

Whole Leadership Framework

FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH AGE EIGHT



The Whole Leadership Framework encompasses a broad view of program leadership organized into three domains: Leadership Essentials, Administrative Leadership, and Pedagogical Leadership. Together, the domains create the necessary conditions for program growth and sustainability.

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PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP

Facilitating a community of learning that builds on the strengths of children, families, and staff. Pedagogical Leadership includes ensuring fidelity to research-based curricula, assessing children's development and learning, using data for evaluation, optimizing learning environments, and empowering families.

- **Instructional leadership:** Supporting educators in implementing developmentally appropriate practice and inclusive curriculum
- **Family leadership:** Building on family strengths, promoting equitable engagement, and encouraging advocacy on behalf of children

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP

Coordinating work and mobilizing people to ensure the organization remains stable and continues to thrive. Administrative Leadership includes systems thinking and development.

- **Operational leadership:** Ensuring sufficient staffing, space, and equipment, guiding fiscal management, fostering a positive work environment, hiring and supporting talent
- **Strategic leadership:** Setting goals and guiding future program directions
 - **Advocacy leadership:** Acting as an ambassador for children, families, and staff
 - **Community leadership:** Collaborating with organizations within the local community to maximize collective impact

WHOLE LEADERSHIP

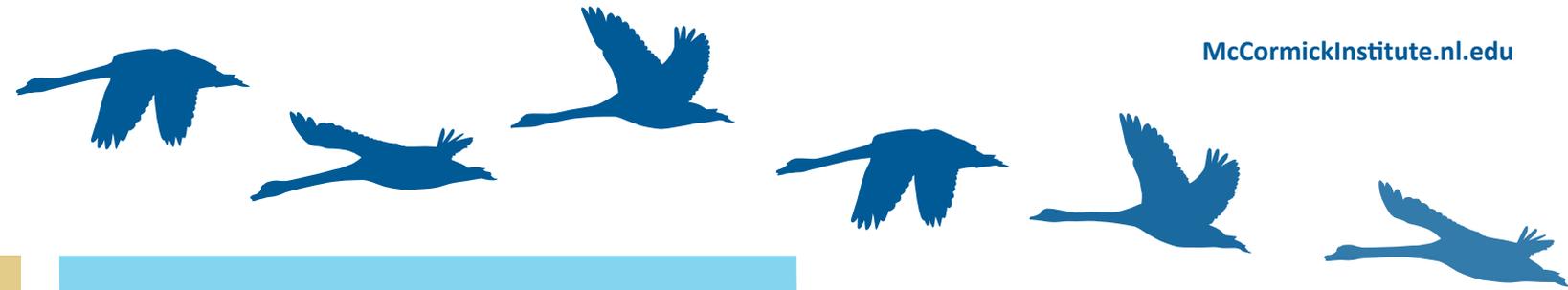
represents the interdependent relationship that exists among three leadership domains. A balanced perspective is necessary when performing leadership functions in early childhood programs.

LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS

Creating a culture of caring, equity, and improvement in early childhood programs. Leadership Essentials include foundational competencies and behaviors necessary for relationship building and motivating people to achieve shared goals. Reflective and intentional practice are the hallmarks of Leadership Essentials.

- **Leadership for continuous quality improvement (CQI):** Committing to CQI as a management philosophy and set of practices embedded at the organizational, classroom, and individual levels

- **Intrapersonal and interpersonal leadership:** Identifying qualities and strengthening behaviors that contribute to a healthy organizational culture. Modeling adaptability, authenticity, creativity, empathy, humility, lifelong learning, persistence, self-efficacy, transparency, and trust
- **Culturally responsive leadership:** Valuing and building on the talents and strengths of each individual, family, and community. Implementing leadership practices that ensure equitable opportunities and outcomes for children, families, and staff and build on their unique cultural and linguistic contexts



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LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS COMPETENCY AREAS

- Advance communication skills
- Apply a culturally responsive anti-bias lens to all facets of the organization
- Demonstrate professionalism
- Develop personal and professional self-awareness
- Embed continuous quality improvement (CQI) practices
- Employ a strengths-based approach to develop people
- Facilitate shared leadership and decision-making
- Implement efficient and effective project management skills

PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY AREAS

- Apply knowledge of child development and research
- Coach/mentor to scaffold teaching and learning
- Engage in developmentally appropriate practice
- Foster family leadership and advocacy
- Implement principles of trauma-informed teaching
- Incorporate knowledge of adult learning
- Understand and implement reflective supervision
- Use data to identify quality improvement goals

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY AREAS

- Build positive organizational climate
- Demonstrate legal knowledge and financial acumen
- Develop and refine advocacy skills
- Establish public relations and marketing expertise
- Foster entrepreneurship and innovation
- Promote community engagement
- Understand systems theory and apply to organizational development
- Use data to inform strategic planning

ABOUT WHOLE LEADERSHIP

In 2017, the McCormick Institute for Early Childhood at National Louis University developed the framework with voices from the field to define the critical components of early childhood leadership and to ensure consistent approaches to leadership standards and competencies. In 2023, the framework was revised in response to current research, the needs of the profession, and feedback from the field.