

Effective and Caring Leadership in the Early Years

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Thousand Oaks, California 91320

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B 1/I 1 Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area
Mathura Road
New Delhi 110 044

SAGE Publications Asia-Pacific Pte Ltd
3 Church Street
#10-04 Samsung Hub
Singapore 049483

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2014

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Marketing manager: Lorna Patkai
Cover design: Wendy Scott
Typeset by: Dorwyn, Wells, Somerset
Printed by: Replika Press, India

Library of Congress Control Number:
2013937612

British Library Cataloguing in Publication
data

A catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-4462-5534-6
ISBN 978-1-4462-5535-3 (pb)

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Leadership in early childhood: the early years context

Chapter overview

Leadership in early years settings, schools and children's centres has been recognized as significant in raising standards and increasing the quality of educational, health and social outcomes for children. Effective and caring leadership is an evolving area of importance in developing quality provision for young children and families. This chapter provides a discussion about the evolving leadership landscape and the distinctiveness of leadership within the early years context.

This chapter will:

- explore the evolving leadership landscape in the early years sector
- discuss professional learning opportunities for leadership development
- examine the relationship between leadership and management
- consider the distinctiveness of leadership in the early years.



The evolving leadership landscape

Leadership is a complex phenomenon with numerous definitions to understand the concept of leadership and being a leader. Terms such as leadership, leading and leaders are often used interchangeably. In essence, leadership is portrayed as a purposeful and positive activity (Fitzgerald and Gunter, 2008). The relationship between effective educational leadership, teacher leadership and school leadership for school improvement and positive educational outcomes for children and young people has been

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evidenced (Bush et al., 2010). For example, leadership practices that directly linked with and support improved outcomes for students in Queensland, Australia, were described by Lingard et al. (2003) as productive leadership. Starratt (2003) argues that a shift in focus from solo leadership of an organization to a focus on leadership of learning and shared distributed leadership, placing learners at the centre of the organization, links learning, leaders and leadership.

An understanding of leadership within the wider context of early years settings and children's centres is evolving, as is the impact upon educational, health, social and well-being outcomes for children (Rodd, 2013; Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2007; Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002). The emerging understanding points to leadership being a relational and communal concept where all can be a leader, engage in leadership, benefit from leadership and exercise power and individual agency when leadership is distributed and shared (Fitzgerald and Gunter, 2008). Leadership is transformative and empowering for individuals; Greenleaf (2003: 15) highlights that 'true leadership emerges from those whose primary motivation is a desire to help others'.

A global understanding of leadership in early childhood and its relationship to professionalism is developing from a 'ground up' perspective (Dalli, 2008). The nationally recognized status and pedagogical leadership role of the graduate Early Years Professional (EYP) in England, linked leadership with the professionalization and raising the status of the early years workforce. Duhn (2011: 141) views professionalism and leadership as closely interlinked with the learning self. Ellsworth (2005) theorizes the learning self as movement and experiences, the professional and personal self reshaping each other in an ongoing process of professional 'knowledge in the making'. Leadership and learning reshapes leadership and is an aspect of professionalism.

Theories of leadership, trait, behavioural, situational and transformational theories have informed understanding of leadership (Whalley, 2011a). There are cultural and contextual aspects that influence leadership style and practices. The International Successful School Principalship Project (ISSPP) (Moos et al., 2008) aimed to identify successful school leadership practices in different geographical locations and with pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds. The construct of 'success' applied to school leadership in the project was contextualized and relational, referring to multiple perspectives within the case study schools. In most schools, the principal set the direction for the school. In some schools, the direction was formulated by the principal while in other schools the direction was the product of dialogue and shared sense and knowledge making.

In the Scandinavian context, democratic principles were applied to school leadership. In Sweden, many schools formed teacher teams and distributed

both responsibility and decision-making to them. Principals in Tasmania, Australia, strove for a culture of collegiality and collaboration in which the principals set directions. The Chinese school system has a hierarchy of leaders and has strong top-down communities. Decisions and policy were made at district level and implemented in a top-down way; by managers at lower levels and then in a similar way in Chinese schools. A focus on performance standards in New York state schools in the USA, stimulated collaborative dialogue and shared learning to monitor progress. Leadership was distributed to teacher teams for shared planning and decision-making. In the UK, principals developed vision for improving pupils' achievement. They set vision and direction for their school and education but also delegated tasks and responsibility for implementing those visions to teachers' teams.

International developments within early childhood demonstrate the changing nature of early years services in several parts of the world and the evolving nature and understanding of leadership. While there are contextual differences between countries, there is renewed interest in the early years phase of children's learning and development and the affirmation of the importance of this stage of education as a major factor propelling change in service and provision (Chan and Mellor, 2002).

Leaders often take up leadership roles without training (Aubrey, 2011) and, internationally, qualifications vary. Practitioners undertaking early childhood leadership in Australia, New Zealand and Europe hold different qualifications, including diploma, degree, master's degree and teaching qualifications. In Australia the majority of practitioners working in early childhood services are qualified teachers (Jonsdottir and Hard, 2009). In New Zealand an integrated service of education and care is delivered in early childhood centres by teachers (Dalli, 2008). Few practitioners have specific qualifications in leadership, although many head teachers in Iceland have a diploma in leadership from a one-year graduate study and some have a master's degree (Jonsdottir and Hard, 2009). The selection of terms used in early childhood services in Europe, listed in Figure 1.1, shows the range of job titles used to describe the role of practitioners who work with young children from birth to 7 years (Oberhuemer et al., 2010).

At a glance the term 'leader' is missing from the plethora of names, although the words pedagogue, teacher, professional are common terminology. The job title names, nursery nurse, teaching assistant, teacher, Early Years Professional and Early Years Practitioner used in England add to confusion about roles and responsibilities for those working in the early years sector. In the *Foundations for Quality* report about early education and childcare qualifications (DfE, 2012: 46), Nutbrown proposed a new set of job titles for qualified staff within the workforce in England: early years practitioner (level 3), senior early years practitioner (level 4 and above), Early Years Professional (graduate with Early Year Professional Status – EYPS) and Early Years Teacher (graduate with Qualified Teacher Status – QTS). Their pedagogical leadership role identified:

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early years practitioners leading practice within a room, senior early years practitioners leading practice across a number of rooms, Early Years Professionals (EYPs) leading practice across a setting and qualified Early Years Teachers (EYTs) providing overall pedagogical leadership for a setting, all working directly with children and families. The range of Early Years Practitioners in Nutbrown's proposal of job roles have leadership responsibility in supporting and supervising unqualified or less qualified staff. In the Truss Report, *More Great Childcare* (DfE, 2013), the job title 'early years educator' is used for practitioners qualified to level 3, and the term 'Early Years Teacher' is used for graduate leaders, replacing the proposed titles by Nutbrown. The new job titles change the role emphasis from practice to education.

Country	Job title
Austria	Kindergarten pedagogue
Belgium	Social pedagogy professional Infant-toddler professional
Czech Republic	Teacher
Denmark	Pedagogue
France	Pre-primary teacher
Ireland	Primary school teacher Basic practitioner in early childhood/care Intermediate practitioner in early childhood/care Experienced practitioner in early childhood/care Advanced practitioner in early childhood/care Expert practitioner in early childhood/care
Italy	Early childhood education teacher Assistant in community work with young children Educator Integration teacher
Romania	Pre-primary and primary school professional
Spain	Teacher in early childhood education Senior specialist in early childhood education
Sweden	Teacher of young children

Figure 1.1 European early childhood job titles

The Effective Pre-school Provision in Education (EPPE) research study in England found higher-quality provision and children's cognitive outcomes in pre-schools led by staff with graduate degree qualifications. Less qualified staff benefited from working with staff with higher qualifications (Oberhuemer et al., 2010). Research studies in America (Barnett, 2004) concerning the relationship between the qualifications of staff and quality of early years services found that the education levels of staff, together with a specialist professional qualification in Early Childhood Education, predict both the qualities of interactions between teacher and child, and children's learning and development.

Government reform proposals in England within the Truss Report (DfE, 2013) recognize the contribution of graduate early years leaders who are EYPs in helping to improve the quality of education but whose public status is low. The government wants to introduce more graduates in the early years. Early Years Professionals and EYTs have a pedagogical leadership role. Early Years Teachers will be introduced to build on the EYPS programme, and existing EYPs will be recognized as EYTs, specialists in early childhood development. Early Years Teachers will be seen as equivalent to QTS. As Nutbrown (2013) in her response to the Truss Report argues, this will bring inequality of status and pay for Early Years Teachers with QTS and those without. The introduction of the terms 'Early Years Educator' and 'Early Years Teacher' in the Truss Report (DfE, 2013) highlights the government's emphasis on children's education, learning and graduate pedagogical leadership.

Similarly, Early Years Teaching Centres (EYTC) promote a regional focus on teaching, learning and the leadership for learning. These centres provide effective pedagogical leadership through a combination of training, support and demonstrating outstanding practice. There is evidence to show (Pen Green, 2012) that this model of professional learning through communities of practice is improving children's outcomes both in the setting and within the EYTC's region.

Leadership development in the early years

Leadership has been taking place with nursery and infant schools in England for many years by head and deputy head teachers in nursery schools and by teachers in nursery classes and units (Hallet, 2013a). In these contexts, leadership seemed to be the domain of educational institutions such as schools. Leadership was little acknowledged in early years settings where care and education took place, for example, in Sure Start children's centres and in early years settings in the Private, Voluntary and Independent sector (PVI) such as in playgroups, pre-schools, crèches, full daycare and sessional provision. Many teachers and practitioners, particularly women, who were also leaders, preferred to recognize their teaching role rather than their leadership role of leading people, resources

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and curriculum (Rodd, 2013). Although leadership in the early years sector was happening, it seems to have gone unrecognized (Bennis and Nanus, 1997) until more recently.

The introduction of leadership programmes for leaders of practice – the Early Years Professional Status training programme, the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) for integrated centre leaders in children’s centres and the National Professional Qualification for Head Teachers (NPQH) – has provided opportunities for practitioners and teachers to access nationally recognized leadership training through higher education (CWDC, 2008; NC, 2010). One of the main findings from the EPPE project (Sylva et al., 2010) and the associated Researching Effective Pedagogy in the Early Years (REPEY) study (Siraj-Blatchford et al., 2002) was that settings with higher-quality scores were those where staff had higher qualifications (Cottle and Alexander, 2012). The importance of leadership learning throughout a career is recognized for developing leadership sustainability. School systems in Australia have developed a leadership continuum framework that supports the leadership journey from aspirations through to beginning in leadership roles, consolidation and growth, high achievement in the role and transitions to other roles (Anderson et al., 2007). In England, The National College for Teaching and Leadership, formerly the National College for School Leadership, provides professional development programmes for aspiring leaders and those in middle leadership.

The government’s Children’s Workforce Strategy (DfES, 2005a) highlighted the need to develop a more highly qualified workforce, particularly in the PVI sector. The introduction of the graduate leadership training programme, EYPS and the EYP role as a leader of practice for those working in the PVI sector aimed to address this issue (CWDC, 2008). Those working in the early years sector are regarded as the most underpaid with least status within the public sector (Miller and Cable, 2008). Government funding from the Transformation and Graduate Leader Funds (2006–11) provided financial access for many practitioners, particularly women, to higher education, furthering their qualifications and career opportunities (DFE, 2011). Evidence from the national longitudinal study of graduate leadership training (EYPS) demonstrates that graduate leadership training impacts upon leaders’ practice, particularly those in the early stages of their career (Hadfield et al., 2011).

Leadership and management

Early years settings, schools, children’s centres and their leaders are very diverse in character, as well as in quality and effectiveness. They are charged with proactively leading and managing related areas of care, health and family support, and integrating these with education,

managing budgets and reporting information (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2007). They also need effectively to manage, deploy and develop staff with different professional perspectives and associated qualifications as well as with varying levels of experience and exposure to professional training (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2007). Accompanying this there is public demand for greater accountability and pressure to achieve excellence in service and health, educational and social outcomes for children (Aubrey, 2011).

The multifaceted aspects of leadership and management can merge into one role; the terms are used interchangeably in the early years sector but frequently there is an emphasis on being a manager, rather than a leader. Siraj-Blatchford and Manni (2007: 25) in the *Effective Leadership in the Early Years Sector (The ELEYS Study)*, found it was important to strike a balance in leading and managing a setting, as the administrative role can take precedence over leading teaching and learning.

In the following case study from the LLEaP project, the early years leader in a private day nursery reflects upon leadership and management roles within the nursery's senior team.



Case study: Leader's reflection – leading and managing a nursery

The nursery owner, Lisa, reflects about the management and leadership of her small nursery which is situated in the downstairs of her large Victorian house:

The nursery leadership and management team consists of me as the owner, Sue the nursery manager and Deena the deputy manager. There are administrative, financial and curriculum tasks; Sue and Deena share these between them. Deena went on a graduate leadership training course, and came back with lots of ideas and theories about how children learn and develop. As the Toddler Room Leader, she tried out new ideas and activities with the children; she involved and discussed what she was doing with the practitioners in the Toddler Room. Deena was beginning to take a leadership role in curriculum and learning within the nursery; staff began to ask her advice for activities to do with children. As deputy manager, Deena also spent time in administrative tasks such as arranging staff rotas, collecting dinner and trip monies, ordering resources, all of which took her away from working with children.

We have weekly management team meetings. We discussed the influence of Deena's developing specialized knowledge upon nursery provision and practitioners' practice. We want to allow time for Deena to use her developing expertise more. To do this we agreed

(Continues)

(Continued)

for Deena and Sue to have two distinct roles, one with more emphasis on curriculum leadership and the other with emphasis on administrative and financial tasks of a manager's role. They now have specific roles, new job titles and job descriptions to reflect the work they do in the nursery. Deena has a designated role as Curriculum Leader and Sue has a designated role as Nursery Manager. This allows them to work together in a defined and focused way in two parallel roles. Deena has time to lead the curriculum for children's learning and development, as a room leader, and for whole-setting curriculum development through leading staff meetings, mentoring and supporting practitioners in their work with young children and families. Sue has time to carry out administrative and financial tasks for the day-to-day smooth running of the nursery; undertaking budgetary monitoring and reporting to others such as the management committee and outside agencies like Ofsted [Office for Standards in Education]. These two parallel but complementary roles allow for effective leadership and management of the nursery.

The case study demonstrates an organizational restructuring for leadership activity. Outstanding leadership has invariably emerged as a key characteristic of outstanding schools and pre-school provision (Ofsted, 2003; Sylva et al., 2010). There is widespread recognition that leadership is second only to classroom practice in terms of impact on school and children's outcomes (Bush et al., 2010). Strong primary and secondary leadership and management are key factors in effective schools (Ofsted, 2003b). The contribution of educational leadership for improving organizational performance, raising achievement and quality of provision (Muijs et al., 2004; Sylva et al., 2010) is influencing leadership in early years settings, and its distinctiveness is now explored.

Distinctive leadership in the early years

Leadership has several traits and attributes to unravel and make sense of (Friedman, 2007). The concept of leadership has developed from educational models of leadership found in schools, a hierarchical concept of leadership being associated with a sole owner, a single person with authority to lead, undertake and carry out tasks alone (Rodd, 2013) being a charismatic leader who others follow resonates with this view. Weber (1968: 241) explains that a person with 'charisma' has a certain quality of individual personality that is considered as extraordinary, endowed with exceptional powers or qualities. On the basis of these personality qualities, the individual concerned is treated as a 'leader'.

However, this well-established view of leadership is changing. The view of leadership, as collaborative, relational and interdependent, rather than hierarchical, is emerging from within the early years sector (McDowall Clark and Murray, 2012; Rodd, 2013). Leadership within the early years sector concerns relational leadership, groups of people collaboratively working together to complete tasks and goals rather than being the work of one leader (Siraj-Blatchford and Manni, 2007). Rodd (2013) defines leaders working in early childhood as people who can influence the behaviours of others to achieve a goal or planned outcome. They possess a set of qualities and skills which combine an ability to influence and motivate others to do what the leader wants because they want to do it. They do this by using personal qualities which promote feelings of trust, motivation and security. Leaders are responsible for developing and articulating a shared vision, setting and clarifying goals, roles and responsibilities, collecting information and planning, making decisions and involving members of the group by communicating, encouraging and acknowledging commitment and contribution. Leadership concerns creating the conditions in which all members of the organization can give their best in a climate of commitment, reflection and challenge. Leadership is a process for personal and professional learning and development; organizational change and improvement.

The graduate early years leader (EYP, EYT) as a leader of practice (Whalley, 2011b) places leadership as an important factor in early years settings in the PVI sector. McDowall Clark and Murray (2012) discuss perspectives of early years leadership, recognizing leadership can come from anywhere within the organization, particularly if the setting is a 'leaderful community' (Raelin, 2003: 44) of shared and distributed leadership. Their paradigm of 'leadership within' defines a new concept of early years leadership as collective, group based, participatory and shared. 'It is non-hierarchical, flexible and responsive enabling leadership to emerge at any level of the organization wherever the appropriate knowledge and expertise or initiative occurs and with the ability to identify and act on challenges and opportunities' (McDowall Clark and Murray, 2012: 12). The term 'leadership within' illustrates leadership found in the non-hierarchical nature of many small early years settings in the PVI sector, led by play leaders, room leaders, nursery managers and management committees; in comparison to the hierarchical nature of the composition of school leadership teams of head teacher, deputy head teacher, assistant head teacher, phase leaders, subject leaders and curriculum coordinators. A similar inclusive and democratic leadership style was found in the LLEaP project (Hallet and Roberts-Holmes, 2010). The Nutbrown Review (DfE, 2012) regards leadership as inclusive and the responsibility of all who work in schools, settings and children's centres. This view develops sustainable leadership and supports the model of system leadership across a range of schools, children's centres and early years settings, currently being developed in the Foundation Years (NC, 2012). The influence of gender upon inclusive leadership and the distinctiveness of women as leaders are now explored.

Inclusive leadership

The composition of the early education and childcare workforce is predominantly women, averaging between 98 and 99 per cent depending on setting type. Working with children and particularly young children is widely regarded as 'women's work' (Nutbrown, 2012: 41). There are issues around the lack of men working in the sector and also the under-representation of black and minority ethnic groups within the workforce (Nutbrown, 2012) as well as the representation of women in leadership roles. There are more men working as teachers in primary schools, usually with older children, than with very young children in the Foundation Years (birth to 5 years of age) and fewer with babies and young children under 3 years of age. The sensitivities about child abuse and perceptions of men working with children may mean men meet with prejudice and mistrust, resulting in fewer men becoming early years or infant teachers, nursery nurses, early years practitioners and teaching assistants (Cushman, 2005). The widely held view that working in early education and childcare is low status and underpaid (Nutbrown, 2012; Vincent and Braun, 2010) affects diverse recruitment into the workforce.

The demographics of the workforce are reflected in leadership within the early years sector. Internationally, the only area of education where most leaders are women is in early years provision (Lumby and Coleman, 2007). There is a tendency for men working in areas of female-dominated work to gain promotion (Lumby and Coleman, 2007) and become leaders within, and of, schools, settings, children's centres, private daycare organizations and children's services. Men entering into primary teaching in England are likely to reach a senior post. In nursery and the primary sector, 16 per cent of primary teachers are male teachers, yet 38 per cent of head teachers are men (DfES, 2004a). Cameron (2001: 439), in a review of literature about men working in childcare in the UK, USA, Australia and Scandinavia, found that men do well financially and access work opportunities when they do 'women's work'.

There are varied social and cultural reasons for this gender imbalance. In a review of literature on women leading at work (Coleman, 2008), gender stereotypes relating to leadership and assumptions about family responsibilities were an integral component of the stereotypes relating to gender and leadership. Coleman summarizes barriers to career progression for women as:

- a masculine work culture, particularly at senior levels
- gender stereotypes which cast men as leaders, women as supporters and nurturers and therefore 'outsiders' as leaders
- the actual and perceived impact of family responsibilities on women's ability to work.

Stereotypical views and assumptions about leadership and who become leaders, inform the gender discourse about leadership. Weyer (2007), in reviewing the persistence of the glass ceiling of leadership for women, identifies the cultural view that leadership is a task and requires behaviours that are deemed masculine. Miller (2006) identifies the stereotype within our culture of men with more agentic leadership behaviour and women with more nurturing and supportive, communal roles. Shakeshaft (1987), in a gendered analysis of educational leadership and management, suggests that women's leadership style tends to be more democratic and participatory, encouraging inclusiveness and holding a broader view of the curriculum. McDowall and Murray (2012) note that an ethic of care (Osgood, 2004) underpins the nature of work in the early years and is a defining characteristic that permeates caring leadership. However, Blackmore (1999) suggests that men's public admittance to feminine leadership qualities continues to maintain their advantage in leadership.

Leadership behaviours and qualities that are stereotypically female or male, do not exclude the other gender from sharing these. Effective leaders should share qualities that are both stereotypically feminine and masculine (Gilligan, 1982) and knowingly use appropriate leadership behaviours for a particular situation and context. Both women and men head teachers aspire to a democratic, nurturing feminine leadership style (Lumby and Coleman, 2007) particularly in the early years sector. Leaders should combine both affective (feminine) and rational (male) ways of working, and use a broad range of qualities and behaviours (McDowall and Murray, 2012).

There is an absence of gender from theories of leadership (Runte and Miles, 2006). Standpoint theory holds the view that women have a particular view of the world and of life because of their experience as women, which is bound to differ from that of men (Coleman, 2011). There is emerging understanding of leadership behaviours and qualities of women as leaders. Chrisholm (2001: 398) refers to 'maternal feminism' with women harnessing experience and qualities from motherhood, asserting a version of the 'strong woman' in their leadership style, behaviour and qualities, being nurturing, democratic and assertive. This attitude begins to challenge the traditional view of leadership and reconceptualizes leadership for diversity of leaders. Through graduate and postgraduate leadership programmes there are many women leaders in the early years sector as children centre leaders, leaders in integrated practice in children's services, and in nurseries, settings and schools. Through higher education the 'invisible workforce' of women traditionally working in supportive roles in education, health and social services are now in the forefront of leading provision, services and practice (Hallet, 2013a: 10). Their shared and distributed style of leadership is now discussed within the value base of an ethic of care.

Caring leadership

The context for care and education and caring leadership in the delivery of multidisciplinary children's services in England developed from the Rumbold Report, *Starting with Quality* (DES, 1990), highlighting inequality of provision for 3- and 4-year olds within early years settings and schools in the maintained and PVI sectors. The report recommended the delivery of care integrated with education, and the concept of 'educare' in the delivery of multi-agency services was introduced (MacLeod-Brudenell, 2008). The Rumbold Report recommended a higher qualified workforce with multidisciplinary knowledge and understanding for working with young children and families. The introduction of undergraduate degrees in early childhood studies, incorporating health, social and educational perspectives in working with children and families, promoted a holistic and integrated way of working (DES, 1990).

The introduction of the Labour government's strategy *Every Child Matters: Change for Children* (DfES, 2004b) set out strategic plans for bringing together all services with responsibility for children, young people and families under one coherent national framework through a social justice agenda of equalizing and optimizing later life chances (Knowles, 2009). The more recent government review of provision furthers holistic multi-agency approach to service delivery; the Marmot Review (Marmot, 2010), of health inequalities identified a complex interaction of many factors – housing, financial, education and social – which are largely preventable, and there is a strong social justice and economic case for addressing health inequalities (Marmot, 2010). The Allen Review (Allen, 2011: xi) furthers holistic delivery of services for young children and families through early intervention policies and programmes to identify multi-agency support for children aged from birth to 3 years which help give them the 'social and emotional bedrock they need to reach their full potential'. The Munro Review of child protection and safeguarding children endorses Sure Start children's centres and the health visitor service in delivering early intervention programmes and in reporting early intervention outcomes (Munro, 2010). The Field Review (2010: 6) examined poverty and its impact upon children's life changes, recommending greater prominence be given to the earliest years in life, from pregnancy to the age of 5, adopting the term 'Foundation Years', to increase understanding of how babies and young children develop healthily, and recommending support for children and parents in the early years, and to ensure that child development and services during those early years are well understood. The Tickell Review (2011: 4) of early educational provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum recommended further inclusion of the holistic nature of children's learning and development.

Within this landscape of review and policy development there is a need for caring and effective leadership of children's services, children's centres,

early years settings and schools. An ethic of care underpins practitioners' and leaders' work with young children and families (Osgood, 2006), contributing to caring leadership practice in the early years sector. The ethic of care involves developing and maintaining caring relationships with children, parents and carers, and multi-agency professionals, which guides professional action, placing the welfare, interests and outcomes for children at the centre of the service. A passion to work with young children is a driver to work and lead in early childhood in a nurturing and caring way (Hallet, 2013b). Leadership in the early years should advocate caring as a social principle (McDowall Clark and Murray, 2012) with a commitment to improving educational, health and social outcomes for children. Children's holistic learning and development is at the heart of caring leadership, which includes leading multi-agency teams in integrated practice through distributed and shared leadership. Caring leadership requires a leadership style of distributed and shared leadership. This approach to leadership is now discussed within the context of Sure Start children's centres.

Distributed and shared leadership

SureStart children's centres bring together services for children under 5 and their families, offering services that integrate health, childcare, education, parent involvement, family support and employment services, and 'children's centres that provide more and better integrated services are improving outcomes for children' (DCSF, 2007: 3). The leaders of children's centres have the responsibility of leading a diverse range of multi-professional integrated service delivery. Practitioners working in children's centres are from a range of different professional backgrounds offering a range of services to support parents and children in the Foundation Years; for example, a midwife, employment adviser, health visitor, health carer, speech and language therapist, social worker, family support, nursery nurse. The range of services offered may include childcare, healthy eating programmes, midwife appointments, General Practitioner (GP) medical appointments, outreach family support, early intervention programmes, play-and-stay sessions, baby massage sessions, fathers' group, debt advice and job centre information.

Children's centre services are distinct owing to the collaboration and cooperation of different professional groups and agencies working together in integrated practice in providing services for children, parents and families (DCSF, 2007). The leadership and coordination of the complex range of services is challenging for leaders of children's centres (Lord et al., 2011). The expansion of integrated multi-agency services for young children and families has affected leadership roles, definitions and expectations placed upon leaders working in the early years sector (Pugh, 2006). Leading integrated practice has led to change in the ways leadership is viewed in early years settings, from a model of the head of centre being

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the only leader, to a model of distributed and shared leadership within and across the centre's services. It is unrealistic for a centre leader to be knowledgeable about all services. The centre leader requires a range of strategies to promote the best outcomes for children, to lead across professional boundaries and distribute leadership among the whole staff team (Duffy and Marshall, 2007). Integrated practice requires leadership approaches, such as distributed and sustainable leadership, which offer opportunities for leadership to be distributed and shared among teams. The centre leader has a strategic role for the services the centre provides, promotes the centre's vision, developed with the whole staff team, is able to trust the specialized knowledge and expertise of multi-professional teams and team leaders, and is able to support as appropriate and challenge staff when necessary (Duffy and Marshall, 2007) in a caring and effective way.

Summary

This chapter has provided a context for effective and caring leadership in early childhood by exploring the evolving leadership landscape in the early years sector; discussing professional learning opportunities for leadership development; examining the relationship between leadership and management; and exploring the distinctiveness of leadership in the early years referring to the ethic of care within early childhood, inclusively of leadership, women as leaders and distributed shared leadership within integrated practice.



The next chapter considers research studies about leadership in early childhood, highlighting contextual requirements, characteristics and leadership practices for effective early years settings, children's centres and schools.

Further reading

Bloch, M.N. (2008) 'Gender, work, and child care: crossing borders in the life and work of Sally Lubeck', *Journal of Early Childhood Research*, 6(1): 31–45.

The focus of this journal article is on the themes of gender, work and childcare as addressed in Sally Lubeck's work in the USA.

Coleman, M. (2011) *Women at the Top: Challenges, Choice and Change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book provides a broad perspective of women, work and leadership through authentic women's voices.

Miller, L. and Cable, C. (eds) (2011) *Professionalization, Leadership and Management in the Early Years*. London: Sage.

This book examines the interest in and development of professionalism and

leadership in early childhood, providing reflective insights.

Moyles, J. (2001) 'Passion, paradox and professionalism in early years education', *Early Years*, 21(2): 81–95.

This journal article explores the notion of a passionate early years workforce.

Siraj-Blatchford, I., Clarke, K. and Needham, M. (eds) (2007) *The Team around the Child: Multi-agency Working in the Early Years*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.

This book has a multi-agency focus and underpins theoretical perspectives for integrated practice and distributed leadership.