IV.
Personnel

Knowledgeable Leadership

Illinois Birth to Five Program Standard IV.A.

The program leadership is knowledgeable about child development and current best practice for quality birth to five programs.

The program leader is a skilled professional who manages program, staff, and budget. The training, background, and experience of program leadership provide expertise and knowledge of early childhood growth and development. In addition, effective communication and interpersonal skills are necessary for quality programming.

Quality Indicator IV.A.1.   **The program supervisor/coordinator is an experienced early childhood professional with expertise in early childhood development and family enrichment.**

The program supervisor/coordinator is responsible for setting the climate of the birth to three program, which includes creating a developmentally appropriate and nurturing environment for young children and their families, as well as a positive place where staff can work effectively. The quality of the services provided is based on the knowledge, competencies, and interpersonal skills possessed by this leader.

In order to create a nurturing environment for staff and families, leaders must have both theoretical and practical knowledge about how infants and toddlers grow and develop. They must keep abreast of all current research in the field. They must be able to effectively communicate sensitive information to families and staff.

The supervisor/coordinator is knowledgeable about theory and assists staff to understand the relationship between theory and practice. S/he also is available to staff as they work with families to understand the way all the areas of development are related and how families can assist with the child's continuous development and growth.

The job description of the program leader should include the degree and/or certification required, as well as desired additional education and experience. Qualifications should include a variety of ways by which the requirements can be met, including use of equivalent experiences. Of course, fidelity to the Prevention Initiative program's model regarding the program leader's qualifications should be maintained.

Consider requiring the following:

- A master's degree in early childhood or related field is preferred.

- A bachelor's degree in early childhood education or a related field would be considered if the person is working toward the master's.

- Illinois administrative certification and/or the Illinois Director's Credential are desirable but optional. For the center-based option,

programs should refer to the Illinois Tiered Quality Rating and Improvement System (TQRIS) standards.

- The leader must have course work in infant/toddler development, parent and family involvement, and program management including supervision and evaluation.

- The leader should have experience in working in the field of infants and toddlers and their families. Suggest a minimum of three (3) years' experience.

- The leader must have skills and abilities to relate to young children and their families, and also to staff.

- The leader must possess the following attributes:
  - Leadership ability, including credibility to gain the confidence of the staff and program participants;
  - Good interpersonal and communication skills, including: ability to work as part of a team, ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing, ability to receive and provide feedback, ability to manage dynamic interchanges in meetings, and ability to develop and manage a budget;
  - Experience in human services program management, including: program planning, operations, and evaluation and use of management information systems.

(Adapted from the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services 1996)

In hiring the program leader, the hiring agent should:

- Visit and observe the applicants in their current setting if possible.
- Validate references.
- Check state references regarding abuse/neglect and criminal background check.

Once the new director has been hired, an orientation regarding the philosophy, policies, and practices of the program is shared, discussed, and provided in writing to the employee by the hiring official or another administrator. The new director needs to know that assistance and support are available from this administrator during the early months. The hiring agent also needs to provide assistance and support to the new director as collaborative relationships with the funding agency and other programs are established.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Review books on early childhood administration.

- Become familiar with the materials available through The Center

- for Early Childhood Leadership at National Louis University.

- Review the administrative sections of the Head Start Performance Standards. See the link: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/Head%20Start%20Requirements

REFERENCES

1. United States Department of Health and Human Services. (2006). *Head Start Program Performance Standards and Other Regulations.* Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C.

Quality Indicator IV.A.2.

Program leadership is supportive of and works to fully implement current best practice in birth to five programs.

A quality program is based on both age appropriate and individually appropriate activities for each child within the group. This is known in the field as developmentally appropriate practice (DAP). All professionals realize that in the real world of early childhood education, knowledge must be tempered by experience.

The words "developmentally appropriate practice" by themselves carry little meaning if one does not know how to observe children in order to understand their current level of developmental abilities. Knowledge gained through formal education and orientation training must be applied in order to affect the quality of care and education offered.

Through the guidance of the leader, staff need to realize that when a program is "individually appropriate … each child is considered a unique person with individual patterns of growth, individual preferences for activities, and different family backgrounds. No two children develop on the same schedule or in exactly the same sequence. One child may walk earlier but begin using words later than other children of the same age. Some children will spend time with blocks and push and pull/wheel toys while others prefer quieter activities, such as puzzles or books. Staff should not expect each child to conform to a rigid timetable of growth or engage in the same activity." (Koralek 1993) Supervisors and staff need to work hand in hand to be sure best practices are always in evidence.

When one observes infants and toddlers at play, one sees children learning through "their senses – looking, touching, tasting, hearing, or smelling – as they crawl or walk about the environment. The key to an appropriate curriculum for children birth to three years of age and the best practices that implement that curriculum is the relationship young children build with the adults who care for them." (Koralek 1993) It is through relationships that children learn about themselves and the world about them.

The leader knows education begins at birth and learning is facilitated when:

- children are given a chance to move freely,
- children play with toys of their own choosing,
- children manipulate toys in ways they choose and try new ways,
- children are asked open-ended questions that encourage language development and thinking skills,
- children see their parents valued by their teacher, and then
- everyone learns – the child, the parent, the staff, and the supervisor!

The staff of a good birth to three program recognizes the importance of the parent-child relationship. The program is viewed as a support to the family, not a replacement. Having parents involved as an integral part of the birth to three program is essential so that the values, cultures, and goals of the parents are incorporated into the program.

A developmentally appropriate environment for young children and their parents is warm and nurturing to help children feel comfortable and secure. In response to each child's individual needs, staff members respond lovingly, promptly, and consistently.

In addition, the birth to three program provides a balance between a toddler's conflicting needs for security and independence. Staff members respond to toddlers' struggles to become independent by allowing them to make simple choices and to do things for themselves (adapted from Koralek 1993).

"Knowing about is different from knowing how. Knowing about means learning theory. Knowing how puts theory into action." (Gonzalez-Mena 1980) The leader must encourage, support, and enable staff to put theory into practice. It is the responsibility of program leadership to enable best practices.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- The recent trend toward formal academics for young children is based on misconceptions about early learning. Read more about how infants and toddlers learn most effectively through playful interactions with loving adults. The guidelines in *Developmentally Appropriate Practice* (3rd edition), by editors Carol Copple and Sue Bredekamp, are one resource that helps teachers, parents, program administrators, policy makers, and others make informed decisions about the education of young children.

- Familiarize yourself with websites that promote best practices.

- Become a member of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and read about best practices in the journal Young Children.

- Review the practical suggestions in *The What, Why, and How of High-Quality Early Childhood Education: A Guide for On-Site Supervision* (1993) by Derry J. Koralek, Laura J. Colker, and Diane Trister Dodge.

REFERENCES

1. Gonzalez-Mena, Janet and Dianne Widmeyer Eyer. (1980). *Infancy and Caregiving*, Palo Alto, California: Mayfield Publishing Co.

2. Koralek, Derry J., Laura J. Colker, and Diane Trister Dodge. (1993). *The What, Why, and How of High-Quality Early Childhood Education: A Guide for On-Site Supervision.* Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

{*"Our chief want in life is somebody who will make us do what we can."*}

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Effective Management and Supervision

Illinois Birth to Five Program Standard IV.B.

The program leadership is effective in explaining, organizing, implementing, supervising, and evaluating birth to five programs.

Program leaders, as early childhood professionals, interact with a variety of constituents including children, parents, staff, funding sources, and the community. Effective communication and interpersonal skills are critical to implementing the program mission and goals, supervising and evaluating programs and staff, and collaborating with families and communities.

Quality Indicator IV.B.1.

The program supervisor/coordinator is skilled in program management and supervision.

The program supervisor/coordinator is in a unique position to influence the decision-making policies and practices in the birth to three program. A participatory manager implements management strategies as well as empowering staff and making them partners in bringing success to the program.

"Regardless of the setting, directors who embrace a philosophy of participative management uniformly believe that their teachers have the potential to be leaders. They have a deep conviction that programs that tap the knowledge of their staff make more informed decisions, garner higher levels of productivity, and enjoy greater staff morale because of people's increased sense of control and accountability."

"It is important to remember, though, that involvement should be viewed as a means to an end, and not an end in itself. The goal of participative management is to improve program practices for children and families and the quality of work life for the staff." (Bloom 2000) "In the end, shared decision making is a delicate balance of meeting both the organizational needs and the individual needs." (Bloom 1995)

Supervision exists to provide a respectful, understanding, and thoughtful atmosphere where exchanges of thoughts, feelings, information, and actions about the things that arise around one's work can occur. The focus is on the children and families involved and the experiences of the one supervised. It is important that supervisors understand their own theoretical and philosophical view of their work with infants and toddlers and their families as well as their biases and expectations of others. Equally, supervisors must be aware of the reciprocal influence of these variables when working with their staff. The work of supervision is bringing these two perspectives together to effect a quality program.

The competence of a leader in a birth to three program has been described as "the ability to do the right thing, at the right time, for the right reasons." (Fenichel and Eggbeer, 1990) The competencies needed to effectively carry out the leader's role vary by:

- the background and culture of the children and families enrolled,
- the types of services provided,
- education and experience of the staff,
- the philosophical orientation of the program, and
- the program funding.

A conceptualization of competence has three components:

1. Knowledge, which includes:
   - child development
   - family systems
   - teaching strategies
   - group dynamics
   - organizational theories

2. Skill, which includes:
   - human
   - conceptual skills needed to perform different tasks (such as developing a budget, motivating staff, solving problems)
   - technical

3. Attitude, which includes:
   - beliefs
   - values
   - dispositions
   - emotional responses that support optimum performance

Program management for infants and toddlers involves the interaction of staff, parents, children, and the community in activities that enhance quality service delivery. Supervisors/coordinators in collaboration with program constituents are responsible for:

- Program and budget development and implementation
- Supervision of the day-to-day operations of the program
- Communication with the various program constituents
- Evaluation of all program components

As supervisor, the program leader facilitates the activities of the staff by

- encouraging collaboration and cooperation,
- identifying strengths,
- suggesting ways to improve or enhance services,
- nurturing staff,
- mentoring staff,
- modeling appropriate behavior and practices,
- encouraging continued professional development,

- requiring staff to have current itineraries on file, and
- requiring staff to be trained on safety awareness.

| ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES | • Review literature from the Center for Early Childhood Leadership with particular attention to materials regarding participatory management. |

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Review literature from the Center for Early Childhood Leadership with particular attention to materials regarding participatory management.

- Review articles regarding center management and supervision.

- Consider the Illinois Director's Credential and the self-assessment portfolio that provide insight into one's own learning and accomplishments.

- Search for other materials and websites about management, supervision, and mentoring.

REFERENCES

1. Bloom, P. J. (1995). *Shared Decisionmaking: The Centerpiece of Participatory Management.* Young Children 50 (4) 55-60.

2. Bloom, P. J. (1997). *Commentary*. In Leadership in Early Care and Education. Kagan S.L. and Barbara L. Bowman, ed. Washington, D. C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children. 34-37.

3. Bloom, P. J. (2000), March. *How do we define director competence?* Exchange, 13-18.

Quality Indicator IV.B.2.

The program leadership models professionalism and conveys high expectations for all staff.

Excerpted from Parlakian, R. & Seibel, N. (2001): "Think for a moment about the words or phrases you might use to describe an effective leader. Chances are, the characteristics are not specific to the infant-family field but encompass more general qualities, such as 'open to new ideas,' 'thoughtful,' and 'compassionate.' The leadership traits listed below, which were generated by a group of Early Intervention professionals, represent the skills and abilities that most people believe leaders should possess.

"Did any of these qualities appear on your list?

- Communicates a shared vision
- Is confident
- Exhibits a can-do attitude
- Facilitates and compromises; looks for "win-win" solutions
- Involves staff; uses a team-based approach
- Is flexible, adaptive
- Listens attentively
- Motivates staff
- Provides support and encouragement
- Respects staff and their thoughts, opinions, and feedback
- Sets clear goals
- Shares achievements
- Trusts employees
- Uses humor

"Almost all of the qualities above refer to how effective the leader is at managing her interactions with others. Simply put, we lead through relationships. How we lead is important: How we treat others, how

we interact, how we resolve conflict, and how we provide feedback all directly influence our staff members' experience of the work.

"Although effectiveness as a leader is often measured in quantitative outcomes—increasing school readiness, decreasing incidences of abuse and neglect, increasing vaccination rates—it is our ability to reflect on, and optimize, our relationships that makes these goals achievable. It is our skill in connecting with others, guiding and mentoring them, that makes 'good numbers' a natural outgrowth of good relationships. In other words, our accomplishments are a reflection of what our relationships have allowed us to achieve…Leadership takes place in the context of relationships, and quality relationships are crucial to good outcomes.

"Reflective Leadership in Infant-Family Programs

Leaders in the infant-family field hope that their program is one in which quality relationships characterized by trust, support, and growth exist among supervisors, staff, parents and children. These relationships form the foundation for all the work that is done. Workplaces based on these beliefs and values can be thought of as relationship-based organizations.

"Reflective leadership is the key to creating a relationship-based organization. It is characterized by three important skills: self-awareness, careful observation, and flexible response.

"Self-awareness refers to a leader's ability to know herself, her strengths, and her limitations. It implies that a leader is interested in, and committed to, examining her own reactions, thoughts, and feelings about the work.

"Careful observation means that leaders are skilled at deciphering the meaning of what they are seeing and hearing. Leaders wonder about the meaning of their own and others' behavior, tones of voice, body language, or reactions. They ask themselves, 'Why might this be happening?' and solicit more information.

"Flexible responses require that leaders know their staff—what their personal styles are, how they work best, what motivates them. Leaders can then approach each professional in a way that reflects that particular staff member's needs, strengths, and areas for development. Flexible responses are the most basic—and sometimes most difficult—expression of mutual respect in our relationships with staff members."

Good leaders are firmly in charge. They never abuse power but also never feel weak or apologetic about assuming it. The leader values individual differences among all persons under his/her direction and believes in the dignity and respect due each and every one. The leader feels responsible to the entire group of children, the staff, and the parents. Balance is important; the effective leader manages to clarify goals and rules while also projecting friendliness, good faith, and optimism. The leader also has integrity as one of his/her attributes. The leader always tries to act in the best interest of the total program and provides the foundation necessary for birth to three programs to become a community that works for everyone.

The role of a program leader is demanding and complex, and requires both leadership and management skills. There are three major core competency areas that leaders should develop: interpersonal, management, and technical.

Interpersonal Competencies

Social interdependence is at the heart of all human interactions, and cooperation is at the heart of organization and group efforts. Inherent in the responsibilities of a director or program leader is an ability to inspire others to establish relationships based on positive attitudes toward each other, mutual concern, friendliness, attentiveness, feelings of commitment, and a desire to earn each other's respect. Examples of interpersonal competencies include:

- Developing leadership
- Self-management and supervisory potential
- Shaping personal and professional development
- Effective oral and written communication skills and supporting the resolution of conflicts

Management Competencies

These are skills needed to be an effective leader, manager, and consultant. These skills include having the ability to create organizational knowledge within and outside of the program. Management competencies increase levels of team performance and accountability. They enable the leader to anticipate and respond to organizational change. A leader demonstrates management competencies by personally modeling and supporting continuous improvement and learning. Such skills include:

- Developing one's knowledge of administrative and fiscal management systems
- Good business practices

- Planning, organizational development
- Advocacy
- Coalition-building
- Effective communications

Technical Competencies

These call upon the leader to have problem-solving skills and a range of competencies that require an ability to collect, measure, synthesize, and analyze data; use computer technology to manage and coordinate; and call upon research and best practices to solve problems. Technical competencies include general knowledge of the state's administrative rules, the Infant/Toddler Guidelines, human resources, budget and fiscal requirements, child health and development, education and early childhood development, child nutrition, mental health, and family/community partnerships. Technical competencies encourage high performance and mutual purpose in teams; they require a leader to keep track of progress and generate mutual responsibility and accountability. (Department of Health and Human Services, 1998)

Supervision is defined literally is the "ability to see in an overarching manner." Thus, supervisors should be able to envision the "big picture": what the children need, what the families bring to the staff/parent relationship, what the staff do to support families, and how the agency supports the home-based or center-based services.

Some of the roles the Leader or Supervisor takes on in this process include the following:

- **Teacher** who shares expertise about child development and the program model with the staff.
- **Support person** who is a trusted authority figure, providing staff with an experience of being cared about and supported in their work.
- **Model** who demonstrates respectful, development-promoting relationships with others that can be emulated by the staff in his or her work with families and children.
- **Ombudsperson** who advocates for staff and families in the program and encourages program leaders to meet family and staff needs.
- **Program planner** who is an essential contributor to the design and continuous improvement of the services offered to families and children in the program.
- **Accountability person** who maintains the integrity of the program by holding staff responsible for delivering high-quality services.
- **Leader** whose vision and commitment to build and maintain a high-quality program are internalized by the staff.

In addition to these roles, the program leadership performs certain functions to ensure that the program is operating effectively as well as meeting the requirements of the regulations. The functions of the leader are many and varied. Some of these functions include staff selection; staff development; clinical expertise; program coordination, monitoring and assessment; and program integration.

Staff Selection An important first step for staff selection is to conceptualize a thorough and accurate job description. To seek a qualified candidate, the leader must know of appropriate outlets for recruitment. She must have the ability to craft an interview that provides her with the information needed to evaluate the candidate's capacity to do the job.

Staff Development An assessment of staff members' needs provides valuable information with respect to their knowledge base and skill level as well as their perceptions of their work and the program. The program leader can assess training and professional development needs through individual staff evaluations or through a staff survey. Collective and individual training plans can be developed directly from this assessment.

Clinical Expertise The program leader shares her knowledge about child development, family support intervention, and the program regulations with staff in many ways such as through individual staff supervision, formal and informal training experiences, and in-depth reviews of participant families. Mental health experts and other consultants can also be used to educate staff about pertinent issues (e.g., substance abuse, family violence, or depression). In addition, the program leader can initiate innovative intervention strategies such as the use of videotape into the work, which is invigorating for both staff and families.

Program Coordination, Monitoring, and Assessment The program leader is involved in many facets of program management. She participates in programmatic and budgetary planning. She also ensures that services are being delivered appropriately to families by monitoring documentation and by engaging in the continuous improvement process. Finally, the program leader helps make the connection between how services are delivered to families and the outcomes that are expected to occur, thus, helping children, families, and the program to reach their goals.

Integration of Multiple Levels of Program One of the most important tasks of a program leader is team building. She is in a pivotal position in the program to enhance communication between staff members at

different levels and to help direct-service staff understand administrative mandates. The program leader can also advocate for the program in many ways, for example, by seeking other financial resources to provide incentives for staff and to enhance their work environment. (Department of Health and Human Services, 2004)

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES	• Consider obtaining for your professional development library, *Building Classroom Community; The Early Childhood Teacher's Role* by Jeannette G. Stone, published by NAEYC.
	• Review the leadership section in *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers by the National Research Council*, and note Recommendation No. 5: "All early childhood education and child care programs should have access to a qualified supervisor of early childhood programs."
	• Join a professional association such the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and take a leadership role, serving on a committee or commission, presenting at a conference, or serving on a board.
	• Consider obtaining an advanced degree.

REFERENCES

1. DHHS/ACF/OHS. (1998) *Head Start Director Core Competencies. Head Start & Early Head Start Directors' Professional Development Planner.* Retrieved from http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/operations/mgmt-admin/hr/leadership/HeadStartDirect.htm

2. DHHS/ACF/ACYF/HSB. (2004) *Home-Based Supervisors' Manual for the Home-based Head Start Program Option.* 6-7 Retrieved from http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/resources/ECLKC_Bookstore/PDFs/0BC3AD7C913FF5F8F72D3F733610AE3B.pdf

3. Excerpted from Parlakian, R. & Seibel, N. (2001). *Being in charge: Reflective leadership in infant-family programs.* Washington, DC: ZERO TO THREE

{*"I don't know what your destiny will be, but one thing I know: the only ones among us who will be really happy are those who will have sought and found out how to serve."*}

— Albert Schweitzer

Qualified Staff

Illinois Birth to Five Program Standard IV.C.

The program leadership hires qualified staff who are competent in working with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers and their families.

The effectiveness of the program depends on the staff. Staff must have an in-depth knowledge of early childhood development and be able to competently match activities to each child's developmental level and potential. Staff should also understand the complex needs of families and be able to relate to them with sensitivity and understanding. Furthermore, staff is in the unique position of teaching parents to teach their children and must have skills in facilitating the parent/child dyad. The rewards of having a qualified staff are multiplied when staff is encouraged to regularly mentor each other to continue to improve their skills and level of effectiveness.

Quality Indicator IV.C.1.

The program staff members meet the minimum entry-level requirements for their role/responsibilities established by the funding agent.

Several research studies conducted over the last few years show a direct correlation between positive outcomes for children and the educational level and quality of the staff. The importance of staff with knowledge about infant/toddler development and working with families cannot be overstated.

Each funding entity has requirements for staff working in programs with infants and toddlers and their families. Illinois State Board of Education specifies the staffing requirements in the annual Request for Proposal and furthermore supports Developmentally Appropriate Practice as defined by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). "Developmentally appropriate practice requires that teachers integrate the many dimensions of their knowledge base." (NAEYC 1997) "Regardless of the resources available, professionals have an ethical responsibility to practice, to the best of their ability." (NAEYC 1997)

Early Head Start is required to meet the requirements that are specified in the latest Head Start Act that can be found at http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/Head%20Start%20Act.

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) lists minimum requirements for staff employed by its licensed day care centers at the following web address: http://www.ilga.gov/commission/jcar/admincode/089/08900407sections.html

More information about each ISBE Prevention Initiative model's staffing requirements can be found in the Resource Toolkit for Early Childhood Birth to Three Programs found at http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/pdf/ec_0-3_resource_toolkit.pdf.

Program leadership is responsible for employment of staff. In this role they must:

- Familiarize themselves with the funding agency's requirements or licensing standards for hiring personnel
- Prepare an advertisement for the position available clearly detailing

the minimum requirements and preferences beyond the minimum

- Disseminate ads to and network with the early childhood and local communities
- Include, in the hiring interview, questions about infant/toddler development
- Check references and background carefully
  - College transcripts
  - Personal and professional references
  - State-required fingerprinting and background checks
- Clearly state education and training expectations in the interview and include them in the contract
- Look at differential compensation for staff with more experience and education

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ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Obtain and review copies of other funding agencies' requirements for hiring early childhood personnel.

- Check with the leadership at other programs to share job descriptions and hiring practices.

- Consider staff training needs and budget accordingly.

- Look at career lattices in different programs.

REFERENCES

1. National Association for the Education of Young Children, Bredekamp, Sue and Carol Copple, eds. (1997). *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs, revised edition.* Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Quality Indicator IV.C.2.   **Staff members have formal training in child development theory and practice. They are able to demonstrate an understanding of how young children develop and learn in the context of their families.**

Finding staff who can work effectively with infants and toddlers and their families is a challenge for program leadership. Every once in a while, one encounters a "natural" in working with very young children. They are nurturing and responsive to both the babies and their parents. Nurturing, or the ability to nurture, is a very important characteristic of staff working with young children. By itself, though, it is not enough.

In order to provide for the children's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development, staff must have formal training in child development theory and practice. Research has shown that the more formal training a staff member has received, the better the quality of the program.

Formal training is a systematic program of instruction that provides the learner with opportunities to acquire knowledge and practical experience in infant/toddler development. The venue for providing this training can be varied from formal coursework at an accredited college or university to professional development provided by statewide training and technical support groups. Program leadership has the responsibility to implement the program's policy that defines formal training.

The responsibility for ensuring that staff members have formal training in child development theory and practice, with ability to demonstrate specific infant/toddler development, rests with the program supervisor. In undertaking this responsibility, the leader must:

- Know and understand the program's policy regarding "formal training"
- Clearly define "formal training" for the infant/toddler program
- Outline, in the job description, the requirements regarding formal training expected from the candidate
- Determine how she will evaluate a candidate's knowledge of infant/toddler development:

- Develop a set of open-ended questions to ask candidates
- Review credentials
- Follow up on letters of reference and recommendation

- Set up a real experience as part of the interview process to observe the candidate's interaction with infants/toddlers and their parents
- Ensure that continued formal training is ongoing and clearly state what expectations are as a condition for continued employment

Characteristics of good early childhood professionals (Adapted from Feeney & Chun, 1985):

A Good Early Childhood Teacher:	
Is warm and caring	Likes children and enjoys working with them
Is patient and flexible	Has many interests and shares them with children
Has a good sense of humor	Is creative and encourages creativity
Respects and understands parents as children's first teachers	Listens to children and converses with them
Welcomes diversity among children	Praises appropriately and genuinely
Builds upon children's interests	Is reliable and responsible
Models desired behaviors	Strives to become more knowledgeable
Redirects inappropriate behaviors	Is interested in ideas and possibilities
Is sensitive to children's individual needs	Contributes to the profession
Is aware of each child and the total group	Has energy and stamina
Has self-understanding	

Core values for Early Childhood Educators (NAEYC 2011)

"Standards of ethical behavior in early childhood care and education are based on commitment to the following core values that are deeply rooted in the history of the field of early childhood care and education.

We have made a commitment to:

- Appreciate childhood as a unique and valuable stage of the human life cycle
- Base our work on knowledge of how children develop and learn
- Appreciate and support the bond between the child and family
- Recognize that children are best understood and supported in the context of family, culture,* community, and society
- Respect the dignity, worth, and uniqueness of each individual (child, family member, and colleague)
- Respect diversity in children, families, and colleagues

- Recognize that children and adults achieve their full potential in the context of relationships that are based on trust and respect

* The term *culture* includes ethnicity, racial identity, economic level, family structure, language, and religious and political beliefs, which profoundly influence each child's development and relationship to the world."

NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct & Statement of Commitment
http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements/ethical_conduct

| ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES | • Become familiar with the training that is available in the field. |

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Become familiar with the training that is available in the field.

- Obtain catalogues from local colleges and universities that offer course work in child development and/or early childhood education. Review and update periodically.

- Ask organizations, groups, and educational institutions for calendars of their training activities and courses they offer.

- Become familiar with the quality of the training programs in the field.

REFERENCES

1. Illinois State Board of Education. (2011). *Illinois Preschool For All Implementation Manual.* 204, 206.

2. National Association for the Education of Young Children's *Code of Ethical Conduct.* (2011). Position Statement. Retrieved from http://www.naeyc.org/

3. Feeney, Stephanie, & Chun, Robyn. (1985). Effective teachers of young children. *Young Children*, 41(1), 47–52.

Quality Indicator IV.C.3.   **Staff members demonstrate the ability to establish meaningful working relationships with parents and other family members.**

Effective infant/toddler programs provide relationship-based, individualized services to children and their families. Recognizing parents as the first and most influential teachers of their children, quality programs respect and value families. Programming and services, therefore, are family centered.

What is family centered? The infant or toddler is a member of a family. Although the structure of the family differs widely for each child, those individuals primarily responsible for the nurturing of the child have the greatest impact on that child's overall development. A family-centered program focuses on that relationship by finding individualized and meaningful ways to provide services to each family. Planning is done with and around the family. Staff must be able to effectively work with parents and other family members, including siblings.

The responsibility for employing staff who establish meaningful working relationships with parents rests with the program leader. In carrying out this responsibility, the leader must do the following:

- Look for a candidate's ability to establish and maintain supportive relationships with children, families, and colleagues. To determine this, ask these questions:
    - Does the candidate show genuine warmth and respect for others?
    - Can the candidate empathize with others' feelings?
    - Can the candidate reflect on his/her own beliefs, values, strengths, and weaknesses?
    - How does s/he handle stress?
    - How does s/he solve problems?
    - Does s/he exhibit a sense of humor?
- Observe the candidate's interaction with children and families, if possible.
- Get feedback from reference sources. Ask for the name of a parent with whom they have worked to interview.
- Provide a copy of the mission statement and goals.

- Establish a mentoring relationship to share ideas with like programs in the community.

- Elicit assistance from one of the ISBE program consultants.

- Develop with staff program activities that support trust building and camaraderie.

Quality Indicator IV.C.4.

Staff members demonstrate knowledge of and respect for the unique ways in which adults learn, acquire skills, and adjust to change.

In birth to three programs parents are active partners in promoting the growth and development of their children. Just as with the children, staff must identify the needs of parents and individualize the kinds of education programs provided for them. The staff needs to know the learning styles, abilities, and interests of family members in order to design an effective family plan. They must be knowledgeable of adult learning principles and practices. Elizabeth Jones in her book *Growing Teachers: Partnerships in Staff Development* believes that "Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood education is also a good model for effective practice in teacher education. Adult learners, like children, need to play—that is they need to take initiative, make choices among possibilities, act and interact. And, as adults, they need to engage in reflection and dialogue about their experience. They do need baseline social knowledge—training—to get started, to know how to behave, but then they need continuing opportunity to make intellectual and moral judgments, to observe children's behavior, and to put their experience into words that are taken seriously by other adults, both peers and teacher educators." (Jones 1993)

In working with parents and other adults, staff should:

- Establish trust and build confidence with parents.
- Let parents know that information they share with you will be kept confidential.
- Conduct parent interviews that get to know the family better by including the following questions:

  1. What do you see as your greatest strength?
  2. What is your child's greatest strength?
  3. What are your favorite things to do? Your child's?
  4. What is your favorite book? Your child's favorite book?
  5. What is your favorite pastime?
  6. What did you enjoy most about school?
  7. What is the last grade you completed in school?

- Value their input and listen to what they have to say.

- Respect their opinions.
- Encourage active participation in developing and implementing a family plan.
- Support their ability to make choices and decisions, and solve problems.
- Introduce new information in the context of the parents' past knowledge and experiences.
- Plan activities at a variety of times and places to encourage parent participation.
- Respect and honor the primary language and culture of the family.
- Set high, but doable, programmatic expectations for the parents.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES	- Review *Growing Teachers: Partnerships in Staff Development* by Elizabeth Jones. - Become familiar with the Family Partnership sections of the Head Start Performance Standards. http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family - Review other latest research on involving families in infant/toddler programs that may be found on Internet websites and in other sources.

REFERENCES	1. Jones, Elizabeth ed.(1993). *Growing Teachers: Partnerships in Staff Development.* Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Quality Indicator IV.C.5.

The program staff is knowledgeable about and sensitive to the social, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the community.

The communities in which we live are diverse. That diversity manifests itself in many perspectives – cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and socio-economic. Just as each of us has differing learning styles and intellectual strengths, each of us has our own different culture. For some of us, more than one culture defines who we are.

Culture is larger than family; it provides the broad context of shared beliefs and behaviors in which all persons grow. Before beginning to have knowledge of and respect for the diversity of the children and parents served, the staff members must have knowledge of and respect for their own cultures. Their own attitudes may impact and influence interactions with infants/toddlers and their parents.

The following statement, though written as applying to teachers and schools, can be readily applied to birth to three staff members and programs.

"Multicultural education is a highly complex and political issue. It must be more than something teachers add to their curriculum during the celebration of seasonal and religious holidays. It must go beyond the understanding and appreciation of real cultural differences. It should represent a perspective that permeates all of the curriculum every day of the year, and is reflected in culturally responsive interaction in mutually directed activity. Responsive teachers engage children in egalitarian and meaningful ways in culturally relevant activities like sharing stories, doing art, preparing foods, and other experiences and projects that build on diverse ways of learning, perceiving, and using language. Such activities provide opportunities for connectedness and a sense of belonging that should prevail over the idea of differences. Finally, a pedagogy of caring, which promotes in children feelings of self-worth, love, and care of others, must be at the heart of any developmentally and culturally appropriate curriculum. A pedagogy of caring requires teachers to be reflective and to not lose sight of social, historical, and political conditions that have shaped the life experiences of people from different cultural groups." (Hart et al. 1998)

- Examine your own cultural and historical experiences to understand what informs your beliefs and practices. This can be done through reflection on questions such as:
  - What do I believe?
  - How have I come to believe this? Where do these beliefs come from?
  - What do my daily actions say about what I believe and value?
  - What contributes to the tenacity of my beliefs? (What has influenced me to maintain certain beliefs?)
  - How do my beliefs determine how I make choices and take actions that would move me toward greater multicultural understanding?

(Questions adapted from Hart et al. 1998)

- Learn about and recognize the cultures of the families served.

- Value and use the cultural resources your staff and families bring to the program.

- Provide opportunities for staff development to learn about teaching in a multicultural environment and implementing activities for children and families that enhance the richness of diversity.

- Use foods, celebrations, and field trips as part of a family's expression of its culture.

- Learn about the families' daily practices and activities reflective of their culture.

- Become acquainted with the community at large and identify resources needed to provide effective quality services to children and their families.

- Understand the varying roles of families within each child's culture.

- Acknowledge, appreciate, and respect the diverse family structures inherent in the community served.

- Involve parents in all aspects of planning a program for their children.

Program staff who reflect the social, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the community provide valuable role models for the children to emulate.

The following strategies may be used by programs to reflect the richness of the community in their staff:

- Disseminate position ads and job descriptions to churches, cultural organizations, and other groups within the community served.

- Assess and use the human resources in the community.

- Assess parent strengths and use parents in the program as paid staff or volunteers.

- Include a clear statement on non-discriminatory hiring practices in job descriptions and advertisements.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Work with similar programs in your community to develop a resource guide for diversity and multicultural activities.

- Review the latest research on social, cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity.

- Set up a cultural exchange with another program.

- Conduct a review of the social, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the community and make a comparison with the makeup of the program staff.

- Make a concerted effort to employ new staff members who are representative of the diversity of the community.

- Provide opportunities for collaboration among parents and staff representing diverse cultures.

- Establish a formal career path for staff members including parents employed by the program.

REFERENCES

1. Hart, C.H., Burts, D.C., and Charlesworth, R. (Eds.), (1998). *Integrated Curriculum and Developmentally Appropriate Practice; Birth to Age Eight.* Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press.

{*"It's a funny thing about life: If you refuse to accept anything but the very best, you will very often get it."*}

— W. Somerset Maugham

Reflective Supervision

Illinois Birth to Five Program Standard IV.D.

The program leadership provides ongoing supervision that promotes staff development and enhances quality service delivery.

Supervision of staff needs to take place formally as well as informally. The essential ingredients of supervision include reflection, collaboration, and regularity. Reflection means continual conceptualization of what one is observing and doing. Collaboration refers to the mutual, respectful activity that takes place between supervisor and staff member. This collaborative activity leads to the formation of a plan to support professional development based on the reflective activity that has taken place, which in turn promotes quality services. Regularity is defined beyond timely and systematic to address individual staff needs.

Quality Indicator IV.D.1. **Program leadership creates and maintains an atmosphere that is nurturing and supportive of staff.**

Nurture and support are key words in early childhood. They are words that convey caring and concern, warmth, personal commitment, and involvement. They are active, not passive words. The responsibility of an effective leader is to nurture and support the following in the program staff:

- Self-confidence and belief in their capabilities and competence

- Critical inquiry, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, and cooperative interaction

- An appreciation for the spoken and written language, a love of books, and a sense of wonder

The effective program leader can use the following to nurture and support the program staff:

- Provide opportunities for staff to share their expertise and talents through:
  - Recognizing individual strengths
  - Involving staff in program planning, curriculum development, and other activities
  - Establishing opportunities for bonding, teaming, and collaboration
  - Reaching out to staff for assistance with a concern or problem
  - Establishing a mentoring program for staff

- Support staff through:
  - Being available
  - Listening to their concerns
  - Granting comp time and/or flex time for services provided above and beyond the norm
  - Acknowledging the needs of their families
  - Involving staff families in some program events
  - Providing opportunities for staff development
  - Encouraging continuing education
  - Developing a calendar for the year that identifies all activities, schedules, and events

- Acknowledge success through:
  - Giving credit where credit is due
  - Saying thank you
  - Encouraging efforts
  - Celebrations

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Create unique ways to say thank you, such as placing a personal note or flower in a mailbox.

- Acquaint yourself with the things other programs do to support and nurture staff.

- Plan a special event or recognition ceremony periodically.

Quality Indicator IV.D.2. **Program leadership regularly conducts a self-assessment.**

(For information on Program Assessment, please see Standard III.C. in Section III, Developmental Monitoring and Accountability)

Regular leadership self-assessment is a good way to determine the impact program leadership has on the staff and ultimately on the program. Self-assessment can take place through different activities. It can include: introspection, self and staff questionnaires, interviews with staff members, climate surveys, and feedback from families and outside sources.

The overall purpose of a self-evaluation is to go through a process that will help the leadership identify: What worked, what didn't work, and why? How is leadership perceived? What needs to be changed? A successful leader must look at the results of the self-assessment honestly and objectively, then make changes needed to improve leadership effectiveness.

The following suggestions may be helpful in determining leadership performance:

- Develop and administer a climate survey at least once a year to assess the overall atmosphere of the program. Some of the things that might be included in this survey are:
  - Does staff teaming exist and is it encouraged?
  - How do staff get along with one another?
  - How do staff perceive their colleagues?
  - How do staff perceive their leader?
  - How do staff feel about opportunities for growth?
  - Do staff think they are respected and supported?

- Develop an anonymous staff questionnaire that addresses specific areas of program leadership and the resulting impact on the staff. Areas could include any or all of the following:
  - Fairness
  - Objectivity
  - Commitment
  - Ethics
  - Integrity

- Management skills
- Early childhood expertise
- Issues and crisis management

- Prepare a short evaluation to be completed after each staff development activity. Make it short and simple, but open-ended. Questions such as the following may be used:
  - What idea or activity will be most useful or helpful in your work?
  - What idea or activity would you eliminate from the program? Why?

- Conduct interviews with staff. The establishment of trust is critically important for an honest exchange of information. Questions such as the following could be included as part of the interview process:
  - Is the atmosphere or climate of the program conducive to open communication?
  - Is it positive and stress-free?
  - Does the leadership style allow for free interchange with staff members?
  - Does the leadership model value openness and promote active listening?
  - Are communications to the staff clear, timely, and helpful?
  - Are the personal needs of staff members considered, such as comp time or flex time?

- The strategy of introspection requires the program leader to spend time forming answers from a personal perspective to all questions asked in any of the activities conducted. A more personal process could involve answering the following questions:
  - Did I meet my goals?
  - If so, how well?
  - If not, what should I change?
  - What worked well and how can I build on that?
  - Where can I go for help?

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Ask leaders of other programs in your community about their self-assessment tools.

- Build in a proactive rather than reactive model of leadership as a result of the self-assessment.

- Review available climate surveys.

- Ask for input from ISBE consultants.

Quality Indicator IV.D.3.

The supervisor in partnership with each staff member develops a formative supervision plan.

Supervision of staff is an important role for administrators. It can be used effectively to help staff grow and flourish professionally. Supervision is perhaps one of the most difficult responsibilities of the leader. That is because traditional supervision is often equated with evaluation. People tend to be anxious when they know they are being evaluated, especially if negative evaluations threaten their jobs.

ZERO TO THREE's work over the last quarter-century has found that **reflective supervision** promotes and supports the development of a relationship-based organization. This approach expands on the idea that supervision is a context for learning and professional development. The three building blocks of reflective supervision—reflection, collaboration, and regularity—are outlined below.

Reflection

Reflection means stepping back from the immediate, intense experience of hands-on work and taking the time to wonder what the experience really means. What does it tell us about the family? About ourselves? Through reflection, we can examine our thoughts and feelings about the experience and identify the interventions that best meet the family's goals for self-sufficiency, growth, and development.

Reflection in a supervisory relationship requires a foundation of honesty and trust. The goal is to create an environment in which people do their best thinking—one characterized by safety, calmness, and support. Generally, supervisees meet with supervisors on a regular basis, providing material (like notes from visits with families, videos, verbal reports, etc.) that will help stimulate a dialogue about the work. As a team, supervisor and supervisee explore the range of emotions (positive and negative) related to the families and issues the supervisee is managing. As a team, they work to understand and identify appropriate next steps.

Reflective supervision is not therapy. It is focused on experiences, thoughts, and feelings directly connected with the work. Reflective supervision is characterized by active listening and thoughtful questioning by both parties. The role of the supervisor is to help the

supervisee to answer her own questions, and to provide the support and knowledge necessary to guide decision making. In addition, the supervisor provides an empathetic, nonjudgmental ear to the supervisee. Working through complex emotions in a "safe place" allows the supervisee to manage the stress she experiences on the job. It also allows the staff person to experience the very sort of relationship that she is expected to provide for infants, toddlers, and families.

Supervisors can also support staff's professional development by using supervisory meetings as an opportunity to scaffold, or support, the acquisition of new knowledge. One way of doing this is to encourage supervisees to analyze their own work and its implications. Reflection is important because it empowers staff to assess their own performance. Awareness of one's strengths, as well as one's limits and vulnerabilities, allows individuals to make mid-course corrections in work performance that feel natural, unforced, and generated from within.

Collaboration

The concept of collaboration (or teamwork) emphasizes sharing the responsibility and control of power. Power in an infant/family program is derived from many sources, among them position in the organization, ability to lead and inspire, sphere of influence, and network of colleagues. But most of all, power is derived from knowledge—about children and families, the field, and oneself in the work. While sharing power is the goal of collaboration, it does not exempt supervisors from setting limits or exercising authority. These responsibilities remain firmly within the supervisor's domain. Collaboration does, however, allow for a dialogue to occur on issues affecting the staff person and the program.

Collaboration allows staff to express interest in taking on new tasks and challenges, as well as to exercise some control over the terms and conditions of their work. It offers supervisors and mentors a chance to learn from, as well as teach, staff. Collaboration also allows supervisors to recognize opportunities to share responsibility and decision making and, in so doing, cultivate leadership talent from within.

Collaborative supervisory relationships are characterized by a clear understanding of the reciprocal expectations of each partner. This "contract" is jointly developed and agreed upon by the supervisor and supervisee, and will vary in frequency, intensity, and focus across the organization. Key issues that should always be addressed, however, include logistical issues, such as when and where supervisory meetings will take place, and what will be discussed.

Finally, true collaboration requires open communication, flowing freely in both directions, and protected from "outsiders." Both partners assume the best about each other. The supervisory relationship is one characterized by a feeling of trust and safety, where difficult issues can be discussed without fear of judgment, disclosure, or ridicule. Open communication implies curiosity and active listening. Either partner can ask, "What were you thinking when you did that?" as a means of learning more about the motivations and thoughts of the other.

Regularity

Neither reflection nor collaboration will occur without regularity of interactions. **Supervision should take place on a reliable schedule, and sufficient time must be allocated to its practice.** This reflection time, while precious and hard to come by, should be protected from cancellation, rescheduling, or procrastination.

That said, everyone working in infant/family programs knows that there are times when scheduling conflicts or emergencies arise, making it necessary to reschedule supervision meetings. When this happens, set another time to meet as soon as possible. If the need to reschedule arises frequently, it makes sense to consider why this is happening. Is the selected time an inconvenient one? Is the supervisor or the staff member overburdened, or is either having difficulty with time management skills? Is there some tension in the staff/supervisory relationship prompting either party to postpone their meeting?

It takes time to build a trusting relationship, to collaborate, and to share ideas, thoughts, and emotions. Supervisory meetings are an investment in the professional development of staff and in the future of the infant/family program. Staff will take their cues from leaders: Do program directors make time for supervision? Do the program's leaders "walk the talk"?

Look, Listen, and Learn: Making Reflection Real

When supervisors meet with their staff, the greatest gift they can offer is to simply be there. This means staying in emotional contact with the staff member (offering empathy), but not reacting on the basis of emotion alone to what he or she is sharing. Needless to say, this is easier said than done. It requires self-awareness and the ability to experience feelings, while choosing whether, when, and how to respond. This is why supervisors, too, need reflective supervision. Supervisors can seek such support from those they report to, or from peers within or outside their organizations.

Reflective Supervision and Direct-Service Staff

Work with infants, toddlers, and their families provides professionals with great joys as well as great challenges. Some common sources of on-the-job stress include:

- Heavy caseloads (and resultant lack of time);
- Feedback "vacuum" on how a family is doing or, worse yet, seemingly little improvement with a family;
- Struggle to connect with families who may be distrustful, fearful, or angry at "the system";
- Challenge of maintaining objectivity with families, those we have difficulty with as well as those families we enjoy; and
- The cumulative effect on morale from observing multiple examples of harmful or potentially harmful parenting.

The *Look, Listen, and Learn* approach helps supervisors to know staff members as individuals—their temperaments and learning styles, their history and aspirations, their pet peeves as well as what motivates them. With this information, they need to develop responses that are appropriate to both the situation and the individual. Like the families in our programs, staff, too, require individualized responses from their supervisors. Interventions that respect the unique needs of *this* staff member lay the groundwork for a trusting relationship based on mutual respect, much like the goals professionals have for the relationships they seek to establish with the families they serve.

In this way, the dynamics of the supervisor/staff relationship and the staff/family relationship mutually influence one another. For example, if a supervisor distrusts a staff member and judges her actions harshly, how will this staff member be able to provide her client-families with the trust, respect, and caring they need? The correlation that exists between the supervisor/staff relationship and the staff/family relationship (often referred to as a *parallel process*) embodies the "platinum rule" of supervision as coined by Jeree Pawl: "Do unto others as you would have others do unto others."

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Familiarize yourself with various strategies for supervisory meetings.

- Familiarize yourself with a variety of observation techniques.

- Read current literature and attend workshops on Reflective Supervision and evaluation.

- Review current National Association for the Education of Young Children materials on staff supervision and evaluation.

REFERENCES

1. Excerpted from Parlakian, R. (2001). *Look, listen, and learn: Reflective supervision and relationship-based work.* Washington, D.C: ZERO TO THREE.

Quality Indicator IV.D.4.   ## Sufficient time for supervision is allotted in the program leader's schedule.

The leadership of birth to three programs is responsible for establishing priorities regarding time and tasks in formulating his or her schedule. Time management is critical to the task of organizing and carrying out the responsibilities assigned to the role of birth to three program leader or administrator.

There are many areas that demand attention, but supervision of the staff members is one of the areas that must be accounted for and needs an adequate allotment of time. Each individual administrator or director has his or her own strengths and styles of work effectiveness that must be considered when establishing schedules and timelines. What works for one person in a given situation may not work for another in a different situation. Individualization is as important in this process as it is when programming and services are provided for infants and toddlers and their families.

Lack of communication and support by supervisors in regard to the expectations of staff can be a barrier to retaining staff. Staff want supervision to be more than a formal, scheduled event that includes direct observation of program practice. Staff should be able to express concerns about the process of care and education of young children and have access to dialogue with leadership as well as to use these individuals as a sounding board and mentor. Staff members look to leadership for recognition and encouragement for a job well done. Taking time for these "celebrations," whether formal or informal, is critical to the morale and well-being of the staff member.

Program leadership is personally responsible for the time spent in management activities and must commit to the time needed for appropriate staff supervision. The following process could be helpful when establishing this time commitment.

- Review and organize tasks required to give leadership to a birth to three program.
- Identify the time necessary for supervision of the program staff after evaluating the staff structure and its impact on supervision.
- Review and organize tasks required to give leadership.

- Share what model of supervision is being considered and what has been learned with the staff.
- Ask for input from the staff regarding their ideas for the program supervision model, including what areas might be accomplished by someone other than the program supervisor.
- Share and discuss the timeline needed for supervision of each staff position, and ask for ideas regarding how to make that time dedicated to the supervision task effective, efficient, and without interruption, and what constitutes a "real emergency."
- Spend time with each individual staff member in debriefing and sharing in a manner that meets the needs of leadership and the professional.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND
RESOURCES

- Review and evaluate the current personal calendar, particularly in the area of time spent in supervision, documenting the type of activity, and adjusting future timelines as necessary.

- Attend a workshop or seminar on time management. These may be available through the business community as well as course work, seminars, retreats, and conferences.

- Establish a relationship with another birth to three program administrator to share and discuss the challenges presented in supervision of staff.

{ *"I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think."* }

— Socrates

Professional Development

Illinois Birth to Five Program Standard IV.E.

The program leadership provides opportunities for ongoing professional growth and development.

Research on quality programs demonstrates a high correlation between educational training and quality. Effective leaders recognize that professional development is a continuous process that meets the individual needs of each staff member as determined by an evaluation. Opportunities are provided for each staff member to participate in a variety of staff development activities. Nurturing is a key concept in early childhood. Leaders must provide a nurturing environment to maximize the unique strengths and abilities of the staff so that they may in turn nurture children and families.

Quality Indicator IV.E.1.

A professional development plan, based on the needs identified through reflective supervision and the interests of each staff member, is on file.

Professional development is defined as those processes and activities designed to enhance the professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators so that they might, in turn, improve the learning of students. It also involves learning how to redesign educational structures and cultures.

Professional development is a process that is intentional, ongoing, and systemic.

- Intentional — bring improvements and positive changes.
- Ongoing — continuously investigate improvements and new strategies.
- Systemic — recognize change for larger span of time and various levels of the program.

Professional development is critical for educators to acquire knowledge that can be used to enhance their skills within their classrooms, keep informed of emerging concepts, and succeed in their roles as teachers. (Guskey, 2000)

Evidence of a written professional development plan must be provided. The following points are necessary to complete the plan:

- Determine the needs of each staff member (teaching assistant, teacher, administrator, parent educator, etc.) within the program, i.e., assess the needs.
- Describe the staff in-service training program that will be conducted to meet the individual staff needs, i.e., deliver in-service.
- Describe other professional development activities that will be provided, i.e., other opportunities that are provided free of charge but that staff have the opportunity to attend.

The program leader must consider the many kinds of professional development strategies possible to meet the needs of the staff as follows:

- Course work — Offered at a college or university, usually for credit. Assist staff in developing a plan so that course work eventually leads to moving up the career ladder.

- Seminars — A topic covered from many perspectives, often in several sessions and utilizing an "expert" on the staff or in the field. Can also be offered by institutions of higher education.

- Workshops — One- or two-hour presentations on a particular subject given by staff or other expert in the field.

- Retreats — Organized around a specific plan to deal with a subject that affects the entire staff. They are often more than one day and take place away from the work place where staff can network and collaborate.

- Peer mentoring — The linkage of one staff member with another for the purpose of providing support, modeling, technical assistance, and/or nurturing.

- Program visitation — Opportunities for staff to visit quality programs that provide similar services.

- Professional reading — Set up a staff library of journals, books, and periodicals.

- Websites — Identify websites that contain accurate and useful information for staff.

- Other activities — Presentations, in-service sharing, focus groups, and professional organization memberships can be effective strategies to use in professional development.

- Provide portfolios or journals for the staff to document participation in activities that support the professional development plan.

Professional development opportunities are provided free of charge to participants by the Ounce of Prevention Fund (http://pi.opftrainingcenter.org/ets/welcome.aspx) with support provided by the Illinois State Board of Education.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Maintain ongoing dialogue with local colleges and universities regarding opportunities for staff development.

- Be active in your professional organization to keep abreast of conferences and available workshops.

- Peruse the literature and websites to obtain information useful for staff development.

Quality Indicator IV.E.2.

Sufficient time and funding are provided for staff to participate in appropriate staff development activities.

Although just about everyone recognizes the importance of professional development, the fiscal and human resources necessary to support such a program are often overlooked or scaled down when there is a budgetary concern. A successful professional development plan must be a major part of overall program goals. In addition, budget and scheduling issues need to be factored in when the annual plan is developed.

The program leadership needs to identify resources and accessibility to them so that time and funding needed by staff members to attend and participate in staff development activities are available. The following strategies are suggested:

- Include professional development in program goals.
- Budget funds to provide quality staff development.
- Provide release time for staff to participate in professional growth activities.
- Collaborate with higher education on
  - Available classes,
  - Scheduling,
  - Accessibility,
  - Affordability, and
  - Scholarships.

Programs should refer to their individual program option or model for more information on their training requirements. See the link to the Ounce of Prevention's Resource Toolkit found on ISBE's early childhood website http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/pdf/ec_0-3_resource_toolkit.pdf.

Programs should include ALL their staff in professional development. Not only center teachers and aides, but bus drivers, cooks, etc. need to understand the program model and be able to successfully engage families. Home visitors, family advocates, directors, secretaries, and supervisors need to be able to articulate the program model. Program leaders should provide training for all levels of staff for their professional growth and to support the overall program goals.

Professional Development Opportunities and Benefits

The opportunities for professional development in Illinois relating to early care and education are available through a variety of organizations. They are offered for various types of credit, including in-service hours, clock hours, Continuing Education Units (CEUs), Continuing Professional Development Units (CPDUs), and college credit.

A number of benefits result from professional development:

- Ongoing professional development assists staff and early care and education programs to meet child care licensing requirements, teacher certification requirements, and professional development goals.
- Teachers learn to deliver sensitive, appropriate services and create effective, responsive learning environments for young children.
- Children's learning and development reflect the training and educational qualifications of their teachers.

The following sections describe organizations that offer early childhood professional development:

McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership
(For early childhood administrators)

The McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership, a part of National Louis University's College of Education, is dedicated to enhancing the management skills, professional orientation, and leadership capacity of early childhood administrators through training, technical assistance, research, and public awareness. The Center hosts training events throughout the year to improve the knowledge and skills of early childhood program directors. Current initiatives include the Director's Technology Training program; Management Institutes; the May Leadership Connections Conference; Taking Charge of Change, a year-long leadership and management training program for child care center directors; and The Next Step, an advanced leadership training for seasoned early childhood professionals.

Training Coordinator
McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership
National Louis University
6310 Capitol Drive
Wheeling, IL 60090
Phone: (800) 443-5522 ext. 7703
Email: eeisenberg@nl.edu
http://www2.nl.edu/twal/contactus.htm

STARNET

Illinois STARNET provides a variety of opportunities for personal and professional growth for those who touch the lives of young children, ages birth through eight, with an emphasis on children with special needs. STARNET supports family-centered, researched, and effective practices in early childhood education and care. Illinois STARNET is operated through a grant awarded by the Illinois State Board of Education; 100% of annual funding for the project is from federal sources. STARNET provides training, consultation, and resources to the early childhood community in Illinois. As a statewide system, STARNET assists the Illinois State Board of Education in meeting their local needs by providing services throughout Illinois. STARNET is committed to Helping Illinois' Young Children Reach For The Stars.

To contact your local STARNET office, http://www.starnet.org/about/statewide.php

Head Start and Early Head Start Program Training

The Illinois Head Start Association (IHSA) is committed to enhancing the development of children, empowering families, and strengthening communities. IHSA provides professional development opportunities for all early care and education programs and plays a leadership role in developing partnerships. The IHSA sponsors statewide training events for Head Start programs as well as other early care and education providers (including for-profits) and parents, including its annual statewide conference in January. The IHSA website contains an updated calendar of training events and is a great source of information about Head Start and Early Head Start in Illinois and nationally.

Executive Director
Illinois Head Start Association
3435 Liberty Drive, Suite D
Springfield, IL 62704
Phone: (217) 241-3511
Email: director@ilheadstart.org
http://ilheadstart.org/membership-services/event-registration/

Head Start State Collaboration Office

(For all early care and education practitioners and administrators)

The Head Start State Collaboration Office is a federal-state partnership that supports and encourages collaboration with Head Start, Early Head Start, and various other stakeholders at the state and local levels in the following priority areas: education and child care, professional development, health, community services, family liter-

acy, homeless services, disabilities, and welfare. The Head Start State Collaboration Office works to educate the larger community about Head Start and Early Head Start, provide information and ideas to support partnerships, and conduct and participate in statewide planning to move Illinois toward an integrated system of services for low-income children and families. For-profit providers are eligible to access all training resources offered through this office.

Director
Illinois Department of Human Services Head Start State Collaboration Office
IDHS Head Start Collaboration Office
10 Collinsville Avenue, Suite 203
East St. Louis, IL 62201
Phone: (618) 583-2083
Email: gina.ruther@illinois.gov
http://www.ilearlychildhoodcollab.org

Illinois Early Intervention (EI) Training

(For early childhood practitioners in Illinois, particularly Early Intervention professionals)

The Illinois Early Intervention Training Program provides training opportunities for Early Intervention professionals in Illinois. Many of these trainings may be helpful for early care and education practitioners. Trainings are organized by the United Cerebral Palsy Association of Greater Chicago funded through a grant from the Illinois Department of Human Services Bureau of Early Intervention. An EI Training Calendar, newsletter, and web links are available at the http://illinoiseitraining.org website.

Director
Illinois Early Intervention Training
7550 W. 183rd Street
Tinley Park, IL 60477
Phone: (708) 444-8460 ext. 250
Email: lgimble@ucpnet.org
http://www.illinoiseitraining.org

Illinois Early Learning (IEL) Project

(IEL is intended for early care and education professionals and parents who care for children ages birth through 5 years)

The Illinois Early Learning (IEL) Project and website are funded by the Illinois State Board of Education and managed by staff at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. A variety of resources for

early care and education professionals and parents can be found on the IEL website in English, Spanish, and Polish. Resources include Tip Sheets on high-interest topics; links to activities, videos, and resources to help implement the Illinois Early Learning Standards; a statewide calendar of training events; and responses to questions about topics related to early education and development. The website also features responses from Dr. Lilian Katz to questions from parents and teachers.

Illinois Early Learning Project
c/o Early Childhood and Parenting Collaborative
University of Illinois
Children's Research Center
51 Gerty Drive
Champaign, IL 61820-7469
Phone: (877) 275-3227
Email: iel@uiuc.edu
http://illinoisearlylearning.org

Illinois Trainers Network (ITN)

(For early care and education professionals)

In partnership with your local CCR&R, the Illinois Trainers Network can provide high-quality, accessible, and affordable training for your staff or community. Participants may receive in-service hours for training on a wide variety of topics, including using the Creative Curriculum for infants and toddlers and preschoolers, foundations of child care, special care (how to effectively serve children with disabilities), and Red Cross first aid and CPR. Center directors can contact their local CCR&R Training Coordinator for specific training events or INCCRRA for trainers who might come to your site or other community locations. These services are offered at low or no cost. Contact your local CCR&R for trainers and training available in your area.

Illinois Trainers Network
1226 Towanda Plaza
Bloomington, IL 61701
Phone: (800) 649-1884
http://www.inccrra.org

Ounce of Prevention Fund

The Ounce of Prevention Fund's robust training programs build an early childhood workforce skilled at improving outcomes for Illinois' most vulnerable young children.

The Ounce's Illinois Birth-to-Three Institute is a training and technical assistance provider to early childhood programs, including home-visiting and doula programs, funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS), and Chicago Public Schools (CPS). In 2011, the Ounce trained nearly 3,000 early childhood professionals who, in turn, served an estimated 11,500 families throughout Illinois.

Their expertise in training is based on their experience developing, testing, and refining innovative programs. Their trainings help early childhood professionals use research results to most effectively serve low-income children and their families.

The Ounce provides training in a range of topics, including:

- Early Childhood Development
- Family Support Strategies
- Child Abuse Recognition & Response

The Ounce operates training facilities in Springfield and Chicago. Trainings are open to all direct-service and management staff of early childhood programs funded by IDHS and ISBE's Prevention Initiative programs.

The Ounce provides technical assistance and consultation for more than 40 partner agencies in Illinois. Their teams help organizations build capacity to successfully operate home-visiting, doula, or Early Head Start/Head Start programs. They emphasize the importance of full implementation of program models and create solutions to meet the ongoing challenges of operations, staffing, supervision, and funding.

Ounce of Prevention Fund
33 West Monroe Street, Suite 2400
Chicago, IL 60603
312-922-3863
312-922-3337 (fax)
http://www.ounceofprevention.org

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Obtain information about upcoming professional development activities.

- Research the availability of scholarships, and other funding for staff.

- Ask for input from ISBE consultants.

- Collaborate with the Illinois Resource Center.

REFERENCES

1. Guskey, Thomas R. (2000). *Evaluating professional development.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

{*"There comes that mysterious meeting in life when someone acknowledges who we are and what we can be, igniting the circuits of our highest potential."*}

— Rusty Berkus

Supportive Work Environment

Illinois Birth to Five Program Standard IV.F.

The program leadership promotes continuity in staffing through provision of a supportive work environment, competitive wages and benefits, and opportunities for advancement.

A career ladder permits staff members to assume greater responsibilities with greater rewards as they gain experience, knowledge and skills. Opportunities for staff development should include goal setting, peer mentoring, workshops, and classes, culminating with the opportunity to create their own staff development portfolio. A supportive work environment, including appropriate physical space and material resources, will enhance the staff's effectiveness. In addition, opportunities to exercise and expand their individual skills in a wide range of programming options allow staff to demonstrate their capabilities in working with children and families. Furthermore, staff satisfaction and continuity will be ensured with adequate compensation including a benefit package. When staff are valued, supported, and have the opportunity to be secure and grow, their self-worth will be enhanced, and their ability to make significant contributions to the program will be maximized.

Quality Indicator IV.F.1.   **The program leadership provides staff members with a work space and schedule appropriate for implementing their job responsibilities.**

Leadership and staff must have adequate and pleasant surroundings in which to work. There needs to be individual work spaces and necessary materials and equipment. The staff member needs to take advantage of "teachable moments" and be able to find particular items that will answer questions, solve dilemmas, and/or motivate continued learning; therefore, the space must be organized and adequate. Effort must also be given to the determination of each staff member's work schedule. Consideration should include the position and its responsibilities as well as any agreement reached between the management and staff member regarding scheduling when finalizing the program and staff members' work schedules. Accommodations in the program schedule to meet the needs of the participants and community may include evening and weekend hours. Staffing to meet these needs may require some creative strategies.

Program leaders need to be sure staff are allowed time before the program year begins and periodically throughout the year for "organizational duties."

The following suggestions can assist the leadership to implement supports needed by staff members to fulfill their job responsibilities:

- Arrange office and resource space in center-based programs close to the physical space where activities are conducted for families and children.
- Make boxes, cartons, or other storage containers (preferably on wheels) available for the staff when they conduct home visits.
- Encourage collaboration and sharing of ideas and materials by locating staff in close proximity to each other.
- Request input from staff regarding scheduling and resource sharing.
- Develop realistic schedules to accommodate both group and individual responsibilities.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Network with other birth to three programs and share ideas about scheduling, storing, and/or transporting materials.

- Attend local conferences and visit the exhibits. Note how exhibitors organize, store, and transport their materials.

- Check professional journals and early childhood periodicals for ideas regarding the use of available space and storage of materials.

Quality Indicator IV.F.2.

The program leadership advocates and works to secure a competitive wage and benefit package for personnel based on their position in the program and their expertise and experience.

All programs for young children should provide staff equitable salaries and benefits commensurate with their qualifications and job responsibilities. Compensation packages (salaries and benefits) should be sufficient to recruit and retain qualified, competent staff. Ensuring a sufficient number of well-prepared, competent, and adequately compensated staff greatly increases staff stability and the probability of a high-quality program for children. Salaries of professionals and paraprofessionals in birth to three programs vary greatly according to state regulations, the type of program, the staff member's educational background and experience, the source of funds for the program, the staff member's responsibilities, and the community in which the program is located.

One way to improve the early childhood work force is to address the issues related to retaining staff. A recent study found that staff who remained on the job earned significantly higher wages. Because of low pay and poor benefits, the early childhood field experiences turnover rates that are much higher than the national average in other areas. This reality has a detrimental effect on the profession because staff leave the field rather than continuing to develop skills to further their careers. High turnover can also hinder children's development because it can interrupt the continuity of early care and education.

Staff who experience job satisfaction and fulfillment are more likely to express positive feelings toward children. They are also more likely to remain in their positions for a longer period of time. With general operating costs and health insurance increasing faster than grant and other incoming funds, fringe benefits for staff are generally one of the last budget items to be considered.

High-quality early childhood programs recognize that there is a direct relationship between the quality of work life experienced by the teaching staff and the quality of care and education that staff provide for

children. Prioritizing staff needs to ensure their well-being is a critical task for the leadership, but often the hardest to provide.

The NAEYC Self-Study Administrator's Report gives several suggestions regarding the welfare of early childhood teachers, administrators, and support staff. Use these suggestions as a guide for grantees, governing boards, or agency administrators who seek to improve practice within their own programs:

- Write job descriptions for full- and part-time staff.
- Write personnel policies including: program philosophy, mission, values, and goals; expectations for ethical conduct; health, safety, and emergency procedures; child abuse and neglect reporting procedures; daily staff schedules and routines; salary scales with increments based on professional qualifications; length of employment and performance; description of benefits; resignation and termination policies; and grievance procedures.
- Provide benefit packages for full-time staff including paid leave (vacation, sick, and personal), medical insurance, and retirement.
- Assure the annual program evaluation examines the adequacy of staff compensation, benefits, and rate of staff turnover.
- Develop a plan to increase salaries and benefits to ensure recruitment and retention of qualified staff.
- Check to be sure planning time is incorporated into staff schedules based on the role and responsibility of each staff member. (National Louis University, 2001)

REFERENCES

1. Quality of work life for staff impacts the quality of services for children and families. (2001, Winter). *The Director's Link,* National Louis University. Retrieved from The Center for Early Childhood Leadership website http://mccormickcenter.nl.edu/

Quality Indicator IV.F.3.   **The program leadership provides opportunities for career advancement.**

Part of the responsibility of the program leadership is to encourage staff members to continue their professional growth. Each higher level of training opens up advancement opportunities within the program, school district, cooperating programs, community agencies, or related areas. Staff should be aware of employment opportunities, advancement opportunities, and levels of compensation.

When staff members enroll in a college credit course and take an active step regarding their own professional development, the administrator may see new enthusiasm in the staff member. Sometimes problems that may have concerned the staff member regarding his or her effectiveness are addressed by the professor or other members of the class. While the individual is benefiting from finding new job satisfaction, the whole program is also benefiting from the results. The children usually receive more appropriate care and education, families are better served, and other staff members may be motivated and inspired by the example.

The following suggestions may assist program leadership to identify opportunities for staff career advancement:

- Encourage staff members to take college courses selected from a suggested list researched by the administration.
- Urge eligible staff to check with the local Child Care Resource and Referral agency to access their professional development funds. (July is the beginning of a new funding cycle.)
- Maintain a professional bulletin board for posting all relevant course announcements, notices, and bulletins.
- Advertise opportunities for related areas such as positions of consultant, researcher, administrator, college instructor, infant-development specialist, or home and family living instructor in a secondary school. This informs the staff about career ladder opportunities.

Career Ladder

A career ladder or lattice can be a useful tool for employees to see the possible career options available to them within the program. The first step is to develop and graphically portray all of the positions employees might seek in career advancement. This portrayal should include clear, brief descriptions of the roles, major job functions, and realistic qualifications. The information can be taken from existing job descriptions and it should be condensed to fit on 3 x 5 index cards.

Employees find it helpful when positions are shown in ladders up and down the organizational lines. For example, the ladder can depict career moves an employee can make from a teacher assistant's job to classroom teacher to lead teacher in a center to teacher/mentor. These levels and career moves are most often based on the experience and knowledge needed to be successful. Employees also gain an understanding of the career opportunities open to them in a lateral direction, across specialty lines. For example, an employee can see what skills and knowledge are needed to move from a beginning job as a nutrition aide to a job as a teacher aide in a classroom to a job as a family advocate.

Policies and Procedures for Career Management

Policies and procedures help all aspects of an organization work smoothly and fairly, and career management is no different. Here are some items to cover when developing career management policies:

- What career management services are available?
- Who is eligible to participate in the career management program?
- Must employees be in their jobs a specific amount of time before being eligible?
- What costs must the employee assume?
- May employees use work time for career exploration?
- Who may apply for positions available within the organization?
- What compensation is connected to job changes, advancement, and career moves?
- When and how will a supervisor learn about an employee's internal job search?

Once policy statements have been developed, career management procedures flow from them. Here are examples of procedures to cover:

- Where can an employee find career information within the organization?
- Who (staff title or department) oversees the career management system?

- What is the process for an employee to express interest in an internal career move?
- How is confidentiality handled?
- What forms, if any, need to be completed?

Communication and Promotion Plan

Formal career development plans within organizations may be a new concept to some employees. A communication and promotion plan should be designed to inform several audiences about the career management program, including:

- Parents, who will want to know how they can take advantage of the career management program
- Managers and supervisors, who already are active participants as informal career counselors for staff and parents and may be interested in career changes themselves
- Front-line staff, who will have the most interest in and opportunity to use the career management programs

Employees are usually excited about a formal and open program to advance their careers. At the same time, it is good to remember the hesitant feelings some employees will have; they may be unsure about confidentiality or reactions of supervisors who want to retain quality staff for their sites. An effective communication and promotion plan will meet these challenges by:

- Explaining the program clearly
- Creating enthusiasm in people for whom it was designed
- Reducing the anxiety of supervisors and staff

Community Partners

Most programs have organizations in their communities that offer some type of career guidance (schools, colleges, private organizations, or non-profit job development agencies). In fact, many programs already work with these groups to provide services to parents and employees. It makes sense first to search out these organizations to determine what services they offer.

REFERENCES

1. Manter, M.A. (2002). Designing a Career Development and Management System for Head Start. *Professional Development: The Cornerstone for Trust and Empowerment.* Head Start Bulletin #72. Retrieved from http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/supervision/supervision/manage_art_00405_081205.html

{*"A leader is not an administrator who loves to run others, but someone who carries water for his people so they can get on with their jobs."*}

—Robert Townsend

Knowledge of Community Services

Illinois Birth to Five Program Standard IV.G.

The program leadership and staff are knowledgeable about programs and agencies in the community that provide services for children and their families.

Programs function within the context of the community. Leaders must know what resources are available in the community and support collaboration that enhances service delivery. They share their knowledge with staff and provide opportunities for them to have "hands-on" experiences with other programs/agencies.

Quality Indicator IV.G.1. **The program leadership provides access to information about a variety of agencies in the community that provide social, health, and other services to children and families.**

Collaboration is a necessity in today's society. Each individual program does not have the resources necessary to provide a comprehensive service system to meet the complex needs of families. A competent administrator knows about the existing community health, social, and educational services and provides staff members with the information necessary for their work. The leadership also builds community networks and coalitions through effective communication including the use of media resources, public speaking, and personally written materials for both internal and external use. Working within and between programs and communities requires the ability to build relationships, set clear goals, and use negotiation skills.

Birth to three programs along with local councils, businesses, and private foundations can collaborate to identify existing resources and services as well as gaps and duplication. The program leader should check with the local library, Chamber of Commerce, or their local Head Start program to see if a directory is available of all the early childhood programs and services available in the community. If no directory is available, a committee from the community can develop one. Staff members in each program should:

- Know the services and available resources provided by the program and be able to share that information with community members.
- Become a broker of this important information with program participants and the community.
- Become familiar with existing community services, who provides them, and how the birth to three program fits into the total picture.
- Discuss with families what needs can be met by the birth to three program or one of the other community providers.
- Become familiar with the ways programs can collaborate to provide services for children and families, special programs, and staff development.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Read articles on community services and collaboration strategies.

- Join the local early childhood interagency council or other collaborative groups.

- Offer to work with the local agencies as they develop an early childhood fair.

- Invite a staff member from another program to attend a conference or professional association event with you.

- Offer to help develop the local early childhood service directory.

- Start an early childhood resource library to be shared by all early childhood programs in the community.

- Become familiar with the "All Our Kids" Network sponsored by many County Departments of Health in Illinois.

Quality Indicator IV.G.2.　**The program leadership arranges for staff members to visit and interact with early childhood providers and programs elsewhere in the community.**

The old African proverb "It takes a village to raise a child" is still true today. Staff members will be enriched in their own program roles when they have the opportunity to visit other, similar, local programs. Each program in the community will profit from sharing, learning about each other's experiences, and working together. In addition, families often move within the community and value the information provided by a program that tells them about services and resources in their new neighborhood. Staff can do this accurately if they have actually visited the program. Sometimes it is advantageous for two programs to conduct cooperative planning. This teamwork will also allow staff from each program to know one another.

In many communities, the local councils, libraries, clinics, and hospitals provide opportunities for families and programs to know each other. The various community "fairs" are one example of this and can often serve as public awareness opportunities for individual programs. The program leadership facilitates interactive opportunities for staff members within the community.

ADDITIONAL IDEAS AND RESOURCES

- Develop a schedule so each staff member can visit at least one program during the year, and invite other programs to visit your facility.

- Encourage staff to participate in community events to meet members of the community and learn about services provided by other programs so duplication and gaps can be identified and addressed.

- Form a small group of local providers who meet regularly to share ideas and strategies.

- Engage staff members in a "shadowing" activity with the staff of another program.

- Have a "staff exchange day" with another program.

- Read about the early childhood programs in France, Great Britain, Italy, and Sweden. Compare their efforts to what is happening in early childhood in the United States.

{*"Some people come into our lives and quickly go.*
Some stay for awhile and leave footprints on our hearts.
And we are never, ever the same."}

—Unknown