



## Learning to Lead



# Learning to LEAD

Second edition



## Effective Leadership Skills for Teachers of Young Children

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I dedicate this book to every child, in loving memory of Dr. Zakiya Mawanatabu Stewart. Mother Zakiya dedicated her life the most to children who had the least. Every child has a right to an excellent education. Our best teaching and our best leadership will guarantee that right.

I also dedicate this book to my beloved son, Aaron John Sullivan.



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## Preface



I have often been asked why I decided to write this book. There are numerous books out there on leadership, books for almost any field imaginable. For many years, I have taught undergraduate and graduate leadership classes to students preparing for early childhood and elementary education. I have worked with preschool, kindergarten, and elementary teachers negotiating changes in student demographics, curriculum, building-level leadership, and staffing. I have presented conference workshops that bring together care providers, teachers, parents, and social-service workers to collaborate on moving away from what others should be doing and toward what each individual can do to improve the service, care, and education of children.

In all of these situations, I often come across the same two problems. First, many of the students in my classes see true leadership as something that belongs to great people, not as something they can achieve themselves. Students often experience a moment of surprise when they realize we are not going to talk about people like Barack Obama, Mother Teresa, José Rizal, or Docia Zavitkovsky, but instead are going to examine their own roles in the leadership process.

Second, although early childhood educators continue to struggle with the challenges of being overlooked when it comes to the leadership potential, qualities, and abilities of those who care for and teach children, very little leadership literature is written for child care professionals who work

directly with children. Yet, these are people who share in the leadership process every day, spotting problems and working toward solutions. These are the teachers, care providers, aides, and assistants who have direct responsibility for the care and education of young children.

While leadership applies to everyone connected with the field of early childhood care and education, this book is addressed to the people who constitute the majority of early care and education workers: teachers. They are people like you, who have been and will continue to be part of the leadership process.

This book is about your personal development as a teacher and a leader. If you work with children, you are a teacher. Even if you are just standing in a room with children, you are a teacher. Children learn. That's all they do. It's their job. They learn from what you do and what you don't do. They learn from what you say and what you don't say. They learn from what you allow and what you won't allow. They learn from what you act on and what you don't act on. They learn from what you notice and what you don't notice. Children learn from you how to treat people and what to expect of others. If children are present, they are learning. If you are present with them, you are teaching. It is for this reason that the term *teacher* is used here to include all teachers, child care providers, aides, assistants, program/activity coordinators, and other staff, such as the cook, who work in early care and education settings.

Leadership is similar to teaching. If you are interacting with other people, you are leading. How you behave with other people has an effect on what they think they can do, how they approach problems, and what they will consider. If other people are present, they are responding to you. They notice how you hold your body and if you look tired or bored or interested or enthusiastic or angry. They hear how you react to questions, to problems, to changes, to good news. If you work in a child care center, school, or similar organization, everything you do or don't do contributes to the way the organization functions. This is leadership.

Every adult needs to acknowledge, be responsible, and be accountable for the impact she has on the life of a child. Children look to us for learning, and we provide it, whether we intend to or not. In the same way, you are leading whether you intend to or not, whether you are the director of the child care center, a home provider at a licensing meeting, or the infant-room

teacher. That's why it's so important to acknowledge your leadership—are you leading others in the direction you want to go?

Teaching and leading have other similarities. They involve many of the same skills. Because you are a good teacher, you can be a good leader as well. You are already doing it. You already know how. It's just a matter of recognizing your leadership and paying attention. You do this with children every day. You can do it with adults too.

This book is designed to give you an introduction to leadership theory and practice whether you work in a center, family child care setting, pre-school, school-age care setting, or any other work environment involving children. You'll learn the definitions of what leadership is (and is not) and some functions and styles of leadership. You'll learn about the roles of empowerment, followership, and advocacy in leadership, as well as your own role in facilitating the development of leadership in others. You'll learn how to use your knowledge of child development to understand leadership development and how to transfer your natural skills and abilities to a number of leadership situations and circumstances. Being able to transfer your abilities from one area to another will help you recognize the leader within.

Each chapter is built around a combination of theories, examples, and reflection questions—all designed to give you opportunities to fully examine and fully appreciate your own strengths, gifts, attitudes, values, challenges, and motivations and reflect on how these influence your leadership development. And what good is a book if it doesn't contain some stories? Each chapter ends with a little vignette that puts some of the ideas you've read into action. It is not possible to include everything you need to know about leadership in one book, so I have also included ideas, information, and references for further study, learning, and practice.

While playing with blocks, children learn about weight, balance, gravity, construction, destruction, addition, subtraction, and working with other children. In much the same way that children transfer playing to learning possibilities, I hope you will transfer the knowledge you gain from reading this book to your everyday life. Using this book, you will examine your ability to change the world. To the young child, all adults are leaders and have the power, authority, and status to change the world. Just turn the page to begin understanding and implementing what young children already know!



## Acknowledgments



I have loved working with the Redleaf Press team! I still give many thanks to my first editor, Beth Wallace. With even more thanks and with much appreciation, I can add my latest editor, Kyra Ostendorf, and Redleaf's editor-in-chief, David Heath, for their wonderful patience in and zest for what this book could be. In the first edition, I gave a very special thank you to my friends and colleagues at Pacific Oaks College Northwest and the Early Childhood Equity Alliance for helping me see the many faces of leadership and the many gifts we bring to the leadership process. Many of them joined me in the creation and development of the Praxis Institute for Early Childhood Education, where we continue our collaborative work on behalf of the children and families who need our leadership the most. The newest members of our team (see \*) have added much to the strength of our work together. Thank you!

Veronica Barrera	Charlotte Jahn *	Diana Puente
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Cynthia Holloway	Dale Otto *	



## Chapter 1



# Leadership in Early Childhood Education

**I**n this chapter, I will discuss various ways of looking at leaders and leadership. You will have an opportunity to think about leadership's developmental nature, the way the leadership process is mutually influenced by leaders and followers, and the many roles and words used to describe leaders. You will learn the differences between leadership, power, authority, and status. You will explore the relationship between leadership development and human development. Finally, you will have an opportunity to think about what leadership means to you. But first, let's take a look at why we need leadership in our field and at the challenges and obstacles we face because our profession is composed almost entirely of women working with children.

## Why Do We Need Leaders and Leadership in Early Childhood Care and Education?

There are 2.3 million people serving approximately 12 million children under the age of 6 every day. Another 3 million children participate in after-school and summer programs and many millions more are in public or private primary grades. For each child, you and your colleagues serve as important teachers. Each and every one of your words, actions, reactions, values, beliefs, interests, priorities, and perspectives (and a host of other things) provide the children with a model of what kind of person they can

become and what they should learn about their world. Such a big responsibility requires leadership from many people. For the children in our classrooms, we look for teaching that is intellectually and creatively stimulating, developmentally and culturally appropriate for the children being served, and socially responsive to the needs of families and communities. Outside of the classroom, we look for curricular and organizational leadership from teachers. From directors and managers, we seek guidance and vision in staff trainings, the management of resources, the setting of goals and outcomes, and the establishment of good relationships with families and outside agencies. We seek political leadership in advocates who can give voice to such issues as worthy wages, clear and accessible career paths, and the impact of quality child care on our children's futures. From our neighborhoods and communities, we hear the call for leaders in early care and education who can address the needs and realities of families, form collaborative relationships for social change, and recognize the essential role of families and communities in raising children successfully.

Leadership through collaboration, cooperation, and communication on all our parts will improve and strengthen the whole system. Employees and advocates in the field may think of early childhood care and education (ECE) as a series of discrete environments and institutions serving children of a limited age range, but to children and families, it is one continuous process that builds on previous experiences. If leadership in ECE is truly to affect our children and families in beneficial ways, we must begin to view it from their perspectives. Seeing the educational system as a single entity can increase collaboration and cooperation among family child care settings, centers, school-age care settings, preschools, and elementary schools.

As a parent or a professional, you may find yourself involved in many child-related contexts throughout your life. For example, your work in community collaboration as a school-age care provider may become critical when you act as an advocate in a family-services campaign. As a family child care provider, your close, collaborative efforts with families may become the key ingredient in planning family involvement at a child care center. Your firsthand experiences with children's developmental stages in your work at a child care center may influence your parenting style at home. In all of these examples, your ability to understand the impact of

leadership on children and their families can help change society and the future of early childhood care and education in ways you can't begin to imagine!

## Obstacles to Early Childhood Leadership

Many obstacles to leadership occur in early childhood care and education. Our field is almost entirely composed of women drawn to a nurturing environment, working with young children, participating in the growth of others, and putting the needs of others above their own. This makes developing leaders difficult, given that leadership development is self-focused, often rigorous or conflictual, and involves teachers in situations and activities that may feel uncomfortable.

In addition, our field is often undervalued. Our pay is low, our benefits are minimal or nonexistent, our turnover is high, there are few entry requirements and even fewer opportunities for our professional development or training, and our pathways for career advancement are unclear. We have yet to develop an inclusive definition of leadership that takes into account its need at all levels and in all areas. In many cases, we are not even sure how we really feel about leadership. Because of this, we compete with each other—level against level, setting against setting, public against private—for the few resources that are available.

We can be sure that if we are ambivalent about the need for and definition of leadership within our field, those on the outside looking in at us are even more confused. Developing future leaders in such an environment is incredibly difficult! Some critics have suggested that we hesitate to provide rewards and incentives for leadership development because those of us with more skills may be drawn to positions outside the classroom. We can't have it both ways. If we need leaders in our profession, we must be willing to help develop and reward them. We must acknowledge existing leadership at all levels of the profession, formally and informally.

## What Is Leadership?

What is leadership and who are leaders? Leadership means different things to different people and is defined differently in different settings and

environments. Nevertheless, at least two common factors are evident in most definitions of leaders and leadership:

- Leadership is a group phenomenon. At least two people must be involved—a leader must be leading someone.
- Leadership usually involves intentional influence. At least one of the people involved must want to make something happen.

A few more things are known about leadership. The development of leadership ability takes time. It is a lifelong process that begins at birth and is influenced by many factors, including life and work experiences. Operating the most sought-after family child care center in your community, for example, didn't just happen in a day. When you first started, you may not have had all the knowledge, information, and experience you needed. However, if you got along well with younger children when you were a child, raised a number of children of your own, took a few classes in child development, or worked in a center for a while, you began to pull together experiences that led you toward your goal. You learned different things from each experience, and you put them all together in a way that made sense to you. This process of integrating your experience gave you what you needed to begin your own family child care business. It made you a leader. And with more experiences, development, and learning comes a lot more leadership development!

## SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND INTERDEPENDENCE

Effective leadership encourages a person's or a group's growth in self-sufficiency and interdependence. We foster self-sufficiency when we work to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute to the leadership process—growing into our own leadership potential and assisting others in growing into theirs. Effective leadership creates interdependence: we find ways to work together and draw on each other's unique gifts and strengths so we can accomplish common goals and achieve great things.

Take, for example, a new director who has just begun working in a child care center. She has a great vision for the future of the center and really wants teachers to participate more in decisions that affect the center's

overall work environment. Unfortunately, she also has a difficult time getting them to buy in to some of her ideas. The lead teacher, on the other hand, does not have a lot of information about participatory decisions, but she really knows how to communicate with other teachers and has an uncanny knack for guessing exactly how each of them will respond in a particular situation. By working together and sharing an interdependence, the director and the lead teacher can combine their skills to meet all needs. By collaborating, the director and the lead teacher develop new leadership skills. The director learns how to incorporate more ideas from others in her planning, and the lead teacher learns more about participatory decision making. In this process, each becomes more self-sufficient.

## MUTUAL INFLUENCE

Leadership includes the recognition of individual strengths, contributions, and responsibilities. It is a subtle process of leaders and followers influencing each other. This process combines thoughts, beliefs, values, perspectives, expectations, feelings, and actions. It makes it possible for leaders and followers to collectively achieve purposes and values they both share.

In your work with children, you can see how teachers and children constantly influence each other. Everything you do is modeled and transferred to young children, who learn by modeling and mimicking the adults around them. At the same time, children also have their own set of thoughts, beliefs, values, perspectives, expectations, feelings, and actions. When children teach you what they want to happen in their learning environment, you make adjustments so you can better meet their needs and hold their interest.

The process is similar for leaders and followers. Both followers and leaders have their own sets of thoughts, beliefs, values, and dreams. A leader's actions are a model for those who follow him, and followers are always learning from the leader. At the same time, a good leader is also learning what others in the group want to have happen in the organization or on the project and how they want it to happen. He uses this information to change policies, revise the goals of the project, and rethink how he is leading.

# Who Are Leaders?

Leaders are individuals who influence others in a way that encourages them to higher or better performance and personal development. Effective leaders may or may not have authority, position, or status. They do, however, have integrity, dignity, and respect for others. Leaders empower, encourage, and support others in a shared effort to achieve goals or create change. Leaders can be found at all levels and in a variety of positions in early childhood care and education. They take action where action is needed, and they enable others to take action when their strengths and abilities are needed. Effective leaders care about other people. They see their relationship to and with others as essential to the overall strength and vitality of the group or organization. Effective leaders and effective leadership generate more leaders, thereby strengthening the leadership process itself.

Early childhood teachers are familiar with providing encouraging, empowering, and supportive learning environments for children so each and every child has opportunities to learn. In this way we strengthen the learning process. We can also provide this kind of learning environment for each other by encouraging better performance and personal development from each other. Veteran teachers can take newcomers under their wings and point out areas for growing and learning. This process is best implemented with respect for the new teacher who is learning to master a new task and is still developing, not unlike the way a teacher helps a child who is learning to master a new task. Just like the child, the new teacher has the potential to master that task and teach it to someone else. In this way we add to the leadership pool and the leadership process.

How you see your role will influence what kind of leadership you bring to a situation. For example, leaders have been described as scouts—those who go out ahead of the rest to show the way. Other terms used to describe leaders are *architect*, *catalyst*, *advocate*, *prophet*, *mediator*, and *coach*. Leaders might be considered poets who look at their work settings from a variety of perspectives. Leaders can be designers and stewards who build communities in which people continually expand their capabilities. Leaders are learners, performers, power brokers, and role models. All of these terms describe

leaders who play primary roles in making an organization or group better for its members. How you define your own role as a leader also provides many clues to how you perceive your relationship with children and their families.

Keep in mind the cultural values that influence your conception of a leader's role. In many African and African American communities, for example, great leaders have the twin roles of spokesperson, voicing the concerns of the community, and follower, being directed from the community for which she claims to speak. In the early childhood field, these twin roles of spokesperson and follower can be found in the political advocate who is an excellent spokesperson because she has been a teacher and understands the needs and challenges of the profession. Nevertheless, to be an effective leader, she must also continue to be perceived as a member of the teaching community—the teachers for whom she advocates must see her as one of their own—someone who follows their lead and perspective. This is particularly true in the African and African American early childhood community, but it is important in any leadership setting.

## ASK YOURSELF

- **Does one of the terms used to describe leaders ring true for you and the way you see your role in your work setting?**
- **How does that role influence your relationship with the children and their families? For example, what does your work mean for children and families if you see yourself as an architect? What are you building? How will you build it? How will you know if what you are building meets the needs of the children and families you serve?**
- **In what ways does your leadership provide others with opportunities to perform better and develop personally?**
- **How do you know you are providing an encouraging, empowering, and supportive environment? What characteristics would you look for in this kind of environment?**

• In what ways are the children you teach likely to become teachers of their peers? In what ways are the teachers you lead likely to become leaders of their peers?

• In what ways do the least privileged children and teachers in your group benefit from your leadership? Think about the children in your classroom who have the fewest resources, such as family, money, equipment, or previous learning opportunities. Think about the newest teachers, whether they're new to the profession or new to your work setting. How does your leadership benefit these teachers and children?

• What cultural values influence your expectations of a leader? How do your expectations compare with those of teachers from other cultural groups?

## Other Terms Used to Discuss Leadership

One of the reasons there are so many definitions of *effective leaders* and *leadership* is that the other terms we use alongside *leadership* cause confusion. Terms that are often used to discuss leadership include *power*, *authority*, *status*, and *management*. When these terms are used in place of *leadership*, people's feelings about leadership are affected. For example, someone who equates leadership with management may think of leadership as dull and boring if that's the association they have with the term *management*. In focusing on power, authority, status, and management, we often make the mistake of locating leadership outside of the classroom or family child care setting. Let's look at what each of the four terms mean, particularly in relation to leadership.

### POWER

Leadership is not merely power. *Power*, in its most casually accepted definition, can be described as an intentional, purposeful act in which one person

uses some form of advantage to influence the behavior of another person. *Power* is often understood as a negative term in early care and education. This connotation may exist because we are unfamiliar with the many ways that power can be used in positive ways.

Power can be used *on*, *for*, or *with* another person. Power used *on* or *over* someone is simply oppression, since the follower is not provided with choices or options. Power used *for* someone is facilitation—opportunities, choices, and options are provided, and the other person makes the decision. Power used *with* someone is empowerment—you and the other person learn and succeed together—which is a very important part of leadership because each person can contribute unique gifts and abilities to accomplish a shared or common goal.

## AUTHORITY

Leadership is not simply having authority. A person in authority is the one who has the right to make certain decisions. This right may come from a variety of sources, including an elected or appointed position, age (as in a family situation), or a professional position within a group or organization. A leader may possess authority, but a person in authority is not necessarily a leader. A person with authority may have the right to make a decision, but that doesn't mean she will make the right decision!

## STATUS

Leadership is not the same as having status. People with status may be merely the people who occupy top positions within an organization. Status doesn't always determine leadership ability. There are people who work at the top levels of every field who couldn't lead a group of five-year-olds to ice cream. All leaders have some form of status, but not all of those who have status can be called effective leaders.

## MANAGEMENT

Is leadership the same as management? An ongoing debate rages over the similarities and differences between management and leadership. For many, the two terms are interchangeable; they're seen as two different words for

the same process. For others the terms describe a difference in the way an individual will perceive situations, interact with people, solve problems, and direct the group or organization. Leaders and managers can serve very different functions and purposes, but one without the other can be a setup for failure. The Leadership-Management chart shows some of the ways management and leadership differ from each other.

<b>Management</b>	<b>Leadership</b>
Provides consistency and order	Produces forward movement in an organization
Keeps an operation on time and on budget over the long haul	Creates significant change
Provides the operating talent necessary to keep an organization focused on the day-to-day tasks that must be completed for objectives to be met	Provides the conceptual talent necessary to see the historical perspective (both past and future) that facilitates growth, change, and innovation
Provides efficiency in climbing the ladder of success	Determines whether the ladder is leaning against the right wall

To the children we care for, all grown-ups have authority, status, and power. How you use yours matters. I've spent some time explaining all of these terms because you will find them used often when people talk about leadership. As you think about your own leadership development, focus on what authority, status, and power you have, what each term means to you, and how you tend to use them. The best leaders are those who tap into the human desire to have purpose in life. Increasingly, people look for purpose in the workplace, and the best leaders assist them in fulfilling their potential.

## ASK YOURSELF

- **Think about a leadership situation in which you were involved or that you observed. Was the interaction based on power, authority, status, or management? How? From a leadership perspective, what might have made the outcome different?**
- **How have you used power? Authority? Status? Management?**
- **Describe situations in which you used power *on* or *over*, *for*, and *with* someone. Why did you use power in these situations? What were the outcomes? What were the other people's responses?**

## Functions of Leadership

The functions of leadership should tell you and those around you what you want to happen as a result of your leadership. The function is the goal of your leadership.

Three leadership functions will be discussed:

- Transformational leadership, which changes both the leader and the follower into better people and better leaders
- Situational leadership, which changes when the situation or needs change
- Servant leadership, which puts leaders in the position of serving others

Naturally, many more functions of leadership exist. The ones discussed here are primary examples and will introduce you to some of the language and literature of leadership functions. In chapter 5, you'll learn about transactional leadership, another leadership function that plays an important role in building coalitions with other organizations.

## TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership can be transformational—changing, motivating, and elevating both leaders and followers in ways that improve society and prepare children and adults to participate in the leadership process. Transformational leaders are usually charismatic, inspirational, intellectually stimulating, and empathetic. To become a transformational leader, you must focus on influencing and inspiring others to create change as well as provide a vision and work effectively with complexity, ambiguity, and uncertainty.

Transformational leadership is constantly needed, because you can't solve complex problems once and for all. The current transformational change becomes the new static pattern, and today's solutions become tomorrow's problems. Keep this in mind as you develop your leadership ability. The change you create today will be great for solving today's problems, but tomorrow will bring new problems, and the current solution will become obsolete.

### ASK YOURSELF

- **Select a typical workday and review it from beginning to end. What specific events of the day would you describe as transformational? How were these events transformational? Why?**
- **What actions, behaviors, beliefs, and dreams do you think increase your ability to transform yourself, others, and your work environment?**
- **Think back on a problem that existed in your work environment a couple of years ago, one that resulted in a change in how things were done. In what ways has that change created a new set of problems or stopped working now? If you could do one thing to solve the new problem, what would that be? Why might it work?**

## SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Leadership can be situational. Sometimes circumstances and factors in a given situation determine who will emerge as a leader. Your leadership may emerge as a result of time, place, and circumstance. Rosa Parks is a familiar example. She chose an apt moment to put her years of leadership training and experience to work when she sat down in the front (whites-only section) of a bus. On that day, her leadership was needed. The time, place, and circumstance called for her to rise to the occasion. Once you experience effective leadership in one situation, you'll find it easier to recognize other leadership opportunities, and you'll be more comfortable taking on increased leadership roles.

### ASK YOURSELF

- : **Think about a situation in which an immediate decision**
- : **was needed and you were the only one available to make it.**
- : **How did you feel? What thoughts went through your mind?**
- : **Did you make the decision? If yes, describe the steps that**
- : **led to the decision. If no, explain why not. What would you**
- : **do differently now? Why?**

## SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Leadership can mean serving others. Servant leaders in early childhood education are those who see themselves as serving coworkers, children, and their families. Servant leaders do not focus much on their own needs and goals; they focus on the needs and goals of others. If your family child care program is designed to meet your personal goals and fulfill your personal vision, it may be utilizing a form of leadership, but it is not utilizing servant leadership. If your family child care program is designed to meet the goals and visions of the families who leave their children in your care, it is utilizing servant leadership. A servant leader can be the official head of a child care setting or simply the person who keeps everyone else on a path toward the goal you all hope to achieve. Becoming a servant leader or a servant follower is not easy. It requires that each of us determine what actions and

behaviors are most likely to benefit those who are being served and that the least fortunate of those served perceives himself as better off as a result of those actions and behaviors.

## ASK YOURSELF

- ⋮ **In what ways does your child care program serve coworkers,**
- ⋮ **children, and their families?**
- ⋮ **How do you lead and serve children and their families?**
- ⋮ **How well served are the least privileged children and**
- ⋮ **families in your work setting?**

## Styles of Leadership

If the function of your leadership indicates your goal, the style of your leadership should tell you and those around you the way you will carry out your leadership. Your style suggests why the situation demands a leader. Your style involves the methods you use to achieve your result.

Your leadership style is the process you use to monitor, guide, coach, direct, and evaluate the work of others. Your leadership style, much like your teaching style, will be greatly influenced by your values and beliefs about how people (children and adults) grow, develop, and change.

We'll discuss two leadership styles:

- Directive style, which involves a lot of instruction and guidance
- Facilitative style, which involves acting only in ways that improve others' performance

As is the case with leadership functions, many other styles of leadership exist as well. The two discussed here tend to show up most regularly in early childhood settings.

### DIRECTIVE LEADERSHIP

A directive style may be mistaken for an authoritarian style, but they're not the same. An authoritarian style focuses primarily on the completion of the

task, sometimes at the expense of the learner's needs. Someone who uses the authoritarian style gives orders, not advice, and expects those orders to be carried out without question or hesitation. In a classroom, an authoritarian teacher presents the information or content expecting that the child will learn without question or hesitation. Most of us have been in situations where someone talked or gave a lecture with no learner interaction or participation and then had the nerve to call it teaching. An authoritarian leadership style is used among adults in the military; people in the military are often expected to follow orders from a supervisor or commanding officer without question or discussion.

A directive leadership style often is used when an individual or group is performing some new task. When children are learning a new task, much direction, guidance, monitoring, and feedback are needed. You need to be involved in the task almost as much as the child. The same is true of a directive leadership style when you are interacting with adults. If a coworker is learning a new task, you will need to spend almost as much time on the task as the learner. Providing step-by-step instructions, watching as the task is performed the first few times, giving feedback on the learner's progress, and offering helpful changes are methods used in a directive leadership style.

In a classroom, the teacher provides some direction and guidance as well as opportunities for children to develop internal monitoring and responsibility. The trick is to determine whether this approach is something you use all the time, which makes it a distinct personal style, or is something you use only until the learner has mastered the task, which makes it a style you use when appropriate as a part of situational leadership.

## FACILITATIVE LEADERSHIP

A facilitative leadership style provides group members with the means, resources, authority, and responsibility to act in the best interest of those affected. A facilitative style is never authoritarian, but it may be directive at times. A facilitative leader always strives to meet the needs of coworkers, children, and their families, much as servant leadership does. The facilitative style focuses on the individual strengths of each person and encourages and develops each person's leadership ability. The facilitative teacher, of course, is similarly focused, providing children with the means, resources,

and authority to be active participants in the teaching and learning process while understanding her own role as a learner and the children's roles as teachers. Facilitative teachers and leaders are intentional about sharing control and aware of the importance of understanding their roles as learners. In a facilitative teaching environment, emergent curriculum occurs when the teacher uses the emerging interests, questions, and skills of the children to modify and change the original lesson plan. Facilitative leadership occurs when leaders look for and use the emerging interests, questions, and skills of others as focal points for increasing leadership.

Think about how you can vary your leadership function and style to meet the needs or experience levels of your coworkers. People who are new to a job or who are performing a new task may need more monitoring, guidance, and direction. A directive leadership style is appropriate in that situation. Those who have been performing a task for a long time may do better if left to do what they do best; a facilitative leadership style will probably work better for them. Coworkers may need extra opportunities to learn new perspectives and understand new values and priorities. They may need more time for their ideas and beliefs to form or change. When you look at leadership, remember that there is no best way to lead. Instead, you must adapt your leadership function and style to the needs of the group. This is exactly like taking a developmental approach to children's learning. Developmentally appropriate practice applies to leadership as well!

## Leadership Development and Human Development

Leadership development, human development, and life experiences are interrelated processes that help make us who we are. Human development is the process by which we change cognitively, socially, intellectually, and physically as we mature. Leadership development is the process by which we increase our ability to create and influence change, growth, and achievement. Life experiences are those factors, events, and circumstances that define who we are and influence how we see the world.

Human development and leadership development involve an evolution, a transformation that changes who we are over time. This change is both qualitative and quantitative. Through your life experiences, the quality of

what you know or can do becomes different—you do not simply add to the number of things you know or can do. When a child learns to dress himself, he learns over time how to put on a shirt, underwear, pants, socks, and shoes. This is quantity. He also learns over time how to dress more neatly or to coordinate his clothing. This is quality.

Becoming a leader is also a developmental process and requires that you create and interpret your own life experiences and knowledge. Some early childhood theorists call this *constructivism*. Like human development, leadership development takes time and is never finished. Leadership development is individual—it differs depending on personality, life stage, and other circumstances. Who you are as a leader integrates your previous and current selves and the new you that will continue to emerge as you learn, grow, and gain experience. You will discover and invent your own way of leading. In many ways, you have no other choice; you are a unique individual and no other person can be you better than you can.

Your beliefs and theories about how people learn, grow, and are affected developmentally will influence your beliefs and theories about leadership development. As you think about leadership development, you will have to clarify the theories you hold as a teacher and a leader. Your ability to articulate your beliefs to others will increase your thoughtfulness, your intent, your consistency, and your results.

## ASK YOURSELF

- **You may be very familiar with the concepts of the teachable moment and emergent curriculum. Think about how you would recognize, take advantage of, or provide a lead-able moment. How might facilitative leadership be worked into what you do?**
- **How will your leadership development be affected by your beliefs and theories about how children grow and learn?**

## ASSIMILATION AND ACCOMMODATION

Child development offers useful links to leadership development. For example, children use assimilation and accommodation when confronted with

new knowledge. They assimilate new knowledge when they first learn that not every four-legged animal is a doggie. They begin to accommodate new knowledge when they develop a second category for four-legged animals: cow. Through the years, children repeatedly assimilate to accommodate the many four-legged animals in our world.

Through our own processes of assimilation and accommodation, we can transfer our current knowledge about child development to our emerging knowledge about leadership development. Multitasking, coordinating different senses, and developing competencies are just three examples of teaching skills that translate into leadership skills. As we discuss each, think about what you already do well as a teacher and how you can use those same skills as a leader.

### *Multitasking*

Multitasking takes place when you engage in more than one activity at the same time, when you make use of more than one skill simultaneously. Some teachers think they are not good at multitasking, but in reality most people are experts at it. They have simply become so proficient at certain skills that they fail to remember they require more than one action or one skill at a time. Take learning to write a paragraph in English; children must make simultaneous use of many skills:

- Remembering the correct symbol (letter) used to make a specific sound
- Choosing correctly between similar symbols (such as b/d and p/q)
- Putting the symbols in a specific order so they represent correctly spelled words
- Focusing on the idea or story they are telling while they put several words together in sentences

Most children can do all of these things simultaneously and quickly by age eight. By the time we are adults, we can perform the multiple tasks involved in writing and reading so quickly that we come to see them as a single fluid task.

Leadership is also about multitasking. In any leadership situation, we must simultaneously

- Think about the purpose of our actions and how those actions relate to the goals and directions of the group
- Balance the needs and relationships of the people involved with the needs and requirements of the tasks to be completed
- Be able to hold onto our vision of the future while focusing on what needs to be done today

As with reading and writing, the ultimate goal in leadership development is to eventually perform these multiple tasks so quickly that leadership becomes a single fluid process.

### *Coordinating Different Senses*

Children coordinate many different senses when they play in and explore their world. They taste the toy and make sense of it orally and manually. They see the toy and listen to the sounds it makes as it is tasted and held. They smell the toy and experience a feeling of satisfaction and happiness with the whole experience. Similarly, as adults, we coordinate many different senses when we take part in a leadership situation. We see the dynamics and the individual facial and body expressions of other people. We sense the energy of the group, the individual, or the situation. We hear the words and the tone of what is being said. Much like a child coordinating different senses, as adults we coordinate different leadership skills to accomplish things or to master new skills.

### *Developing Competency over Time*

Being patient with your developing competency is critical to your leadership development. Children feel good about themselves and their abilities when they believe they are competent at doing what is important to them and when they believe they can compete equally with their peers. Feelings of incompetence come when children repeatedly fail at something or when they are told that they aren't capable. A very perceptive and bright child once described the difference between gifted and special education: "in the gifted classes, teachers find out what you are good at and let you do it again and again and again. In the special education classes, teachers find out what you can't do and make you do it over and over and over."

Feelings of competence and incompetence affect your leadership development. You will feel incompetent while you are practicing and learning some skills. Reflection will be key. As you repeat various skills and learn new ones, think about the result, the consequences of your words and actions.

## ASK YOURSELF

- **Did things turn out the way you expected? Are you getting better? Can you tell?**
- **When do you feel competent? Is it when you believe that others think you are capable of succeeding? Why do you feel that way? In what ways do the opinions of others influence your sense of competence?**
- **When do you feel incompetent? Is it when you believe that others do not think you are capable of succeeding? Why do you feel that way? In what ways do the opinions of others influence your sense of incompetence?**

Think about the natural stages of development as you build or construct your knowledge of leadership practice, and take baby steps in your leadership development journey. Through our knowledge of childhood and adolescent development, we know that there are various stages at which humans strive to construct an identity—a clear understanding of who we are, why we are, and how we want to be in the world. The same holds true in the developmental process of becoming a leader. Just as babies understand words long before they can actually talk, you will understand many leadership concepts long before you can apply them. Your first attempts may feel like baby talk (“All broke,” “Me bite,” or “Kitty bye-bye”). With practice and patience, your leadership attempts will become more complex (“The cup is broken,” “I bit the apple,” or “The cat is gone”). At some point, you will arrive at the adolescent stage of leadership. At that stage, it may be helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

- Who am I as a leader?
- What am I good at?

- What do I believe in?
- What groups do I belong to?
- What do others think of me?
- What do I believe about what they think?

The details of our individual lives are a constant part of each learning environment and each leadership environment. Education and learning are social processes that can be used to maintain or change the status quo. In the same way, leadership can be used to domesticate people to do as instructed or to liberate them to question situations and circumstances and make decisions for themselves. Who you are and who you become as a leader will be evident in how other adults and children grow and change as a result of your leadership role.

## Developing Your Personal Definition of Leadership

Your thinking about leadership will become the basis for how you make decisions and what you expect of others. But in the end, how you define leaders and leadership will not be as important as how others are affected by who you are and what you do. Others will come to know your definition of a leader and leadership by the results and consequences of their interactions with you. How will they define you?

Don't be too concerned about deciding which leadership function or style is perfect for you. Just as you would use a combination of strategies to inform your work with children, you'll need a combination of strategies to inform your leadership. A perfect leader combines all the leadership functions and styles. Because leadership is complex, dynamic, interactive, and situational, no best way exists to develop or strengthen the many skills, abilities, and competencies needed. Those who can best respond in a variety of leadership situations (such as curriculum quality, political analysis, family involvement, mentoring, creative problem solving) will be those who have taken advantage of a variety of leadership-growth opportunities (such as classes, role models, volunteer experiences, books, observations, reflection). As time and experience add up, your leadership skill and ability will be transformed into a whole new leadership strength that is uniquely yours.

## ASK YOURSELF

- ∴ **What is your definition of *leader*? Of *leadership*? How did**
- ∴ **you arrive at these definitions?**

## Summary

This chapter has introduced you to some definitions, roles, and challenges of leaders and leadership. It has also discussed various leadership functions and styles and how they look in the leadership process. Through your examination of leadership development and human development, you have had many opportunities to begin reflecting on how to make links between the two and to begin transferring your skill and ability from one arena to another. In chapter 2, you will look even deeper into who you are and how you learn to be a leader. What role does family play in the development of leadership strength and ability? How do your life experiences and your culture combine to create the leader who is uniquely you? Chapter 2 will cover all of this and provide ideas for how you can stretch yourself.

## STORY TIME

Tilman was the teacher in the toddler room and had just begun working with a new assistant, seventeen-year-old Lori. Those first few days with Lori had been a little frustrating for Tilman because Lori seemed to need a lot of guidance and direction, and there was really no time for that with so many active youngsters. On the third day, Tilman went home and plopped tiredly onto her couch.

“Tough day?” asked her husband.

“Yeah,” Tilman replied. “I wish Lori would just do what I tell her to do instead of asking me questions about what to do all day long!”

“It must be like working with a two-year-old,” her husband responded.

Tilman thought about that for the rest of the evening. The next day at work, Tilman approached Lori in a whole new way. Her husband was right: working with someone who was new to a position was like working with a two-year-old. Lori was simply in the early developmental stages of learning about her new job and her role, and early developmental stages required guidance, modeling, and direction until the behavior was internalized. Tilman needed to adjust her style to accommodate Lori's level of maturity in this new role. After two or three days of intense supervision by Tilman, Lori was off and running on her own and felt competent to do what was expected of her.

## *More Reading*

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## Chapter 2



# Who, Me, a Leader?

**Y**ou might be surprised at how early you began developing your leadership ability. Many people wonder whether leaders are born or made. Do strong leaders possess genes and family dynamics that set them up for future leadership potential? Or do potential leaders evolve as a result of life experiences combined with leadership development and training? Leaders are both born and made. They develop as a combination of both. We were all born with some natural strengths, gifts, and abilities—things we do effortlessly, without much thought. On the other hand, we all have skills and abilities that are the result of practice, hard work, and training. Most leaders find that their greatest achievements and effectiveness come when they combine natural ability and trained skill.

This chapter is designed to help you reflect on the following:

- The ways your own skills and abilities have been influenced by your family experience
- The ways you as a parent or adult family member develop and use leadership skills and abilities in your interactions with children
- The ways culture, life experiences, and learning preferences influence the type of leadership skills you develop
- The ways good leadership and good teaching require the same kinds of skills, competencies, and characteristics

## Family as a Context for Leadership

Why is it important to understand how you developed and use leadership within your family? All of us take into the workplace the skills and abilities we learned growing up. Many people don't know how the leadership styles and skills they use in their interactions with family members relate to leadership on the job, but the connection is nonetheless there. If we are to strengthen and develop the best of these skills, we must first understand that we have them. Making apparent the relationship between leadership at home and leadership at work helps us strengthen those skills that are effective and recognize areas for growth.

An important point to remember about family is that all types of families can supply the components necessary for a flourishing, functioning family environment. Healthy, happy children can be found wherever there is access to the resources and services they need. *Family*, as used in this book, refers to married heterosexual parents and children, single mothers and fathers and children, single cohabiting parents and children, gay and lesbian couples, married or not, with children, adult singles or couples and their parents or other older relatives with children, singles or couples raising their grandchildren or the children of relatives, older siblings raising younger siblings, foster parents with unrelated children, and circles of friends who consider themselves a family. Any of these kinds of families can raise children effectively. Children and adults from all these kinds of families display leadership strengths and skills.

Many of the leadership characteristics and strengths that come naturally to you were already evident in your childhood. The following questions will help you think about your strengths.

### ASK YOURSELF

- ⋮ **As a child, were you described as achievement oriented?**
- ⋮ **Did people find you sociable, reliable, or encouraging?**
- ⋮ **What leadership skills and abilities seem to come to you naturally?**
- ⋮ **What leadership skills and abilities have you been working on, practicing, or studying?**