Recognize the career stages of a professional in early care and education.
- Objective 2: Articulate the value of ongoing professional development

As a young professional I thought I had the best job ever! I was getting paid to play with children—how cool was that!? I would read stories and play dress up with preschool children in the morning, go to community college classes in the middle of the day, and end my day playing dodgeball in an afterschool program. BEST JOB EVER! And then my supervisor gave me a 6 month evaluation and said that I had a lot of great qualities but I needed to develop some key skills (classroom management, being seen as an authority figure, etc.). I was crushed! I thought things were going so well—after all, I and the children were having fun. So we created a plan to have me go to some professional development training, and after my first Saturday I was hooked! For the first time, I saw an opportunity to make early childhood education (ECE) my professional career. I immediately went into my counselor's office and changed my major from business to early childhood education. Then I really started having fun at college—as well as work!

Does my story sound familiar? Many of you probably felt as I did at some point in your professional journey. As educators, we understand the value of ongoing learning. We watch children practice, learn, and grow every day.

Key Takeaways

Just like there are stages and milestones of development for children, there are also stages that an educator experiences as they move through their professional career. These stages, along with the learning that occurs, are valuable for leaders to understand so they can support professionals throughout their career life cycle.

It is important to also note that not all educators will proceed through all stages. Some choose the role they love most and stay in that role throughout their career, while others move around, trying out different roles. The career of each professional can look very different from another. That is part of what makes working in the field such a diverse and amazing experience!

Before we start with the stages of an educator's growth, we think it is important to note that educators enter the field in a variety of ways. Here are some of the paths taken:

- 4-year college or 2-year degree or certificate program.
- Entering the field from another profession such as special education or classroom assistant in a K-12 setting.
- Opening your own business as a family child care provider in order to care for your own children and others in your community.
- Working at a Head Start.
- Babysitting or working with children in a high school program and getting a job or starting school after high school in the field and figuring out where you want to go next.

However you got here, you made choices along the way and here you are! Caring for and educating other people's children is a journey—not a destination. It is your journey and your choices that will propel you as you decide where you are and what next steps are best for you. Let's define career stages and offer some words of wisdom for you—wherever you are.

Your Call to Reflect

What started you on the path to working with children? What draws you to this career? What do you love about working with children? Where do you see yourself in five years?

Career Stages

Pre-service is the stage in an educator's career where they have not started working with children and families yet. In this stage you may be taking courses toward a degree or certificate, or you may be ready to walk into the classroom for the first time as an assistant. For many educators, the pre-service stage is a mix of working with children and pursuing a degree or participating in community-based training.

Characteristics of Pre-service Professionals:

- You are not quite sure if you are ready/what you got yourself into.
- You are enthusiastic and looking to have fun.
- You don't know what you don't know.
- You know what you don't know and you are ready to learn.
- You are ready to start applying the things that you know.

Educators in the Pre-service stage need external support to apply their knowledge and process what the "reality" of working with children really looks like. Pre-service educators need guidance for taking care of themselves so they don't burn out and may need help navigating building relationships with the adults that come with working with children. ????

The Survival stage is a roller coaster of emotions and behaviors. Educators in survival mode are beginning to apply what you know and have learned as you begin your work with children. Everything that you learned and thought you knew takes a backseat to the immediate actions needed to manage the children and tasks in front of you. You are still excited and realizing that working with children is hard and draining and exhilarating all at the same time.

Characteristics of Survival Professionals:

- Your fight or flight brain kicks in and demands to pay high alert attention to everything.
- You may feel like you are never going to "get" it or that this is NEVER going to "work".
- You may feel overwhelmed at the "other" tasks that come with working with children.
- You may feel like you don't have control of the children in your program.
- You may feel locked into struggles with children or other team members.
- You may not feel confident in your abilities; particularly when talking to families.
- You may struggle to see yourself as a professional

Educators in the Survival stage need reassurance and individualized supports. They need to see that they are progressing and that there is an "end" in sight for the survival stage. Pairing professionals in the Survival stage with a veteran team member who can provide one on one advice and coaching. You can also provide these professionals with extra breaks, opportunities to talk, and lots of chocolate.

Developing Skills is the stage where things start to come together. Educators in this stage are practicing, making mistakes,

learning, and experimenting. They are understanding what their skills are and increasing their competency.

Characteristics of Developing Skills Professionals:

- You are looking for and participating in professional development that helps you solve problems.
- You are hands on and trying new things.
- You are confident.
- You are both sure and unsure of yourself.
- You think about the children in your care and your coworkers, even when you are not with them.
- You are setting routines and teaching others how to do what you need them to do.

Educators in the Developing Skills stage should be supported through opportunities to practice, make mistakes, and get coaching. They need recognition for their efforts and opportunities to participate in professional development. Support through one-on-one meetings, frequent check-ins, feedback, and coaching are very beneficial.

In the Mastery stage, educators have developed their competencies and may be looking for new challenges. For some that may mean administration positions, for others, mentoring or providing professional development.

Characteristics of Mastery Professionals:

- You know it is not about you (it never was, but you were inwardly focused for the first three stages).
- You feel confident in your skills.
- You feel like you have “arrived” and can take time off from further professional development.
- You seek professional development opportunities that are focused on theory, practice, or a very narrow topic (ex: supporting children with ADHD).
- You can get stuck in “the way I have always done it” and not look for opportunities to stay current on issues or child development.
- You may feel bored and are looking for a challenge.
- You may feel isolated.

Educators in the Mastery stage may need opportunities to share their knowledge and expertise. This could be through coaching or developing others, presenting training, or participating in contributing to the field outside of their work. Professionals in the Mastery stage should be supported through giving outlets for sharing, providing them with feedback or encouraging them to continue their professional growth.

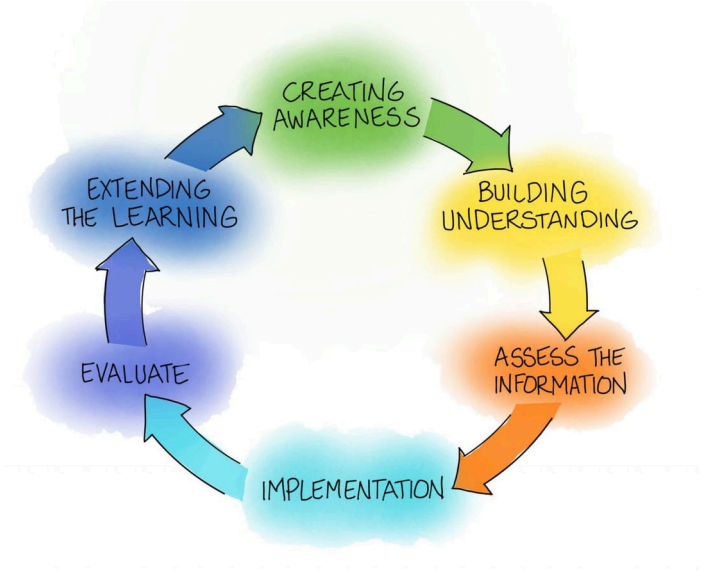
Your Call to Reflect

What stage would you say you are at in your career? What can you do to support your development to the next stage? What can others do to support you?

Professional Development Cycle

Whether you are new to education or have been working with children and families for many years, all educators go through the same cycle for professional development. This 6-part process includes:

1. Creating Awareness – what do you want to know more about? Where can you go to get training or information?
2. Building Understanding – expand your knowledge of the topic you are interested in and learn what the big ideas are.
3. Assess the Information – is this something that will help you in your practice? How will you implement it? What supports or resource might you need?
4. Implementation – plan, prepare and implement the new knowledge. Practice, refine, and practice some more.
5. Evaluate – Did your learning have a positive impact? Is there more information you need? Will you integrate the new learning into your habits and routines?
6. Extending the Learning – What else do you want to know about the topic? Are there other resources available? How can you further increase your knowledge? (See create awareness)



Successful ECCE professionals engage in a cycle of reflective practice that increases their awareness and continues their development. This development cycle can be seen in all career stages except Survival. The reason? Because when you are in survival mode you are unable to learn and retain new information. Your brain is quickly evaluating and deciding on the issue or problem it is currently facing.

Reflective Practice & Professional Development

Reflective practice and professional development go hand in hand! Reflective practices are when you think back on how a particular project, action, task, or day went and you identify what went well and what you might want to do differently in the future. Reflective actions can include:

- Taking time each day to reflect on something that worked really well or not so well.
- Sharing your experiences with others in the field.
- Keeping a journal or log of best practices in your classroom as well as challenges.
- Determining what you could have done differently.
- Seeking out a mentor or coach to help you sort through your reflections and identify areas for continued growth

Your Call to Reflect

Reflect on something that is going well for you right now. What evidence supports your thought that it is going well? How is this having a positive impact? What steps can you take to act with intention to continue success?

Responsibility for Learning

No matter how long you have worked in ECE or what your role may be in the classroom or program, as a professional you have a responsibility to ensure that you have the education needed to perform your job in the best way possible. This means participating in professional development that prepares you for the position you are or will be in. Engaging in ongoing professional development continues your education about topics relevant to your work with children and families.

Ongoing Professional Development

- Ensures you stay current with the latest research.
- Provides you with opportunities to create awareness about what you don't know.
- Assists you in achieving your career goals.
- Engages you with others in the field.
- Provides you with opportunities to learn and explore diverse topics, perspectives, and contexts.

Professional Development of Others

Your leadership role may involve supporting the professional development of someone else. From creating individual professional development plans to providing professional development for groups, there are different methods for supporting others' ongoing professional development.

The following are the most common forms of professional development:

Training is a learning experience specific to a topic and related set of skills or dispositions, delivered by a subject matter expert with adult learning knowledge and skills.

Technical Assistance (TA) is the targeted and customized support by a subject matter expert to develop or strengthen processes, knowledge application, or implementation of services by professionals.

Mentoring is a relationship-based process between people in similar professional roles, the mentor, provides guidance and example to the less-experienced mentee. Mentoring is intended to increase an individual's professional capacity, resulting in greater effectiveness.

Coaching is a relationship-based process led by an expert with specialized and adult learning knowledge and skills. Coaching is designed to build capacity for specific professional skills and is focused on goal-setting and achievement for an individual or group.

Professional Development Advising) is a process through which an advisor offers information, guidance, and advice about professional growth, career options, and pathways.

Peer-to-Peer TA fosters the development of relationship-based learning and support communities among individuals, often in like roles. Peers have developed tools and strategies that can be shared with their colleagues.

Job-Embedded Professional Development (JEPD) refers to educator learning that is grounded in day-to-day teaching practice and is designed to enhance teachers' content-specific instructional practices with the intent of improving student learning.

Reflective Supervision is the regular collaboration between staff member and supervisor where the thoughts, feelings and experiences of the staff member are the focus of improving skills and competencies.

In conclusion, you can see there is a wide range of professional development delivery methods. Each method provides the learner with specific supports and opportunities based on a number of factors including career stage of the learner, career stage of the

leader, resources, context, and type of desired outcome.

Example

Let's revisit my story from the beginning of this module. I was a new assistant in the Survival stage. While I felt confident in my abilities to "play" with children, I did not understand the full scope of my responsibilities. I also did not see myself as a professional. I was offered training as a way to increase my knowledge and understanding of how to work effectively with children. In addition, because of the stage I was in, I also benefited from Job-embedded Professional Development. After the training, my lead teacher offered me guidance and opportunities to try my new skills. She gave me feedback when I attempted to lead circle time (it did not go well the first dozen times) and she provided me with coaching to understand the developmental stages of children.

As a leader, you will need to evaluate these factors to determine the best method for delivering learning for individual staff members as well as the team as a whole. While ongoing professional development hours are often a requirement for licensure or quality standards, they are not the only method for increasing knowledge and competency of staff.

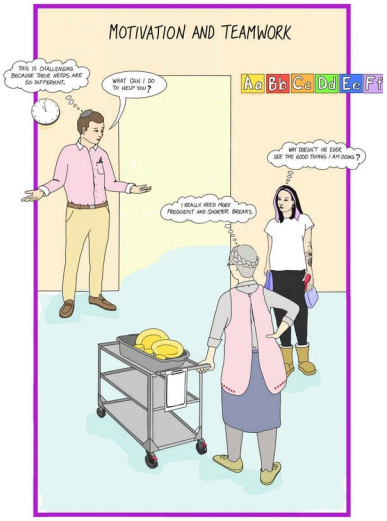
Remember, the best methods for ensuring staff increase their skills/competencies through professional development is to work collaboratively for a mix of modalities that allow for knowledge transfer, practice, feedback, and behavior change. Learning needs to be supported on a regular basis and should become a regular part of your organization's culture. As a professional, it is up to you to continue your professional growth and development as you move through the stages of your career. Learning can be an ongoing journey full of joy and discovery that invigorates and increases the quality of your daily practice.

Resources

- (NAEYC) https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/glossarytraining_ta.pdf

This page titled 2: Educator Development and Professional Development is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

3: Motivation and Teamwork



Learning Objectives

- Objective 1 – Identify how a leader can influence/impact motivation for an individual and a team.
- Objective 2:Articulate the essential skills for leading high performing teams.

Have you ever wondered how to convince someone to assist you with a project? Wondered how to work better with a coworker? Or considered ways you could create better relationships with your team members?

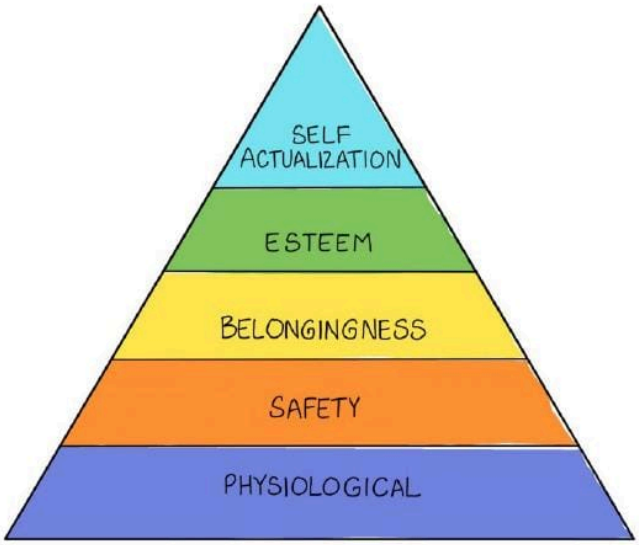
As a leader you will have many opportunities to support others in their work as well as contribute to your team as an equal or a manager. To do this well you will need to understand the foundations of motivation and what you can and cannot influence or change. This concept is key! Most leaders think that they can motivate others through gifts and rewards. Much like the “treasure box” for motivating children’s behavior these strategies only work for short periods of time and teach us to only care about the actions that will get rewarded and remember—everyone values different types of rewards.

Your Call to Reflect

What types of “rewards” have you received in your work life? What worked for you? What didn’t? How did your co-workers respond to the rewards? Make a list.

Let’s start with a bit of theory about what people need to feel safe and effective in doing their job. Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs theory is that individuals cannot achieve their full potential until their basic and psychological needs are met. For example, it is very difficult to have a meaningful relationship if you don’t feel safe or have no place to rest.

Maslow’s Theory can also be applied to staff and team members. Consider this Hierarchy of Needs



Self-Actualization – achieving your full potential working with children and families. Mentoring, coaching and/or leading others.

Esteem – Feeling like you are positively contributing to the development of each child and/or family you work with. Being recognized by your peers for your contributions.

Belongingness – Creating and maintaining strong bonds with co-workers, contributing to a team, feeling supported and trusted.

Safety – Feeling secure in your job, understanding safety requirements and how to seek assistance if needed, feeling safe and free from harassment or bullying.

Physiological – Getting breaks as needed and according to employment laws, having the resources needed to perform at your best, having basic employment practices in place to protect you.

Your Call to Reflect

Think about your current or most recent job. Where would you rank yourself on the hierarchy of needs? What examples come to mind? Now reflect on your staff/team members. Where would you rank them on the hierarchy of needs? Why?

Key Takeaways

Remember–most of the time employers don't intentionally set out to create a negative culture for their employees. If your reflection leads to a result that feels negative–think about why and write down your thoughts.

Ok, we've got you thinking about the levels of job satisfaction and what kinds of rewards work and don't work. Let's take a quick look at what actually motivates people.

Here are some basic principles of motivation:

1. We all have needs that aren't met, and it is these unmet needs that motivate us.
2. We will strive to fulfill our needs by acting in ways that we believe will lead to the outcome we want.
3. A person's greatest ability to have an effect on another's motivation is at the levels of security, the sense of belonging and self-esteem.
4. The ways in which we express or try to fulfill our needs can vary widely based on our cultural perspective.

Let's unpack these!

An unsatisfied need doesn't have to be something negative! You could be a team member who is looking to grow into a new position or someone who feels disconnected and wants to improve your peer relationships. Whatever the unsatisfied need, it is important to identify what it is so you can get/offer the support needed.

Most of us will go to great lengths to ensure our unmet need is met. Sometimes that can mean frustrated or angry behaviors. Unfortunately, if we only respond to the team member who gets upset all the time, then that is how some team members will behave. Remember adults are far more skilled at behaviors than children and often don't hesitate to use the behavior that works, regardless of its impact on those around them. Not because they are bad people, but because it is very difficult to understand our own unmet needs and admit them.

As a leader your greatest impact is at those hierarchy of needs levels of psychological, safety, and belonging. You can support others through coaching or mentoring. You can make sure that processes are in place and that they are aware of them. You can ensure that others feel welcome and appreciated. Remember though, everyone has different values and beliefs and what works for one team member may not work for another!

Your Call to Reflect

How do you think culture, values and belief system influence what we need? Or how do you think our personal biases play a role in how we view what we think or need? For example, if you have one team member who speaks to you regularly about what they need and why and you have another team member whose values and belief system includes not challenging an authority figure how can you make sure to meet both their needs?

It is important to recognize and understand the influence that values and beliefs have on motivation. So what are the differences between values and beliefs?

- Values help define and prioritize what is important.
- Values are established typically by adolescence.
- Values are unlikely to be changed from outside influence.

What does this mean for leaders? It means your values and another team member's values are not likely to change. It also means that you will most likely have shared values that you and others can build a collective understanding on. For example, you probably all value the positive development of children. You may all value supporting families, continuing your education, and quality learning environments. The difference is that some of you will value one of those over another...and that is ok! The point is that you will not likely be able to change someone's values through influence as a leader.

Beliefs, on the other hand, can and do change as we grow and experience new things. We emerge from our teenage years with a set of beliefs about the world and who we are in it. As we age and grow these beliefs will change as we take in and understand

new information and experiences. Beliefs can also be influenced by others such as trusted family or friends, community members, co-workers, or cultural leaders. Think about when you were younger and what you believed vs. what you believe today.

As a leader, you can influence the beliefs of others. Let's take the case of a new team member joining your team. This new team member believes that the best way to teach a child how to get to sleep during nap time is to let them "figure it out–or cry it out". As a leader in ECE, you know that children need to be guided and some children need support from trusting adults to go to sleep. You can support the new team member's change in beliefs by educating them on developmentally appropriate practice, modeling and coaching.

Your Call to Reflect

How have your beliefs about working with children and families grown or changed? What has led you to a different understanding? Education? Experience? A good leader?

People are successfully or unsuccessfully rewarded through a variety of strategies in the workplace. Everyone has unmet needs that can be complicated and even unclear to us. The motivator that works most effectively and leads to further growth is the ability to assist others to feel secure, esteemed, and that they belong. The tricky piece is in sorting out what we and others value and believe in order to correctly identify unmet needs and address them. As we will now explore, effective leaders have a clear understanding of what is within their scope of control and what they cannot control when it comes to motivating other people.

Motivation and Leadership

There are a few things to consider when you look at motivation and leadership. It is not just the leader's responsibility to motivate others. Remember, motivation comes from within and is different for each team member. Leaders CAN influence the working environment, resources that are available, and how others spend their time. Effective leaders focus on the factors that are within their control and work to reduce negative influences on the team's motivation.

Example

As a lead teacher in a classroom you are responsible for your assistant teacher and their success. You can support their success by providing them with feedback about how they are doing or saying thank you for their hard work. You can also support their success by stepping in when they are struggling with a child's behavior and modeling how to handle the situation. This shows them not only that you care about their success but that you are willing to provide support when needed. This has a positive impact on their motivation to want to learn and grow in their position.

You have an ethical responsibility to treat all team members in a fair manner that meets team needs as well as supporting individuals. This can be one of the most difficult parts of being a leader; balancing the needs of the many against the needs of 1 or 2.

The tool we use for sorting out dilemmas, understanding who has the problem, and if solutions are related to motivation, leadership, or something beyond everyone's control is the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Code of Ethical Conduct. Successful leaders use the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct to assist them in making decisions when an ethical dilemma is present. Ethical dilemmas are those instances when there is no clear-cut answer and that your choices for resolution are in conflict with each other.

Key Takeaway

As a leader, you are responsible to know about the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and use it when attempting to solve ethical challenges. The section of the code that relates to relationships with colleagues can guide your process towards an appropriate resolution.

Some things to remember are:

- Sometimes there is not a clear answer to a problem.
- Sometimes the choices that you have for supporting others can be in direct conflict with each other.
- Sometimes you know what you should do but are reluctant to do it.
- There is a fine line between motivating someone and manipulating them. Manipulation is not an ethical action for any leader.

You also need to take into account that culture plays an important role in motivation. Many cultures have a collectivist view where the team members and leader are responsible to each other and the power is in the connectedness of the team. American culture values independence and the rights of each team member. These differences in values can create opportunities for growth and reflection for all team members as well as potential conflict.

- Independent team members may value rewards, kudos, and recognition.
- Collectivist team members may value positive outcomes, long term goals, and team recognition.

Motivation Strategies

There are many strategies you can use to motivate your team members! Let's look at some for each level.

Self- Actualization (doing work that uses your talents) – Providing opportunities to coach others, opportunities to lead team meetings or work on special projects.

Esteem – Recognizing staff for their contributions in a sincere way that highlights their impact on children and families. Providing opportunities for staff to be "experts" on topics and sending other staff to them for advice.

Belongingness – Creating and maintaining team agreements, providing opportunities for teams to meet and celebrate their differences and contributions, holding team members accountable.

Safety – Creating policies and processes that ensure a safe and harassment-free work environment. Having reporting policies and processes in place to support staff when needed. Providing training and resources.

Physiological – Providing predictable schedules, keeping teachers in the same class, establishing routines and rhythms for the program. Just like children, we need to have routines and predictability so we are comfortable to learn and grow.

Teamwork

Learning Objectives

- Objective: Articulate the essentials for leading high performing teams.

Great teams start with great leaders—and that is not always the person that is in charge. Effective teams rely on both a leader and the rest of the team to work together to achieve their goals. Early Childhood Education has many opportunities for working in teams: from classroom teams, to functional teams (everyone doing the same job such as home visitors), to program teams. In fact, you will most likely work in at least three different teams as a staff member in ECE. That is a lot of teamwork!

Why should you care about teamwork? Because good teams make high quality decisions, manage complexity, and get things done! They are highly motivating and build bonds that can weather the storms of working with children and families.

Let's start with the basics. A team is...

- A group of individuals who have a common goal.
- Constructed, created.
- Something substantial.
- Takes time to develop and goes through stages.

Your Call to Reflect

What different types of teams have you been a part of? Were they positive or negative experiences? Why?

Every team has 5 essential elements:

1. Common Goals
2. Shared Consequences
3. Trust and Respect Amongst Team Members
4. Clear Roles
5. Effective Leadership

Now let's break each of these down!

Common goals are important for every team. An effective leader clarifies and states the goals and keeps those goals in front of everyone, so the team knows what it is working towards. These goals can be set with the team or sometimes they are set for the team. In both cases, it is important for each team member to understand the goal so they can do the work needed to meet that goal.

Shared consequences provide each team member with an understanding of how their work impacts the shared goal. Consequences can be positive—everyone is recognized for their efforts when the goal is met. OR Consequences can be negative—a non-performing team member is asked to leave the team or goals are not met. Regardless if they are positive or negative consequences, each team member needs to feel that the consequences are shared equally with all team members.

Trust and respect are crucial for well-functioning teams. Team members need to be able to trust that they can express their views and opinions and that their fellow team members will respect them. They need to feel confident that discussing differing views and opinions is part of the process of working towards goals and that they can make mistakes and learn from those mistakes. They need to trust the leader is there to support and guide them.

Clear roles and responsibilities are also important. Great team leaders carefully consider what each team member can do to support the goals and then the leader effectively communicates what the role and responsibilities are. This can also be an opportunity for team members to weigh in and build a collective understanding of each role on the team.

Finally, **effective team leadership** is all of these things and more! As a team leader, you set the vision for the work and provide the tools and resources needed to perform the work. You are there to provide support and guidance when things go wrong.

Your Call to Reflect

Recall an instance that you were on a team that was unsuccessful or that struggled.? Why do you think that is?

There are 4 stages that teams go through and these can have many different labels. We are going to refer to these stages as...

- Testing the Waters
- Team Control
- Getting Organized
- The Effective Team

Testing the waters includes understanding the vision, goals, and structure of the team. People understand their roles and responsibilities and learn how the team works. On the surface things seem to be going well. But the team has not hit any major obstacles yet.

Team control is when the official and unofficial leaders are recognized. Teams may have someone who convenes them and dictates the work they are to do. They will also, most likely, have a team member who leads the task or day to day actions needed. Other unofficial leaders may be someone with a specific skills set, expertise, or point of view.

Getting organized. For this stage, the questions a team must answer—and many of the things we have already learned about in this module—come into practice. Teams decide on things such as communication, timelines, responsibilities, and consequences. Team members feel they know each other well and can navigate this stage fairly easily in most cases.

The Effective Team is the team that seems to magically get things done. They understand their roles and how they contribute and seek feedback from each other. They trust and respect the other team members and there is a sense of support and understanding.

Your Call to Reflect

Have you experienced any or all of these team stages? How did that go for you? Is there one stage you think is more important than the others? Why?

What Leaders Can Do in Each Stage

1. Testing the waters: leaders can support team members by casting the vision and working collaboratively to establish the goals, roles, and responsibilities. Leaders can conduct get-to-know-you activities so team members learn about each other's preferences, strengths, and contributions. This is a great opportunity to model the behaviors you wish to see in your team members!
2. Team control: establish who is leading what as well as who team members can go to for advice and supports if the team leader is not available. If you are mentoring another as they explore an opportunity to learn leadership skills, you will want to monitor things closely and provide support as needed.
3. Getting organized: provide guidance and a framework of expectations for communication and "how" the work will get accomplished. While most team members will contribute their ideas at this stage, it is the job of the leader to make sure the strategies align with the vision and goals and that the work will be accomplished.
4. Effective team: it can be tempting for leaders to move on to other tasks or fires that need to be put out. It can be hazardous to ignore a well-functioning team because they can begin to feel under-appreciated. Or worse, there could be some issue that comes up and if not handled quickly turns into one of those fires that needs to be put out! Effective teams need to be continually cultivated and nurtured.

Key Takeaway

A key to remember is that teams can cycle through these stages numerous times as new team members are added or new projects are started.

Essential Questions for Successful Teams

There are a couple of essential questions that teams must answer in order to be successful. These questions can be answered by the leader ahead of time or better yet, as facilitated discussion when a team is first formed. Once these questions are answered it can be important to revisit the questions when there are challenges with the team and orientate new team members when they first join the team.

- How do we work through our problems? Do we bring them to the team leader? Do we try to solve them first on our own? Do we talk about them in team meetings?
- What do we need from each other as team members to be successful? Do we need opportunities to practice our skills? Time to learn and grow? Do we want feedback and if so, how often and what does feedback look like to each person?
- How do we handle it when a team member is not fulfilling their responsibilities? Do we bring it to our team leader? Do we offer advice and help?
- How do we communicate? Do we keep a program log book for notes? Do we send emails and texts? Do we schedule regular meetings?

The answers to these questions can be different for many reasons—including an individual's culture and values. Remember, we can't change a person's values but we can influence their behaviors. It is important to set an expectation of inclusiveness and the value of diverse views can have on positive outcomes. If everyone is in agreement all of the time you may miss out on important pieces that could make the team's goals even better!

A Note About Team Building

While there are many different resources available to give you team-building ideas and exercises, it is important to note that team-building activities are most effective when they align with the culture of the organization and are supported afterwards with meaningful interactions in the workplace. Weekend retreats with games and activities can be fun but they alone do not create dynamic and amazing teams. Creating moments and activities that connect to the philosophy and values of the organization build teams that understand and are connected to the important work of supporting children and families. Team building should always be thoughtful and intentional and provide team members with opportunities to get to know their fellow team members in a meaningful way.

Examples

1. A curriculum planning meeting where each team member shares what their hobbies and interests are and brainstorms ideas for curriculum activities.
2. A team meeting where baby pictures are posted and team members get to guess who is who. This can then carry over to a discussion about favorite childhood memories and how our values were shaped as we grow up.
3. Problem solving team meeting where team members share a challenge or an issue and the group members collectively work together to offer solutions and support. The team members then follow up to offer support if needed.

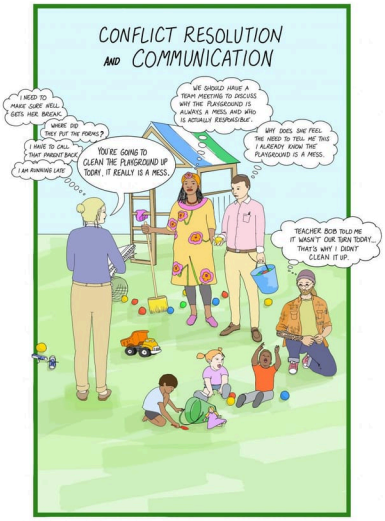
As you can see from these examples, being a good team member and having an effective team is more than just a weekend retreat. It is about caring and nurturing relationships and meaningful opportunities to connect and learn more about each other. When we feel that our team is invested in our success we become more invested in our team. This creates interconnectedness and belonging which are powerful motivators that can support and sustain a team through issues, challenges, and successes.

Citations

- McLeod. (2020). *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*. Simply Psychology. https://www.simplypsychology.org/maslow.html

This page titled 3: Motivation and Teamwork is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

4: Communication and Conflict Resolution



Learning Objectives

- Objective 1 – Recognize how conflict can be viewed from the point of view of individuals, teams, and through the lens of systems of personal and professional values and beliefs.
- Objective 2 – Create a conflict resolution plan for a common challenge in Early Care and Education.
- Objective 3 – Explain how communication impacts conflict resolution.

Have you ever thought—they just don't listen to me! Or I have no idea why they would say that! Communication is nuanced, varied, and dependent on context and who we are communicating to. While there are whole courses dedicated to communication, we are going to focus on communication and how it relates to resolving conflict.

Your Call to Reflect

Think about your communication skills. Reflect on your interactions with someone who you thought was a poor communicator. Why did you feel that person was a poor communicator? How was your communication received? What do you think makes you a good communicator?

Let's start with some working definitions of communication. Communication includes speaking, listening, non-verbal communication such as tone or volume of your voice, and body language. Communication modes include written, verbal, video, and sky writing (only if you have the budget).

We generally prefer to receive communications in the same way we choose to communicate with others. It is important to remember that everyone prefers different methods of communication. You may want to have a sit down, face-to-face conversation with someone who prefers to speak over the phone or in writing. Culture can also play a role in an individual's preferred communication style as well as personal experiences, values and belief systems. All of these facets can make communicating during conflict very challenging!

When we enter communications during conflict there are many opportunities for our intended messages to have quite a different impact on the other person. It is important to realize that we cannot control the way our message is received or how someone feels about it, but we can work hard to communicate our message effectively. Tension-reaction behavior can escalate poor communication and make it difficult to navigate conflict.

How can you use communication to resolve conflict? That is a great question! One of the most powerful communication tools you have is asking questions that can help you understand the other person's perspective as well as what the root cause of the conflict is about (resources, psychological needs, values).

Closed-ended questions...

- Confirm and clarify information—"I just want to confirm, you want me to arrive at 3pm. Correct?"
- Gather specific information— "Which color was the coat? Red or Blue?"
- Focus the conversation—"Can we speak about that tomorrow and focus on parent conferences today?"
- May be perceived as threatening—If your tone and non-verbals convey irritation or anger the questions can be perceived as negative.

Open-ended questions...

- Expand conversation— "That sounds interesting, can you tell me more about your experience?"
- Gather information—"I understand she is not sleeping at nap time. Can you share with me what she is doing instead and what you have done to support her?"
- Involve others in the conversation—"I would love to learn more about your experience with the Smith family. How have your interactions with them been?"
- May not provide specific information—If the question is too open you may get a lot of information but not what you are needing.
- May change focus of conversation—As in the example about the experiences with the Smith family, the other person may start relaying an encounter at the library and not about interactions at the program.

> **Key Takeaway**
>
> NAEYC Code of Conduct states: "P-3A.2—When we have concerns about the professional behavior of a co-worker, we shall first let that person know of our concern in a way that shows respect for personal dignity and for the diversity to be found among staff members, and then attempt to resolve the matter collegially and in a confidential manner."

It can be tempting when dealing with conflict to seek advice from others. This is a normal part of being a nurturing and caring individual. Be cautious though and mindful of your ethical responsibility to your co-workers. By speaking directly with the person you have a conflict with you are showing respect and caring which can set the stage for a productive conflict resolution conversation!

Three Parts to Communication

Now before you can say it—yes there are actually four parts to communication. As you may know, non-verbal communication is very important. How we say what we want to communicate is especially challenging during a conflict when tensions are high and non-verbals can give away our true emotions. Non-verbal communications (tone of voice, facial expressions, body language) can turn a simple message of "I am fine" into a tense message of "I AM FINE!??!"

The other three parts of communication are thinking, speaking, and listening.

Thinking

Ever wanted to blurt something out and stopped yourself? That is the thinking part of communication.

Stop before you speak and...

- Consider the message. What is it you want them to know? What is the outcome you want from the conversation?
- Consider the person receiving the message. What impact might your communication have? What do you intend to happen? What format is the best for this person? In writing? Face to face?
- Consider the context and timing. You don't want to have a conversation about conflict during arrival time for children. Where you talk and when you talk are important. Make sure you have a quiet, private space and time to get into the conversation.

Listening

We all think we listen until we find out we were not ????. Listening is tricky because we typically listen to persuade or share our point of view. As you head into this portion of the communication process remember to...

1. Listen more to the other individual's point of view than share my own.
2. Listen to individuals who disagree with me as attentive as I do to those who agree with me.
3. Put aside other work and focus on the individual.
4. Listen without letting my mind wander.
5. Try to put myself in the other shoes and listen for feelings.
6. Ask the other what they mean if I don't fully understand.
7. Listen without interrupting, even when I anticipate what the individual is going to say.

Speaking

This part seems pretty easy, right?! You just start talking! Effective speaking requires a few more pieces:

- Adjusting speaking tone and volume to the context and listener.
- Watching for signs the listener is not understanding and pausing or clarifying.
- Engaging the listener through questions or a back and forth exchange.
- Communication, especially during times of conflict, can often have different layers that we may not recognize right away. These layers are hidden dimensions that are present in every communication.

There are 3 dimensions to every communication.

Content of Communication. First there is the content of the communication. What exactly do you want to say? More importantly is what is the communication about? During times of conflict and tension-reaction behavior we can struggle to fully articulate what we want the other person to know. Or we bring up information that is not relevant to the current conversation, creating confusion and in some cases hostility.

Emotions. Emotions can make communicating extremely difficult. Even when we think we are concealing our emotions about and during a communication it can still be revealing. During conflict it is usually best to state your feelings, e.g. "I feel frustrated..." etc. This way there is no dissonance between your verbal and non-verbal communications.

Relationship/power. We all speak differently to individuals depending on our relationship with them. Some of us defer to our supervisors, or we may find ourselves speaking tenderly to a small child. This dimension can be tricky when you are navigating conflict with a fellow staff member. Factors such as age, experience, education, or tenure can all influence how we approach our communications. For example, you may have a conversation with someone you consider a friend in one way and a completely different conversation with someone you consider a mentor. These positions of power or importance of relationships can create

challenges through assumptions— “my friend will know what I want” to “I don’t think that is how I want to approach it but they are my mentor, so I guess I better.”

Your Call to Reflect

Think back to the beginning of this section where you identified how you are an effective communicator—now that you understand more about the complexity of communication think about recent communication you had. What hidden dimensions were present? How did they or did they not influence your communication and the outcome of the communication?

Framework for Raising Difficult Issues

1. Opener: Agreement with yourself to have the conversation
2. I-Feeling Language: Only describe how you feel.
3. Practice speaking in positive language that normalizes the conflict and conveys a desire to work through the issue together.
4. Pinpoint specific details.
5. Acknowledge your part.
6. Agree on a solution: Develop a solution that you both create and implement.

Conflict is a natural part of life and working with children, families, and colleagues. As a professional it is our role to collaborate with others to resolve conflict and create opportunities to meet the needs of ourselves and those we work with. When we commit to acknowledging conflict and working through it we show respect and caring for ourselves and our team members. In the end, our nurturing and caring actions can support us in working through some of the tough issues that can come with working with children and families.

Conflict

Conflict is a natural part of life. Conflict can create opportunities for innovation, or it can weigh down a team for months and months. Conflict is incredibly difficult to navigate because it often involves values and beliefs. Conflict is a natural part of life.

If conflict is so natural—why do most people avoid it? Because conflict can make us uncomfortable. Conflict can challenge our perceptions of what we know and invite us to grow and learn. Conflict forces us to consider change, and as we know, change is not always easy.

Your Call to Reflect

What comes to your mind when you think about conflict? Write a list of the first words or phrases you think of. Reflect on a recent conflict with a peer or supervisor. How did you react to the conflict? What was the interaction like? Would you say you avoid conflict? Do you see conflict as natural?

Conflict in Early Care and Education settings is often very different than conflict you may encounter in other parts of your life. Why? Because conflict in ECE settings can be complex.

1. The field of Early Care and Education is a caring and nurturing industry. This can translate to a lot of “polite” interactions where the team members don’t want to “upset” each other and so avoid having discussions or resolving issues that come up as a natural part of working together.
2. Conflict in these settings can be easy to avoid. With all of the things you have to do each day, there is a built-in excuse for not having that important conversation with another team member. A common thought is ”It will go away in a little while if I don’t pay attention to it.”
3. Conflict can include multiple people at different levels in the organization. It can also just involve one person whose perceptions are different from others. This can complicate communications, interactions, and opportunities to discuss and resolve the conflict.
4. Values and beliefs around conflict and how it should be viewed and resolved can increase the complexity for everyone involved.

It can be tempting with this many influences to simply ignore the conflict and hope it goes away. Unfortunately, these unexpressed feelings don't die; they are pushed down and can come up at the wrong times and in the worst ways. When we view conflict as something that needs to be avoided and ignored it erodes trust and respect and sabotages productivity.

Consider this:

- Conflict is a result of someone's need not being met. "Why did that teacher get their planning time today and I didn't?"
- If the issue is not resolved, tensions increase until someone reacts. "That is so unfair! I am going to tell her she can do the snack dishes today because she had PLENTY of time to lesson-plan!!"
- When reactions occur, this is called tension-reaction behavior. We react in a way we might not have had tensions not been so high.
- This cycle drains energy and reduces productivity. "I am not going to bother trying to plan for my children, I never get planning time anyway."

Tension-reaction behavior is most difficult to control when it is directed at someone personally: ("That is so unfair! I am going to tell her she can do the snack dishes today because she had PLENTY of time to plan a lesson!!"). When two people are in tension-reaction behavior communication breaks down and can become controlled by emotions and perceptions.

Causes of Conflict and Strategies to Resolve Them

- **Access to Resources**
- **Psychological Needs**
- **Values**

One thing to note! Each conflict has a life cycle and will continue to cycle and escalate until it is resolved. Because conflict is rooted in an unmet need, as long as that need continues to not be met, the conflict will be harder and harder to avoid. Let's think of conflict from this angle—You are working with a 3-year-old who cries a lot because they are tired (they don't sleep at naptime) or are hungry (they frequently miss breakfast in the morning). You can ignore the crying, but eventually you will need to do something to support that child (nap, hugs, food etc.). In this example, the conflict is the 3-year- old. You can ignore the crying and sometimes the child will stop for a bit but eventually you will have a full melt-down on your hands.

Your Call to Reflect

Think about a recent conflict you have had. Was it about access to resources, psychological needs, or values? What were the tension-reaction behaviors involved? Was it resolved? How or why not?

Access to Resources

This cause of conflict is the most frequent and usually the easiest to navigate. Access to resources can include time, tangible things, or access to relationships. With so many things that need to be done in a day, time is a huge resource for most of us. Having access to the things you need in order to get your tasks done is also a common cause of conflict. Whether it is art supplies, dramatic play materials, or playground equipment, not having enough resources to support our work can be incredibly difficult and filled with tension-reaction behavior!

Strategies:

- Take a breath
- Gather more information
- Determine what your actual need is. Not what you think you need.
- Discuss with the person who controls the resource the best way for your need to be met and or advocate for someone else who may need the resource.

Psychological Needs

Psychological needs include the need for working independently, knowing that your skills are recognized, and having positive relationships with those you work with. As educators we need to know we can make decisions and act independently in a way that is appropriate for our position. If you are constantly being micro-managed and have to ask permission for basic things this may

cause conflict. Effective leaders need to remember that team members were hired for their competence and abilities. When they are not able to use those skills to do their job it can be very difficult. This then impacts the relationships they have with each other, families, and leadership causing tension-reaction behavior.

Strategies:

- Ask questions such as What is your need?
- Is the other person aware of the impact of their actions?
- Discuss your concerns directly with the staff member or your supervisor.

Values

Sometimes conflict arises from what you value vs. what someone else values. For example, if your coworker values a clean classroom and you value child independence, these two values can cause conflict. Your coworker may come along behind children and clean things up for them while you encourage children to clean things up for themselves (which is often not as clean as a teacher would).

Sometimes it is about belief systems and how you view your work. You may believe that families are important partners and meet with parents to discuss their goals for their child and provide updates. Your coworker may believe that families are important but they don't know as much as an educator and have conversations with parents about what they need to do at home to support their child's development. Neither perspective is completely wrong. Both might lead to conflict.

Values can be about beliefs, ethics, morals, culture and all of the things that make us who we are...which is why it is more impactful and harder to navigate. Values can put you in direct conflict with someone else or, as is usually the case, be a slow simmer until things bubble over into something big. When values get tangled up in conflict tensions can rise!

Strategies:

- Don't try to "win" the other person over.
- Be clear with your beliefs and your perceptions—what story are you telling yourself? *Brene Brown
- Ask questions and seek to understand.
- Offer kindness and respect.
- Look for ways to negotiate.

Example

Scenario: You are working with a teacher who has recently begun to withdraw and doesn't really initiate activities with the children. You have reminded them a few times about what they should be doing but they continue to not engage with children. You feel angry and frustrated and not sure what to do next. What should you do?

1. Start by thinking about your perception. Are they really not engaging or are they just not engaging in the way you want them to? Perhaps ask someone else to observe the teacher and offer you objective feedback.
2. Set aside time and ask them questions—how are they feeling? How do they think things are going? Do they have questions or challenges? Get as much information as you can.
3. Offer kindness and respect. Let them know you are listening and care about them and resolving this issue.
4. Once you understand the issue you can begin to build a solution for you and the other teacher. Perhaps the teacher feels unsure about how to handle challenging behavior. Or maybe they are unsure what to do next once an activity gets started. By talking and starting from a place of understanding you can create a solution that works for both of you.

Key Takeaway

One thing to note! Each conflict has a life cycle and will continue to cycle and escalate until it is resolved. Because conflict is rooted in an unmet need, as long as that need continues to not be met, the conflict will be harder and harder to avoid.

Let's think of conflict from this angle—You are working with a 3 year old who cries a lot because they are tired (they don't sleep at naptime) or are hungry (they frequently miss breakfast in the morning). You can ignore the crying but eventually you will need to do something to support that child (nap, hugs, food etc.) In this example, the conflict is the 3-year-old. You can ignore the crying and sometimes the child will stop for a bit but eventually you will have a full melt-down on your hands.

Your Call to Reflect

Think about a recent conflict you have had. Was it about access to resources, psychological needs, or values? What were the tension-reaction behaviors involved? Was it resolved? How or why not?

Steps to Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution takes practice and time to develop your skills. Remember—every conflict is different and contains many different pieces. If you approach each conflict with the same strategies, you will not be successful. Just like no two toddlers are potty-trained in the same way, there are still some predictable patterns and successful strategies that you can apply.

The good news is that there is a pattern to resolving conflicts and you can use this framework in all scenarios.

1. **Analyze the conflict and the sources.** What do you think is happening? Why do you think that? Write down your thoughts and take time to reflect on the conflict and your beliefs about the conflict.
2. **Set the Scene**. Provide a quiet and private place away from children to talk about the conflict. Minimizing distractions allows both of you an opportunity to focus on listening and communicating.
3. **Ask open ended questions**. These may be hard questions, but they show a willingness to understand the other person's point of view. Be willing to listen for all parts of the communication (we will learn more about this in the communication section). If you don't spend enough time learning about the conflict and expressing yourself, you run a risk of not finding the right solution!
4. **Communicate, communicate, and communicate some more!** All parties should have an opportunity to listen and be heard. Commit to being authentic and honest in your communications. It is your job as a leader to support this process. Allow individuals to take breaks if needed. Talking about conflict can be very challenging for some and easy for others. Make sure you are offering an equal opportunity for all to engage in the process.
5. **Manage Big Emotions**. Communicating can raise big feelings from frustration and anger to sadness for both of you. Be prepared to take a break and agree to re-engage at a later time or to simply pause to allow time to process. Conflict is hard and can often surprise us in how it can make us feel.

6. **Focus on the future state.** Yes, how we got to the current conflict is important to know. Then—focus on what each of you wants and needs and the best methods for achieving those goals.
7. **Identify the agreed-upon resolution and create a timeline for implementation.** Sometimes conflict cannot be resolved with an "easy" fix. Make sure you and the other person knows what steps need to be taken, who is responsible, and the timeline for each step. It is important to include a follow-up conversation to ensure the solution has resolved the conflict.

Creative Problem Solving

Most conflicts can be resolved with a little creative problem solving. Conflict might not always feel good to begin with, but when we authentically bring our best selves to the table with open hearts and minds, it can turn into not only a satisfying experience, but the foundation for partnerships that last a lifetime.

There are five steps to the creative problem-solving process. Each step can be done individually or collaboratively as a group.

1. The first step is to take a deep breath and describe the problem in your own words. Then ask yourself—what else do I need to know? Who can give me those answers?
2. Next, after you have done some research, revise or restate the problem and determine what your objective is. What do you want to happen? How is that different from what is happening now?
3. Brainstorm possible resolutions. How could this conflict be resolved? Is there something you have not thought about before?
4. Review the list of possibilities and weigh the advantages and disadvantages to each possibility until you have narrowed it down to one that feels acceptable.
5. Finally, as a team, decide ways to implement the solution, who might be involved, what is the timeline and how will you know if it was a success or not?

Let's take creative problem solving for a test run!

Issue: Lunch is being delivered late to the classrooms. Everyone is frustrated because children are hungry and late lunch means late nap time. The kitchen staff are frustrated because they are working as hard as they can. Yikes!

1. Breathe! What else do we need to know? Some possible questions include—how late is late? How often is it happening? Are there other contributing factors? Who is all involved?

Through your careful questioning, you discover that it is happening almost daily and that the delay is 10-20 minutes. In addition, you discover that the dishes from the snack are not making it back to the kitchen in a timely manner (someone usually takes them back eventually but it is no one person's responsibility).

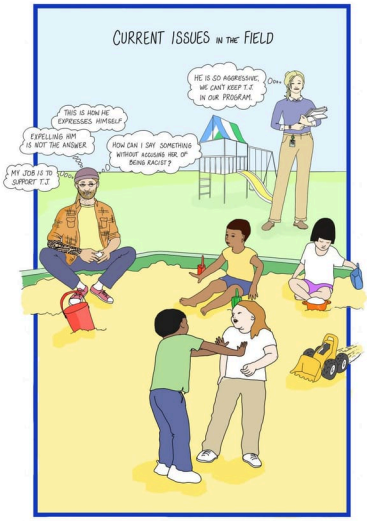
2. The problem is that the one set of dishes that are used for all snacks and meals are not making it back to the kitchen in time to be washed, sanitized and ready for lunch service. This causes lunch to be delayed.
3. Working as a team you brainstorm possible solutions including: using disposable dishes for morning snack, having one person collect all of the dishes before a certain time, have each classroom designate someone to take the dishes back at a certain time, only offer morning snacks that don't need dishes, or something else we have not thought of.
4. & 5. Weighing these options we decide that we don't like disposable dishes because of the impact to the environment and it is not reasonable to only offer snacks that don't need dishes. The team settles on a solution that involves getting the dishes back by a certain time each day. After careful consideration the team decides that while they would like to have someone from each class take them back—that is part of the problem right now. Therefore, the group decides that the break person will change the break schedule to allow them to collect all of the dishes and bring them back by 9:45am each day. We agree to check in at the end of the week to see if it is working.

As you can tell from this example, the issues started off as kitchen staff as the cause for the issue and upon further investigation the realization that the issue was a bit more complex. When we stop to ask questions and get to the root of an issue, we are more likely to come up with a solution that meets everyone's needs and is long lasting. It can be easy to fall into a cycle of blame that doesn't support anyone or really solve an issue.

Communication is key in resolving conflicts!

This page titled 4: Communication and Conflict Resolution is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education



Learning Objectives

- Objective 1: Identify current issues that impact stakeholders in early childhood care and education.
- Objective 2: Describe strategies for understanding current issues as a professional in early childhood care and education.
- Objective 3: Create an informed response to a current issue as a professional in early childhood care and education.

Current Issues in the Field—Part 1

There's one thing you can be sure of in the field of early childhood: the fact that the field is always changing. We make plans for our classrooms based on the reality we and the children in our care are living in, and then, something happens in that external world, the place where "life happens," and our reality changes. Or sometimes it's a slow shift: you go to a training and hear about new research, you think it over, read a few articles, and over time you realize the activities you carefully planned are no longer truly relevant to the lives children are living today, or that you know new things that make you rethink whether your practice is really meeting the needs of every child.

This is guaranteed to happen at some point. Natural events might occur that affect your community, like forest fires or tornadoes, or like COVID-19, which closed far too many child care programs and left many other early educators struggling to figure out how to work with children online. Cultural and political changes happen, which affect your children's lives, or perhaps your understanding of their lives, like the Black Lives Matter demonstrations that brought to light how much disparity and tension exist and persist in the United States. New information may come to light through research that allows us to understand human development very differently, like the advancements in neuroscience that help us understand how trauma affects children's brains, and how we as early educators can counteract those affects and build resilience.

And guess what—all this change is a good thing! Read this paragraph slowly—it's important! Change is good because we as providers of early childhood care and education are working with much more than a set of academic skills that need to be imparted to children; we are working with the whole child, and preparing the child to live successfully in the world. So when history sticks its foot into our nice calm stream of practice, the waters get muddied. But the good news is that mud acts as a fertilizer so that we as educators and leaders in the field have the chance to learn and grow, to bloom into better educators for every child, and, let's face it, to become better human beings!

Your Call to Reflect

You may know at an intellectual level that change is part of the deal, but what about deep down? Do you sometimes long for everything to just stay the same for a little while (especially when on vacation)? When you consider the idea of change, how does it make you feel? Anxious? Excited? Maybe just a little tired? What factors impact your response? What were your first thoughts when you sat back and FELT the reality of ever present change?

The work of early childhood care and education is so full, so complex, so packed with details to track and respond to, from where Caiden left his socks, to whether Amelia's parents are going to be receptive to considering evaluation for speech supports, and how to adapt the curriculum for the child who has never yet come to circle time. It might make you feel a little uneasy—or, let's face it, even overwhelmed—to also consider how the course of history may cause you to deeply rethink what you do over time.

That's normal. Thinking about the complexity of human history while pushing Keisha on the swings makes you completely normal! **As leaders in the field, we must learn to expect that we will be called upon to change, maybe even dramatically, over time.**

Your Call to Reflect

Now, put your educator hat on. Can you think of a time in your own education when something occurred that your teachers had to adapt to? Maybe a natural event, or a political or cultural one? What did they do to adapt to the event? Or maybe they didn't adapt—what happened then? What can you learn from this memory?

Let me share a personal story with you: I had just become director of an established small center, and was working to sort out all the details that directing encompassed: scheduling, billing policies, and most of all, staffing frustrations about who got planning time, etc. But I was also called upon to substitute teach on an almost daily basis, so there was a lot of disruption to my carefully made daily plans to address the business end, or to work with teachers to seek collaborative solutions to long-standing conflict. I was frustrated by not having time to do the work I felt I needed to do, and felt there were new small crises each day. I couldn't get comfortable with my new position, nor with the way my days were constantly shifting away from my plans. It was then that a co-worker shared a quote with me from Thomas F. Crum, who writes about how to thrive in difficult working conditions: "Instead of seeing the rug being pulled from under us, we can learn to dance on a shifting carpet".

Wow! That gave me a new vision, one where I wasn't failing and flailing, but could become graceful in learning to be responsive to change big and small. I felt relieved to have a different way of looking at my progress through my days: I wasn't flailing at all—I was dancing! Okay, it might be a clumsy dance, and I might bruise my knees, but that idea helped me respond to each day's needs with courage and hope.

I especially like this image for those of us who work with young children. I imagine a child hopping around in the middle of a parachute, while the other children joyfully whip their corners up and down. The child in the center feels disoriented, exhilarated, surrounded by shifting color, sensation, and laughter. When I feel like there's too much change happening, I try to see the world through that child's eyes. It's possible to find joy and possibility in the disorientation, and the swirl of thoughts and feelings, and new ways of seeing and being that come from change.

Key Takeaways

Our practices in the classroom and as leaders must constantly adapt to changes in our communities and our understanding of the world around us, which gives us the opportunity to continue to grow and develop.

You are a leader, and change is happening, and you are making decisions about how to move forward, and how to adapt thoughtfully. The good news is that when this change happens, our field has really amazing tools for adapting. We can develop a toolkit of trusted sources that we can turn to to provide us with information and strategies for ethical decision making.

If You're Afraid of Falling...

One of the most important of these is the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, which expresses a commitment to core values for the field, and a set of principles for determining ethical behavior and decision-making. As we commit to the code, we commit to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture,* community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues
- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect.

If someone asked us to make a list of beliefs we have about children and families, we might not have been able to come up with a list that looked just like this, but, most of us in the field are here because we share these values and show up every day with them in our hearts.

The Code of Ethical Conduct can help bring what's in your heart into your head. It's a complete tool to help you think carefully about a dilemma, a decision, or a plan, based on these values. Sometimes we don't make the "right" decision and need to change our minds, but as long as we make a decision based on values about the importance of the well-being of all children and families, we won't be making a decision that we will regret.

Your Call to Reflect

Can you think of a time that you had to make a really hard decision and you were able to base that decision in a deeply held value like "family is the most important thing" or "my education comes first?" How did basing your decision in personal or professional values help you to make a decision? Are you experiencing change in some aspect of your life right now that you can link to a personal or professional value to help you move forward? As you reflect on whatever the hard change might be, are you able to explain your choices from a values standpoint? For example, maybe you are deciding whether to go to school full time next term or go only part time to be more present with your family. Which values would you lean on to help you decide to go full time? Which values would you lean on to decide to go part time? Neither is wrong—but deciding which values are most important to you at the time can help you make your decision.

An Awfully Big Current Issue—Let's Not Dance Around It

You might be wondering how we link the Code of Ethical Conduct to the change all around us—let's roll up our sleeves and dive into an example that has risen to the forefront in our culture and in early childhood care and education in recent years: skin color, bias, and prejudice. We hear the terms "race and racism" used to identify these issues in media and news. Tensions within and toward communities and individuals of color have been especially visible in the news because of the heightened impact of COVID-19 on communities of color, the highly visible police violence against black and brown men and women, and the subsequent demonstrations that took place in 2020. Children see and hear the media and adult conversations, and they feel the unease, or even fear, around questions of difference. This has heightened our responsibility as early educators to approach

these issues in the classroom, and to do it with sensitivity and self-awareness.

In the field of early childhood, issues of prejudice have long been important to research, and in this country, Head Start was developed more than 50 years ago with an eye toward dismantling disparity based on ethnicity or skin color (among other things). However, research shows that this gap has not closed. Particularly striking, in recent years, is research addressing perceptions of the behavior of children of color and the numbers of children who are asked to leave programs.

In fact, studies of expulsion from preschool showed that black children were twice as likely to be expelled as white preschoolers, and 3.6 times as likely to receive one or more suspensions. This is deeply concerning in and of itself, but the fact that preschool expulsion is predictive of later difficulties is even more so:

Starting as young as infancy and toddlerhood, children of color are at highest risk for being expelled from early childhood care and education programs. Early expulsions and suspensions lead to greater gaps in access to resources for young children and thus create increasing gaps in later achievement and well-being... Research indicates that early expulsions and suspensions predict later expulsions and suspensions, academic failure, school dropout, and an increased likelihood of later incarceration.

Why does this happen? It's complicated. Studies on the K-12 system show that some of the reasons include:

- uneven or biased implementation of disciplinary policies
- discriminatory discipline practices
- school racial climate
- under resourced programs
- inadequate education and training for teachers on bias

In other words, educators need more support and help in reflecting on their own practices, but there are also policies and systems in place that contribute to unfair treatment of some groups of children.

Key Takeaway

It is not possible to simultaneously "respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual" and watch a significant number of students from a particular group be expelled from their early learning experience, realizing this may frequently be a first step in a process of punishment by loss of opportunity.

So...we have a lot of research that continues to be eye opening and cause us to rethink our practices over time, plus a cultural event—in the form of the Black Lives Matter movement—that push the issue of disparity based on skin color directly in front of us. We are called to respond. You are called to respond.

How Will I Ever Learn the Steps?

Woah—how do I respond to something so big and so complex and so sensitive to so many different groups of people?

As someone drawn to early childhood care and education, you probably bring certain gifts and abilities to this work.

- You probably already feel compassion for every child and want every child to have opportunities to grow into happy, responsible adults who achieve their goals. Remember the statement above about respecting the dignity and worth of every individual? That in itself is a huge start to becoming a leader working as an advocate for social justice.
- You may have been to trainings that focus on anti-bias and being culturally responsive.
- You may have some great activities to promote respect for diversity, and be actively looking for more.
- You may be very intentional about including materials that reflect people with different racial identities, genders, family structures.
- You may make sure that each family is supported in their home language and that multilingualism is valued in your program.
- You may even have spent some time diving into your own internalized biases.

This list could become very long! These are extremely important aspects of addressing injustice in early education which you can do to alter your individual practice with children.

As a leader in the field, you are called to think beyond your own practice. As a leader you have the opportunity—the responsibility!—to look beyond your own practices and become an advocate for change. Two important recommendations (of many) from the NAEYC Advancing Equity in Early Childhood Education Position Statement, another important tool:

Speak out against unfair policies or practices and challenge biased perspectives. Work to embed fair and equitable approaches in all aspects of early childhood program delivery, including standards, assessments, curriculum, and personnel practices.

Look for ways to work collectively with others who are committed to equity. Consider it a professional responsibility to help challenge and change policies, laws, systems, and institutional practices that keep social inequities in place.

One take away I want you to grab from those last sentences: **You are not alone.** This work can be, and must be, collective.

As a leader, your sphere of influence is bigger than just you. You can influence the practices of others in your program and outside of it. You can influence policies, rules, choices about the tools you use, and ultimately, you can even challenge laws that are not fair to every child.

Your Call to Reflect

Who's on your team? I want you to think for a moment about the people who help you in times where you are facing change. These are the people you can turn to for an honest conversation, where you can show your confusion and fear, and they will be supportive and think alongside you. This might include your friends, your partner, some or all of your coworkers, a former teacher of your own, a counselor, a pastor. Make a quick list of people you can turn to when you need to do some deep digging and ground yourself in your values.

And now, your workplace team: who are your fellow advocates in your workplace? Who can you reach out to when you realize something might need to change within your program?

Wonderful. You've got other people to lean on in times of change. More can be accomplished together than alone. Let's consider what you can do:

What is your sphere of influence? What are some small ways you can create room for growth within your sphere of influence? What about that workplace team? Do their spheres of influence add to your own?

Try drawing your sphere of influence: Draw yourself in the middle of the page, and put another circle around yourself, another circle around that, and another around that. Fill your circles in:

- Consider the first circle your personal sphere. Brainstorm family and friends who you can talk to about issues that are part of your professional life. You can put down their names, draw them, or otherwise indicate who they might be!

- Next, those you influence in your daily work, such as the children in your care, their families, maybe your co-workers land here.
- Next, those who make decisions about the system you are in—maybe this is your director or board, or even a PTA.
- Next, think about the early childhood care and education community you work within. What kind of influence could you have on this community? Do you have friends who work at other programs you can have important conversations with to spread ideas? Are you part of a local Association for the Education of Young Children (AEYC)? Could you speak to the organizers of a local conference about including certain topics for sessions?
- And finally, how about state (and even national) policies? Check out The Children's Institute to learn about state bills that impact childcare. Do you know your local representatives? Could you write a letter to your senator? Maybe you have been frustrated with the slow reimbursement and low rates for Employment Related Day Care subsidies and can find a place to share your story. You can call your local Child Care Resource and Referral, your local or state AEYC chapter, or visit childinst.org to find out how you can increase your reach! It's probably a lot farther than you think!

Break It Down: Systemic Racism

When you think about injustice and the kind of change you want to make, there's an important distinction to understand in the ways injustice happens in education (or anywhere else). First, there's personal bias and racism, and of course it's crucial as an educator to examine ourselves and our practices and responses. We all have bias and addressing it is an act of courage that you can model for your colleagues.

In addition, there's another kind of bias and racism, and it doesn't live inside of individual people, but inside of the systems we have built. Systemic racism exists in the structures and processes that have come into place over time, which allow one group of people a greater chance of succeeding than other specific groups of people.

Key Takeaways (Sidebar)

Systemic racism is also called institutional racism, because it exists – sometimes unquestioned – within institutions themselves.

In early childhood care and education, there are many elements that were built with middle class white children in mind. Many of our standardized tests were made with middle class white children in mind. The curriculum we use, the assessments we use, the standards of behavior we have been taught; they may have all been developed with middle class white children in mind.

Therefore it is important to consider whether they adequately and fairly work for all of the children in your program community. Do they have relevance to all children's lived experience, development, and abilities? Who is being left out?

Imagine a vocabulary assessment in which children are shown common household items including a lawn mower...common if you live in a house; they might well be unfamiliar to a three-year-old who lives in an apartment building, however. The child may end up receiving a lower score, though their vocabulary could be rich, full of words that do reflect the objects in their lived experience.

The test is at fault, not the child's experience. Yet the results of that test can impact the way educators, parents, and the child see their ability and likelihood to succeed.

Key Takeaway

Leaders in early childhood care and education have an ethical obligation to value every child's unique experiences, family, and community. In order to make sure your program values every child, you must make choices that ensure that each child, especially those who are part of groups that have not had as many resources, receive what they need in order to reach outcomes.

You Don't Have to Invent the Steps: Using an Equity Lens

In addition to the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct and Equity Statement, another tool for addressing decision-making is an equity lens. To explain what an equity lens is, we first need to talk about equity. It's a term you may have heard before, but sometimes people confuse it with equality. It's a little different – equity is having the resources needed to be successful.

There's a wonderful graphic of children looking over a fence at a baseball game. In one frame, each child stands at the fence; one is tall enough to see over the top; another stands tip-toe, straining to see; and another is simply too short. This is equality—everyone has the same chance, but not everyone is equally prepared. In the frame titled equity, each child stands on a stool just high enough so that they may all see over the fence. The stools are the supports they need to have an equitable outcome—being able to experience the same thing as their friend.

Seeking equity means considering who might not be able to see over the fence and figuring out how to build them a stool so that they have the same opportunity.

An equity lens, then, is a tool to help you look at decisions through a framework of equity. It's a series of questions to ask yourself when making decisions. An equity lens is a process of asking a series of questions to better help you understand if something (a project, a curriculum, a parent meeting, a set of behavioral guidelines) is unfair to specific individuals or groups whose needs have been overlooked in the past. This lens might help you to identify the impact of your decisions on students of color, and you can also use the lens to consider the impact on students experiencing poverty, students in nontraditional families, students with differing abilities, students who are geographically isolated, students whose home language is other than English, etc.) The lens then helps you determine how to move past this unfairness by overcoming barriers and providing equitable opportunities to all children.

Some states have adopted a version of the equity lens for use in their early learning systems. Questions that are part of an equity lens might include:

- What decision is being made, and what kind of values or assumptions are affecting how we make the decision?
- Who is helping make the decision? Are there representatives of the affected group who get to have a voice in the process?
- Does the new activity, rule, etc. have the potential to make disparities worse? For instance, could it mean that families who don't have a car miss out on a family night? Or will it make those disparities better?
- Who might be left out? How can we make sure they are included?
- Are there any potential unforeseen consequences of the decision that will impact specific groups? How can we try to make sure the impact will be positive?

You can use this lens for all kinds of decisions, in formal settings, like staff meetings, and you can also work to make them part of your everyday thinking. I have a sticky note on my desk that asks "Who am I leaving out"? This is an especially important question if the answer points to children who are people of color, or another group that is historically disadvantaged. If that's the answer, you don't have to scrap your idea entirely. Celebrate your awareness, and brainstorm about how you can do better for everyone—and then do it!

> **Key Takeaway**
>
> Racism and other forms of injustice can be built into the systems we work within—even if each individual is working hard not to recognize and root out their individual biases. As a leader, you can do work that will impact the system and undo these unjust practices or structures!

Embracing our Bruised Knees: Accepting Discomfort as We Grow

Inspirational author Brene Brown, who writes books, among other things, about being an ethical leader, said something that really walloped me: if we avoid the hard work of addressing unfairness (like talking about skin color at a time when our country is divided over it) **we are prioritizing our discomfort over the pain of others.**

Imagine a parent who doesn't think it's appropriate to talk about skin color with young children, who tells you so with some anger in their voice. That's uncomfortable, maybe even a little scary. But as you prioritize upholding the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of every individual, you can see that this is more important than trying to avoid discomfort. Changing your practice to avoid

conflict with this parent means prioritizing your own momentary discomfort over the pain children of color in your program may experience over time.

We might feel vulnerable when we think about skin color, and we don't want to have to have the difficult conversation. But if keeping ourselves safe from discomfort means that we might not be keeping children safe from very real and life-impacting racial disparity, we're not making a choice that is based in our values.

Your Call to Reflect

Can you think of a time that you prioritized your comfort over someone else's pain? I can! I've avoided uncomfortable conversations about disparity lots of times, for instance (though I also try really hard to be courageous and open when faced with these moments, and think I am doing better). Once you've thought of your example, take yourself back to the moment when you were deciding what to do, and say to yourself: I will not prioritize my own discomfort over the pain of others! Now grant yourself a do-over. Imagine what you would have done instead. How does it feel? Is the discomfort manageable? Does it go away? What other feelings do you experience?

Change is uncomfortable. It leaves us feeling vulnerable as we reexamine the ideas, strategies, even the deeply held beliefs that have served us so far. But as a leader, and with the call to support every child as they deserve, we can develop a sort of super power vision, where we can look unflinchingly around us and understand the hidden impacts of the structures we work within.

A Few Recent Dance Steps of My Own

You're definitely not alone—researchers and thinkers in the field are doing this work alongside you, examining even our most cherished and important ideas about childhood and early education. For instance, a key phrase that we often use to underpin our decisions is developmentally appropriate practice, which NAEYC defines as "methods that promote each child's optimal development and learning through a strengths-based, play-based approach to joyful, engaged learning." The phrase is sometimes used to contrast against practices that might not be developmentally appropriate, like expecting three-year-olds to write their names or sit quietly in a 30 minute story time.

But we have to consider how we as a field have determined what is developmentally appropriate. We do have science to build on, a strong understanding of brain development and its impact on regulation, impulse control, language acquisition, etc. **But we also have a set of cultural values that impact what we believe to be appropriate.**

Let me tell you a story about how professional development is still causing me to stare change in the face! At the NAEYC conference in 2020, during a session in which Dr. Jie-Qi Chen presented on different perspectives on developmentally appropriate practice among early educators in China and the United States. She showed a video from a classroom in China

to educators in both the US and in China. The video was of a circle time in which a child was retelling a story that the class knew well, and then the children were encouraged to offer feedback and rate how well the child had done. The children listened attentively, and then told the storytelling child how they had felt about his retelling, including identifying parts that had been left out, inaccuracies in the telling, and advice for speaking more clearly and loudly.

The educators were asked what the impact of the activity would be on the children and whether it was developmentally appropriate. The educators in the United States had deep concerns that the activity would be damaging to a child's self esteem, and was therefore not developmentally appropriate. They also expressed concerns about the children being asked to sit for this amount of time. The educators in the classroom in China felt that it was developmentally appropriate and the children were learning not only storytelling skills but how to give and receive constructive criticism.

As I watched the video, I had the same thoughts as the educators from the US—I'm not used to children being encouraged to offer criticism rather than praise. But I also saw that the child in question had self-confidence and received the feedback positively. The children were very engaged and seemed to feel their feedback mattered.

What was most interesting to me here was the idea of self-esteem, and how important it is to us here in the United States, or rather, how much protecting we feel it needs. I realized that what educators were responding to weren't questions of whether retelling a story was developmentally appropriate, or whether the critical thinking skills the children were being asked to display were developmentally appropriate, but rather whether the social scenario in which one child receives potentially negative feedback in front of their peers was developmentally appropriate, and that the responses were based in the different cultural ideas of self-esteem and individual vision versus collective success.

My point here is that even our big ideas, like developmentally appropriate practice, have an element of vulnerability to them. As courageous leaders, we need to turn our eyes even there to make sure that our cultural assumptions and biases aren't affecting our ability to see clearly, that the reality of every child is honored within them, and that no one is being left out. And that's okay. It doesn't mean we should scrap them. It's not wrong to advocate for and use developmentally appropriate practice as a framework for our work—not at all! It just means we need to remember that it's built from values that may be specific to our culture—and not everyone may have equal access to that culture. It means we should return to our big ideas with respect and bravery and sit with them and make sure they are still the ones that serve us best in the world we are living in right now, with the best knowledge we have right now.

> **Key Takeaway**
>
> Even our big ideas, the really important ones that underlie our philosophies, can't be assumed to be a universal truth, because they are affected by our beliefs and values. As leaders, we are called upon to be extra courageous and extra thoughtful in examining these beliefs and making sure they are a firm ground for every unique child to stand on.

You, Dancing With Courage

So...As a leader is early childhood, you will be called upon to be nimble, to make new decisions and reframe your practice when current events or new understanding disrupt your plans. When this happens, professional tools are available to you to help you make choices based on your ethical commitment to children.

Change makes us feel uncomfortable but we can embrace it to do the best by the children and families we work with. We can learn to develop our critical thinking skills so that we can examine our own beliefs and assumptions, both as individuals and as a leader.

Remember that person dancing on the shifting carpet? That child in the middle of the parachute? They might be a little dizzy, but with possibility. They might lose their footing, but in that uncertainty, in the middle of the billowing parachute, there is the sensation that the very instability provides the possibility of rising up like the fabric. And besides—there are hands to hold if they lose their balance—or if you do! And so can you rise when you allow yourself to accept change and adapt to all the new possibility of growth that it opens up!

Current Issues in the Field Part 2—Dance Lessons

Okay, sure—things are gonna change, and this change is going to affect the lives of the children and families you work with, and affect you, professionally and personally. So—you're sold, in theory, that to do the best by each one of those children, you're just going to have to do some fancy footwork, embrace the change, and think through how to best adapt to it.

But...how? Before we talk about the kind of change that's about rethinking your program on a broad level, let's talk about those times we face when change happens in the spur of the moment, and impacts the lives of the children in your program—those times when your job becomes helping children process their feelings and adapt to change. Sometimes this is a really big deal, like a natural disaster. Sometimes it's something smaller like the personal story I share below...something small, cuddly, and very important to the children.

Learning the Steps: How do I help children respond to change?

I have a sad story to share. For many years, I was the lead teacher in a classroom in which we had a pet rabbit named Flopsy. Flopsy was litter-trained and so our licensing specialist allowed us to let him hop freely around the classroom. Flopsy was very social, and liked to interact with children. He liked to be held and petted and was also playful, suddenly zooming around the classroom, hopping over toys and nudging children. Flopsy was a big part of our community and of children's experience in our classroom.

One day, I arrived at school to be told by my distraught director that Flopsy had died in the night and she had removed his body. I had about 15 minutes before children would be arriving, and I had to figure out how to address Flopsy's loss.

I took a few minutes to collect myself, and considered the following questions:

Does the issue affect children's lived experiences?

Yes, absolutely. The children would notice immediately that Flopsy was missing and would comment on it. It was important that I not evade their questions.

How much and what kind of information is appropriate for their age?

Flopsy had died. His body had stopped working. His brain had stopped working. He would not ever come back to life. We would never see Flopsy again. I wrote these sentences on a sticky note. They were short but utterly important.

How can I best affirm their emotions?

I would give children the opportunity to share their feelings, and talk about my own feelings. I would read children's books that would express feelings they might not have words for yet. I would pay extra attention to children reaching out to me and offer opportunities to affirm children's responses by writing them down.

What do I hope they will learn?

Human beings encounter death. Children lose pets, grandparents, and sometimes parents or siblings. I wanted these children to experience death in a way that would give them a template when they experienced more intense loss. I wanted them to know it's okay to be sad, and that the sadness grows less acute over time. That it's okay to feel angry or scared, and that these feelings, too, though they might be really big, will become less immediate. And that it's okay to feel happy as you remember the one you lost.

Could I accidentally be doing harm through my response?

I knew it was important not to give children mistaken impressions about death. I was careful not to compare it to sleep, because I didn't want them to think that maybe Flopsy would wake up again. I also didn't want them to fear that when mama fell asleep it was the same thing as death. I also wanted to be factual but leave room for families to share their religious beliefs with their children.

Which resources do I need and can I gather in a timely manner?

I didn't have time to do research. But I mentally gathered up some wisdom from a training I'd been to, where the trainer talked

about how important it is that we don't shy away from addressing death with children. Her words gave me courage. I also gathered up some children's books about pet death from our library.

How do I gather my team?

The first thing I did was text my husband. I was really sad. I had cared for this bunny for years and I loved him too. I didn't have time for a phone call, but that text was an important way for me to acknowledge my own feelings of grief.

Then I talked to the other teachers. I asked for their quick advice, and shared my plan, since the news would travel to other classrooms as well.

How can I involve families?

During my prep time that day, I wrote a letter to families, letting them know Flopsy had died and some basic information about how we had spoken to children about it, some resources about talking to children about death, and some titles of books about the death of pets. I knew that news of Flopsy's death would be carried home to many families, and that parents might want to share their own belief systems about death. I also knew many parents were uncomfortable discussing death with young children and that it might be helpful to see the way we had done so.

Then, I created and enacted my plan...

I had curriculum planned for that day which I partially scrapped. At our first gathering time I shared the news with the whole group: I shared my sticky note of information about death. I told the children I was sad. I asked if they had questions and I answered them honestly. I listened when they shared their own feelings. I also told them I had happy memories of FLopsy and we talked about our memories.

During the course of the day, and the next few days, I gave the children invitations (but not assignments) to reflect on Flopsy and their feelings. I sat on the floor with a notebook and the invitation for children to write a "story" about Flopsy. Almost every child wanted their words recorded. Responses ranged from "Goodbye bunny" to imagined stories about Flopsy's adventures, to a description of feelings of sadness and loss. Writing down these words helped acknowledge the children's feelings. Some of them hung their stories on the wall, and some asked them to be read aloud, or shared them themselves, at circle time.

I also made sure there were plenty of other opportunities in the classroom for children who didn't want to engage in these ways, or who didn't need to.

We read "Saying Goodbye to Lulu" and "The Tenth Good Thing About Barney" in small groups; and while these books were a little bit above the developmental level of some children in the class, many children wanted to hear and discuss the books. When I became teary reading them, I didn't try to hide it, but just said "I'm feeling sad, and it makes me cry a little bit. Everyone cries sometimes."

In short, I recognized that I needed to address Flopsy's death right away, and changed the plan to do so with the resources I had on hand.

This would be a good set of steps to address an event like a hurricane, wildfires, or an earthquake as well. First and foremost of course, make sure your children are safe and have their physical needs met! Remember your role as educator and caretaker; address their emotional needs, consider what you hope they will learn, gather the resources and your team, and make decisions that affirm the dignity of each child in your care.

Your Call to Reflect

Can you think of a time you were called upon to be nimble in responding to an event that impacted children? Pet loss is a very common example. The severe illness or loss of a family member might only affect one child at a time, but could also be a good example. If you were working with children during the onset of COVID-19, that time called for a great deal of change for children and adults as we learned to live in new ways. Once you have your example, look at the questions below. Imagine yourself right back to the moment when you were deciding how to respond, notice feelings of uncertainty, of concern, maybe of fear, of compassion, and whatever else surfaces for you. Now, walk that person you were through these questions.

- Does the issue affect children's lived experiences?

- How much and what kind of information is appropriate for their age?
- How can I best affirm their emotions?
- What do I hope they will learn?
- Could I accidentally be doing harm through my response?
- Which resources do I need and can I gather in a timely manner?
- How do I gather my team?
- How can I involve families?
- Now, I create and enact my plan...

Did your plan look any different for having used these questions? And did the process of making decisions as a leader look or feel different? How so?

You might not always walk yourself through a set of questions–but using an intentional tool is like counting out dance steps—there's a lot of thinking it through at first, and maybe forgetting a step, and stumbling, and so forth. And then...somehow, you just know how to dance. And then you can learn to improvise. In other words, it is through practice that you will become adept at and confident in responding to change, and learn to move with grace on the shifting carpet of life.

Feeling the Rhythm: How do I help myself respond to change

—and grow through it?

Now, let's address what it might look like to respond to a different kind of change, the kind in which you learn something new and realize you need to make some changes in who you are as an educator. This is hard, but there are steps you can take to make sure you keep moving forward:

- Work to understand your own feelings. Write about them. Talk them through with your teams—personal and/or professional.
- Take a look in the mirror, strive to see where you are at, and then be kind to yourself!
- Gather your tools! Get out that dog eared copy of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, and look for other tools that are relevant to your situation. Root yourself in the values of early childhood care and education.
- Examine your own practices in light of this change.
- Examine the policies, structures, or systems that affect your program in light of this change.
- Ask yourself, where could change happen? Remember your spheres of influence.
- Who can you collaborate with? Who is on your team?
- How can you make sure the people being affected by this change help inform your response? Sometimes people use the phrase "Nothing for us without us" to help remember that we don't want to make decisions that affect a group of people (even if we think we're helping) without learning more from individuals in that group about what real support looks like).
- Make a plan, including a big vision and small steps, and start taking those small steps. Remember that when you are ready to bring others in, they will need to go through some of this process too, and you may need to be on their team as they look for a safe sounding board to explore their discomfort or fear.
- Realize that you are a courageous advocate for children. Give yourself a hug!

To make this real, let's imagine you just learned about expulsion rates among children of color (and maybe you just did!). This has struck a chord with you and you wonder if this is reflected in your own classroom or program or even your own practice. What do you do?

- **Work to understand your own feelings. Write about them. Talk them through with your teams—personal and/or professional.**

This might be a good time to freewrite about your feelings—just put your pencil to paper and start writing. Maybe you feel guilty because you're afraid that too many children of color have been asked to leave your program. Maybe you feel angry about the injustice. Maybe you feel scared that this topic is politicized and people aren't going to want to hear about it. Maybe you feel scared to even face the idea that bias could have affected children while in your care. All these feelings are okay! Maybe you talk to your partner or your friends about your fears before you're ready to get started even thinking about taking action.

- **Take a look in the mirror, strive to see where you are at, and then be kind to yourself! Tell that person looking back at you: "I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better."**

Yep. You love children and you did what you believed was best for the children in your program. Maybe now you can do even better by them! You are being really really brave by investigating!

- **Gather your tools! Get out that dog-eared copy of the NAEYC Code of Ethical Conduct, and look for other tools that are relevant to your situation.**

Okay! This would be an excellent time to bring out the equity lens and your other tools. Read them over. Use them.

- **Examine your own practices in light of this change.**

Do your practices affirm the dignity of every child and family? Ask yourself these hard questions while focusing on, in this case, how you look at behavior of children of color. Do the choices you make affirm the dignity of each unique child? Use your tools—you can pull out the equity lens here! Are you acknowledging the home realities of each child when you are having conversations that are meant to build social-emotional skills? Are you considering the needs of each child during difficult transitions? Do you provide alternative ways for children to engage if they have difficulty sitting in circle times?

- **Examine the policies, structures, or systems that affect your program in light of this change.**

And...Do your policies and structures affirm the dignity of every child and family? Use those tools! Look at your behavioral guidance policies—are you expecting children to come into your program with certain skills that may not be valued by certain cultures? What about your policies on sending children home or asking a family to leave your program? Could these policies be unfair to certain groups? In fact—given that you now know how extremely impactful expulsion is for preschoolers, could you take it off the table entirely?

- **Ask yourself, where could change happen? Remember your spheres of influence.**

Let's say you're a teacher, and you can look back and see that over the years you've been at your center, a disproportionately high number of children of color have been excluded from the program. Your director makes policy decisions—can you bring this information to him or her? Could you talk to your coworkers about how to bring it up? Maybe your sphere of influence could get even wider—could you share this information with other early educators in your community? Maybe even write a letter to your local representatives!

- **Who can you collaborate with? Who is on your team?**

Maybe other educators? Maybe parents? Maybe your director? Maybe an old teacher of your own? Can you bring this up at a staff meeting? Or in informal conversations?

- **How can you make sure the people being affected by this change help inform your response?**

Let's say your director is convinced that your policies need to change in light of this new information. You want to make sure that parent voice—and especially that of parents of color—is heard! You could suggest a parent meeting on the topic; or maybe do "listening sessions" with parents of color, where you ask them open-ended questions and listen and record their responses—without adding much of your own response; maybe you could invite parents to be part of a group who looks over and works on the policies. This can feel a little scary to people in charge (see decentered leadership?)

- **Make a plan, including a big vision and small steps, and start taking those small steps. Remember that when you are ready to bring others in, they will need to go through some of this process too, and you may need to be on their team as they look for a safe sounding board to explore their discomfort or fear.**

Maybe this plan is made along with your director and includes those parent meetings, and a timeline for having revised policies, and some training for the staff. Or—let's back it up—maybe you're not quite to that point yet, and your plan is how you are going to approach your director, especially since they might feel criticized. Then your plan might be sharing information, communicating enthusiasm about moving forward and making positive change, and clearly stating your thoughts on where change is needed! (Also some chocolate to reward yourself for being a courageous advocate for every child.)

- **Realize that you are a courageous advocate for children. Give yourself a hug!**

And, as I may have mentioned, some chocolate. You are a leader and an advocate, and a person whose action mirrors their values. You are worth admiring!

Maybe you haven't had your mind blown with new information lately, but I'll bet there's something you've thought about that you haven't quite acted on yet...maybe it's about individualizing lesson plans for children with differing abilities. Maybe it's about addressing diversity of gender in the classroom. Maybe it's about celebrating linguistic diversity, inviting children and parents to share their home languages in the classroom, and finding authentic ways to include print in these languages.

Whatever it is—we all have room to grow.

Make a Plan!

So, make yourself a plan. Look back to those 10 steps and write a few sentences, or more if you are inspired, on what you can do to move yourself forward, as a resourced member of a team and a powerful advocate for children! When you are done, take a step, then another, and another. And then, yes, you are walking the walk, dancing the dance (or maybe not The Dance, but some other, new, even more inspiring dance!) You are courageously living your beliefs, and your actions are rooted in respect of the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual your professional life touches!

Dancing Your Dance: Rocking Leadership in Times of Change

There will never be a time when we as educators are not having to examine and respond to "Current Issues in the Field." Working with children means working with children in a dynamic and ever-evolving landscape of community, knowledge, and personal experience. It's really cool that we get to do this, walk beside small human beings as they learn to traverse the big wacky world with all its potholes...and it means we get to keep getting better and better at circling around, leaping over, and, yep, dancing around or even through those very potholes.

In conclusion, all dancers feel unsteady sometimes. All dancers bruise their knees along the way. All educators make mistakes and experience discomfort. All dancers wonder if this dance just isn't for them. All dancers think that maybe this one is just too hard and want to quit sometimes. All educators second guess their career choices. But all dancers also discover their own innate grace and their inborn ability to both learn and to change; our very muscles are made to stretch, our cells replace themselves, and we quite simply cannot stand still. All educators have the capacity to grow into compassionate, courageous leaders!

Your heart, your brain, and your antsy feet have led you to become a professional in early childhood care and education, and they will all demand that you jump into the uncertainty of leadership in times of change, and learn to dance for the sake of the children in your care. This, truly, is your call to action, and your pressing invitation to join the dance!

Citations

Brown, B. (2018). *Dare to lead*. Vermilion.

Broughton, A., Castro, D. and Chen, J. (2020). *Three International Perspectives on Culturally Embraced Pedagogical Approaches to Early Teaching and Learning*. [Conference presentation]. NAEYC Annual Conference.

Crum, T. (1987). *The Magic of Conflict: Turning a Life of Work into a Work of Art*. Touchstone.

Meek, S. and Gilliam, W. (2016). Expulsion and Suspension in Early Education as Matters of Social Justice and Health Equity. *Perspectives: Expert Voices in Health & Health Care*.

Scott, K., Looby, A., Hipp, J. and Frost, N. (2017). "Applying an Equity Lens to the Child Care Setting." *The Journal of Law, Medicine & Ethics 45 (S1), 77-81*.

Online Resources for *Current Issues in the Field*

Resources for opening yourself to personal growth, change, and courageous leadership:

- Brown, Brenee. *Daring Classrooms*. https://brenebrown.com/daringclassrooms
- Chang, R. (March 25, 2019). *What Growth Mindset Means for Kids* [Video]. TED Conferences. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=66yaYmUNOx4

Resources for Thinking About Responding to Current Issues in Education

- Flanagan, N. (July 31, 2020). *How School Should Respond to Covid-19* [Video]. TED Conferences. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cSkUHHH4nb8
- Harris, N.B.. (February 217, 015). *How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime* [Video]. TED Conferences. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ovIJ3dsNk
- Simmons, D. (August 28, 2020). *6 Ways to be an Anti Racist Educator* [Video]. Edutopia. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UM3Lfk751cg&t=3s

This page titled 5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

Learning Objectives

- Objective 1: Describe role of an Advocate.
- Objective 2: Articulate the role of Advocacy in Early Childhood Care & Education (ECE).
- Objective 3: Identify the elements of culture, bias, and beliefs that need to be considered when creating an Advocacy Plan.
- Objective 4: Design an Advocacy Plan for an issue or topic in ECE.

What does it mean to be an advocate?

Simply defined by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, an advocate is “someone who publicly supports or promotes the interests of a cause or group.” The role of an advocate in early childhood care and education is to support or promote the interests of children, families, and community.

As an early childhood care and education (ECE) professional you are in a unique and powerful position in influencing the lives of children and families. You are also in a unique and powerful position in understanding the issues that affect many families and children. You see the day-to-day struggles that families face, the barriers that keep children for succeeding to their full potential, and the missteps of policy creation that hold families back. You are an expert on these issues. Your thoughts, experiences and ideas are valuable, and your voice needs to be heard.

Don’t believe me? Then watch the two following YouTube videos. The first is a TedTalk titled “Every Kid needs a Champion” given by Rita Pierson. Ms. Pierson passed away in 2013 but her message is still just as important today.

Every Kid needs a Champion

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

The second is a TedxPortland talk titled “The Power of Advocacy” given by Xiomara Torres, a Multnomah County judge who shares her journey which began with just one person who believed in her and stood beside her when she was just a child.

The Power of Advocacy

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

These videos show the positive power that one single person can have over the life of a child or an entire group of children. You can be that person—in fact, you probably already are.

The Big A and Little a of Advocacy

What comes to mind when you hear the word Advocacy? Does it make you think about sticking your foot in doors to keep them open? Protesting in the street? Standing in a courtroom, board meeting, or other stakeholder gathering to make your case known and speak your mind? How do these scenarios make you feel? Are you palms sweaty, your heart racing, or your temperature rising?

If so, you are not alone. Many people, especially those of us working in early childhood care and education, feel uncomfortable in situations in which we put ourselves out there or even considering putting ourselves out there.

When I think about advocacy in early childhood care and education, I like to think about “little a” advocacy and “Big A” advocacy. Advocacy can take many forms. It can be the heroic big-impact actions that we see in the movies and on television. Such as participating or planning and leading a protest about an issue that you care about, meeting with policy creators, or presenting at board meetings. The Big A’s are the thoughts many people have about advocacy that can make palms sweat and hearts race.

However, there is also the equally powerful “little a” advocacy. Little a advocacy consists of the actions you choose to do for children and their families every day. Such as speaking your mind about what you know, from your experiences and/or education in early childhood. This may be when:

- You partner with a family about the best way to support their child as they learn to use a toilet.
- When you talk to your program director or supervisor about a vegetarian option for families who do not eat meat.
- Perhaps you have questioned a policy or procedure that does not align with what you know to be culturally responsive best practice for the people who live in the community.

Each of these, along with many more, are examples of how you are already an advocate.

You may not have realized that you were an advocate in these situations. You might, even now, be thinking, “That isn’t advocacy, that is just doing my job.” Well, yes, it is part of your job. Part of your job in working with children is, in fact, the advocacy in which you are already taking action. This is true no matter what position of power you hold in your classroom, in the program where you work, or your participation in early childhood associations. You are already an advocate for children.

The fact that you are an advocate may feel uncomfortable to you, or perhaps you know you are an advocate but want to take your work forward to the next level. Perhaps you want to do more, and maybe feel a bit guilty for not being more involved, or you might just not know where to start. Maybe you have found yourself thinking “someone should do something about this situation” and wondering if that someone should be you.

No matter where you are in the advocacy part of your leadership journey, this module was created to support and empower you in your advocacy work and to help you organize a sustainable strategy for performing actions of advocacy that fuel your passions and keep you from feeling overwhelmed or burnt out.

Your Call to Reflect

To take the first step, let’s do a reflection about the advocacy work you are already doing. Reflection is a key component to being an effective leader. Your ability to reflect on your experiences and beliefs has a direct effect on your capability to learn from these experiences and grow.

Throughout this module, you will be called to reflect on your experiences. Plan to spend 10-15 minutes on each reflection. Clear your mind of any distractions. Read the reflection prompt through to the end. Depending on your learning style, you can write, web, draw, or do any other means of expression for your reflection.

Think about a time when you felt the need to stand up for another person or idea. What was the issue? Why was it important to you? What steps, if any, did you take to prepare yourself? How did you do it? What was the end result? How did you feel before, during, and after the situation? Would you classify this as Big A advocacy or little a advocacy?

If you did not do anything, what were the reasons at the time that made you make that decision? If faced with a similar situation today, would you do anything differently? Why or why not?

Connecting your identities in advocacy. Why your voice matters in early childhood policy creation.

For most early childhood care and education professionals, our comfort and natural tendencies may be in little a advocacy. Those things we do each and every day that make a positive change in the lives of children and families. Your role as an ECE professional gives you a unique insight to the challenges being faced by teachers, children, and families in your community that make it necessary for you to step into the Big A advocacy role. Guyon, (2019) writes:

> The field of early childhood education is complex and varied. From outside of the tangled web of home based, commercial, corporate, and publicly funded early childhood education and care programs, it can seem chaotic, but it is within this complexity that we find the uniqueness of early childhood education. Not every early childhood education program works for every family in all communities. Many early childhood education programs offer unique aspects that support the children and families they serve, focusing on the ever-changing needs and rights of the community around them (p. 117).

This is why it is so important for you, no matter what your role is in the classroom or early childhood program, to see yourself as a leader and an advocate for the children and families in your community. You have relationships and an understanding of the children and families in your program that no one else can have. You know what works and you know what does not work. You have had times in your career when decision makers have got it completely wrong, and you have had to find ways in which to work around policy and required practice that does not support the children in the classroom.

> Stop for a moment and take a deep breath or two. Re-read this paragraph and let it sink into your heart. Do you believe these sentences to be true for you? If not, can you say why?

Let me share a short, yet true, story. While working at a very large early childhood program, I was attending a professional development in-service day with my colleagues. During one of the sessions, the presenter, who was a supervisor in the program, was sharing the different Boardmaker® tools that were available to support children's language development, and encouraging us to share resources if needed. During this presentation, he declared that all Boardmaker® tools should be laminated and have Velcro on the back so we could hang them where needed. In this declaration he stated, "I am just going to make an executive policy that the fuzzy side of the Velcro goes on the back of the laminated tools." Now, if you have ever worked in an early childhood care and education program, you are rolling your eyes as much as we were. Why? Because you know that felt boards, and the back of early childhood furniture are soft. Which means that for items to stick to them, they need the scratchy side of the Velcro stuck to the back.

This was not a huge issue, and after a week of having to peel off soft Velcro to re-stick scratchy Velcro someone finally spoke to him about his decision. However, it does show how policy and practice decisions can be easily made in ways that do not support the actual work we do. Nevertheless, it demonstrates why it is so important for each person working in a classroom to have a say in the policy that informs their practice.

Your Call to Reflect

You may have noticed in the story above that it took a week before someone advocated on the behalf of the teachers and spoke up to the supervisor about their Velcro decision. Why do you think no one spoke up during the in-service session? What aspects might have been in play that gave someone the opportunity or the confidence to speak up to the supervisor? In a similar situation, would you feel comfortable speaking up to your own supervisor? Why or why not? What would the conditions need to be for you to be comfortable to speak up? What do you think would be the results of your advocacy?

At this point, you may have connected to this story and are seeing the ways in which you are doing little a advocacy every day. You may also be thinking that Big A advocacy is too scary, too hard, or maybe you feel you are in a unique situation that prevents you from doing more than the tasks assigned to you in your role or job. This can be understandable, and although both Big A and little a advocacy require that you take a chance, Big A advocacy is on a much larger scale. Taking chances on a larger stage can be scary:

- What if you make someone mad?
- What if you are wrong?
- Or even worse, what if you are right and expected to take the lead?

Participating in Big A advocacy does not have to feel scary or isolating. If we rethink our ideas about what Big A advocacy really is, can be, or how it is implemented, what changes could we make collectively? How might your role in Big A advocacy look if you were involved with a group of people rather than just being on your own?

Rethinking our idea of Big A advocacy—Collective Advocacy

> "It's up to each of us to create a better world for our children."
>
> —Dr. Benjamin Spock

Collective advocacy allows a group of people, and the wider community with shared interests, to represent their views, preferences, and experiences. A collective voice can be more powerful than a single voice and can help policy makers, strategic planners, and service providers know what is working well, where gaps are, and how best to target resources. Being part of a collective advocacy group can help to reduce an individual's sense of isolation when raising a difficult issue.

Collective advocacy rethinks the way advocacy can look in ECE. Instead of the traditional idea of funders, policy makers, and decision makers creating policy to be implemented into ECE programs and classrooms, Collective advocacy is a process of creating and connecting individuals and groups in the community that share common needs and concerns to learn from each other. In collective advocacy, these individuals and groups work together towards making positive long-lasting change.

Collective advocacy empowers a group of people to share their views, ideas, and experiences about shared interests. It offers opportunities for the voices and stakeholders who are often not at the table to be heard. It creates a platform in which all perspectives are considered, and a deeper sense of understanding is obtained. Collective advocacy can allow individuals who may be unsure or uncomfortable speaking up on their own a community of support in which to address an issue. In collective advocacy, leadership and decision making are shared by all.

Traditional advocacy is what most people know and see—think about figures in history who have led big change or called attention to big issues, such as Rosa Parks, Malala Yousafzai, and David Hogg. Traditional advocacy is led by a few and followed by many with those at the top making the decisions. It can be dependent on leadership and dissolve quickly when leadership falters or changes.

Traditional Advocacy vs Collective Advocacy

> "Listening requires that you quiet your own experience to make room for another's." —Zikiea Gardner

The table below serves as a quick reference to the differences of what might be seen as traditional advocacy and collective advocacy.

	Traditional Advocacy	Collective Advocacy
Structure	Charismatic Leader(s)	Stakeholders are at equal levels of power.
Dec. Making	Executive Committee / Leadership	Decision making involves working through problems, sharing ideas, & decision making with the community.
Assumptions	Leaders know best. Force/power makes change	Family & community engagement will create lasting change
Beliefs	Working for change to a community	Working with families & community for lasting change

Let us look at each of the elements of traditional and collective advocacy in turn:

Structure:

- Traditional advocacy structure usually has one or a few charismatic leaders at the top. They are the ones who begin the idea, set the goal, and have some sort of plan about what steps to take to get their idea out to others to make a change. They can get people fired up and their voices amplify their cause and get their ideas out.
- In collective advocacy structures, a number of people connect over an issue or an idea. They meet with each other to create a set of goals and a plan in which to move forward. In collective advocacy structures, many people take on many different leadership roles to amplify their cause and get their ideas out.

Decision Making:

- In traditional advocacy, decisions are made by the one or few charismatic leaders at the top. It is their idea, their goals, and their plans that others follow. Other members of the advocacy project may contribute ideas or thoughts, but ultimately the end decision falls on the shoulders of the leader, or on a larger stage, with an executive committee.
- In collective advocacy, decision making is a process of understanding and working through problems, sharing ideas, and involving the community affected in the decision-making process.

Assumptions:

- With traditional advocacy, it is assumed that the leaders know what is best for the community. Their perspectives, ideas, goals, and plans lead the force for change.
- With collective advocacy, the assumption is that all voices and perspectives will be heard to create ideas, goals, and plans that engage the community and make for lasting change.

Beliefs:

- In traditional advocacy models, change is being made for a community to support the community in a beneficial way.
- In collective advocacy models, change is being made with the community to better understand the needs and desires of the community and help the community accomplish their goals.

How Traditional & Collective Advocacy can look in ECE:

To consider how traditional and collective advocacy can play out in ECE, let us take a real-life issue that comes up in most ECE programs: special diets and food allergies.

Scenario

The program in which you work provides two snacks and a lunch for the children each day as part of the tuition families pay. There is a strict policy that children cannot bring food into the classroom from home. You have 20 children in your classroom with the following allergies and/or special diets:

- 3 children who are allergic to dairy
- 2 children who are gluten free
- 1 child that is vegan
- 1 child that is vegetarian
- 1 child that is allergic to melon
- 12 children who have no food allergies or special diets

Currently, your program caters to each child's dietary needs. However, doing so means following almost 50 different diet plans and has become too expensive to maintain. The program needs to find a way in which to support all children but keep costs down. The stakeholders in this decision are parents, children, administration/management, and teachers, each with their own ideas and wanting a voice of how to make this work. How would the decision-making process look using a traditional advocacy model?

	Traditional Advocacy	What it looks like:
Structure	A parent whose child has special dietary needs would advocate to meet with the director. (For this scenario let's say the family practices a vegetarian lifestyle.)	In this meeting the parent voices their beliefs about being a vegetarian and why having a vegetarian option is essential. The director listens and expresses the cost situation of the center to the parent. The director might extend an invitation to the parent to meet with the executive committee to be part of the decision making process.
Decision Making	The parent makes a suggestion to the executive committee, gives a strong argument in how the suggestion meets the needs of the center, and the suggestion is moved forward as the proposed change.	The suggestion is that all the food offered could be vegetarian. The parent offers to work with the committee to create well balanced vegetarian menus. The executive committee is excited about what seems like an easy solution and passes the suggestion.
Assumptions	It is assumed that the advocating parent's perspective is the only concern about the menu changes.	Everyone in the meeting thinks, "Yay! That was so much easier that we thought it would be!"
Beliefs	Decision makers believe that if other stakeholders cared, they would have said so.	"There will be no issues with the menu changes."
Likely Consequences	Not all of the needs of the community are heard and/or addressed. Many stakeholders are left out of the decision making process and do not feel heard.	The parents of children who are vegan, or have other special dietary needs and/or allergies are angry and frustrated with the changes. Chaos reigns.

Now let's take a look at how this might play out using a Collective Advocacy approach.

	Collective Advocacy	What it looks like:
Structure	A group of parents, administration members, teachers, children, and other stakeholders meet to discuss the upcoming menu changes.	A small group or individual reaches out to the director about building a committee to discuss the reason for the menu changes. An invitation is sent to all stakeholders to be part of the solution process. This includes parents, teachers, administration members, children, and others.
Decision Making	Each group is allowed an equal opportunity to share their needs and opinions. Each is discussed, problems are addressed, and possible solutions are offered. Solutions are voted on by the group.	After much consideration and debate, it is decided that the center would offer two menus, a vegan menu and a regular menu. Parents would choose to have their child eat one menu or another. It is also decided that children with special dietary needs would be allowed to bring in substitutions for items their children could not eat (such as berries for children allergic to melon, gluten free bread for children on a gluten free diet, etc.)

	Collective Advocacy	What it looks like:
Assumptions	The group as a whole is working towards a solution that will benefit all involved.	"Our work has just begun."
Beliefs	We will do our best to make this work for everyone.	"This is a good start, but needs to be continually addressed over time to make sure we are meeting the needs of our community as it changes and grows."
Likely Consequences	The needs of the overall community are met, although they may look different for some families than for others.	Everyone feels as if their voices were heard and that they had the opportunity to be part of the decision-making process. They know that as issues come up, they will continue to have opportunities to work with the community to address the issues and make needed changes.

Pros & Cons of Each:

- Traditional advocacy models can start quickly, spark a fire, and draw attention around an issue. Charismatic leaders inspire others to join in and traditional advocacy models can become a nationwide focus very quickly. Having a single voice directing goals and plans makes it easy for others to join even if those goals do not always align with the larger needs of the community. Involvement in traditional advocacy models can be long or short term, people who join can move in and out of their roles easily. Traditional advocacy movements can fizzle out quickly, especially if the leaders who began the movement leave or are involved in a scandal of some type, or slowly once the initial goals are met.
- Collective advocacy models can be slower to start and take more time to get going. Collective advocacy models focus on bringing many different groups and many different perspectives that are concerned about a certain issue to the table. In collective advocacy models, each voice has an equal opportunity to be heard and is equally valued. Because of this, setting goals and plans takes time, commitment, and a willingness to understand and find common ground. Collective advocacy models focus on a series of both long-term and short-term goals that work with families and the community for long-lasting change.

Your Call to Reflect

Think of a time when something was done for you that did not quite meet your needs. This can be in your professional life, such as a policy that was implemented, or your personal life, such as someone doing something for you to be kind or helpful. How did their involvement help and hinder the issue? How did it make you feel? What was your response?

Now think of a time that you were involved in the decision-making process. Again, this can be either in your professional life or your personal life. What was it like for you to be involved in the process? How did it make you feel? How did this compare and contrast to when you were not involved in the decision-making process?

> "I raise my voice not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard."
>
> —Malala Yousafzai

Think briefly about the reflection you just did in this module about the difference between when something was done for you and when you were involved in the decision making process. Which scenario created a better result? When creating an advocacy plan it is important to remember to have a focus of advocating with, rather than advocating for. Each of us carries our own thoughts, beliefs, values, and bias. These come from our experience, our education, from our culture, and the way in which we were raised. As humans, we all look for connections and can sometimes incorrectly assume that others have the same thoughts, beliefs, values, and bias as us.

Some questions for consideration are:

- How is my positionality affecting my perspective about this issue?
- How do I make sure the perspectives of all stakeholders are represented and have the opportunity to be involved in this advocacy plan?
- How can I keep my bias from silencing other voices?
- Who do I need to contact to hear other perspectives about this idea or issue?

- What am I missing?

Moving the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further.

"Anyone who does anything to help a child is a hero to me." – Fred Rogers

Most of us want to see, and be a part of, positive change in our programs and communities for a variety of reasons. Taking the first steps can be intimidating, it may be difficult to know where to start. You may be wondering:

- How do I know what is important to me?
- What if I don't know enough?
- What if people think I am a trouble-maker?
- What if I offend someone?
- What if I make it worse than it already is?

These worries are common and worthy of addressing. When you take the first steps from little a advocacy to Big A advocacy it can be helpful to identify one or two people you can rely on to help you address your concerns. This can be anyone: a co-worker, supervisor, colleague, partner, teacher, classmate, etc.

There are a lot of issues that need to be addressed in the field of ECE and it can be hard to narrow down where to hone your focus. Remember you are not alone! Many associations focused on early childhood have wonderful links and resources in which you can connect and explore different levels and types of advocacy.

ZERO TO THREE https://www.zerotothree.org/policy-and-advocacy

ZERO TO THREE Mission Statement: Our mission is to ensure that all babies and toddlers have a strong start in life. At ZERO TO THREE, we envision a society that has the knowledge and will to support all infants and toddlers in reaching their full potential.

National Association for the Education of Young Children https://www.naeyc.org/our-work/public-policy-advocacy

NAEYC Mission Statement: NAEYC promotes high-quality early learning for all children, birth through age eight, by connecting practice, policy, and research. We advance a diverse, dynamic early childhood profession and support all who care for, educate, and work on behalf of young children.

Let's get started!

> "To take a first step forward, you have to lose your balance a little."
>
> —3-year-old child in Reggio Emilia, Italy

There are also some wonderful tools to help you get started on your advocacy journey. For this module, we are going to use the You Have What It Takes! Zero to Three Advocacy tool. This tool was designed by ZERO TO THREE to help early childhood care & education professionals use their abilities, skills, knowledge and experience towards advocacy.

Let's walk through this tool together.

1. The first thing you will need to do is print the Advocacy Tool. You can use the link above or you can copy the pages out of this module.

Once you have copied or printed the Advocacy Tool pages, list out the ECE issues that you are interested in working as an advocate.

Your Call to Reflect

Take 10-15 minutes to free write about your thoughts around issues in ECE. If you have never done a free write, this is a good place to start. Simply place your pen or pencil on a piece of paper and write whatever comes to mind about this subject. Here are a couple of ideas to consider:

> Think about the little a advocacy you do. What are the bigger issues connected to this work? Are you aware of any state or federal policies that are related to this in your classroom?
>
> How would you imagine early childhood education and care at it's very best? What are the aspects you would see in classrooms, programs, or in your community? What are the barriers that might get in your way of achieving this image?

Once you have finished your free write, reread it and highlight three areas that mean the most to you, Write them down in the space provided on the Advocacy Tool Form.

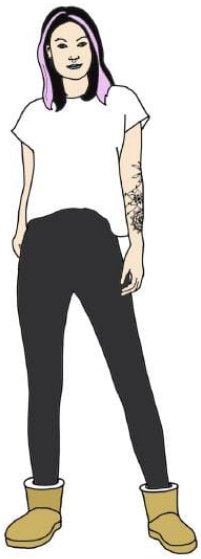
1. For the next step, identify the skills that you already possess that make you a strong advocate. Consider each carefully, and rate yourself honestly. Remember that this form is to help you see where your advocacy skills can be put to use. Be honest, there are no wrong answers.
2. Now, use the Matching Skills chart to illustrate how your skills connect to different advocacy strategies. Fill in your scores on the Matching Skills to Advocacy Skills Chart.

When you have completed this chart, see where your strongest skills align with the Advocacy Strategies. You may be surprised at what you see, but don't let that intimidate you, you might have advocacy skills you haven't even considered yet!

> The first time I completed this section of the Advocacy Tool, I wrote the ratings on top of the boxes, then I looked at where I saw the highest percentages. As someone who considered themselves an introvert, I was surprised to see that many of my skills aligned with public speaking (Testifying, Organizing Meetings, Recruiting Others, etc.). I reflected on this with a few of my colleagues and discovered that they fully agreed with the Advocacy Skills that I had identified in using this tool and mentioned several times that I had done each of these things in little a advocacy ways. Both the tool and the conversations helped me to see myself a bit differently than I had before.

You are now ready for your next step.

1. Build your Advocacy Plan and identify some achievable goals! Use the Advocacy Strategies that you checked off on the Matching Skills sheet. In the first column, list three of the Advocacy Strategies in which you had a high rating.
2. Next, visit the ZERO TO THREE Policy & Advocacy page. Also take a look at the NAEYC Advocacy page. Browse through the different topics and tools. What do you see that align with the three issues you identified at the beginning of this assignment available on this page that align with those issues? Do not get worried if you have to dig around a bit. You want to make sure that both the issue and plan align with what you feel is valuable and you are passionate about. In the second column, write down the first step you will take to work towards your advocacy strategy.
3. Identify your resources. You do not have to do this work alone! This section of the Advocacy Tool helps you to identify who you can collaborate with, how you can get connected, and how it will help you grow in your Big A advocacy work. Let's break this section down to the three columns.



- **Individual or Organization**—Who do you know is already involved in this work? Who do you know is passionate about this issue? Consider different professional development sessions you have had around the issue, who led those sessions? Think about your break room or playground conversations: who has expressed similar hopes or frustrations? What organizations are leading this work?
- **Connecting to Resources**—How are you going to connect with the individuals and/or organizations that you have identified? For individuals, an email or phone call is a great place to start, followed by an invitation to meet either in person or virtually. Organizations often have a plethora of resources on their websites and connecting to organizations can be as simple as visiting the website and becoming a member or joining the email list.
- **How this resource can support your advocacy plan**—It is very easy to get lost in a conversation or go down the rabbit hole of information on a website and lose your focus on your original intent. Be sure to complete this third and final column of the Advocacy Tool and consider it as the beginning of your road map on your advocacy journey.

CONGRATULATIONS! You now have an Advocacy Plan!

Your Call to Reflect

Even with your plan, you may be still feeling a little nervous or not quite sure where to start. To learn how to begin your advocacy journey, watch the Tedx talk by Joseph R. Campbell as he describes five steps you can take to become an advocate.

Five Steps to becoming an Advocate

YouTube Video

This interactive element is not available in this format. Visit the link or scan the QR code to access it online.

View this YouTube Video online

As you listen to his talk, write down how you might see yourself following these steps to support your own advocacy plan.

- Lock down your motivation—what is your sense of purpose?
- Establish role models or become one yourself—who else has done similar work?

- Understand your historical context and the histories of people around you—how do your intentions align with these contexts?
- Focus all those benefits, beliefs, and observations to push a way forward—are you looking at all the different perspectives? Who else do you need to connect with to learn more?
- Find a way forward—how can you take a step in, take a few steps back, and then step up?

Conclusion

As an early childhood care and education professional, you are in a unique and powerful position in influencing the lives of children and families. The work you do each day supports children in becoming healthy and happy adults. The way you speak to and speak about children can change the way families understand and support their children.

You are also in a unique and powerful position in understanding the issues that affect many families and children. You see the day-to-day struggles that families face, the barriers that keep children for succeeding to their full potential, and the missteps of policy creation that hold families back. You are an expert on these issues.

Embracing your role as both a "little a" advocate and a "Big A" advocate is an important part of the work you do with children and families. Hopefully, this module has provided you with tools, support, and motivation to continue and expand on this work. You do not have to do this alone. Partner with other ECE professionals in your program or center, connect with associations that support children and families, and find ways in which you can listen to the perspectives of the children and families in your care and invite them to get involved.

Most importantly, remember that your thoughts, experiences, and ideas are valuable, and your voice needs to be heard.

Citations

- Campbell, J.R. (2018, January). *Five Steps to Becoming an Advocate* [Video]. TEDxAdelaide. https://youtu.be/nIo31mMB4P8.
- CAPS Independent Advocacy. (n.d.). *Collective Advocacy.* CAPS Independent Advocacy. Retrieved
- February 13, 2021, from http://capsadvocacy.org/collective-advocacy/.
- Densten, I. L., & Gray, J. H. (2001). Leadership development and reflection: what is the connection?.
- *International Journal of Educational Management*.
- Guyon, S. K. (2019). *Experiences of Early Childhood Educators Working with Teaching Strategies GOLD®: a Narrative Inquiry*. Portland State University.
- Merriam-Webster, (n.d.). Advocate. In *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*. Retrieved February 6, 2021, from: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/advocate.
- Pierson, R. (2013, May). *Every Kid Needs a Champion* [Video]. TED. https://youtu.be/SFnMTHhKdkw.
- Torres, X. (2019, September). *The Power of Advocacy* [Video]. TEDxPortland. https://youtu.be/xjutWPTA4wo.
- ZERO TO THREE. (2016). *You Have What It Takes! Advocacy Tool*. https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/494-you-have-what-it-takes-advocacy-tool

This page titled 6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

INDEX

A

advocacy strategies
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

C

childdevelopment
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

children's welfare
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

classroom management
2: Educator Development and Professional Development

classroompractice
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

coaching
3: Motivation and Teamwork

collaboration
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

collective advocacy
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

communication skills
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

community support
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

communityimpact
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

conflict resolution
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

continuous learning
2: Educator Development and Professional Development

D

decision making
1: Ethical Leadership
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

E

early care education
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

early childhood education
1: Ethical Leadership
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

earlychildhood
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

education
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

educational leadership
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

educator growth
2: Educator Development and Professional Development

effective communication
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

emotional intelligence
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

employee engagement
3: Motivation and Teamwork

equity
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

ethical dilemmas
1: Ethical Leadership

ethical responsibilities
1: Ethical Leadership

ethics
1: Ethical Leadership

H

high performing teams
3: Motivation and Teamwork

I

inclusion
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

integrity
1: Ethical Leadership

L

leader
3: Motivation and Teamwork

leadership
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

leadership styles
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

learning objectives
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

listening skills
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

M

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
3: Motivation and Teamwork

mentoring
2: Educator Development and Professional Development

moral principles
1: Ethical Leadership

motivation
3: Motivation and Teamwork

N

NAEYC
1: Ethical Leadership

O

organizational structure
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

P

professional conduct
1: Ethical Leadership

professional development
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

professionaldevelopment
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

R

reflective practice
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

relationship dynamics
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

S

socialjustice
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

stakeholder engagement
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

T

teaching strategies
2: Educator Development and Professional Development

teachingstrategies
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

team
3: Motivation and Teamwork

team dynamics
3: Motivation and Teamwork

teamwork
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution
traditional advocacy
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

V

values
1: Ethical Leadership

W

workplace culture
3: Motivation and Teamwork

This page titled Index is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland.

GLOSSARY

S

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

This page titled Glossary is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland.

DETAILED LICENSING

Overview

Title: Leadership in Early Care and Education

Webpages: 31

Applicable Restrictions: Noncommercial

All licenses found:

- CC BY-NC-SA 4.0: 51.6% (16 pages)
- Undeclared: 48.4% (15 pages)

By Page

- Leadership in Early Care and Education - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - Front Matter - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - TitlePage - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - InfoPage - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Table of Contents - *Undeclared*
    - Licensing - *Undeclared*
    - Introduction - *Undeclared*
    - About the Authors - *Undeclared*
    - Licensing (1) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - Chapters - *Undeclared*
    - Front Matter - *Undeclared*
      - TitlePage - *Undeclared*
      - InfoPage - *Undeclared*
      - Table of Contents - *Undeclared*
      - Licensing - *Undeclared*
    - Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 1: Ethical Leadership - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 2: Educator Development and Professional Development - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3: Motivation and Teamwork - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 4: Communication and Conflict Resolution - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Back Matter - *Undeclared*
      - Index - *Undeclared*
      - Glossary - *Undeclared*
      - Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*
  - Back Matter - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Index - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Glossary - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Detailed Licensing - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Detailed Licensing (1) - *Undeclared*

This page titled Leadership in Early Care and Education is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, & Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

INDEX

A

advocacy strategies
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

C

childdevelopment
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

children's welfare
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

classroom management
2: Educator Development and Professional Development

classroompractice
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

coaching
3: Motivation and Teamwork

collaboration
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

collective advocacy
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

communication skills
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

community support
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

communityimpact
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

conflict resolution
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

continuous learning
2: Educator Development and Professional Development

D

decision making
1: Ethical Leadership
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

E

early care education
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

early childhood education
1: Ethical Leadership
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

earlychildhood
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

education
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

educational leadership
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

educator growth
2: Educator Development and Professional Development

effective communication
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

emotional intelligence
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

employee engagement
3: Motivation and Teamwork

equity
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

ethical dilemmas
1: Ethical Leadership

ethical responsibilities
1: Ethical Leadership

ethics
1: Ethical Leadership

H

high performing teams
3: Motivation and Teamwork

I

inclusion
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

integrity
1: Ethical Leadership

L

leader
3: Motivation and Teamwork

leadership
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

leadership styles
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

learning objectives
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

listening skills
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

M

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
3: Motivation and Teamwork

mentoring
2: Educator Development and Professional Development

moral principles
1: Ethical Leadership

motivation
3: Motivation and Teamwork

N

NAEYC
1: Ethical Leadership

O

organizational structure
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

P

professional conduct
1: Ethical Leadership

professional development
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

professionaldevelopment
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

R

reflective practice
2: Educator Development and Professional Development
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

relationship dynamics
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution

S

socialjustice
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

stakeholder engagement
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further
Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education

T

teaching strategies
2: Educator Development and Professional Development

teachingstrategies
5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education

team
3: Motivation and Teamwork

team dynamics
3: Motivation and Teamwork

teamwork
4: Communication and Conflict Resolution
traditional advocacy
6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further

V

values
1: Ethical Leadership

W

workplace culture
3: Motivation and Teamwork

This page titled Index is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

GLOSSARY

S

Sample Word 1 | Sample Definition 1

This page titled Glossary is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, and Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.

DETAILED LICENSING

Overview

Title: Leadership in Early Care and Education

Webpages: 31

Applicable Restrictions: Noncommercial

All licenses found:

- CC BY-NC-SA 4.0: 51.6% (16 pages)
- Undeclared: 48.4% (15 pages)

By Page

- Leadership in Early Care and Education - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - Front Matter - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - TitlePage - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - InfoPage - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Table of Contents - *Undeclared*
    - Licensing - *Undeclared*
    - Introduction - *Undeclared*
    - About the Authors - *Undeclared*
    - Licensing (1) - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
  - Chapters - *Undeclared*
    - Front Matter - *Undeclared*
      - TitlePage - *Undeclared*
      - InfoPage - *Undeclared*
      - Table of Contents - *Undeclared*
      - Licensing - *Undeclared*
    - Leadership- An Introduction to Leadership Skills in Early Childhood Care and Education - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 1: Ethical Leadership - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 2: Educator Development and Professional Development - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 3: Motivation and Teamwork - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 4: Communication and Conflict Resolution - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 5: Current Issues in the Field of Early Childhood Education - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - 6: Advocacy- Embracing the Work You are Already Doing and Taking it Further - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Back Matter - *Undeclared*
      - Index - *Undeclared*
      - Glossary - *Undeclared*
      - Detailed Licensing - *Undeclared*
  - Back Matter - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Index - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Glossary - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Detailed Licensing - *CC BY-NC-SA 4.0*
    - Detailed Licensing (1) - *Undeclared*

This page titled Leadership in Early Care and Education is shared under a CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license and was authored, remixed, and/or curated by Tammy Marino, Maidie Rosengarden, Sally Gunyon, & Taya Noland via source content that was edited to the style and standards of the LibreTexts platform.