UNDERSTANDING CENTER DIRECTORS: BACKGROUNDS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND LEADERSHIP EFFORTS

Kelly M. Purcell
Crane Center for Early Childhood Research and Policy
The Ohio State University
ExCels Framework from Center Director Perspective

• Center Characteristics
  • Responsibilities/challenges (e.g., turnover)
  • Supports (professional development, support staff)

• What Leaders Bring
  • Backgrounds
  • Goals and Perspectives

• Directors’ Perceptions of Leadership in Their Center
Research Questions

• What are the characteristics of center-based early education settings in Franklin County Ohio?

• What do directors bring to the leadership of these centers?

• How do these center and director characteristics shape perceptions of leadership?
Methods

- Online surveys sent to all directors of licensed Type C (center-based) childcare providers in Franklin County OH
  - Must serve preschool-aged children

- Total responses= 150 directors

- Focused on center characteristics, director backgrounds, and director responsibilities
# Director Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>97.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>3.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>69.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>27.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>2.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Annual Salary

- 29,999 or less: 24.8%
- 30,000 - 39,999: 31.8%
- 40,000 - 49,999: 25.6%
- 50,000 - 89,999: 17.8%
## Center Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit status</td>
<td>38.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average number of days open</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (Mon - Thu)</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (only weekdays)</td>
<td>95.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (Mon - Sat)</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (all week)</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average number of hours open per day</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 hours - 11 hours</td>
<td>17.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 hours - 12 hours</td>
<td>42.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 hours - 13 hours</td>
<td>29.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 20 hours</td>
<td>11.35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What Influences ECE Leadership: Funding Sources

Number of Public Funds

- "0": 38.3%
- "1": 53.2%
- "2": 6.4%
- "3-4": 2.1%
What Influences ECE Leadership: Teacher Turnover

![Teacher Turnover Chart]

Teacher Turnover

- **Lead teacher**
  - 0%: 29.8%
  - 1%: 17.7%
  - 2%: 17.7%
  - 3%: 15.6%
  - 4%: 10.6%
  - 5% or more: 8.5%

- **Assistant teacher**
  - 0%: 24.5%
  - 1%: 13.0%
  - 2%: 23.0%
  - 3%: 12.2%
  - 4%: 12.2%
  - 5% or more: 15.1%
What Influences ECE Leadership: Replacement Challenges

Difficulty of finding teacher replacement

- Very easy: 1.4%
- Fairly easy: 14.9%
- Fairly difficult: 40.4%
- Very difficult: 43.3%

$M = 3.26$
$SD = 0.76$
(Range = 1-4)
What Influences ECE Leadership: Support Staff

![Bar chart showing the influence of different support staff categories on ECE leadership.]

- Other Staff in Center:
  - Accounting: 23.4%
  - Secretary/front desk staff: 20.6%
  - Janitorial staff: 34.8%
  - Other office staff: 30.5%
  - Office interns: 2.8%
  - Teaching interns: 12.1%
  - None (described here): 34.8%

![Pie chart showing the presence of office staff.]

- Presence of Office Staff:
  - Yes: 54.6%
  - No: 45.4%
What Influences ECE Leadership: Professional Development (PD)

Director Participation in PD

- PD activities related to role as director: 86.5%
- Workshops/conferences/training as non-presenter: 75.9%
- Visits to other childhood education settings: 48.9%
- Mentoring and/or peer observations and coaching: 46.1%
- Individual or collaborative research: 44.0%
- Workshops/conferences/training as a presenter: 42.6%
- Participation in a director network: 41.8%
- University courses related to role as director: 24.2%
What Influences ECE Leadership: Professional Development

Level of Support for Director PD

- Very sufficient: 12.8%
- Very insufficient: 9.9%
- Not sufficient: 24.1%
- Somewhat sufficient: 53.2%

$M = 2.68$
$SD = 0.82$
(Range = 1-4)
What Influences ECE Leadership: Professional Development

Areas of Additional Support Needed to Lead Center

- Staffing (hiring, etc.): 55.3%
- Teacher remediation/coaching: 49.7%
- Teacher evaluation: 48.9%
- Instructional leadership: 41.1%
- Creating positive learning environ.: 38.3%
- Working with parents and the community: 34.0%
- School improvement planning: 31.9%
- Student assessment: 27.7%
- Budgeting: 25.5%
- Data-driven decision making: 17.7%
- School scheduling: 7.8%
- Other: 5.7%
What Influences ECE Leadership: Job Responsibilities

- Buying/ordering supplies: 91.4%
- Managing teacher and staff scheduling: 99.3%
- Managing the budget: 79.1%
- Assigning children to classrooms: 95.7%
- Processing admissions: 95.0%
What Influences ECE Leadership: Job Responsibilities

Director currently teaching

- Yes: 28.4%
- No: 71.6%
What Leaders Bring: Education

Director highest degree earned

- Bachelors: 48.2%
- Masters or Educational specialist or professional: 21.3%
- Doctorate or first professional: 2.8%
- No degree: 8.5%

Highest degree earned in education

- Overall: 70.5% Yes, 29.5% No
- Doctorate and equivalent: 75.0% Yes, 25.0% No
- Master's and equivalent: 76.7% Yes, 23.3% No
- Bachelors: 66.2% Yes, 33.8% No
- Associates: 74.1% Yes, 25.9% No
What Leaders Bring: Years of Experience

Director tenure/teaching experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Director tenure</th>
<th>0%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>40%</th>
<th>60%</th>
<th>80%</th>
<th>100%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>23.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director teaching experience before current program</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4-5
- 6-14
- 15 or more
What Leaders Bring: Types of Experience

![Bar chart showing director prior experience](chart.png)

Management:
- Yes: 44.0%
- No: 56.0%

Assistant director:
- Yes: 42.6%
- No: 57.5%

Curriculum specialist:
- Yes: 19.2%
- No: 80.9%
What Leaders Bring: Job Satisfaction

**Job satisfaction**

Overall Mean
- Strongly disagree: 21%
- Disagree: 14%
- Neither: 49%
- Agree: 33%
- Strongly agree: 25%

Would choose job again
- Strongly disagree: 28%
- Disagree: 71%
- Neither: 1%

Feel like making a difference
- Strongly disagree: 14%
- Disagree: 34%
- Neither: 63%

Enjoy job
- Strongly disagree: 14%
- Disagree: 36%
- Neither: 55%

*Mean (M) = 4.31, Standard Deviation (SD) = 0.75, (Range = 1-5)*
What Leaders Bring: Goals

Director goals for center

- Promoting positive social skills: 63.6%
- Building basic academic skills: 43.6%
- Preparing children for Kindergarten: 36.4%
- Promoting good work habits: 29.3%
- Promoting self-esteem/efficacy: 29.3%
- Providing a safe place for children to play: 29.3%
- Providing socialization experience for children: 17.1%
- Reducing problematic classroom behaviors: 14.3%
- Providing care for children so parents can work: 13.6%
- Fostering religious/spiritual development: 6.4%
- Promoting multicultural awareness: 5.7%
- Promoting specific moral values: 4.3%
What Leaders Do

• **Perception of teacher support**: how directors agree/disagree with statements about staff support in the center
  - 7 items, 4-point scale, $\alpha = .891$
  - E.g., “Teachers feel comfortable raising issues and concerns that are important to them.” “The staff are recognized for accomplishments.”

• **Efforts to address teacher concerns**: to the extent the center leadership makes a sustained effort to address teacher concerns about...
  - 9 items, 4-point scale, $\alpha = .933$
  - E.g., Leadership issues, facilities and resources, professional development, new teacher support

• **Director's influence**: The extent the directors have actual influence on decisions concerning the activities on...
  - 6 items, 4-point scale, $\alpha = .681$
  - E.g., Establishing curriculum, determining the content of in-service professional development programs, setting discipline policy at the center
## What Leaders Do

### Predicting What Leaders Do from Center Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Perception of teacher support $b (SE)$</th>
<th>Efforts to address teacher concerns $b (SE)$</th>
<th>Director’s influence $b (SE)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of public funding</td>
<td>-0.051 (0.054)</td>
<td>-0.071 (0.055)</td>
<td>-0.002 (0.050)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead teacher turnover</td>
<td><strong>-0.072 (0.023)</strong></td>
<td>-0.041 (0.023)</td>
<td><strong>-0.051 (0.021)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher turnover</td>
<td>0.017 (0.021)</td>
<td>0.014 (0.022)</td>
<td>-0.014 (0.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether they have other staff (1 = yes)</td>
<td>-0.011 (0.076)</td>
<td>-0.035 (0.077)</td>
<td>0.052 (0.070)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of support for director PD</td>
<td>0.040 (0.046)</td>
<td>-0.017 (0.046)</td>
<td>-0.038 (0.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director is currently teaching (1 = yes)</td>
<td>0.017 (0.086)</td>
<td>-0.019 (0.086)</td>
<td>-0.023 (0.079)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director’s current duty includes budgeting (1 = yes)</td>
<td><strong>0.225 (0.094)</strong></td>
<td>0.073 (0.095)</td>
<td><strong>0.229 (0.087)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>.136</td>
<td>.047</td>
<td>.144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## What Leaders Do

### Predicting What Leaders Do from What Leaders Bring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Perception of teacher support $b$ (SE)</th>
<th>Efforts to address teacher concerns $b$ (SE)</th>
<th>Director’s influence $b$ (SE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree earned (ref. Associates or less)</td>
<td>0.043 (0.105)</td>
<td>-0.157 (0.102)</td>
<td>0.109 (0.094)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>0.062 (0.125)</td>
<td>-0.013 (0.121)</td>
<td>0.024 (0.111)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters or more</td>
<td>-0.052 (0.090)</td>
<td>0.024 (0.087)</td>
<td>0.050 (0.080)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree is in education (1 = yes)</td>
<td>-0.001 (0.006)</td>
<td>0.003 (0.006)</td>
<td><strong>0.013 (0.006)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as director in current program</td>
<td>0.020 (0.086)</td>
<td>0.069 (0.083)</td>
<td>-0.111 (0.076)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant program director experience (1 = yes)</td>
<td>0.073 (0.084)</td>
<td>0.082 (0.081)</td>
<td><strong>0.148 (0.074)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management experience outside education (1 = yes)</td>
<td><strong>0.167 (0.060)</strong></td>
<td>0.087 (0.058)</td>
<td><strong>0.169 (0.053)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director job satisfaction</td>
<td>.077</td>
<td>.065</td>
<td>.183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# What Leaders Do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Perception of teacher support $b$ (SE)</th>
<th>Efforts to address teacher concerns $b$ (SE)</th>
<th>Director’s influence $b$ (SE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree earned (ref. Associates or less)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>0.021 (0.108)</td>
<td>-0.195 (0.109)</td>
<td>0.005 (0.094)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters or more</td>
<td>0.015 (0.124)</td>
<td>-0.061 (0.125)</td>
<td>-0.081 (0.109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree is in education (1 = yes)</td>
<td>-0.086 (0.087)</td>
<td>0.008 (0.087)</td>
<td>0.040 (0.076)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years as director in current program</td>
<td>-0.005 (0.006)</td>
<td>-0.001 (0.006)</td>
<td>0.008 (0.006)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant program director experience (1 = yes)</td>
<td>0.034 (0.085)</td>
<td>0.055 (0.086)</td>
<td>-0.136 (0.074)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management experience outside education (1 = yes)</td>
<td>0.093 (0.082)</td>
<td>0.122 (0.083)</td>
<td>0.142 (0.072)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director job satisfaction</td>
<td><strong>0.160 (0.059)</strong></td>
<td>0.094 (0.059)</td>
<td><strong>0.168 (0.051)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of public funding</td>
<td>-0.059 (0.057)</td>
<td>-0.093 (0.058)</td>
<td>-0.039 (0.050)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lead teacher turnover</td>
<td><strong>-0.080 (0.024)</strong></td>
<td>-0.045 (0.025)</td>
<td><strong>-0.044 (0.021)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant teacher turnover</td>
<td>0.011 (0.022)</td>
<td>0.010 (0.023)</td>
<td>-0.009 (0.020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether they have other staff (1 = yes)</td>
<td>-0.029 (0.081)</td>
<td>-0.036 (0.081)</td>
<td>0.088 (0.070)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of support for director PD</td>
<td>0.025 (0.048)</td>
<td>-0.023 (0.049)</td>
<td>-0.045 (0.042)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director is currently teaching (1 = yes)</td>
<td>-0.048 (0.092)</td>
<td>-0.072 (0.093)</td>
<td>-0.062 (0.081)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director’s current duty includes budgeting (1 = yes)</td>
<td>0.143 (0.103)</td>
<td>0.004 (0.104)</td>
<td><em><em>0.213</em> (0.090)</em>*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td><strong>2.681 (0.335)</strong></td>
<td>3.152 (0.338)</td>
<td><strong>2.946 (0.292)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R-squared</td>
<td>.219</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>.314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

R-squared: .219, .132, .314
Conclusions

• Directors have varied responsibilities and types of preparation.

• Characteristics of both the center and the director influenced their perceptions of their leadership.

• More research is needed to map the center conditions that inhibit or promote positive leadership.
  • Need for information from multiple perspectives
Thank You!

• Collaborators: Sugene Cho, Jessica Logan, Joshua Peri

• Funders: OSU EHE Office of Research & Foundation for Child Development

purtell.15@osu.edu
The Whole Leadership Framework and State Systems Building

Child Care and Early Education Policy Research Consortium (CCEEPRC)
Annual Meeting | April 18, 2019

MICHAEL ABEL, Ph.D. | Director of Research and Evaluation
TOM LAYMAN | QRIS (ExceleRate Illinois®) Policy Director,
Governor’s Office of Early Childhood Development
Whole Leadership Framework
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS (BIRTH TO THIRD GRADE)

PEDAGOGICAL LEADERSHIP
Leading the art and science of teaching with an emphasis on educator dispositions and high quality interactions with children. This includes ensuring fidelity to curricular philosophy, assessing children’s development and learning, using data for evaluation, and optimizing learning environments.

- **Instructional leadership:** Supporting educators in implementing curriculum
- **Family engagement:** Promoting partnerships with families and fostering family leadership

ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP
Coordinating work and mobilizing people to ensure the organization remains stable and continues to grow.

- **Operational leadership:** Hiring and supporting staff, overseeing budgets, and fostering positive workplace climates
- **Strategic leadership:** Goal setting and guiding future program direction
- **Advocacy leadership:** Acting as an ambassador for the needs of children, families, and programs
- **Community leadership:** Collaborating with organizations within the local community on behalf of the children and families served

WHOLE LEADERSHIP
is an inter-dependent relationship that exists between leadership domains. A balanced perspective is necessary when performing administrative functions.

LEADERSHIP ESSENTIALS
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.

- Self-efficacy
- Empathy
- Creativity
- Authenticity
- Humility
- Transparency
- Adaptability
- Learning

Together, function as an integrated, balanced whole.
Administrator Role Perception Survey

- Phase I conducted in 2018
- 1,530 program administrators, from 49 states and DC
- Aligned to the *Whole Leadership Framework*
- What did the survey measure?
  - Administrators’ perceptions about their role and their jobs
  - Administrators’ development stage
    - Stage 1: Novice,
    - Stage 2: Proficient
    - Stage 3: Advanced
  - Administrators’ leadership self-efficacy beliefs (confidence)
- Differences among administrators at different stages
- Self-efficacy scale factored onto the *Whole Leadership Framework*
### Confidence of New Administrators

#### ROLE PERCEPTIONS WHEN FIRST BECOMING AN ADMINISTRATOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Perception</th>
<th>Confidence and Self-Assured</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>I hoped no one would find out how scared I was</td>
<td>I felt confident and self-assured</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62%</td>
<td>I was not prepared for the kinds of issues I encountered</td>
<td>I felt well-trained for my administrative position</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36%</td>
<td>My expectations for myself were unrealistic</td>
<td>My expectations for myself were realistic</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46%</td>
<td>I worried the teachers/parents wouldn’t like me</td>
<td>I was confident everyone would like me</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( n = 1,500 \)
## LEADERSHIP SELF-EFFICACY – Least Confident

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NOVICE</th>
<th>PROFICIENT</th>
<th>ADVANCED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Budgeting, cash flow, and financial management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use performance appraisal as catalyst for change</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Recruit, select, and orient staff</td>
<td>Protect time for staff to plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use technology to support teaching and learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>Use technology to support teaching and learning and administrative practices</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ready to Lead – Leadership Academy

- Community of Practice for newly hired early childhood administrators
- Develops Leadership Essentials
  - Power of reflection and self-awareness
  - Leadership style
  - Transitioning from peer to supervisor
  - Productivity and project management
- Aligned with the Illinois Director Credential
Illinois QRIS

• Problem
  – Quality standards treated as checklist
  – State-funded TA wasted on programs without “cultures of improvement”

• Subcommittee charge
  – Support program leaders to implement CQI

• Question 1: What does a program leader do?
What does a program leader do?

1. Lead by example
2. Establish time for communication
3. Develop teams; share leadership
4. Build professional learning into program improvement
5. Engage families and staff to shape program mission and values
6. Know program standards
7. Facilitate annual goal-setting
8. Lead weekly or monthly CQI cycles
Using the framework

• Prepared inventory of public supports for any of the 8 components
• Made recommendations for enhanced support
• Planning use by Communities of Practice:
  – Constructivist approach