



Texas Professional Home Childcare Association

2024

1st Quarter Self-instructional Training “Directors, Management and Administration” 6 training hours

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To obtain your certificate:

- ✓ Answer the questions attached
- ✓ **Mail answers to:**
Ronda Smith
TPHCCA Education Chair
1609 Gloucester Drive
Garland, TX 75044

With 70% of your answers correct you will receive your certificate along with your corrected answers. The date your test is received by the Education Chair is the date that will appear on the certificate. Please allow four weeks to receive your certificate.

Directors, Management and Administration – Part 1

6 Hour Class

Objectives:

1. As a result of this course, the participant will be able to explain their individual duties at the center in detail.
2. As a result of this course, the participant will be able to list 3 ways to help change their own attitude when it has become negative.
3. As a result of this course, the participant will be able to explain how they influence an effective or non-effective child care program.

Introduction

One of my favorite quotes is “Your ability to connect with others has a great impact on your Business success.” As a director you are responsible for many different connections throughout the day. It is going to take some time for you to understand how each one of those connections is making a difference in your program, but I promise you they are. This course is going to help you see some different aspects of creating connections with the people that you come into contact with daily – your staff and parents!

Duties

A child care center director has many duties. He or she is responsible for providing a clean, safe, and educational experience for the children who attend the center. Individuals in this role also hire and train the teachers and other employees and partner with the parents. The director will often be in charge of the finances and the human resource needs of the center.

One of the most important duties for a child care center director is hiring and training staff members that will follow the center's procedures. The director often needs teachers and assistant teachers and is usually in charge of training the teachers to write and teach lessons based on the age of the children. He or she will follow up with teachers to be sure that educational goals are being met in each classroom.

The director will usually need a cook and a cleaning crew as well. He or she will train the cook to make meals that are nutritional and budget-friendly. This person will also have to train the cleaning crew and have all the employees make an effort to keep the center as germ-free as possible. He or she will make sure that all toys are being sanitized and that center furniture is being cleaned on a daily basis.

The child care center director has to know each parent and child at the center. He or she will work with the parents when they are touring the center or when they have questions. The director will attend teacher/parent conferences whenever possible. It is part of the job to maintain a good working relationship with each parent.

Child care centers are usually for-profit businesses. This leaves financial responsibility to the child care center director. He or she will handle the records for each family's monthly payment and the center's expenses.

Expenses may include food and toys for the center, employees' salaries, and building maintenance.

Most child care centers do not have a human resources department, so this duty often falls on the director. He or she is in charge of managing all the employees' vacation time, benefits, and expense reports.

The director will create all training documents and personnel policies. He or she will also perform yearly evaluations for each employee and meet with the employee to discuss results. If there is a staff member who is not following the center's policies, the director will be the one to reprimand or terminate that employee.

Is it that hard?

Managing a child care center is a big job. It takes someone who loves children, understands people, and can handle the business side of child care. Whether a center is small or large, it is the center director's responsibility to be sure that each child is receiving the very best care possible. This means that each child is treated with love and respect and helped to fully develop. Doing a good job is not easy, but the rewards are great. To do the best job as a center director, you need to:

Manage: Know what needs to be done.

Lead: Get things done through your staff.

Use resources wisely: Make the best use of what you have.

Management in child care is a special mix of caring, understanding your staff, and knowing how you want your center to operate. The following tips on communication and supervision will help you

1. Keep the focus on meeting the children's needs by giving quality child care.
2. Have goals for your child care center. Know where you are going so you will know when you get there.
3. Work with staff to help them learn to provide quality care. Give them feedback when they do things right and when they need to improve.
4. Keep up with what is happening in all areas of the center, including the kitchen.
5. Get organized. Do paperwork correctly and on time.
6. Use what you know about children, and your own common sense, to make sound management decisions.

Lead - Center staff members need a good leader to keep them focused on providing quality care. You can show your leadership through the way you communicate and the way you supervise staff.

Tips on Communication

Be honest and clear when talking to your staff.

Listen carefully to what your staff members tell you.

Give direct and clear answers.

Show your staff you respect the

Tips on Supervision

Keep the focus on meeting the children's needs. Help everyone remember that the reason for the job is to care for the children.

Expect the best from your staff. People tend to get what they expect.

Make sure your staff knows how to do their jobs using best practices. Best practices means doing things the right way.

Give your staff feedback. Congratulate them on what they do that is right and help them learn to correct mistakes.

Coach the staff to success. Coaching means teaching staff members to do something, then encouraging them to keep doing it.

Evaluate your staff and hold them responsible for doing their job the right way.

Use Resources Wisely

Resources include knowledge, time, and common sense. Making the most of the resources that you have helps to make your center the best it can be.

Knowledge Resources

You and the center staff members have a lifetime of experience and a good deal of training about child care. You also have materials that are

good resources to help you make decisions and provide excellent care. Other resources include your sponsoring agency and the state agency.

Time Resources

Everyone has the same amount of time. The difference between success and failure in many situations is the wise use of time.

Plan your work and stick to the plan.

Think about what's important, and do the most important things first.

Know when you need to do a task, and when to assign the task to someone else.

Common Sense Resources

Every center director, no matter how well-trained, must rely on common sense to make a lot of decisions. Your common sense can help you make good decisions when you think through the CARE Process to decide what to do.

A child care center director has a big job that requires the use of business sense and knowledge about caring for children.

Whether you are making a decision about food to purchase or how to get James to try green vegetables, you can use this advice, "Start with the end in mind." This means having a goal in mind and making decisions to help you reach that goal. If your goal is to provide quality CARE for children, then that is the "end in your mind."

Every decision you make should begin with the question, "Does this decision help provide the best care for the children in my center?"

Building Professional Relationships

Building relationships with families, staff, and other early childhood professionals is not always easy, but is essential when you want to be their leader. No one is going to want to follow you or your vision for the program, if you are not building strong professional relationships with each individual. When I first started my large child care center, I was very scared. I had spoken to the six families I had in my home child care but when I started looking at being licensed for 297 children – that scared me. That was a lot of families to build a relationship with. Building relationships is all about getting to know the other person and actually caring enough to remember part of their life. I was so nervous to try to not only build these relationships but to just plan communicate with them in the first place.

If you want to build a successful and great relationship with someone, you need to make sure that you take the time to plan ahead and do some research. Why? Well, if you plan well and research effectively, it'll show the person you are trying to connect with that you've put a considerable amount of effort in learning about them or their company before you spoke with them. I mean let's face it, it's no secret that people like talking about themselves, so by learning about them and bringing up what you have learned into the conversation, you've essentially opened the door for more personal, yet professional conversation, and by doing so, you've already made the other person feel connected to you. This is very important. By making the other person feel connected to you, they are most likely going to remember you. So what exactly do you need to plan and research?

Engage in the conversation. I can't put this anymore plainly. Being able to hold a conversation can be tough and also intimidating, especially if you haven't talked to many business professionals or families before. One of the things that I did to help me get started was talking to anyone that would listen to me talk. This included the grocery store cashier, a waitress or even just neighbors. I'll go and converse with those individuals to get all the jitters and nervousness out and then I'll tackle the people in the early childhood field. While engaging in conversation, do what you can to make it personal.

Effective Programs

Child care center directors are responsible for the overall center's program. It is up to the director to make sure that the program is able to meet each individual child's needs while also being sensitive to the families desires. There is no one rule in how to create effective programs but rather multiple layers to the equation.

Children develop quickly in the physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally domains the first five years of life. In order for children to be prepared for middle childhood and beyond, it is important that they develop a solid foundation for learning and pro-social skills during early childhood. When children are involved in high-quality programs, their school readiness is enhanced, which leads to better success in school (Olsen, 2005). Children who are involved in high-quality care the first five years are able to develop a relationship with responsive adults who are able to help their development of the child's self-esteem, self-confidence and behavior self-regulation.

There are many different components that can contribute to a high-quality program. The first one is a rich curriculum that is centered toward the individual child (Olsen, 2005). The curriculum should include language and literacy, mathematics, motor skills, and social development. The rich environment should also include child-directed play, with the teacher being able to create activities that will be challenging, without frustrating to individual children. A second component that can contribute to a high-quality program is creating a safe physical setting for the children to explore (National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy, 2008). When the children are in a physically safe environment, they are able to expand on their natural curiosity and explore so they are able to gain new skills and knowledge. The third component that can contribute to a high-quality program is a staff that is responsive to the children and well trained. "One of the strongest predictors of high-quality early learning programs is the preparation and compensation of teachers, and their responsiveness and sensitivity to the children in their care, which can be affected by teacher-child staffing ratios" (Olsen, 2005, p. 4). A fourth component of high-quality programs is the relationship with parents and the encouragement of parent education (Galinsky, 2006).

High Quality for All

It is very sad that so many children are unable to attend a high-quality program. There are not enough funds available for all the children that financially qualify to attend government programs like Head Start (Olsen, 2005). From personal experience, I also see families that financially cannot afford high-quality programs on their own; however they do not qualify for Head Start or other government assistance because they make just above the financial cut off line. All children deserve to be a part of a high quality program with effective practices, regardless of the amount of tuition they pay each week. I want your program to be effective and high quality so that the children that attend will have a positive solid foundation for their future.

High quality programs must provide support and resources for families, meets the needs of the individual child, and fosters positive and respectable interactions between parents, teachers, children and the community. This environment includes the materials, furniture and activities that the children will have access to but most importantly it includes the teacher's ability to create a developmentally appropriate learning environment. I have seen perfect new buildings, with the best educational items but without a properly trained teacher the classroom was not of high quality. The interaction that preschool children have with their teacher, their peers and the environment allows them the opportunity to grow in all of the developmental domains. This growth and development will help to prepare the child for kindergarten. Creating positive interactions that help children to expand their learning is key for a high quality program (Dombro, Jablon, & Stetson, 2011). It is the teacher's responsibility to make sure that the children are able to explore their environment through hands-on activities and while using all of their senses. The environment must make sure to include appropriate daily and natural activities that set a foundation in literacy, alphabet knowledge, environmental print, and reading (Vukelich & Christie, 2009). The environment need to encourage exploration through creative art, dramatic play, music and movement, and a variety of learning experiences for the individual child's needs in all developmental domains. Part of a quality program is encouraging and providing proper nutrition and high quality health. Without proper nutrition and overall well-being, a child is not going to have the energy or ability to explore and learn. It is important to remember that part of a quality program includes parental involvement. The parent is the child's first teacher and the only person that will be there to encourage him throughout all of his school years. When programs have

parenting classes, they are providing for the long term encouragement of the child by his parents.

During early childhood the critical period of brain development can either be positively or negatively affected by the influences the child has with his environment, including the adults in the environment (Maine department of Health and Human Services, 2005). High-quality programs are able to nurture and encourage development, while low quality programs can actually put the brain development at risk. When children are introduced to high-quality programs during the first five years of life, a foundation for their later success in life is laid. This success could take on the form of academic achievements in school, better paying job, becoming an upstanding citizen of their community and having personal fulfillment from the self-esteem that can be built. Research shows that children that are exposed to low-quality care in early childhood are at risk for slower language development, lower cognitive development, more behavior problems and less social skills (Loeb, Fuller, Kagan, & Carrol, 2004). It is important that children have positive interactions with the materials, activities and adults that care for them.

What do Quality Center Directors Do?

Employees can tell you when a director is doing their job and when they are not. It is easy for the employee to see and feel when they work for a quality director. Making sure to follow the below statements will help you become a better director and lead your employees to a quality program!

1. Quality Center Directors follow rules, requirements and regulations. It is important for you as a director to make sure that you follow the Minimum Standards Requirements, City Requirements, Accreditation Requirements, etc. If you want your employees to know that you care and understand that you want what is best for children, then follow the rules. When staff members see a director that does things half-way or covers up for mistakes, they are more likely to do the same. They will also know that you, the Leader, doesn't care if they follow the rules either!
2. Quality Center Directors build relationships! When you are working alongside your staff members, remember to build relationships with them! No one wants to work for someone that has a "High and Mighty"

Attitude. We want to work for someone that builds a true relationship with us. Someone that cares about us and shows that daily. Staff members want you to remember their birthday, anniversary, and celebrate the years they have been with you. Relationships are the heart of any effective program and it all starts with the director and employees!

3. Quality Center Directors recognize and respond to good work. When you see a staff member doing something they should be doing, let them know. Your staff wants to have your approval and it is important that you give it to them. Too often directors only point out the negative but it is more important to recognize the positive. Provide positive feedback that helps each staff member know what you want them to do and what you don't. Give them the recognition of their accomplishments and abilities when working with young children.

4. Quality Center Directors create a team or family environment. They create a place that encourages cooperation and not competition. It is important for you to create a common goal and school spirit for the teachers to follow. It is the director's job to be enthusiastic and not negative all of the time. No one wants to work when the director is 'venting' or complaining about everything. You must be the cheerleader that brings everyone together. Create motivation in your staff members by incentives and recognition.

5. Quality Center Directors expect high quality from their teachers. When you expect the teachers to do their job correctly, that is what you will get. When you allow them to slack and not care, then you will get a teacher that does not stay within the minimum standards. Remember, that book is called "MINIMUM STANDARDS" for a reason. To create a high quality program, you must go above and beyond the standards. Expect and require your staff members to do more than just meet the minimum. If they continue to show poor performance, then it is time to have a change of staff. One person can destroy morale and undermine the entire center with their low standards.

6. Quality Center Directors are fair! You might have a staff member that you are friends with or how known for a long time; however you must always be neutral and fair when it comes to conflicts. Don't allow your personal feelings toward a staff member to show bias in dealing

with conflict. It is your responsibility to step in and help defuse conflict among teachers!

How to Manage a Center?

There are many different types of Center Managers/Directors. Each of them have their own pros and cons. It is up to you, the center director, to figure out your own philosophy of management.

Managing by Wondering Around

The idea behind the Managing by Wondering Around (MBWA) philosophy is quite simple. Effective managers know what is happening in their organizations, and they are perceived by their people as being "in touch" with the workers and the workplace. Rather than isolating themselves from workers in offices separate from the workplace, MBWA managers purposefully and consciously make time to wander through their organizations to talk with others and to discover things that might help improve its functioning. The benefits of such a philosophy are widespread.

As organizational decision makers, it is critical that managers understand the strengths and weaknesses of their companies and the opportunities and threats that exist in their business environments before making important decisions. It is also important to know the effects and repercussions of decisions on the firm. A solution that seems clear-cut on paper might have disastrous consequences in practice. Being familiar with the true workings of the firm and its people could help avoid such costly mistakes.

Trust and communication are two of the biggest hurdles that many managers face when trying to establish positive relationships with their workers. MBWA helps resolve those issues by breaking down barriers between managers and workers. When managers are perceived as being truly interested in the needs, ideas, and input of the workers, rather than being perceived as spies and out to interfere with the work, trust and respect can emerge. Wanderings must be regular and perceived as genuine in order for their benefits to arise.

Another benefit of MBWA is that it allows workers to identify with managers and promotes attributions of leadership. When workers see that managers are genuinely concerned about their wellbeing and that they are respected and appreciated by management, they usually return those feelings to the managers. Teamwork, cooperation, open communication, trust and mutual respect can all emerge from effective MBWA practices.

Here are a few tips to assist you as you manage by Wandering Around:

- Do it to everyone, including parents and support staff . . . it shows you value every customer and employee and their contribution to your program.
- Wander around often, even daily if you can, but at the very least once a week. It reveals your interest in your people and your clients, and it says you don't consider yourself 'too good' to spend time with them.
- Vary the time that you walk around so you experience all parts of the day.
- Relax as you make your rounds; people will reflect your feelings and actions.
- Remain open and responsive to questions and concerns.
- Observe and listen and let everyone see you do it.
- Make certain your visits are spontaneous and unplanned.
- Talk with employees about their passions, whether it is family, hobbies, vacations, or sports.
- Ask for suggestions to improve operations, service, and care.
- Try to spend an equal amount of time in all areas of your program including the kitchen and the bus.
- Catch your employees doing something right and recognize them publicly.
- Convey the image of a coach, not an inspector.
- Encourage your employees to show you how the real work gets done; try it yourself — read a story, serve a snack, or change a diaper.
- Be available for impromptu discussions.

- Bring good news — give them the good news, increase their confidence, and brighten their outlook.

Leadership

I have worked with some really great leaders and then some that are not so wonderful over the last 24 years. I have found the following to be a good description of leadership.

The ability to communicate and bring others on a collective venture through shared vision and decision-making

Achieving goals in the collaboration, development, and journey of teams

Giving guidance and direction to others through shared leadership

Being able to move people's hearts and minds and maximize their passion for a cause, issue, or vision

Showing and giving direction to others, moving people's heads and hearts (and bodies!) in making a difference

Having a clear sense of purpose and clarity of thought in defining a vision

Recognizing and building on individual perspectives and efforts to create shared vision and team spirit

Beyond the personal traits of a leader, there are specific skills someone must master if they want to be a leader.

Effective communication - it's more than just being able to speak and write. A leader's communication must move people to work toward the goal the leader has chosen.

Motivation - a leader has to be able to motivate everyone to contribute. Each of us has different "buttons". A leader knows how to push the right buttons on everyone to make them really want to do their best to achieve the leader's goal.

Planning - the leader has a plan to achieve the goal. He/she doesn't get too bogged down in the details, that are what managers are for, but rather uses a high level plan to keep everyone moving together toward the goal.

Leadership is always defined by societal and cultural values. What we believe a good leader is in the United States might not be a good leader in China or Russia. This is important for all directors to remember because of the diverse staff and family dynamics you will have enroll in your program.

A Day in Your Life!

Taken from the article by Roger Neugebauer titled "So you're a Director - What Else Can Go Wrong?" Exchange Magazine Sept. / Oct 1989

You knock yourself out to rise to the top of your profession as a child care center director or owner, and what do you get-teachers calling in sick at 6:30 AM, a playground degenerating into a mud puddle, late parents, red ink in the checkbook, intransigent licensing officials . . . the whole litany of daily headaches. But these are just the pesky, garden variety problems. What every director must be prepared for are the fatal follies-the five pitfalls that plague leaders in early childhood education:

Pitfall #1: Legend in Your Own Mind

Just beneath the surface of nearly every director is an ego struggling to control everything that goes on. Not that directors don't know intellectually that they should share responsibilities. It's just that emotionally they can't let go.

Delegation means never having to say you're worried. But it is very difficult for a director to delegate a task and not worry that it will be done right. It requires a deliberate effort to develop trust in your subordinates, to accept that subordinates will do things differently, and to allow them to make mistakes along the way.

A refusal to let go can have serious consequences. In the short term, it can undermine staff motivation. Staff members will be frustrated when they are not trusted to share responsibilities.

In the long term, it can undermine the future of the organization. In a nonprofit center, where the organization will outlive the director, failure to develop a strong management team can leave the center in chaos when a director leaves. In a for profit center, it can handicap the sale of the business. According to acquisition expert Lisa Berger, buyers of businesses "look for companies showing management depth that can generate profits without their master architects."

It takes a person with a great deal of self-confidence to put up with the plethora of aggravations and the paucity of rewards from running a child care center. But the real challenge for a director is to keep one's ego in check. Your goal as a director should be to work yourself out of a job-to build up a team that can run the organization without you.

Pitfall #2: Things That Go Bump in the Night

A common failing of child care organizations is to let changes in consumer attitudes; changes in employment trends; changes in funding, financing, or regulatory patterns; and changes in the competition sneak up on you. Regis McKenna, the marketing guru who put Silicon Valley on the map, calls these unanticipated events "things that go bump in the night." Organizations don't see them coming; but, like the iceberg that sank the Titanic, they can do a lot of damage.

Child care centers are not islands unto themselves. They are increasingly influenced by the forces shaping society at large-the ups and downs of the insurance industry, concerns over the federal deficit, the barbs of the "pro family" movement, the ebbs and flows of various types of businesses, competition from Japan and Korea, and fears of AIDS. Many nonprofit child care programs were forced to close their doors when they failed to prepare for the dramatic funding cuts promised and carried out by Ronald Reagan. Likewise, a number of mid-size for profit child care chains launched ambitious growth plans in the mid 1980's which went sour because the companies had failed to take seriously warnings about the staffing shortage.

Small business consultant Gary Goldstick advises, "No matter how committed they are to developing their businesses, managers must allocate 10% to 20% of their time to reading trade journals, the Wall Street Journal, and to attending industry trade shows."

Child care owners and directors would be well advised to set time aside to read American Demographics in addition to Young Children, to track the progress of the ABC Bill as closely as they track the social development of Sammy or Sarah, to attend meetings of the Chamber of Commerce as well as their local directors' group. By failing to keep in touch with the world outside the center, a director is failing the center.

Pitfall #3: The Disney World School of Management

A director can also fall into the trap of managing with her eyes closed to problems within the organization. When serious problems are developing, it is sometimes tempting to put blinders on and pretend they don't exist, to operate in a child care Fantasyland.

Center director Olson found himself having to aggressively juggle payables and receivables at the end of every month. He told himself that this was just a temporary cash flow problem. When confronted directly by his banker with the center's poor financial performance over the past year, he explained the problems away with a web of rationalizations.

Deep down inside, of course, he sensed that the center was in serious trouble. But by refusing to see the problem, he was trying to avoid having to deal with it. He was deluding himself, and digging his center deeper and deeper into a hole.

Successful directors keep their fingers on the pulse of the organization. They have in place effective financial, marketing, and programmatic controls so that potential problems can be flagged before they get out of hand. They stay involved with the day-to-day activities of the organization. They solicit feedback from staff and complaints from parents.

Most importantly, successful directors have the courage to act. They are willing to face up to problems and to admit to mistakes. They know when to cut their losses and when to seek dramatic remedies.

Pitfall #4: When you're Down, You're Down

Who can forget that wrenching scene in the Los Angeles Olympics when the Swiss runner staggered to the finish line of the women's marathon barely able to control her legs? Her body had exerted its last ounce of energy, but she was able to finish the race on sheer willpower.

Athletics abounds with stories of such grit and determination. A standard maxim of coaches is "Ya Gotta Wanna." In fact, analysts often observe that success in athletics is 75% psychological and 25% physical.

Center directors need the same level of tenacity. They are frequently confronted by obstacles which, if not physically painful, are as mentally and emotionally demanding as any marathon effort.

Yet, there are seldom 100,000 fans sitting around the office cheering on a director struggling with a deepening cash flow crisis. There are many times every week when it would be so easy for a director to throw up her hands in frustration and quit. What separates those directors who do quit and those who make it, more often than not, is mental toughness—the ability to withstand tremendous stress and maintain a forward motion.

Pitfall #5: When you're Up, You're Down

Now the really bad news. Not only can crises drive a director out of business, so can success. Every week the Wall Street Journal will document the story of some small enterprise that struggled for years on a shoestring, became a resounding success, and then fell apart. What typically happens is that the company is unprepared for success.

A new, emerging business can survive on the hard work of one person handling all the management tasks and usually does. But as the business grows, this one person is stretched too far. She can't attend to all the details as before, and the business begins to suffer.

Such a boom and bust cycle can occur in the child care world as well. A successful, growing child care business needs to be planning ahead for success—setting up administrative systems to handle increased workload,

developing quality control procedures to insure that services do not slip, and rethinking the organizational structure to keep tasks clearly and appropriately assigned.

In addition, as your organization grows, you need to have a long range plan in place. Such a plan can help direct your energies and insure that your growth is logical and not haphazard.

Your Tool Belt will be needed!

Taken from the article by Terry Anderson titled "The Administrator's 'Handy Dandy' Tool Belt" Exchange Magazine. Nov. / Dec. 2012

Every good leader needs a tool belt. Throughout my years of building early childhood programs, I have acquired a number of tools for my personal belt. These tools have helped me sharpen my skills in supporting teachers and staff, connecting with families, and educating children. This article focuses on those leadership skills that are necessary for overseeing the curriculum, environments, and relationships that build high-quality early childhood classrooms. The belt holds the tools that are essential to complete the job and each tool is dependent on the others.

A level is for checking yourself and for building relationships that foster trust. The ability to build and maintain a sense of balance in supporting teaching staff as you build your program is essential.

Teachers have the task of creating healthy relationships with children, families, colleagues, and administration. The focus should always be on the program's policies and practices that affirm and embrace diversity in all relationships. There are times when the level is off balance: when personality's conflict, individual values and perceptions are not in agreement, policies and procedures are not upheld, and communication is misunderstood or misinterpreted.

Ms. Portillo phones the director very upset with her child's teacher for destroying her daughter's clothes. Three-year-old Isabel came to school in a new outfit that is now covered in paint. When Ms. Portillo expressed her concern to the teacher, she was told not to bring Isabel to school in good clothes. The director acknowledged the parent's concern, said she would

need to talk with the teacher, and asked Ms. Portillo to stop by at the end of the day so the three of them could resolve this issue.

Directors assist teachers in building good relationships by having conversations where concerns are heard and validated. Strategies are discussed, and teachers and administrators work together to determine a plan where all are supported.

A hammer and nails connect and hold together the program's foundation. The pounding of the hammer is like the rapping of the gavel; it represents leadership. Control of this tool is necessary to keep the focus on the program philosophy. Hold the hammer firm, never too heavy. A director's gentle firmness guides the teaching staff in supporting the mission of the program.

Mr. Vigil is planning the agenda for the weekly staff meeting. Two classrooms are having difficulty with families not arriving on time. The staff reflects together on this situation and decides to meet with the families individually to determine the struggles that may be causing their tardiness. Once details are gathered, the teachers can explain the reason for the policy and pound out a solution for ensuring on-going communication from families that ensures that teachers know in advance if children will be arriving late.

Teachers provide a daily schedule, which provides predictability for children and families. They need to be consistent in their messages to children. Program policies are implemented and upheld in the same way with the same message to all families. Predictability is also comforting for employees. Directors should be consistent in their communication with staff and families, making sure their messages are received accurately and that everyone feels equally valued and respected.

Teachers need positive feedback from directors on what is working well and guidance about what might need to be done differently. Learning should happen continuously. This relationship builds the trust that holds the program together. The key to successful classrooms and programming is consistency; it takes a steady hand and willingness to follow through.

A saw restructures and reorganizes the environment. The back and forth motion of the saw must be smooth and steady, to promote dialogue about the changes that need to be implemented. Directors must offer support to teachers in setting up the indoor and outdoor classroom environments.

A teacher comes to the administrator to report the frustration she is experiencing with three-year-old Zach and his disruptive behavior. As the discussion unfolds, it becomes clear that this child may not be challenged enough with the materials and activities in the classroom. The two brainstorm about additional resources that can be offered to challenge Zach and changes that can be made to his environment to make it more engaging.

The director can provide the teacher with a checklist that outlines the components of a high-quality early childhood classroom. This can be followed up with visits to the classrooms where -teachers can review their observations with you. You'll want to ask questions about how the children are functioning. Next, visit these same areas on your own to observe children in these environments. During the second conversation, share your observations and discuss ideas and strategies that are working, and then brainstorm about areas that need to be improved. The objective is to recognize that restructuring must be constant in any environment in order to offer new experiences and challenges for children.

Environments paint the picture of the program. You should feel welcome, sense order, and witness engaged children. Inter-actions among children, families, and staff are warm and friendly. Restructuring and reorganizing indoor and outdoor environments are continuously happening in early learning settings.

A measuring tape supports the assessment process, which guides curriculum. A skilled teacher always measures (critiques) the highs and lows of his day. A skilled director attempts to measure every aspect of the program to ensure alignment with program goals.

Assessment should occur through daily observations, written documentation, and formal tools to assess each child's development. The administrator also trains teachers in the skill of self-assessment. At the end of each day you want teachers to assess that day's activities and evaluate what worked and what did not work. Adjustments can then be made that will inform curriculum planning.

At circle time in a classroom of four year olds, things are getting out of control. Children are not engaged in the story, and several are wiggly and disruptive to the child sitting next to them. The teacher spends her time

trying to redirect the children. At the end of the day, the teacher comes to the administrator and asks for feedback. It is determined that the story was too long and not engaging or interesting to the children. Perhaps it could be told instead of read or possibly acted out by the children. This would shorten the length of time and engage the children in the process. Together they decide that the choice of story and how it is delivered is critical in the planning of circle time.

The assessment process is about the children, the classroom environment, and the teacher's role as facilitator. Check yourself! What were the interactions that worked during the day and what did not work? Were the day's goals and objectives achieved? What was learned that should be unlearned?

A wrench provides the necessary function of tightening and loosening that reflects changing classroom demands. With young learners, the structure of any environment must be flexible and free to change direction as circumstances arise.

A great deal of organization and a willingness to adapt plans to meet the changing needs of the group on any given day are essential. Some days things go as planned and other days can be totally out of sync and require flexibility.

A group of ten two year olds is anxiously waiting to paint using the two easels. However, only four children can work at one time. The teachers anticipate the conflict that is about to occur and decide to set the activity up outdoors. The long fence will serve as the easel. Paper and paint cups will be given to each child so they can all work at one time. The teachers reflect with their director on the success of these changes and how the children were all engaged for a longer -period of time because of this adjustment.

Skilled directors recognize and support teachers in their ability to adjust to better meet the needs of the children. Teachers know in working with young children that they vary in their developmental levels and learning styles. In planning, consideration must be given to the -children who need more time and to those who complete tasks quickly and are ready to move on.

A pencil and notebook are for documenting, planning, assessing, evaluating, and reflecting on growth in one's teaching practice. Keep the pencil sharpened and available at all times.

Written lesson plans document teachers' expectations and specify the goals and objectives for children's learning. The director's role is to review and give feedback on whether the plans are consistent with the program's philosophy and adopted curriculum. Documentation should be collected regularly and tied to measures of staff effectiveness; notes should include the positive things staff bring to their teaching.

Ms. Paul has been assigned to the preschool classroom for six years. Over the past couple of years, her performance has declined. She exhibits less job satisfaction, less energy, and more unhappiness in her work. The results of the annual parent surveys reveal lower parent satisfaction with this classroom than in previous years.

Through the process of the annual staff evaluation, the Director and Ms. Paul have an opportunity to discuss the changes that have occurred over time. After a great deal of reflection, it is agreed that an assignment to a different age level for the upcoming year might be what Ms. Paul needs to find the joy in teaching again. The Director is able to point out Ms. Paul's teaching strengths and the skills she brings to her work with children and families. Together they write a professional plan which includes training, resources, and support to assist Ms. Paul in her transition to an infant classroom.

As educators, we are always changing, learning, and progressing. Directors have the responsibility to recognize the strengths each individual teacher brings to the classroom and how this individual receives information in the context of their own learning style and their stage of professional growth. With these insights, a director can help teachers progress within the early education field.

A flashlight provides the light and -vision to know when it is time to make a change. Make sure batteries are always charged.

For a number of years the center has had a guidance policy that reflects licensing requirements and the philosophy of the program. In the past, teachers were all trained in Creative Conflict Resolution (CCR), a process for helping children -resolve issues using games and activities. The terminology of CCR — acknowledgment, affirmation, and cooperation — is written into the guidance policy. Unfortunately, new staff has not been trained in this process. Additionally, veteran staff has developed additional techniques for guiding children that are more in keeping with the latest brain development

research. It is now time to make the necessary changes to update the guidance policy to reflect current practice.

The director's role is to point the light in the direction of supporting -teachers in realizing the program's goal of high-quality care and education. Current practice must reflect changes that are happening in the program and within the early education field.

Just as carpenters and other professionals have tools for their crafts, administrators of early childhood programs need tools. These are invaluable for overseeing curriculum, classrooms, and healthy relationships.

Each day brings a new set of challenges for which tools may be needed. In your support of teachers, you'll want to practice using a variety of tools to refine your skills in management and leadership. Remember that these tools must be returned to your tool belt at the end of each day and kept sharp and in good condition. You never know when you'll need them!

Tips for Overcoming Negative Aspects in Yourself

1. Learn to recognize when your defensive mechanisms come up. Realize that you are probably not really being attacked.
2. When you catch yourself feeling defensive, don't react so quickly.
3. Learn how to listen when someone asks a question or makes a suggestion.
4. Ask people to re-state their question/comment/suggestion.
5. Try to understand what others are saying by repeating back what you think you heard.
6. You may want to ask for more time to respond, then, get back to them. This will give you time to work with the question/comment/suggestion without the pressure of being on the spot.
7. Do consider that other people have good ideas that are just as valid as yours.
8. Take courses or workshops in listening skills and teambuilding.
9. Find someone who can help you work on this negative aspect of yourself — a good friend, coworker, teacher or counselor.
10. If it is someone that you interact with regularly, ask them to let you know when you are being a jerk and call your attention to what you are

doing. That will help you learn to see what situations and events trigger your insecurity.

11. Recognize that changing learned patterns of insecurity and defensiveness may take years of work.

12. Don't give up on yourself.

13. Learn to understand your own personality and your unique strengths and weaknesses.

14. The effort to improve your ability to get along with others will be rewarded as you find more career opportunities open up for you.

Tips for Dealing with Negative Aspects in Others

1. When you see someone go into attack mode or excess defensiveness, recognize that it is useless to argue with them.

2. Realize that the person is feeling very insecure at that time.

3. Don't continue to push them because they will only get worse.

4. If the symptoms only seem to occur when the person is under stress, wait until another time to pursue the discussion.

5. If they are always overly defensive or always attacking others, you may need to find another person to work with who does not have the same problem.

6. Keep your own sense of self-confidence and don't allow yourself to be verbally abused.

7. If the difficult person is your boss, reconsider whether it's time to find a job elsewhere.

Tips for Supervising People with Negative Aspects

1. Help the person see how much their negative behavior is damaging their career potential.

2. Set goals for them to learn to work better with others and monitor their behavior until it improves.

3. If it does not improve within a reasonable time, send them packing.

Stopping Gossip

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.

— NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct (P-3A.2)

Gossip is discussion of a personal or intimate nature, often about someone who is not present and with the intent of harming that person's reputation. Listening to gossip is gossiping. Sharing accurate, necessary information or holding an opinion about another person is not gossiping. Some people use gossip to gain and maintain power, at the expense of community. By sabotaging the director's leadership, a teacher diminishes the director's effectiveness, putting the teacher in charge in many ways.

[Employers should strive] to create and maintain a climate of trust and candor that will enable staff to speak and act in the best interests of children, families, and the field of early childhood care and education.

— NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct (I-3C.2)

Taking a stand for a gossip-free new day requires courage. Leaders must first make an internal commitment to model, promote, and enforce policies and practices that replace gossip with effective problem solving. Most of us will need to line up members of our support system to encourage us when resistance to change becomes most intense. Some of us may need to let go of our secure position as insiders who do not rock the boat. Here is one way administrators can initiate the change process.

- Call everyone together. Announce your vision of a gossip-free community of problem-solving professionals.
- Let staff know that NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct will be honored and enforced.
- Encourage people to talk about their concerns, hopes, and fears about committing to a gossip-free zone.
- Have staff work in small groups to envision how to become a gossip-free team by creating anti-gossip strategies.

This approach can help staff focus on the goal of serving children and families by replacing gossip with respectful communication.

The power of peers to stop gossip

What power do individual staff members have to stop gossip? Employees feel more confident doing their part when they observe supervisors enforcing the gossip-free zone. By listening to gossip, we enable the gossiper. Speak to your staff about some of these gossip stoppers they can use!

Here are some gossip stoppers anyone can use:

- I am not comfortable talking about a person who is not here.
- I need to focus on the children now.
- Would you be willing to talk with X about your concern with her?
- I'll go with you so you can share your concern with X.
- I promised not to gossip.
- Let's not go there.
- Since I can't help you with that problem, please don't raise it with me again.
- Remember, we signed an agreement not to gossip.
- Our mission statement says we respect differences.

Responsibility and the Environment

The environment is largely influenced by the attitude in the teachers and managers. The attitude of the teachers is largely influenced by the environment. If the environment is negative, the teacher's attitudes will become negative and vice versa. It is a cycle that you, the director, can change. Let's take a look at two different centers.

1. Jimmy is running around while Allison is hiding behind the bookshelf and no one saw Abram take the hermit crab out of his cage. There isn't any place for Aidan and Wyatt to play with blocks because there are too many toys all over the room so they start to throw the blocks at each other. The behavior of the children in this classroom is affected by the way the space is arranged.

2. In another center the space is carefully organized. All the children are involved in constructive play. The room layout is set up in a way to encourage independent learning and communication with all the children. The children in this classroom show few if any behavior problems. The rules are set out where children understand what is expected of them. Carla is smiling and laughing as Kyler is making up a silly story to the book he is holding. In another area of the room

Kaden and his friends are building with blocks to make a zoo for the animals.

Program quality reflects the classroom arrangement. It also provides clues about expected behavior. A well planned room usually promotes interesting play, provides children with choices and reduces behavior problems. It should encourage interaction with other children and adults, as well as active exploration. A well planned out room will allow children to feel safe and secure to explore the environment. Well planned space is arranged based on the children's temperaments, developmental needs, interests, and program goals. The classroom should also be attractive and inviting.

A nurturing, safe environment is critical for children's social, emotional, physical and cognitive development. Children need space to build, move, sort, create, pretend, spread out, work and interact with friends. They need diverse materials in sufficient quantity to keep them actively involved. Children need a place to be quiet, to be active, to talk, to move, and to interact with others in the room. Space affects the activity level of children. The choices children make and the way they carry out their choices are also affected by space. Space can even affect the children's concentration and the length of time they will remain with one activity. Space should be arranged according to children's needs and interest. The space must also be convenient for staff.

The early years are crucial for the cognitive development of children. Before arranging a classroom, review the development objectives of the program. For example, 18 month old children do not have refined large motor skills. They need to have large open space classrooms to promote safety and motor development. The classroom should be planned with these goals in mind. An attractive, well arranged classroom conveys a sense of order. It encourages children to use materials and to do things for themselves. It also molds their behavior. Boundaries found in this type of classroom make the children more responsible. They know where to find classroom materials, and how to return them when finished. Safety is an important concern in planning space. When children feel safe, they feel free to learn. Open spaces must be provided so teaches can supervise the entire room. The ratio of caregivers to children also affects safety. If the number of caregivers is low, the room arrangement should be simple to make supervision easier.

Value of a Well Planned Space

You are responsible for the environment and even the teacher's attitudes. I have noticed over my years in child care centers that the arrangement of space greatly affects a teacher's behavior as well as children's. In centers with well-planned space, teachers were more friendly, sensitive and warm to children. These teachers taught their children to respect others' rights and feelings. In centers with poorly planned space teachers were often more insensitive to their students.

Children's learning is promoted by properly organized space. The organized space will provide children with the option of working alone or in groups. The children's needs and interest as well as program goals should be reflected in the space that the children occupy.

Goals for a well-planned space include:

1. Providing a physically safe environment
2. Providing children with areas that promote cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth.
3. Providing adults with a space that is easy to supervise.
4. Providing space that is pleasing to the eye for both adults and students
5. Providing easy access to materials when needed so children are able to direct themselves.
6. Providing space where children can work and play comfortably.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Children

Someone told me the other day that I sound like a broken record because I speak about culturally and linguistically diversity all the time. I bring this subject up so much because it is an important aspect of the early childhood field today. We all, directors and teachers, must understand how it plays in our programs!

Preparation of teachers: Working toward greater cultural and linguistic competence.

1. Increased faculty knowledge—To what extent do teacher education faculty have significant depth and breadth of knowledge to support student understanding of both theory and research-based strategies regarding culture, language, race, social class, special needs, and other dimensions of diversity?

In the area of language, such specifics involve acquiring knowledge and learning appropriate practices related to language acquisition for these three groups: monolinguals, bilinguals, and speakers of English dialects.

2. Enhanced faculty dispositions and willingness to adapt and change—

Education has come a long way in integrating special needs expertise among faculty and into course offerings. How can faculty engage in collegial discussions to develop and critique their own knowledge base regarding the complex areas of child development and diversity? To what extent are faculty members disposed to grapple with the real issues of diversity and racism?

3. Ongoing faculty practice—To what extent are faculty members working effectively with diverse communities and sharing with students how they themselves are challenged by such experiences? How do faculty model for student's ways to deal with feelings of bias? Including students in the reciprocal partnerships among faculty and diverse communities that are often created through faculty research and/or service is one way to access this kind of meaningful dialogue.

4. Required ESL courses for teachers— Given the increasing number of young children who are English-language learners, early childhood education students must be required to take course work that will teach them about ESL

(English as a second language). This is not occurring in most programs, but is absolutely essential given the number of children

Family Partnerships

NAEYC's View on the Family

NAEYC's view on accreditation. You may access more information at <http://families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/10-naeyc-program-standards#7>

"The program establishes and maintains collaborative relationships with each child's family to foster children's development in all settings. These relationships are sensitive to family composition, language, and culture. To support children's optimal learning and development, programs need to establish relationships with families based on mutual trust and respect, involve families in their children's educational growth, and encourage families to fully participate in the program.

NAEYC's: What to look for in a program:

All families are welcome and encouraged to be involved in all aspects of the program.

Teachers and staff talk with families about their family structure and their views on childrearing and use that information to adapt the curriculum and teaching methods to the families served.

The program uses a variety of strategies to communicate with families, including family conferences, new family orientations, and individual conversations.

Program information—including policies and operating procedures—is provided in a language that families can understand."

Look at the above information. Is that what your family program looks like? If someone from NAEYC came into your program today, would they see that type of relationship with families going on? If not, are you willing to change it? Sometimes we think we are doing what is good for everyone, but in fact we are not. Take some time today to really think about the way you and your staff treat the families in your program!

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Family Friendliness

The following criteria are provided to help you start building a list to help determine the extent to which a program is family friendly:

1. All program components reflect guiding principles for family-friendly services.
2. A verbal and/or written system is established for sharing day-to-day happenings that may affect children. Changes in a child's physical or emotional state are reported regularly.
3. Meeting space is made available for families to speak with teachers and with other parents.
4. Time is allocated for staff to speak with families formally and informally.
5. Families are provided with opportunities to participate in classroom activities.
6. Reciprocal communication about program activities and children's progress between home and school takes place at times convenient to each family.
7. Staff members view parents as equal members of the team who can contribute vital and unique information to help set meaningful goals and objectives for their.
8. Staff is evaluated based on their demonstration of family-friendly behaviors.
9. Staff development includes workshops on the importance of and strategies to increase family participation.
10. Families are involved in the development and design of program goals and objectives and in the implementation of strategies to meet those goals and objectives.
11. Staff members meet with families individually and in groups to solicit input about their satisfaction with the program.

Parent/Center Communication

One of the most important aspects of inviting families into the program is through your communication with them. It is very important that you create newsletters, daily reports, bulletin boards, etc. to communicate with parents about the program.

An important procedure that you must make sure you have in place is when and how is it appropriate for teachers to speak with parents. A parent who wants a lengthy conversation should be able to make an appointment and the teachers need to know that they cannot ignore the children in their care to have an informal conference at pick up time. A procedure set up to meet this need avoids the parent feeling 'brushed off' and the teacher feels 'ambushed'.

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Directors, Management and Administration Quiz

1. One of the most important duties for a child care center director is hiring and training staff members that will follow the center's procedures.
 - a. True
 - b. False

2. Managing a child care center is a _____.
 - a. small job
 - b. big job
 - c. easy job

3. For a _____ center, it is the center director's responsibility to be sure that each child is receiving the very best care possible.
 - a. large
 - b. small
 - c. corporate
 - d. all of the above

4. _____ in child care is a special mix of caring, understanding your staff, and knowing how you want your center to operate.
 - a. Management
 - b. Leadership
 - c. Using resources wisely

5. Center staff members need a good _____ to keep them focused on providing quality care.
 - a. follower
 - b. leader

6. Which of the following is not a tip on communication.
 - a. Be honest and clear when talking to your staff.

- b. Always let your staff know your right.
- c. Listen carefully to what your staff members tell you.

7. Resources include knowledge, time, and common sense. Making the most of the resources that you have helps to make your center the best it can be.

- a. True
- b. False

8. Directions have _____ amount of time than staff members to get things accomplished.

- a. more
- b. less
- c. the same

9. Building relationships with families, staff, and other early childhood professionals is always easy, but is essential when you want to be their leader.

- a. True
- b. False

10. If you want to build a successful and great relationship with someone, you need to make sure that you take the time to plan ahead and do some research.

- a. True
- b. False

11. Child care center teachers are responsible for the overall center's program.

- a. True
- b. False

12. Children develop quickly in the physically, cognitively, socially and emotionally domains the first _____ years of life.

- a. 5
- b. 6
- c. 7

13. Which of the statements below are NOT a components that can contribute to a high-quality program.

- a. is a rich curriculum that is centered toward the individual child.
- b. creating a safe physical setting for the children to explore
- c. staff that is responsive to the children and well trained.
- d. none of the above

14. During early childhood the critical period of brain development can either be _____ affected by the influences the child has with his environment, including the adults in the environment.

- a. positively
- b. negatively
- c. positively or negatively

15. Employees can tell you when a director is doing their job and when they are not.

- a. True
- b. False

16. Quality Center Directors do not worry about following rules, requirements and regulations.

- a. True
- b. False

17. Quality Center Directors create a place that encourages cooperation and not competition.

- a. True
- b. False

18. Rather than isolating themselves from workers in offices separate from the workplace, _____ managers purposefully and consciously make time to wander through their organizations to talk with others and to discover things that might help improve its functioning.

- a. MBWA
- b. PTWL
- c. NEIL

19. _____ are two of the biggest hurdles that many managers face when trying to establish positive relationships with their workers.

- a. Financial and effective budgets
- b. Friendship and being the boss
- c. Trust and communication

20. The following are good descriptions of leadership except:

- a. The ability to communicate and bring others on a collective venture through shared vision and decision-making
- b. Achieving goals in the collaboration, development, and journey of teams
- c. Giving guidance and direction to others through shared leadership

d. Always letting the staff be right no matter what the issue.

21. A _____ is for checking yourself and for building relationships that foster trust.

- a. level
- b. hammer and nails
- c. saw

22. _____ connect and hold together the program's foundation.

- a. level
- b. hammer and nails
- c. saw

23. Which of the following is one of the Tips for Overcoming Negative Aspects in Yourself?

- a. When you catch yourself feeling defensive, don't react so quickly.
- b. Ask people to re-state their question/comment/suggestion.
- c. Take courses or workshops in listening skills and teambuilding.
- d. All of the above

24. Which of the following is NOT a Tip for Dealing with Negative Aspects in Others?

- a. Don't continue to push them because they will only get worse.
- b. If the symptoms only seem to occur when the person is under stress, wait until another time to pursue the discussion.
- c. Keep your own sense of self-confidence and don't allow yourself to be verbally abused.
- d. Tell them to 'get over it' then ignore them until they do.

25. _____ is discussion of a personal or intimate nature, often about someone who is not present and with the intent of harming that person's reputation.

- a. Listening
- b. Gossip
- c. Quality Director Characteristic

26. Taking a stand for a gossip-free new day requires courage.

- a. True
- b. False

27. Employees feel more confident to stop gossip when they observe supervisors enforcing the gossip-free zone.

- a. True
- b. False

28. The environment is not influenced by the attitude in the teachers and managers.

- a. True
- b. False

29. Children's learning is promoted by properly organized space.

- a. True
- b. False

30. One of the most important aspects of inviting families into the program is through your communication with them.

- a. True
- b. False