



**LEAD
LEARN
EXCEL**

KEY CONCEPT

THE FIVE ESSENTIALS SUPPORTS FRAMEWORK

For Continuous Professional Learning and Improvement



Definitions adapted with permission and collaboration from authors: Bryk, A., Sebring, P., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S. & Easton, J. (2010). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.



INSTRUCTIONAL AND INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

- Leaders establish a strategic focus on children’s health, learning, development and school readiness, cultivating strong partnerships with families, and supporting teachers to be effective in their work.
- In daily activities and interactions, they build and maintain mutually trusting and respectful relationships.
- They establish a vision for child-centered supportive learning environments, ambitious pedagogical practice, and children’s learning, development and kindergarten readiness.
- They hire staff determined to continuously improve learning opportunities and outcomes for young children and families.
- They galvanize staff activity, ensure embedded professional development for staff, and direct resources towards a vision for sustained learning and improvement.
- They enlist teachers in improvement efforts and build collective responsibility.
- They practice shared leadership and cultivate a cadre of leaders among teachers, parents, and community.
- They manage the “business” of running a school including facilities, budgeting, staffing and human resources, etc.

COLLABORATIVE, JOB-EMBEDDED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ROUTINES

- Leaders use supervisory and professional development resources, performance feedback, and social resources within the staff to build their professional capacity.
- Leaders work together with staff to define their strategic focus and practice improvement goals and to solve learning and implementation problems.
- Leaders protect time for program- and job-embedded routines for professional development and structure and facilitate routines that support staff to be reviewing data, examining practice, reflecting, and collaborating to design and try out practice improvements.
- All staff work in collaboration to promote their own and their colleagues’ professional growth. In such schools and centers, teachers and staff are: active partners in quality improvement; committed to the school/center and the children and families it cares for and educates; and focused on continuous professional learning, effectiveness, and improvement.



AMBITIOUS INTERACTIONS AND INSTRUCTION

Part One:

- All adults are provided guidance that articulates the “what” and “how” of teaching and learning for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.
- All adults endorse and use early learning and development standards and assessment information about children’s progress towards the standards to design meaningful learning opportunities.
- Teachers reflect on and plan intentionally for their role in providing children with interactions that are emotionally supportive, organized, and instructionally meaningful and individualized to the needs of each child.
- All adults partner with families in continuing to learn about meaningful and effective learning opportunities for the children at home and at school.

Part Two:

- A guidance system supports implementation and continuous improvement of interactions and instruction.
- Structures for implementation of curricula, assessments, and use of materials are coordinated across the program. While teachers may have substantial discretion in how these resources are used, teaching effectiveness depends on the community of practice, job aids, and supervisory dialogue and feedback that support implementation.
- When combined with Child-Centered Supportive Learning Environments, Ambitious Instruction has the most direct effect on children’s learning and development.

CHILD-CENTERED SUPPORTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

- In Child-Centered Supportive Learning Environments, all adults build supportive relationships with each other, with children and their families—the most basic prerequisite for learning.
- In the earliest years, it is critical children experience child-centered supportive learning environments in order to develop a positive sense of themselves, trust in others, and successful approaches to learning.
- Leaders use resources and establish policies that ensure all adults in the school community create consistently child-centered supportive learning environments.



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- All adults attend daily to how they use physical space, materials, daily structure and routines, continuity of care, group size and ratio to create child-centered supportive environments. This foundation supports adults to create an emotional climate allowing children to consistently feel safe, liked, able to build relationships, and actively explore.
- Teachers are trust-worthy and responsive to children's individual emotional and intellectual needs, they hold high expectations for children's capacity to relate, learn, and develop, and they affirm and promote children's exploration, friendships, engagement, and persistence.

STRONG TIES AND PARTNERSHIPS AMONG FAMILIES, SCHOOLS, AND COMMUNITIES

- Children do not exist alone; they are a member of a family that lives within a community. When families, schools, and communities focus collectively on children's needs from birth through college entrance, children are healthy, competent motivated learners, who realize long-term social and academic success.
- Early parent-school partnerships shape parents' awareness and capacity for partnering with educators and advocating for their children's needs to ensure positive experiences and success in school and life.
- Through systematic approaches, the entire staff works to build responsive, respectful relationships with families that motivate their engagement, and goal-oriented partnerships among families, schools, and the community.
- Parents are partners in developing and achieving goals for their child and their family. Staff value parents' perspective, participation, and are willing to be influenced by it.
- All staff share and seek information from families to build mutual respect and understanding. They make decisions collaboratively with parents and work cohesively across home and school to support children's participation, health, learning, and development.
- All staff cultivate strong ties with elementary schools and actively support parents, children, and teachers to make successful kindergarten transitions. Through referrals and connections to community resources and services, staff work to reduce material hardships, promote well being, and increase family capacity to engage with the children's learning and development. By building social networks among families, staff work to reduce isolation, increase social-emotional supports, and open life and learning opportunities that strengthen families and entire communities.