

Element 4: Professional Practice

Activity F: Thinking about leadership for learning

‘Leadership for learning’ refers to a practitioner’s work in supporting and guiding the learning and development process for children. Regardless of role, each individual working in an early childhood setting is a leader for learning.

Examples include practitioners working together to support a child in discovering something new, a team member leading parents to understand something unique about how their child learns, a practitioner supporting a student or new colleague to understand the principles and values underpinning the setting, or a manager supporting a practitioner to gain new knowledge. Leadership for learning is a collaborative process where responsibility for children’s learning and development is shared among practitioners, children and families. Responsive leaders build each person’s individual leadership capability.

Leadership styles and leadership structures in an early childhood setting can greatly impact on children’s and adults’ learning and development. Leaders are responsible for creating a work culture that promotes discussion about learning, and stimulates the improvement of facilitating and supporting learning. Leaders in early childhood settings inspire others, prompt team discussions, facilitate and support reflective practice, listen to colleagues as individuals and as a team, and research and encourage appropriate practice.

Activity F looks in more detail at ‘leadership for learning.’ The activity is divided into three parts:

1. Experience of leadership for learning
2. Reflecting on your own role as leader
3. Being effective as a leader for learning in your setting.

Activity F, Part 1: Experience of leadership for learning

A practitioner’s experience of leadership can influence his/her own style as a leader for learning, and how he/she reacts to leadership by others. This activity will help you to reflect on your experience of being led, and how this may impact on your own style as a leader for learning in your room/setting.

Try to complete this activity alone and review your responses with your team or with the support of a mentor.

Effective leadership	Ineffective leadership
Think about a time when you experienced good leadership or felt well-supported. How did it feel?	Think about a time when you experienced ineffective leadership or felt unsupported. How did it feel?
What was it about this experience and how you were led, that made you feel this way?	What was it about this experience and how you were led, that made you feel this way?
How did you feel about your work when you experienced good leadership or felt well-supported?	How did you feel about your work when you experienced ineffective leadership or felt unsupported?
What was it about this experience and how you were led, that made you feel this way?	What was it about this experience and how you were led, that made you feel this way?

Effective leadership	Ineffective leadership
What, if anything, could you have done to help the person leading, to be more effective?	What, if anything, could you have done to help the person leading, to be more effective?
<p>Based on your answers above, think about what makes a good leader for learning. Note your ideas below.</p>	
<p>What type of leader for learning would you like to be? Remember, you may be leading colleagues, students, parents and children.</p>	

Activity F, Part 2: Reflecting on your role as a leader for learning

This activity will support you to think about your role as a leader for learning—who you lead and how you lead. It will also help you to identify key aspects of, and influences on your leadership style.

You can complete this activity alone, with a colleague or manager or with the support of a mentor.

Who do you lead? (How many people and in what roles?)
What words would the people you manage use to describe your leadership style? Consider Activity F, Part 1, and use the prompts from the box below or choose your own words.
What personal qualities do you bring to leadership? (Think about the experiences, qualifications, dispositions, skills, knowledge, attributes and characteristics that support your role as leader).
How does your leadership style support others to learn? (Think about colleagues, children and parents.)
What else do you need to help you in your role as leader?

Suggested words to describe leadership style:

Approachable	Decisive	Happy	Methodical	Reflective
Assertive	Distant	Helpful	Miserable	Respected
Balanced	Eager	Impatient	Motherly	Respectful
Bored	Easy-going	Informative	Motivated	Short-tempered
Cautious	Friendly	Insensitive	Motivating	Sincere
Collaborative	Fun	Irritable	Nervous	Tactful
Competent	Gentle	Kind	Outspoken	Tolerant
Confident	Goal-setter	Knowledgeable	Patient	Trusting
Cool-headed	Good listener	Lazy	Popular	Trust-worthy
Creative	Guarded	Logical	Positive	Well-intentioned

Activity F, Part 3: Being effective as a leader for learning in my room/setting

Effective leaders support colleagues, children and parents to understand and extend learning. Practitioners lead children to new levels of understanding and make this learning visible to parents. They support colleagues to be reflective and take a team approach to implementing and sustaining positive change.

Leaders for learning take personal responsibility for collaborating to extend all children's learning and development. This activity will help you to reflect on the impact of your leadership on children's learning and development.

You can complete this activity alone, with a colleague, manager or with the support of a mentor.

Think about a time when your leadership for learning was effective in supporting children's learning and development. Briefly describe the experience, interaction or activity.

How do you know your leadership for learning was effective? What evidence do you have?

Who or what do you need to support effective leadership for learning?

**How can you support others to be effective leaders for learning?
(Think about children, parents, colleagues, students.)**