

Quality Trickles Down: The Importance of Directors in Creating and Maintaining High Quality Programs

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Prior Knowledge

- How many of you are directors?
- Raise your hand if you have ever worked for an ineffective director?
- Raise your hand if you have ever worked for an effective director?



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Discussion

- Discuss your experience with early childhood directors?
- What's good?
- What's not so good?



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Presentation Objectives

- Explain the role of management, leadership, organization, ethical, and communication practices in high quality programs for children and families.
- Evaluate local, state, and national regulations, standards, and policies that affect programs serving children and families.
- Develop a plan for staffing, hiring, professional development, and sound personnel practices.
- Design program goals and implementation plans to establish an appropriate, anti-biased curriculum for young children in various child services programs.
- Develop sound fiscal policies and procedures for programs serving children and families.
- Identify and apply recommended guidelines for facilities maintenance, health, safety, food and nutrition services in programs serving children and families.



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Above all, we want to create a safe space to **discuss**, share ideas, brainstorm, and be creative



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Challenges to High Quality

- What are the challenges that directors face in creating and maintaining high quality programs for children, families, and teachers?
- Record on Flip Chart



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Great ideas, now what can we do about it?



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Importance of Directors

- In *Transforming the Workforce for Children Birth Through Age 8: A Unifying Foundation*, the authors stress the critical importance of the early childhood professional in ensuring the learning, development, and health of young children.



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Importance of Directors

- Research shows that quality programs are associated with highly qualified, well-trained, educated, and engaged directors (Ressler, Doherty, Ferguson, & Lomotey, 2015).



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Importance of Directors

- Directors' level of formal education and the quality of administrative practices are strong predictors of the overall quality of the children's learning environment (McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, 2010).



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Importance of Directors

- In addition, directors who have specialized training in administration are more likely to support the professional development needs of their staff (Ressler, Doherty, Ferguson, & Lomotey, 2015).



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Importance of Directors

- More knowledgeable directors improve the quality of the work environment and the knowledge and well-being of the teachers. These factors directly influence the behaviors of the teacher, which has a positive effect on the children's learning environment, improving relationships with children, families, and other professionals.



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Types of Early Childhood Programs

- Center-based
- Home-based (family child care)
- Family, Friend, Neighbor care – informal care

Programs might be:

- Profit or Not-for-profit
- Licensed or Licensed-Exempt
- Unlicensed
- Regulated
- Accredited



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One Thing in Common

- The one thing that all of these programs have in common is that there is a **LEADER** or someone in charge of leading and managing the program.



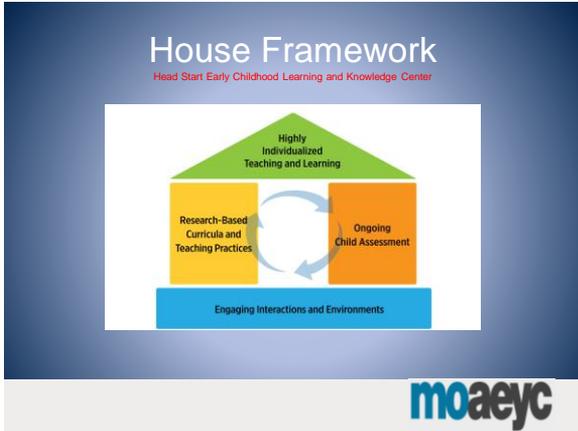
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EFFECTIVE DIRECTORS FACILITATE ENGAGING INTERACTIONS AND ENVIRONMENTS

The foundation of our house.



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Strong Foundations are Key

- The fact of the matter is that you can't build a strong program without engaging interactions and environments.
- How do we do this?
- How do we ensure our foundations are strong?

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By strengthening and supporting Directors, they will be able to better assist teachers, who will be able to better serve children and their families.




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Director Self-Care

- Before you can help others, you need to make sure you take care of yourself.

What ideas do you have that work for you— or that you want to try?



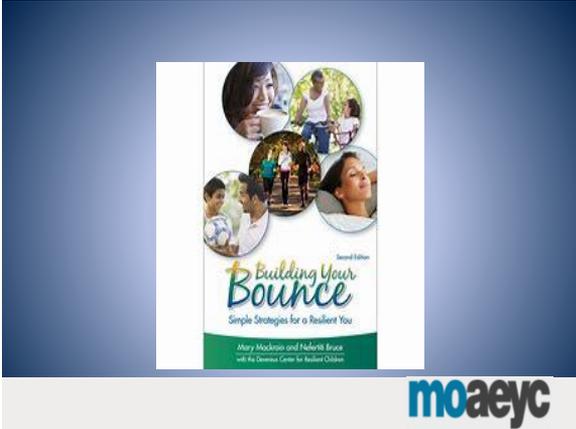

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Self-Care Ideas

- maintain a healthy work/family balance
- promote physical well-being
- provide positive work relationships
- stay active
- eat well
- practice mindfulness and other self-care activities (meditation, yoga, drinking soothing tea, getting enough sleep, etc.)



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Tool that Supports Teachers

SEQUAL – Supportive Environmental Quality Underlying Adult Learning

- This tool can help directors examine and improve environments for the teaching staff.
- It assesses five domains:
 - teaching supports
 - learning community
 - job crafting
 - adult well-being
 - program leadership

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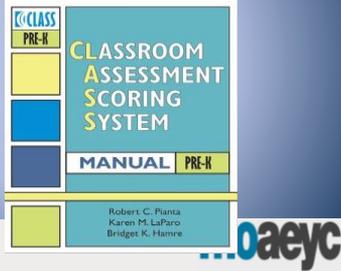
Evaluation Tools

- Next we will briefly discuss some evaluation tools that can help directors create and maintain high quality programs for children, families, and staff.

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Supportive Interactions

- How many of you use the CLASS? How do you use it?



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Discussion

- How many of you use the CLASS? How do you use it?



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Harms, Clifford and Cryer Environment Rating Scales



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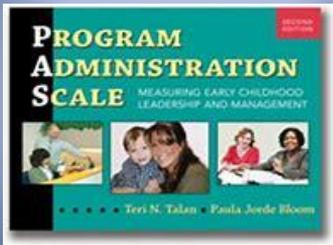
Discussion

- How many of you use the ERS? How do you use it?



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Strong Administrative Practices



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Discussion

- How many of you use the PAS? How do you use it?



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Approaches versus Models

- So what's the difference?
- Approaches tend to be more philosophical. It's a way of living and being. It requires in- depth study and cannot be easily replicated.
- Models are those that can be easily copied/replicated/purchased, etc.



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Standards

- According to the Head Start House Framework for Effective Practice, all curriculum should be research-based and aligned with standards.
- In Missouri, we use the Missouri Early Learning Goals for our state standards.



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European Approaches

- Montessori Method
- Reggio Emilia Approach
- Waldorf Approach



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Missouri-Approved Curricula

- Creative Curriculum
- ELLC – Emerging Language and Literacy Curriculum
- High/Scope
- Project Construct



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U.S. Models

- What curriculum model(s) do you use?
- Do you use fidelity checklists to ensure the curriculum is being implemented as intended?
- Discuss among your table.



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CDL Uses

- IT – Creative Curriculum
- Preschool – Project Construct
- Preschool – High Scope
- Preschool – Emerging Language and Literacy (ELLC)
- I want for our college students to see four different curricula “in action” and for the CDL to be a model program for each type.



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Curricular Fidelity



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EFFECTIVE DIRECTORS
EXPECT HIGHLY
INDIVIDUALIZED TEACHING
AND LEARNING



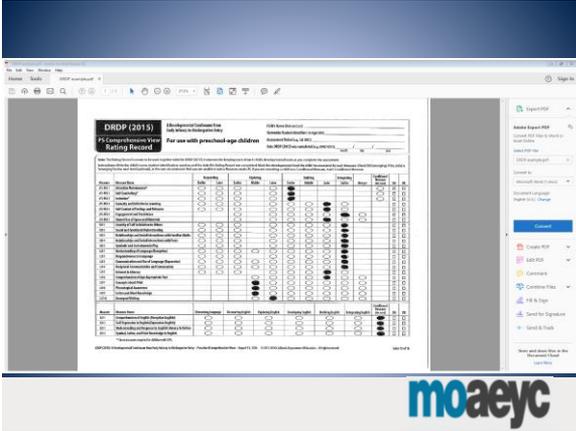
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Desired Results Developmental
Profile (DRDP)

- We use the DRDP to monitor children's progress and to inform our teaching.
- Teachers take anecdotal notes daily and then score the children on a continuum (Responding, Exploring, Building, Integrating).
- DRDP is completed three times a year and it helps teachers be more intentional teachers.



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DRDP Benefits

- Helps to get to know children.
- Helps to identify strengths and limitations.
- Helps teachers plan curriculum and experiences using real data.
- Helps to identify areas where they don't play (child never go in the writing area or never dances).
- Makes sure teachers are individualizing teaching and learning for each child.

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Discussion

- What assessment or tool do you use for progress monitoring or informing your teaching?

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EFFECTIVE DIRECTORS ENSURE ONGOING CHILD ASSESSMENT



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Assessment

- Definition – The process of obtaining information about a child in order to make judgments about their characteristics and decisions about appropriate teaching and care.
- Simplest definition – Getting to know each child.



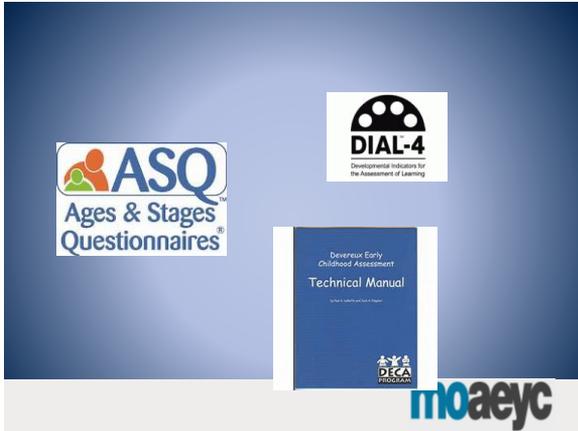
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Screening

- Definition- The use of a brief procedure or instrument designed to identify, from within a large population of children, those children who may need further assessment to verify developmental and/or health risks.



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Strong Vision for the Future

- Directors are forward thinkers. Always looking ahead rather than dwelling on the past.
- Directors need to be visionaries. Imagining what is possible, rather than staying stuck on what's holding them back.
- Directors enjoy a good challenge and an opportunity to solve a problem, create a better outcome.



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Inspiring Leader

- The well director doesn't work to make people love her, but makes people love to work for her.
- The well director is always working to develop an effective team. Understands he/she cannot do it alone.



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Continually Assesses and Evaluates

- The goal is to constantly keep improving, keep getting better, striving for excellence if everything we do.
- Assesses organizational climate



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Stays Current with Latest Research and Technology and . . . Is Not Afraid of Change



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Organization and Time Manager

- At the CDL we have a yearly calendar and although this may seem redundant we do the same things at the same time each year.
- In a way, the annual calendar to staff is just as important as the daily schedule for children.
- It provides consistency, structure, and teachers know what's happening and when



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Creates a Positive School/Family and Working Environment

- Has high expectations for staff
- Respects teacher's autonomy and never micro-manages
- Provides professional development/invests in his/her teachers
- Provides constructive feedback
- Recognizes growth and successes
- Encourages collaboration and team building
- Fosters creativity and new innovative ways of doing things



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Effective Decision Maker

- Directors have to make difficult decisions. These include:
 - ✓ Handling complaints from parents/family members
 - ✓ Raising tuition and deciding how much
 - ✓ Mediating disputes between teachers or between teachers and parents
 - ✓ Disciplining teachers
 - ✓ Firing teachers



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Why do we do this work?

- Because high quality preschool matters



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The Current State of Scientific Knowledge on Pre-Kindergarten Effects “Consensus Statement”

- Studies of different groups of preschoolers often find greater improvement in learning at the end of the pre-k year for economically disadvantaged children and dual language learners than for more advantaged and English-proficient children.
- Pre-k programs are not all equally effective. Several effectiveness factors may be at work in the most successful programs.
- Children’s early learning trajectories depend on the quality of their learning experiences not only before and during their pre-k year, but also following the pre-k year.
- Convincing evidence shows that children attending a diverse array of state and school district pre-k programs are more ready for school at the end of their pre-k year than children who do not attend pre-k. Improvements in academic areas such as literacy and numeracy are most common.
- Convincing evidence on the longer-term impacts of scaled-up pre-k programs on academic outcomes and school progress is sparse, precluding broad conclusions.
- Ongoing innovation and evaluation are needed during and after pre-k to ensure continued improvement in creating and sustaining children’s learning gains.



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Untangling the Evidence on Preschool Effectiveness: Insights for Policymakers



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