



## Leadership

The National Quality Standard is linked to national Learning Frameworks, which outline practices to support and promote children's learning. The Learning Frameworks assist nominated supervisors, educators and coordinators to think more deeply about the service's approach to learning, development and care and the way in which this guides everyday practice and development of the program (Guide to the National Quality Standard, p. 21)

This summary exists to share with nominated supervisors, educators, coordinators and other interested people, some recent perspectives in the field of leadership. By learning more about the perspectives of other leaders within the sector, we as educators can model reflective practice and the value of ongoing learning, as well as exploring ways in which to improve our leadership practice.

### Recent perspectives

Recent perspectives about leadership in the context of the National Quality Framework include:

- The idea that leaders are an integral part of a community of learners which continually endeavours for reflective and critical practice and ongoing professional development (Sergiovanni, 1998 & MacNeill et al, 2004 - cited in Siraj-Blatchford, I & Manni, L 2006).
- The need for leaders to work within, across and beyond the early childhood setting, forming partnerships and conversations with and amongst educators, allied health professionals, parents, families and communities (Stamopoulos, 2011)
- That leaders are not only leading services and educators in the present moment, but are also leading and managing change, as regulations, expectations and frameworks change
- The strong link between leadership and high quality practice in education and care settings
- Ongoing learning and reflective practice are important threads of the Framework, and leadership and mentoring is vital to the successful integration of these concepts in services
- Confidence, collaboration, consultation, a willingness to embrace challenge and communication are all key threads in exploring leadership in early childhood education and care services

So what do these perspectives mean for nominated supervisors, educators, and coordinators? They mean that now, more than ever before, leadership of services isn't something that happens in isolation. Much of the recent work on leadership in early childhood has focused on the idea the leadership is dynamic and collaborative, with leaders being seen less as those who hold all the knowledge, and more as those who facilitate growth and exploration within a service. Increasingly, the role of the leader within the service is to support, challenge and guide educators as they grow in their understandings of philosophy, principle and pedagogy.

Leadership in the context of education and care services is dynamic and evolving, and educational leaders, directors, area managers etc are learning and growing alongside educators, children and families. Leaders are called upon to recognise the individual and group strengths of their teams, and to tailor their support and engagement to meet these needs. This support involves too a deep knowing of the self as a leader, as well as a willingness to embrace change and to explore, thinking critically about how one defines oneself as a leader, what leadership means for yourself and your service.

The link between leadership and high quality service delivery is linked closely with the underpinning concepts of critical reflection and reflective practice. The connection between reflection, professional learning and quality practice is found in many contemporary policy and curriculum documents. For example, the Early Years Learning Framework (DEEWR, 2009) identifies reflective practice and ongoing learning as an underpinning principle for quality practice and places emphasis on the power of collaborative reflective practice to enhance thinking and practice.

Leaders need to be confident, not only in their leadership, but also in their willingness to seek and explore further perspectives, as new information comes to hand. Leaders also need to collaborate with other leaders, as well as members of their team, in order to consult and embrace challenges as they arise in a leadership context. Communication is also a key element of successful leadership, with effective leaders paying close attention to communication styles, methods and responses, as well as building good communication channels with other leaders, inside and outside the sector, to grow and challenge their ideas and thinking. ■

## Further Resources

To access more resources around leadership in the IPSP online library ([www.ipsplibrary.net.au](http://www.ipsplibrary.net.au)), search for terms such as "leadership", "change" or "leader". For other ideas and perspectives, you could search for "challenge" or "communication", and for information on working with families, try searching "families" or "parent"

Read more about leadership from:

ACECQA – the role of the educational leader:

<http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/Information%20sheets/Portal%20The%20role%20of%20the%20educational%20leader%20-%20information%20sheet%20PDF%20version.pdf>

Leadership in Early Childhood – e book by Jillian Rodd:

<http://ir.nmu.org.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/130657/41868f122d7385e1240745e73fd4bf62.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>

Dimensions of Pedagogical Leadership in ECEC:

[http://ilrfec.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/01/art\\_10Fonsen.pdf](http://ilrfec.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/01/art_10Fonsen.pdf)

If you would like further support, please email the project officer, at [enquiries@gowriesa.org.au](mailto:enquiries@gowriesa.org.au)

## References:

Black, F. 2013, 'Sharing Educational Leadership', *Reflections*, Issue 51, pp. 16-17

Educator Researcher poster series

Siraj-Blackford, I & Manni, L 2007, *Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector: The ELEYS Study*, Institute of Education Press, London

Stamopoulos, E, 'Building Early Childhood Leadership Capacity through Professional Knowledge, an Interpretive Lens, Courage and Relational Trust', *Reflections*, Issue 44, pp. 11 - 13