

Leadership, Ethics and Advocacy in Education

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Abstract: The study delves into the viewpoints of educational leadership within early childhood education (ECE), highlighting its critical importance in improving the quality of teaching and the educational results for children. Successful educational leadership plays a crucial role in fostering nurturing settings that promote teacher growth, stimulate introspective methods, and enhance inclusive education. The paper, incorporating insights from multiple studies, emphasizes the significance of distributed and ethical leadership, along with advocacy, in tackling worldwide inequalities, fostering fairness, and enhancing educational methods. It is recommended that educational authorities endorse ongoing professional growth, foster creative teaching methods, and support policies guaranteeing equitable access to quality education for every child, disabilities included. Additionally, the document highlights the moral duty of leaders to cultivate family relationships, tackle issues linked to varied values, and promote comprehensive reforms in the Early Childhood Education sector. Educational leaders can significantly enhance teaching quality and children's growth by harmonizing their leadership methods with ethical norms and inclusive strategies.

Keywords: Leadership, Ethics and Advocacy, Early Childhood Education.

1. Introduction

Not only does Contemporary educational leadership face complex global challenges but also is gradually shifting from traditional management to collaborative and distributed leadership (Woodrow and Busch, 2008). This approach enhances teacher effectiveness and child learning outcomes by emphasizing professional development (Robinson and Timperley, 2007). This paper will explore how educational leadership can support these improvements and analyze the ethics and advocacy needed to build and maintain collaborative relationships with families and children.

2. Perspectives of Educational Leadership

Educational leadership is important in establishing a high-quality early childhood teaching environment and driving progress in early childhood education (Page and Tayler, 2016). It is found that educational leaders can effectively promote the improvement of the teaching environment and education quality through leadership (Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe, 2008). Fink and Brayman (2006) argued that educational leadership is significant in shaping the learning environment, and it effectively improves learning outcomes. Support and encouragement from educational leaders can enhance teachers' motivation and teaching abilities, which in turn helps improve children's learning outcomes (Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe, 2008). Educational leaders play an important role in education development (Fullan, 2014). Educational leaders enhance the quality of education, support teachers' professional development, and create a positive educational culture (Fullan, 2014). Effective educational leadership not only improves teaching practices but also drives the development of educational institutions (Fullan, 2014). Thus, children can have a higher quality educational experience. These studies support evidence to show the importance of educational leadership. Not only does

effective educational leadership support teachers' teaching practices but also promotes children's learning and development. However, early childhood education (ECE) faces complex global disparities, policy changes, and fairness pressures (Robinson and Timperley, 2007) that make the practice of educational leadership complex and diverse. Educational leadership has also shifted from the traditional managerial model to a more collaborative style (Woodrow and Busch, 2008). As an effective ECE leadership practice, distributed leadership enhances the quality of education by providing professional development; therefore, equity is promoted (Robinson and Timperley, 2007). For example, educational leaders can involve teachers in designing teaching strategies by setting up a teaching leadership team; thus, early childhood teaching is promoted the innovated. Furthermore, distributed leadership supports the practice of ethical leadership by enhancing teachers' sense of participation and fairness (Catacutan and de Guzman, 2015). Ethical leadership ensures that educational practices are effective and ethically compelling on fairness, justice and integrity. For example, educational leaders demonstrate integrity and responsibility by publicly acknowledging mistakes and correcting them when dealing with complaints. Not only does this practice enhance trust and cohesion but also promotes a positive working environment. As required by element 7.2.2 of the National Quality Framework (NQF) for educational leadership: the educational leader is supported and leads the development and implementation of the educational program and assessment and planning cycle. These practices not only help address global disparities and equity in education but also provide support and development opportunities for teachers. Effective educational leadership requires specific goal-setting and rational allocation of resources (Harper, 1992). Educational leaders also need to conduct scientific data collection and analysis in the assessment and planning cycle. In the face of implementation challenges, education leaders should adopt effective solutions to ensure the successful implementation of education programs and ultimately improve the quality of education. Therefore,

effective educational leaders play a vital role in advancing teachers' teaching and children's learning development.

3. Teacher Effectiveness and Children's Learning Outcomes

Through the discussion of the educational leadership perspectives, I found that effective educational leadership is critical to maintaining the quality of ECE programs to support children's learning and development (Fonsen et al., 2022). Therefore, as a leader, my goal should be to improve children's learning and development by improving teaching strategies. According to Fonsen et al (2022), educational leadership is seen as a shared responsibility for implementing high-quality teaching. However, not only is educational leadership discussed in studies but also has been applied in practice. On the one hand, educational leaders should provide continuous professional development opportunities to enhance teachers' teaching skills and knowledge (Dyment et al., 2013). First of all, as a leader, I should keep an eye on the emerging trends and technologies in the field of EC education. For example, educational leaders can visit other excellent EC settings for observation and learning. Furthermore, I will organize regular coaching to explain the latest educational theories and practices and help teachers apply new teaching strategies and tools. Mentoring is a well-known and effective strategy that enables teachers to reflect on, modify, and improve their teaching practices over time (Page and Taylor, 2016). The improvement of teachers' teaching skills can meet the diversified learning needs of children. Children's intellectual development is promoted, and teachers can understand and support children's emotional needs. On the other hand, educational leaders need to encourage teachers to engage in reflective practice. Educational leaders and teachers work together to discuss the implementation of teaching strategies and assess children's learning outcomes. Reflective practice helps teachers evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching methods. Some teachers need more support to reflect on their practice (Page and Taylor, 2016). Coaching is further used to develop teachers' knowledge and understanding of reflective practice so that teachers are able to make decisions about their practice. Furthermore, children's cognitive and emotional development is developed to a certain extent. For example, teachers can better understand and respond to children's emotional needs through reflection, and establish an effective teacher-children relationship. This relationship contributes to children's safety on emotion, which in turn supports their social skills and emotional development. In addition, effective educational leaders create an inclusive learning environment. Inclusive learning environments can help children develop a sense of belonging, especially those with disabilities, and promote positive interactions in social learning environments (Classen and Westbrook, 2020). Moreover, inclusive learning environments can monitor learning outcomes (Classen and Westbrook, 2020). For example, in an inclusive classroom, teachers can use a personalized teaching strategies to help children with disabilities reach their learning goals. Teachers may use visual AIDS and sign language interpreters to help the children engage in activities. At the same time, teachers regularly assess children's progress, using a variety of assessment methods, such as observation, alternative testing, and oral reports. Teachers work closely with special education specialists and parents to adapt teaching strategies based on

the assessment results to ensure that the student is achieving the best learning outcomes (Page and Taylor, 2016). This integrated approach has access to effective support and equitable educational opportunities in an inclusive environment. Studies have shown that educators have a significant impact on children's learning, and teaching quality is a key variable affecting children's learning outcomes (Mckenzie, Santiago and Organisation For Economic Co-Operation And Development, 2005). High-quality teaching can promote children's cognitive development, and it supports children's social skills and emotional well-being (Mckenzie, Santiago and Organisation For Economic Co-Operation And Development, 2005). On the contrary, low quality teaching may lead to the decline of students' learning effect, and even produce learning difficulties and frustration.

4. Ethics and Advocacy

When educational leaders implement the above teaching strategies, they need to critically analyze these teaching strategies. Because teaching strategies need to ensure that follow ethical standards in practice so that children's diverse needs can be satisfied. Educational leaders should take ethical responsibility in the advocacy process to ensure that the goals of advocacy activities conform to ethics (Waniganayake et al., 2017). Furthermore, partnerships with children and families can be built through ethics and advocacy. For example, childcare places in Australia are limited, even though the government has announced an increase in childcare subsidies and an increase in childcare places (Harper, 1992). However, some low-income families are still not receiving childcare places. In order to solve the problem of insufficient childcare places, educational leaders should first actively communicate with the community to understand the needs of families for childcare services. After that, educational leaders need to seek the support and cooperation of the community to explore innovative care services to alleviate the current under-resourcing problem. Ultimately, educational leaders should make a formal appeal to governments to explain the urgency and need to increase childcare places. This process will not only enhance the rationality of the solution, but also garner more policy and resource support. Moreover, in advocating, educational leaders ensure that policies and resource allocation do not have a discriminatory or unjust impact on children with disabilities. Children with disabilities deserve more attention in inclusive learning environments (Classen and Westbrook, 2020). In addition, the *ECA Code of Ethics* points out that ethics can help educational leaders facilitate advocacy activities. For example, educational leaders should communicate more with disabled children and their families and understand their needs and feedback. Educational leaders further integrate this feedback into educational practice. not only does ethics help build relationships between families and EC, but also ensures that all children receive the necessary support. Thus, advocacy and ethics can effectively establish and maintain cooperative relations with families and children. During exploring the relationship between advocacy and ethics, there is conflict because of the family's values and the advocacy goals of ECE (Inez Wilson Heenan, Lafferty and Patricia Mannix McNamara, 2024). For example, gender diversity needs to be advocated, which aims to create an educational environment that is inclusive and respectful of the identities of all children. However, some families may have different views on gender diversity education based on religious or cultural beliefs. Therefore, educational leaders

need to support families with gender diversity knowledge and help them understand the benefits of such education for child development (Kelly-Hanku et al., 2020). Educational leaders can also develop individualized educational programs that take into account the cultural background of the family and the diversity advocacy. Educational leaders can share other successful cases of families engaging in gender diversity education. Teachers can demonstrate the positive impact of such education on children's development and help families with different perspectives to see the practical benefits of education.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, educational leadership plays a vital role in early childhood teaching, driving overall progress in children's education by building and maintaining effective partnerships. Effective educational leadership is not just a manager position, but also a facilitator, supporter and innovator. This includes providing guidance, feedback and encouragement to create an environment where teachers feel valued. Education leaders can create a more supportive and involved education environment by engaging teachers, families, and children.

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