Aistear Síolta Practice Guide

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 Flooks in more detail at 'leadership for learning.' The activity is divided into three parts:

- l. 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?		







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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?		
Based on your answers above, think about what ma	kes a good leader for learning. Note your ideas below.		
	arning would you like to be? agues, students, parents and children.		







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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 identity key aspects of, and influences on your leadership style.

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		e, with a colleag	ue or manager of	r with the suppor	t of a mentor.
	Who do y	ou lead? (How m	any people and in	what roles?)	
Wł	hat words would th	e people you ma	nage use to describ	oe your leadership	style?
Consider	Activity F, Part 1, a	and use the prom	pts from the box be	low or choose you	r own words.
			ship? (Think abou		
dispositio	ns, skills, knowled	lge, attributes an	d characteristics t	hat support your r	ole as leader).
How does your	leadership style s	upport others to	learn? (Think abou	it colleagues, child	iren and parents.)
	what els	e do you need to l	help you in your rol	le as leader?	
gested words	Approachable	Decisive	Happy	Methodical	Reflective
escribe lership style:	Assertive Balanced	Distant Eager	Helpful Impatient	Miserable Motherly	Respected Respectful
tersnip style:	Bored Cautious	Easy-going Friendly	Informative Insensitive	Motivated Motivating	Short-tempered Sincere

S t l Collaborative Competent Confident Cool-headed Creative

Fun Gentle Goal-setter Good listener Guarded

Irritable Kind Knowledgeable Lazy Logical

Nervous Outspoken Patient Popular Positive

Tactful Tolerant Trusting Trust-worthy Well-intentioned

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Department of Children and Youth Affairs

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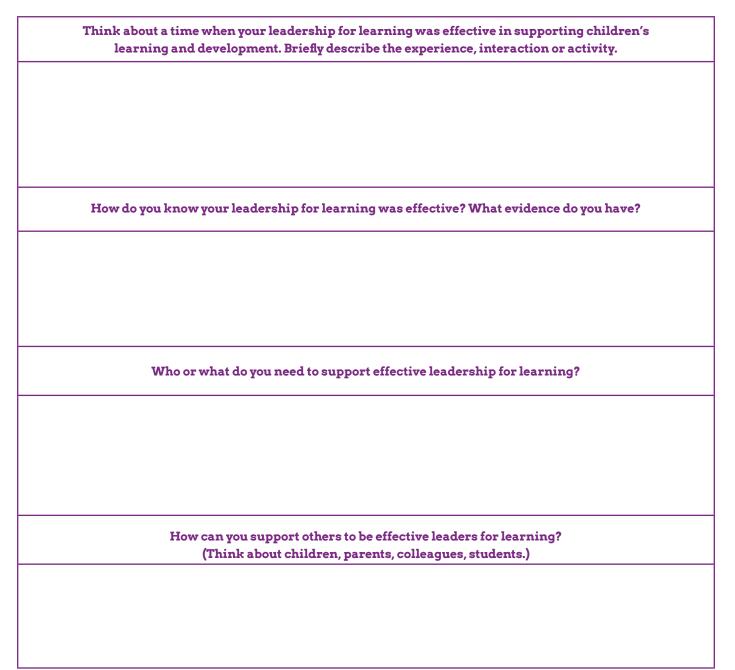


Activity F, Part 3: Being effective as a leader for learning in my room/setting

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.



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