

Early Childhood Leadership Development Consortium **Consensus Statement**

INTRODUCTION

The Early Childhood Leadership Development Consortium is a network of early childhood experts and advocates, committed to developing progressive and transformational leaders of early childhood center- and school-based programs, who will improve outcomes for all children birth through age 8. Consortium members include representatives from national early childhood and public education organizations, higher education institutions, professional development and training groups, philanthropic organizations, and policy advocates. *(Please see Appendix A for a full list of Participating Members.)*

The Consortium's strategy is to develop a unifying conceptual framework, concrete action plan, and practical tools to strengthen the effectiveness of and bring coherence to current, as well as future, early childhood leadership development efforts. The Consortium recognizes that in order to develop progressive, transformational leadership for the field of early care and education, a thorough analysis of current research and application of best practices is needed—all while exploring our individual and organizational common interests in developing early childhood education leaders. This consensus statement represents our current best thinking and research efforts to date, to produce an Early Childhood Education Leadership Development Conceptual Framework that we hope will serve as a catalyst for dialogue and reflection among a much larger group of individuals and organizations that have an interest in this topic.

LEADERSHIP IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Research sheds light on the history of leadership development in early childhood education and points toward the future. Nearly 20 years ago, as the evidence was building toward the current focus on early childhood leadership development, Kagan and Bowman (1997) edited a comprehensive volume, *Leadership in Early Care and Education*. In the preface they wrote:

The quality of any field or organization is determined on the quality of its leaders. In early care and education, leadership has never been as critical to the field's advancement as it is now. This is for several reasons. First, long-held concerns about the status of early care and education services recently have been empirically confirmed with studies finding that many programs threaten the healthy development of young children and that leadership plays a key role in quality enhancement. Second, anticipated growth of early childhood services, as well as the changing nature and numbers of individuals entering the profession, spurs interest in the training of a leadership

cadre. Third, because important efforts to nurture leadership have emerged in recent years, there is a need to consolidate lessons from the field with understandings of leadership strategies and theories from other fields.

They concluded that, as a field, early childhood education had not devoted enough serious analysis and action to the issue of leadership and, as a result, identified a set of recommendations to address the gap in early childhood education leadership development: (1) Pioneer new definitions of and visions for leadership; (2) Engage allied groups and organizations concerned about children and families in the development of a new emphasis on and vision for early childhood leadership; (3) Formalize a leadership structure for the field; (4) Encourage higher education to match leadership training to the needs of the field; (5) Promote nonacademic opportunities for early childhood leaders to learn and gain experience; and (6) Advance diversity through opportunity and the elimination of bias. While the context for ECE leadership was rapidly changing, as of 2013, the early childhood education field was paying limited attention to leadership development (Goffin & Janke, 2013; Goffin & Means, 2009). The latest survey of ECE leadership development programs suggests that the field does not fully recognize the potential of leadership to serve as a change catalyst, nor does it have a common definition of leadership development or a common framework for the necessary knowledge and skills (Goffin & Janke, 2013).

Leadership may be described as the intersection of knowledge, skills, character attributes, and personality traits that motivate others to work toward a common goal (Whitebook & Austin, 2009). Within that definition, early childhood educators demonstrate leadership in a variety of roles. In addition to possessing expertise in specific areas, such as understanding how children learn and develop, partnering with families, or supervising staff, early childhood leaders need to understand the early childhood system itself, and how policy shapes the quality of services available to children and families (Whitebook & Austin, 2009). Furthermore, the diverse sectors in early childhood education require leaders who can successfully collaborate across many types of services and within various policy contexts. Early childhood education services do not exist in isolation. As such, leaders must understand a complex array of issues, develop skills to work collaboratively across disciplines and interest groups, and ultimately improve the quality of early care and education in order to positively impact outcomes for children. As Goffin and Means (2009) articulated so well in their extensive research, *“The early care and education field is at a crossroads, and this defining moment calls for leadership.”* As a Consortium, we recognize and honor the past efforts of many individuals and organizations who have given time, effort, and thoughtful consideration to the challenge of early childhood education leadership development. We believe that now is the time to work together collectively to further the aims of the 1997 groundbreaking volume, *Leadership in Early Care and Education*.

Leadership Matters

Leaders of early childhood programs are highlighted in the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership’s report, “Leadership Matters”: “To ensure school readiness and help prepare children for successful participation in work and in civic life, our nation has committed to providing a comprehensive and coordinated system of early learning and development. As more community-based programs provide publicly-funded preschool, the need for well-qualified early childhood administrators has greatly increased” (Bloom & Bella, 2005; MCECL, 2014). The leadership matters theme is further highlighted in the work of two efforts that extend their scope beyond preschool: *Leading Pre-K- 3 Learning Communities: Competencies for Effective Principal Practice*, from the National Association of Elementary Principals in 2014, and the ongoing work of Kristie Kauerz at the University of Washington Seattle, P-3 Executive Leadership Institute.

High-Quality Early Childhood Education

Strong and intentional leadership-by-design is a necessary ingredient for high-quality education to produce meaningful outcomes for children. Recent research finds that early childhood programs that combine evidence-based curriculum, highly-trained educators, and leadership support, produce positive effects on multiple domains of learning and school readiness, including language, literacy, mathematics, and emotional development, as well as executive function skills, such as working memory, inhibitory control, and attention shifting (Weiland & Yoshikawa, 2013).

The science of child development and early learning clearly demonstrates how important and complex it is to work with young children. Despite this fact, the professionals who provide for the care and education of children from birth through age 8 are often not acknowledged as a cohesive workforce, unified by shared knowledge and competencies necessary to perform their jobs well. Expectations for early childhood educators have frequently fallen out of pace with what research indicates children need to thrive and learn, and many current policies do not place enough value on the significant contributions these individuals make to children’s long term growth and success (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015). Early childhood leaders are needed to facilitate a shift in perspective and practice that will allow all children to receive a high-quality early childhood education—the kind of education that will help them achieve their learning goals and reach their highest potential.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF LEADERSHIP

Early childhood program leaders play an instrumental role in improving outcomes for children by helping teachers strengthen their core competencies, and in creating work environments where these educators can fully implement and grow their knowledge and skills. Leaders have a tremendous influence on professional development. Principals and directors, for example, often select the structure, content, and activities for professional learning. Leaders are also responsible for determining workforce-hiring practices and for the systems used to evaluate early

childhood professionals. In addition, leaders facilitate the necessary communication and collaboration among various professionals with the goal of improving consistency within the care and education sector for children, as well as outside of it, including for example, in the areas of health and social services.

The Institute of Medicine (IOM) and the National Research Council (NRC) recently convened a committee of experts assigned with exploring the science of child development, particularly with implications for the professionals who work with children birth through age 8. Their resulting report entitled, *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, includes a blueprint of recommended actions with the ultimate goal to establish cohesive and consistent support for the development of young learners. (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015). The committee also recommends specific actions, including well-informed and capable leadership that can make these suggested changes to the early childhood workforce feasible.

IOM Workforce Report: Leadership Recommendations

Specifically, the IOM committee issued the following leadership recommendations:

1. Policies and standards that shape the professional learning of leaders should encompass the foundational knowledge and competencies necessary to support high-quality practices for child development and early learning.
2. Policy, research, and governmental organizations should establish updated and comprehensive standards that reflect what early care and education leaders need to know and be able to do, particularly in the area of instructional leadership.
3. Early learning principles and best practices should be integrated into leadership training, including policies and accreditation standards; coursework, practicum and evaluation requirements; and ongoing professional learning support systems and recertification requirements.

The IOM committee further recommends that a core competency consensus statement for early childhood leaders be developed in collaboration with organizations that have developed similar statements for school principals, such as the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. While improved statements of core competencies are certainly tantamount, they are not sufficient because realizing those competencies in *practice* is where the true contribution to improving outcomes for children will occur. Therefore, it's also recommended that states develop criteria for licensing or credentialing early childhood leaders. Criteria should identify the specialized knowledge and competencies necessary to be both leaders in instruction and experts in organizational development and management. This will require rethinking requirements for leaders related to education, credentials, coursework, and professional experiences.

Elementary school principals, in particular, pose unique considerations to leadership development. This is becoming more evident due to their increasing responsibility for prekindergarten students. To align with the IOM committee recommendations, integrating instructional leadership for early learning into principal development and training is advised. One possibility is to develop distinct definitions of “highly qualified principal” for elementary schools. This definition would include both core competencies and past teaching and leadership experiences specific to the age range the principal is responsible for. If this recommendation were to be realized, elementary school principals would become school administrators recognized for their specific knowledge and competencies in early learning birth through age 8.

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

The Early Childhood Leadership Development Consortium’s initial strategy included the development of a unifying conceptual framework for early childhood leadership. In September of 2014, the Consortium first convened to review a conceptual framework, *Leadership by Design*, developed by Deloitte Consulting LLP. Deloitte’s framework is based on an extensive study of more than 10,000 exemplary private and public sector executive leaders. *(Please see Attachment B for the Deloitte Leadership Capabilities Chart.)* Their Framework takes a comprehensive view of leadership by highlighting four types of leadership with distinct capabilities assigned to each:

- People Leadership - Inspirational Leadership and Execution
- Relationship Leadership - Influence and Collaboration
- Business Leadership - Direction and Business Judgment
- Entrepreneurial Leadership - Competitive Edge and Building Talent

The Consortium reviewed, revised, and adapted the Deloitte Framework to incorporate the specific knowledge and competencies of successful early childhood leaders. This includes relationships with teachers and families, knowledge across content and grade levels, and collaboration between ranges of interested parties.

IOM Workforce Report Influence

Following the release and close review of the IOM Workforce Report, the Consortium revised the framework to incorporate the report’s leadership recommendations. We added two competencies to their framework, namely Instructional Leadership and Inter-Professional Collaboration. We incorporated the IOM recommendations related to organizational development and management across eight the leadership capabilities, while adding more business acumen detail, including an understanding of finance and human resources. See *Attachment A* for the updated version of the Early Childhood Leadership Conceptual Framework.

MOVING FORWARD

The Early Childhood Leadership Development Consortium is committed to refining this Leadership Framework and expanding its reach by conducting dialogue/information sessions within the participating Consortium organizations at the leadership level, as well as the organizational, membership, client/stakeholder levels. We will reach out to other potential stakeholders who have an organizational interest in teaching, learning, and leadership in the arena of early childhood education. Additionally, there are many thought leaders within and outside of early childhood education whose opinions and ideas will be sought, in order to expand the dialogue and improve the quality of the framework.

We also look forward to convening focus groups of successful early childhood school and program leaders to review and recommend refinements to the framework, as well as systems-level leaders at the local, state, and federal levels. -Long-term goals include exploring the framework's alignment to the curriculum and components of selected existing early childhood leadership development programs, as well as policy frameworks related to the certification and licensure of early childhood leaders.

Our Consortium recognizes that early childhood leaders and educators bear a great responsibility for children's health, development, and learning. Maintaining the status quo for these professionals will only perpetuate today's fragmented approach to the care and education of young children. As articulated in the IOM Report, this will ultimately result in inadequate learning and development, particularly among the most vulnerable families and communities. The time is now, and the need is urgent to develop progressive and transformational early childhood leaders.

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Early Childhood Leadership Development Consortium Participating Members

Association for Early Learning Leaders

- Colleen Haddad

Bank Street College of Education

- Denise Prince

Child Care Information Exchange

- Roger Neugebauer
- Bonnie Neugebauer

Council for Professional Recognition

- Valora Washington

Council of Chief State School Officers

- Tom Schultz (Consortium Co-Convener)

Early Childhood Leadership Institute

- Maurice Sykes (Consortium Co-Convener)

HITN/Early Learning Consortium

- Ed Greene

Kaplan Early Learning Company

- Kyra Ostendorf

McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, National Louis University

- Paula Jorde Bloom

National Association for the Education of Young Children

- Rhian Evans Allvin

National Association of Elementary School Principals

- Gail Connelly
- Kelly Pollitt

National Head Start Association

EC Leadership Statement

- Yasmina Vinci
- Lisa Stewart

New America Foundation

- Laura Bornfreund
- Lisa Guernsey

Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center

- Kimberlee Kiehl

University of Colorado, Denver

- Rebecca Kanter

University of Missouri

- Linda Espinosa

University of Washington, Seattle

- Kristie Kauerz

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EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

Leadership Knowledge and Competencies									
Inspirational Leadership <i>Leaders inspire professionals to follow them</i>	Execution <i>Leaders achieve results through others</i>	Influence <i>Leaders persuade and influence stakeholders</i>	Inter-Professional Collaboration <i>Leaders work in synergy with others professionals</i>	Foundational Knowledge <i>Leaders model and promote foundational knowledge</i>	Vision <i>Leaders provide vision and direction</i>	Judgment <i>Leaders demonstrate business acumen</i>	Competitive Edge <i>Leaders drive change and innovation</i>	Building Talent <i>Leaders build capability for competitive advantage</i>	Pedagogical/ Instructional Leadership <i>Leaders promote evidenced-based teaching and learning practices</i>
Demonstrates statesmanship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grows internal and external reputation as a significant leader 	Delivers enterprise execution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holds top leaders accountable for delivering strategic goals 	Influences politically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses political skills and networking to gain external support and backing 	Creates sustainable synergies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes cross-sector collaboration 	Focuses on learning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps staff increase their knowledge and competencies • Selects appropriate content for adult learning 	Creates strategic direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets and communicates long-term strategy to shape the field 	Promotes the mission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates future forecasts • Monitors industry patterns and trends 	Drives innovation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates new business models • Creates awareness of impact 	Sustains program capability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds a strong succession plan • Highlights successes 	Serves as an instructional resource and coach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fosters practices that help promote deep learning for children and adults
Provides figurehead leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a clear leadership brand • Builds followers across the program 	Leverages senior leader strengths <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harnesses the full range of capabilities from senior teams • Promotes workforce professionalism 	Influences stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has broad support and buy-in for initiatives • Leverages relationships with key senior players 	Builds strategic partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a shared understanding of the inter-connectedness of practice • Secures support and resources with internal and external 	Selects teams strategically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hires highly qualified early childhood educators • Assesses and responds to content knowledge needs of early childhood educators 	Builds alignment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligns internal and external teams across the field with a unifying vision for the future 	Determines ROI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluates what will deliver a return on invested resources • Supports mission fulfillment 	Drives transformation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates conditions for people to innovate • Measures the collective impact of innovative strategies 	Sponsors leaders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast-tracks the careers of senior talent • Fosters career mobility 	Supports developmentally appropriate curricula and instructional practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes best practices based on knowledge of how children learn • Uses multiple forms of

Leadership Knowledge and Competencies									
			stakeholders						assessment to monitor children's learning
Demonstrates leadership versatility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivates and inspires people from different functions and cultures 	Stretches performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stretches the performance of people with a wide range of abilities 	Influences cross-functionally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses range of interpersonal approaches to persuade people with differing perspectives and interests 	Collaborates across boundaries <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds reciprocal relationships and alliances across all levels, grades, and with parents 	Demonstrates strong interpersonal communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicates with professionals in a respectful and responsible manner 	Coordinates across teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps diverse teams focused on the same goals 	Maximizes resource utilization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluates internal systems to support sustainability 	Drives differentiation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourages early adoption and application of new strategies 	Fast-tracks high performers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides opportunities for high potential performers Encourages team-based development 	Uses multiple sources of data to inform professional development needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implements individualized professional development plans
Establishes leadership impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Projects personal confidence, expertise, and authority 	Drives delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeps team's performance on track Anticipates obstacles 	Influences colleagues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tailors information, support, and understanding with colleagues 	Works within teams <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds mutual support and understanding with colleagues and parents 	Promotes teamwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies relationship values and principles of team dynamics to plan and deliver early care and learning that is safe, timely, efficient, and equitable 	Sets direction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a clear sense of direction and priorities 	Secures added value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilizes knowledge of program operations and finance to evaluate the most effective use of resources 	Pushes for continuous improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains awareness of industry trends and research 	Coaches talent <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shares knowledge and experience Encourages individual development Fosters professionalism 	Promotes a professional learning community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides leadership and allocates time for peer learning

1
 Strategy and Models

Leadership capability levels across transitions

	People Leadership		Relationship Leadership		Business Leadership		Entrepreneurial Leadership	
Complexity of Leadership Demands	Inspirational Leadership Getting people to follow you	Execution Achieving results through others	Influence Persuading and influencing stakeholders	Collaboration Creating synergies through working in partnership	Direction Providing vision and direction	Business Judgment Showing commercial acumen	Competitive Edge Driving change and innovation	Building Talent Building capability for competitive advantage
4	Demonstrating statesmanship Growing internal and external reputation as a significant business leader; 'one to watch'	Delivering enterprise execution Holding top leaders accountable for delivering strategic goals	Political influencing Using political skills and networking to gain external support and backing	Creating business synergies Establishing business to business mergers and partnerships	Creating strategic direction Setting and communicating long-term strategy to shape the market and industry landscape	Delivering shareholder value Making judgments on what will grow the value of the business	Driving innovation Innovating to create new demand, new markets, new business models	Sustaining enterprise capability Building a strong bench and succession for the C Suite
3	Providing figurehead leadership Demonstrating a clear leadership 'brand'; building followership across the business	Leveraging senior leader strengths Harnessing the full range of capabilities from senior teams	Stakeholder influencing Getting broad support and buy-in for initiatives, leveraging relationships with key senior players	Building strategic partnerships Identifying and securing business synergies across internal and external boundaries	Building business alignment Aligning teams from across business with a unifying vision of the future	Delivering capital ROI Making judgments on what will deliver a return on capital invested	Driving transformation Creating conditions for people to innovate, setting the agenda for change	Sponsoring leaders Fast tracking the careers of senior talent pools; hosting, sponsoring, fostering mobility
2	Demonstrating leadership versatility Motivating and inspiring people from different functions and cultures	Stretching performance Stretching the performance of people with a wide range of abilities and capabilities	Cross matrix influencing Using a range of interpersonal approaches to persuade people with differing perspectives and interests	Collaborating across boundaries Building reciprocal relationships and alliances across the business	Coordinating cross business teams Keeping diverse teams focused on the same goals	Maximising commercial return Making judgments on what will build profitability and make money for the business	Driving differentiation Innovating and encouraging early adoption of new ideas; 'pushing the boundaries'	Fast-tracking 'hi-pos' Taking risks with stretch opportunities for high potential performers to 'raise their game'
1	Establishing leadership impact Projecting personal confidence, expertise and authority	Driving delivery Keeping team's performance on track; anticipating obstacles	Persuasive influencing Tailoring information and arguments for different audiences	Team working Building mutual support and understanding with colleagues	Setting direction Creating a clear sense of direction and priorities	Securing added value Making judgments on what will make the most effective use of resources	Pushing for continuous improvement Challenging current practices to drive improvement in products, offers, processes	Coaching talent Sharing own knowledge and experience to help team to develop

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