

Whole Leadership of site-based CQI: *Creating a Culture of Caring, Reflection and Improvement*

What does a program leader do?

This chart describes how a program leader creates an organizational culture that supports Continuous Quality Improvement and how the leader structures the CQI work, as described in the following definition from ExceleRate Illinois.

“CQI is a leadership philosophy and an ongoing process that involves the Plan, Do, Study, Act (or Plan, Do, Review) cycle. It is proactive, not reactive. It is related to the internal “owning” of a process by the team in a program. It goes beyond meeting the externally applied regulations and standards – and moves the lever for change internally, using data to guide decisions and reflect upon the results of the improvement plan to increase program quality.”

Item	Whole Leadership Dimension	EC Work Environment Survey
Building a foundation for CQI: Leadership Essentials “Leadership Essentials are foundational competencies and individual qualities necessary for leading people that are expressed in personal leadership styles and dispositions. Leadership essentials are often developed through reflective practice.” (McCormick Center)		
Take charge of quality improvement		
Demonstrate commitment and energy for continuous improvement, and a belief that your work with the team will make a difference in peoples’ lives. [IS THIS A GOOD STATEMENT OF THE SELF-EFFICACY CONCEPT?]	<i>Self-efficacy</i>	
Lead by example		
<u>Model caring and learning</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make time to be with staff, families and children • Listen • Show understanding and empathy • Help find people’s strengths <u>Learn about and welcome people of different cultures</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find, include, and value people from other cultures in your professional and personal life. Seek to learn from them. • Understand your own cultural background and limitations, and that you will always be learning about other cultures. • Create places that are safe and trusting for all. • Include gender identity in your efforts to understand others. <u>Value and build on the talents and strengths of each person, culture and community</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize the talents and strengths of each child and staff member and find ways to make use of them in classroom and program activities. • Incorporate exploration and learning about children’s cultures and communities. 	<i>Empathy</i> <i>Learner</i> <i>Authenticity</i> <i>Humility</i> <i>Transparency</i>	Supervisor Support Collegiality

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<p><u>Develop Trust and Collegiality</u></p> <p>Use a variety of strategies to develop trust and collegiality among staff, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show humility, empathy and limitations. • Discuss one’s own values and hopes while taking an interest in those of staff members. • Listen – “Seek first to understand, then to be understood.” • Believe in staff members, show respect and appreciate their strengths. • Be open about organizational plans & challenges, seek advice from staff, share bad news that will affect staff as early as possible. • Demonstrate ethical conduct (The NAEYC Code of Ethics provides guidance) 		
Communicate		
<p><u>Communicate clearly, often, and in multiple ways</u></p> <p>Communicate frequently and with transparency about how the program works, its policies, procedures, and decisions that have been made. Listen and respond to staff concerns.</p> <p><u>Recognize good work.</u></p> <p>Acknowledge the contributions of staff members by listening to them, acting on their ideas, distributing or sharing leadership with them, and thanking them in private and in public.</p>		Clarity
Create a learning organization		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that staff members experience the same kind of active, engaged learning that the children experience. (See sections below for details.) • Support staff to learn and use a wide range of teaching strategies because children learn and grow in different ways. • Be the “chief learner.” Increase your own professional knowledge and share with others. contribute to the profession through involvement in Communities of Practice, professional associations and the like. Discuss your learning and interests with staff and demonstrate “technical credibility” by applying knowledge to support program development. [IS THIS THE PLACE FOR THIS IDEA?] 	<i>Creativity Learner</i>	Supervisor Support Professional Growth Innovativeness
Make decisions that put children first		
<p>Ensure that children’s well-being is the first and most important consideration in all decisions including budgeting, staffing and daily operations.</p>	<i>Integrity (I made that up also)</i>	

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Maximizing Team Capacity: Administrative Leadership “Coordinating work and mobilizing people to ensure the organization remains stable and continues to grow.”		
Develop an authentic mission and vision		
Engage staff teams and families to develop or update a shared mission or vision for the program that is built on values and strengths.	<i>Strategic Leadership</i>	Goal Consensus
Build a team or teams for collaborative reflection and improvement planning		
<p><u>Build staff teams for 2 purposes:</u></p> <p>1. Collaborative reflection and <u>planning based on observations and assessments of children</u></p> <p>Ensure that classroom teams meet regularly for planning, sharing and problem-solving – focused on children’s learning and development. Teams use observations of children and child assessment instruments to guide this work.</p> <p>(A team could be the teachers in one classroom or the teachers from several classrooms. Child observations might include anecdotal notes, review of work products, etc., and examples of child assessments instruments would include Teaching Strategies GOLD, Work Sampling System, etc.)</p> <p>2. Collaborative reflection and planning <u>based on program quality goals and assessments</u></p> <p>Ensure that one or more teams meet regularly for planning, sharing and problem-solving – focused on program quality. Teams use measures of program administration, organizational climate and culture, or unique program goals to guide this work.</p> <p>(Measures might include results from ERS, CLASS, PAS, accreditation indicators, licensing compliance, EWES, SEQUAL, Early Ed Essentials Survey, etc. See glossary re acronyms.)</p>	<i>Strategic Leadership</i>	Collegiality Goal consensus Decision-making Innovativeness
<p><u>Communicate team purpose and structure</u></p> <p>--Communicate the goals of the team(s) and benefits to children, families and staff members</p> <p>--Discuss how the team will work, including frequency of meetings, desired results and supports from the organization</p> <p>--Build on strengths within the teams</p>	<i>Strategic Leadership</i>	Clarity Collegiality Goal consensus Supervisor support
<p><u>Specify protocols for meetings</u></p> <p>Ensure that team meetings use a standard format or routine to examine child and classroom data (including anecdotes and stories) or program quality data and make plans based on the data and the team’s goals. Ensure that teams are facilitated by staff member(s) trained in the formats or routines used.</p> <p>(For example, the curriculum might include a planning format based on observations.)</p>	<i>Strategic Leadership</i>	Clarity Task Orientation

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Include job-embedded professional learning		
<p><u>Provide team training within the Plan-Do-Study-Act or Plan-Do-Review cycle</u></p> <p>Ensure that learning experiences for staff support team planning and problem-solving. When the team decides on a goal in the “Plan” phase, remember to build staff capacity as part of the “Do” phase.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When possible, include college credits for this job-embedded professional learning. <p>(Refer to ExceleRate Plan-Do-Study-Act diagram. Learning experiences might include targeted trainings, coaching, peer to peer sharing, etc.)</p>	<i>Strategic Leadership</i>	Task orientation Professional growth
Put organizational supports in place		
<p><u>Distribute or share leadership functions</u></p> <p>One program leader cannot usually perform all leadership functions required in an organization – and often these reflective practice and program improvement functions are left out. Create a shared leadership structure including defined areas of responsibility, scope of authority and reporting relationships.</p>	<i>Operational Leadership</i>	Supervisor Support Decision Making
<p><u>Specify and protect paid time for staff teams to meet</u></p> <p>Ideally, teams will reflect and plan for children weekly, and reflect on overall program quality measures at least monthly. Not all programs have the staffing or resources to do that, but however they structure collaborative reflection, it should take place regularly during paid time.</p>	<i>Operational Leadership</i>	Professional Growth Task Orientation
<p><u>Specify and protect paid time for teachers to reflect and plan with parents or family members</u></p> <p>Parents are the child’s first and most important teachers. Learning experiences will be most effective if designed in consultation with the parent.</p>		
<p><u>Provide regular developmental, reflective supervision</u> (based on observations of practice) for each staff member outside of team meetings.</p>	<i>Operational Leadership</i>	Supervisor Support
<p><u>Ensure that staff have access to and support for professional learning opportunities</u>, both on the job and in other settings. Opportunities might include participation in an External Community of Practice, training cohort, release time for education, tuition reimbursement, etc.</p>	<i>Operational Leadership</i>	Professional Growth Supervisor Support
Engage stakeholders in program self-assessment		
<p>Periodic self-assessments are not CQI, but they inform goal-setting for daily, weekly or monthly CQI work. Tools are available from funding streams, accreditation systems and ExceleRate Illinois.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Assemble a program self-assessment team that includes families and community members with varying cultural perspectives</u> <p>It is important to include families and community members in establishing program priorities that reflect what they want for their children and make best use of community resources.</p>	<i>Operational Leadership</i>	Goal consensus

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Professional Practice: Pedagogical Leadership		
“Leading the art and science of teaching with an emphasis on educator dispositions and high-quality interactions with children.”		
Prepare to use Plan-Do-Study-Act (or Plan-Do-Review)		
<u>Know professional standards</u> Become familiar with the sets of standards on which professional practice is based (Licensing, Accreditation, Head Start, ExceleRate, etc.).	<i>Instructional Leadership</i>	
<u>Identify the standards or set of standards most important or strategic for achieving the program’s mission at this stage of development</u> Plan-Do-Study-Act or Plan-Do-Review cycles can advance compliance and goal achievement at any stage of program development. The program leader needs to review the standards and supports most important and useful for program development and choose which set or pathway the program will focus on.	<i>Instructional Leadership</i>	
<u>Collect documents and tools for the chosen route</u> If accreditation, for example, enroll in self-study and receive the self-study materials. If the ExceleRate Assessment Route, attend orientation, print standards, and find support materials on the ExceleRate Illinois Providers website.	<i>Instructional Leadership</i>	
<u>Join an external Community of Practice or Cohort for program leaders</u> Program leaders benefit from opportunities to share and learn from other program leaders. Opportunities are often available through CCR&R agencies, SAM cohorts, Lead-Learn-Excel cohorts, Aim4Excellence cohorts, Taking Charge of Change cohorts, community collaborations, AEYC chapters and more. (See glossary re acronyms.)	<i>Instructional Leadership</i>	
Make data available and train staff on its use		
Ensure that useful data on children’s learning and program quality is made available to staff teams or generated by staff members. (Data sources might include: Child observations and assessments such as anecdotal notes, review of work products, data from Teaching Strategies GOLD, Work Sampling System, etc., and program assessment results from ERS, CLASS, PAS, accreditation indicators, licensing compliance, EWES, SEQUAL, Early Ed Essentials Survey, etc. See glossary re acronyms.)	<i>Instructional Leadership</i>	
Model and lead reflective practice including Plan-Do-Study-Act (or Plan-Do-Review Cycles)		
Support staff to interpret how child and program assessment data can inform curriculum, learning environments and staff-child interactions. Support staff to understand and implement rapid CQI cycles based on planning, data, testing and reflection.	<i>Instructional Leadership</i>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Ensure that reflection and planning cycles incorporate priorities and resources of families and community members from multiple cultures</u> Pedagogical leaders support and guide staff teams to involve family members and use community resources.		