



# NORTHEAST KEY CONNECTION

## SPECIAL LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT ISSUE

Community Services for Children, Inc.  
1520 Hanover Avenue, Allentown, PA 18109

Volume 5, Issue 7

Summer 2009



## Sharpening Your Leadership Skills

You don't have to be the administrator of a program to be a leader! As management consultants Jimmy Calano and Jeff Salzman have written, "Effective leadership can be exercised by virtually anyone who takes the time to learn and practice it." So whether you are a CEO, a chair person of a committee, president of PTA, a Preschool Teacher or a busy working parent, the following suggestions will help you sharpen your leadership skills, build loyalty and make things happen:

**HAVE A VISION-** Picture, preferably with your group, where you want the team or project to be in six months, a year or longer. The clearer the vision, the easier it will be to define your goals and objectives.

**HELP PEOPLE REACH THEIR GOALS-** Look for a place where your goals and other people's goals overlap, and focus there, even if it sometimes means supporting an idea you feel lukewarm about.

**BECOME A COMMUNICATOR-** As you know, it's not only what you say- it's how you say it! A good leader is always a good communicator, one-on-one and with groups. Make it a point to develop the skills of speaking, reading, writing and especially, active listening.

**BE FLEXIBLE-** The strength of decisiveness must be tempered with flexibility. As Thomas Jefferson said, "In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock."

**GET IN UP TO YOUR ELBOWS** - People need to see you working as hard as they are. The way to demonstrate that details are important, for instance, is by paying attention to details yourself. Also, it's important for people to be able to approach you as a person. Relax and laugh with your team.

**BE IN THE EYE OF THE HURRICANE-** When things go wrong, good leaders turn their attention to solving the problem, not assigning the blame. A rule of thumb: If you're becoming stressed and frustrated, wait at least one hour before you approach anyone about the crisis at hand, if possible.

**GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO LEAD-** Many people get into leadership positions because they concentrated on their work- and to them, doing "soft" things like praising and coaching just doesn't feel like work. But they are essential to success. Set aside some time every day to hear people's problems/issues, reinforce their vision and communicate your support.

**EMPHASIZE EXCELLENCE-** People are inspired by knowing that their leaders believe in excellence and demand it for their own sake- not just yours or the groups. Not to correct someone when he or she is doing something wrong suggests that you just don't care. Give your feedback immediately. People need to know how they're doing now.

*Leadership is not something that is done to people, but rather working with and through other people to achieve organizational goals.*

---

### Inside this issue:

Sharpening Your Leadership Skills 1

The Five Practices of Exemplary 2

The Director's Role in Orienting New Staff 3-4

Why Email Is Essential! Insert

# The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership

What is leadership? According to Don Robertson, Co-Director of the Leadership Development Institute, Leadership is a set of practices that anyone can choose to demonstrate. For some people it comes much more easily, while for others near impossible. In the end it is a choice. That choice, regardless of what you are born with, is tied directly to how passionate you are about the issue or challenge that is faced. We choose to wait for someone else to take the lead. We choose to follow, or we choose to hang back and see what happen.

So what can you do if you would like to become a leader, or better leader, in early care and education or school-age care?

For 25 years, James Kouzes and Barry Posner gathered information from more than 3 million leaders, from all works of life, to find out what people did when they were at their "personal best" in leading others to accomplish extraordinary things. They then developed this leadership model.

## **Model the Way**

The first Practice is Model the Way. Leaders must be clear about their values and lead from their beliefs. They must model the behavior they expect of others in order to earn respect. They must set the example and "walk the talk." Modeling is a familiar concept in teaching and in our field.

Directors often model for teachers how to manage challenging behaviors with children or how to introduce an activity into a classroom

Teachers model behaviors for children, such as using words to express their feelings, how to go about problem solving, or ways to ask for help.

Our "leadership challenge" is to expand application of this concept beyond teaching situations. We can consciously and intentionally Model the Way in every interaction we have with others. We choose what we will model, and those choices affect our success or failure as leaders.

## **Inspire a Shared Vision**

Successful leaders have passion and believe they can make a difference. They dream about what their organizations can become if everyone on their team is focused on the same thing. They envision exciting possibilities, something so big and wonderful it makes people's eyes light up! Leadership is about the future, so that is why having a vision for future is an essential tool for leaders.

Some of us in leadership positions have not taken the time to really think about what we would envision for the future for our programs. Sometimes we have difficulty putting our visions into words. Take time to think about your vision. Try writing an exciting vision statement that can, as Dona Goss, Co-Director of the Leadership Development Institute puts it, help others see what you see and feel what you feel.

Get others excited about your vision by knowing your people and understanding their needs. As you talk about your vision, relate it to our team's dreams for the future. They'll be more likely to support your vision if they believe you have their best interests at heart. By helping others to see the "big picture" and the role they could play in making that future become a reality; staff will be more likely to buy-in to your vision. It's essential for you and your staff to be on the same page for a successful journey toward that future.

## **Challenge the Process**

Leaders "boldly go where no man (or woman) has gone before." They are pioneers, looking for opportunities to create, change, and improve. They question the status quo. They know that change involves experimenting, taking risks, and sometimes, failure.

Sometimes we forget that "if we keep doing what we've always done, we'll keep getting the same thing we always got." If we want our visions to become a reality, we must be ready to change, to experiment, to take risks, and learn from our mistakes. Are you willing to try something new (such as starting a robotics program after school, closing for a day for teacher in-service, implementing curriculum based on the interests of children, or replacing the traditional pre-k "graduation" with a more developmentally appropriated family transition activity) that will move you closer to your vision?

### **Enable Others to Act**

Leadership is a team effort. Successful leaders use the word *we* much more often than *I*.

Leaders create a trusting environment where it is possible for others to act excel in their work, feeling pride and ownership. Enabling Others to Act means sharing power, control, and decision making. We also have a responsibility to help others develop their leadership skills.

### **Encourage the Heart**

Recognition and celebration are leadership practices that may come easier to us than some of the others. The field of education has long history of pomp and circumstance in celebrating achievements. But leadership is not about fun and games or "pretentious ceremonies designed to create some phony sense of camaraderie"

Successful leaders are intentional about encouragement and take it seriously. They connect celebration to the organization's values and build a strong sense of community that can sustain the group when the going gets tough.

Take advantage of the opportunities you have to Encourage the Heart. Recognize staff who earn their CDAs. Celebrate achieving your next STAR level. Show appreciation for the individual who excelled to help raise your ERS scores. Be creative as you help your program develop a spirit of community!

#### *Resources:*

*If you would like to learn more about "The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership, here are some suggestions.*

*The Leadership Challenge* by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner.

Go to [www.leadershipchallenge.com](http://www.leadershipchallenge.com) to review books, workshops, programs, on-line video, blog case studies, research and more.

Thank you to Joyce Lang - Northampton County Community College - STARS Technical Assistance Program  
Kouzes, J.M. & Posner, B.Z. (2007), *The Leadership Challenge*. New York, John Wiley.

## **The Director's Role in Orienting New Staff**

Through the orientation process, you begin to mesh the skills and information an employee brings to the job with your ideas about meeting the organizations needs. Orientation provides the information necessary to get started in the right direction so that the newcomer can assume full and competent responsibility for the job.

It is the process by which the new employee gets her bearings understands the program mission and discovers her place in the overall organizational environment.

An employee's first days on the job present the director with unique challenges, as well as singular opportunities. Those first days are often anxious ones for employees, as they feel like strangers in their new surroundings. One goal or orientation, therefore should be to make the new employee feel welcome and at ease. During those first days, the new employee is also most eager to learn and to do well. Never again will he be so receptive to information about the organization and their role in it. Therefore, an orientation program should capitalize on this with zeal. It should instill in him a commitment to the goals of the organization and start him off right with proper work habits.

Employee Orientation programs are the foundation of the center's professional development system. A good orientation program reviews job descriptions and center operation as well as orienting the new employee to the center's shared values, vision and mission. During orientation, you are planting seeds for growing and keeping staff.

The orientation plan should be designed for sue each time a new employee is hired. Since new hires are often needed in the classroom immediately, it may be difficult to adequately orient them. Create a plan to accomplish your goals. Consider a phased approach, breaking the orientation down into manageable amounts of information, varying the training strategies used across the orientation period.

Orientation typically coincides with the introductory period for a new employee, usually between 30-90 days. A plan should be designed to put into action every time a new employee is hired. The plan can be a starting point for individualizing orientation for each new employee. A good plan will incorporate ideas about what the new employee needs to do and learn, when her or she will be introduced to each new topic, as well as who is responsible for implementing each part of the Orientation Plan.

(Continue on Page 4)

# The Director's Role in Orienting New Staff

## (Continued)

Breaking down orientation content into manageable amounts of information varying the training strategies you can use during orientation, provide two-way communication and feedback, as well as recognize and celebrate progress. You may want to think about having several phases to your plan. A phase approach helps divide orientation into segments that relate logically to each other and prevents overloading new employees with too much at one time. Think of your plan as three phases: A welcome phase, a learning phase and a skill building /appraisal phase.

**The Warm Welcome-** One the first day, to ensure your new employee feels welcomed, someone should be there to greet your new employee and the director should be available to explain the orientation process. You new staff person should also have a tour of the facility along with being informed of pertinent information, such as emergency procedures.

**The Learning Process-** While words and handouts are valuable; actions are the means through which the newcomer will learn about the program and the people in it. Pull staff members in to share in the orientation process. This provides an opportunity for staff to meet. Any orientation plan should include opportunities for both observing and participating. Have the new staff member work closely with a skilled teacher. This experience should cover a full range of activity a person will be doing in their new position. Share written materials as needed, such as the program Mission Statement, goals and philosophy. **Frequent reference should be made to the philosophy during the orientation.** A sound foundation of information about the programs history and funding will provide the new employee with information on the how and why of the program. This opens doors for handling any future questions effectively. Offer information on the surrounding community, the relationship you have with the community along with resources, and community leaders. You want to ensure the new employee is aware of their job description, personal policies, program policies, health and safety procedures and communication procedures. For staff with who the newcomer will be working closely, some time to meet with them directly should be allotted.

**The Appraisal-** The provision for continual feedback should be thoughtfully planned. *How am I doing is what every newcomer wants to know.* In addition there should be ongoing feedback, take time to let them know how they are doing. Reinforce the efforts and behavior you find effective and identify areas where there is difficulty. Employees should be informed of every aspect of their job as the opportunity allows. As a director you play a crucial role as a mentor and coach. Feedback sessions offer you the perfect time to start building a positive and supportive relationship with your new staff person.

Orientation programs such as New Staff Orientation programs offered through Better Kid Care and or School-Age Care: New Staff Orientation provided by the PA Key, covers essential areas that provide basic information about concepts and skills needed to succeed in their new positions.

The director is the key in implementation of an orientation process that will result in a positive introduction into their program.

*“High expectations are the Key to everything.”*

*~ Sam Walton  
(founder of Walmart)*

# Why Email Is Essential!

## Why email is essential!

As more of your mail is being delivered electronically, the NE Key wants you to know a few facts about this valuable way to communicate. Here are the answers to some of your questions.

## Why do I need an email account?

Email is the primary way we communicate with you. If you don't have email you didn't receive the NE Key Connection, Thursday Notes or information regarding the changes in group standards for the 2009-2010 year. With email, your STARS Manager can send you all of the documents you need to renew or designate electronically.

## What are the benefits of email?

1. **It's FREE!**
2. It's quick, easy and less intrusive to the receiver than a phone call. With email, you can check your messages when you have the time.
3. Email is a visual reminder for the person you want to contact. Phone messages sometimes get lost.
4. Email provides documentation of your correspondence with an individual.
5. Email is an instantaneous way to communicate any time of day, any day of the week.
6. **Did we tell you that it's FREE?**

## How do I get a free email account?

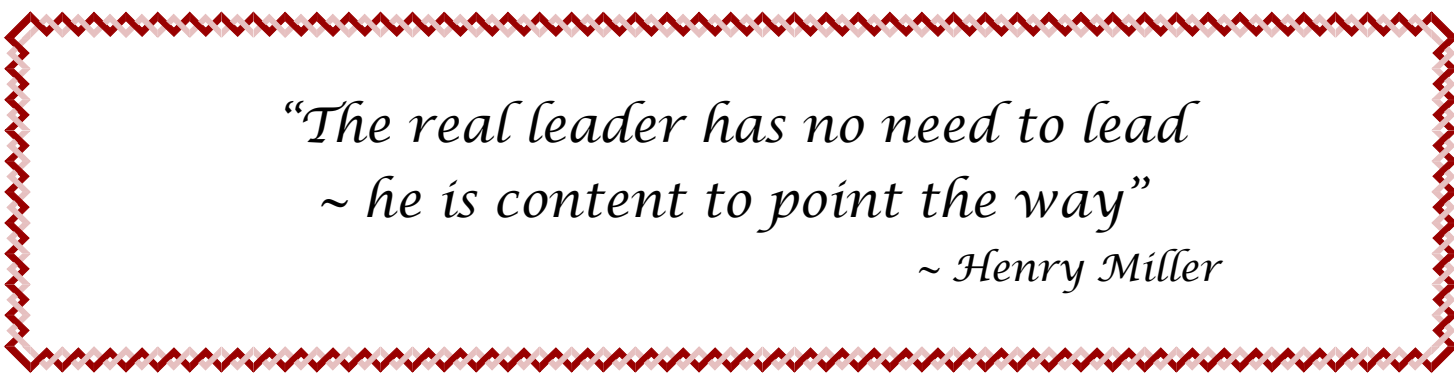
Using the internet, you can go to [www.emailaddresses.com](http://www.emailaddresses.com) for a listing of hundreds of free email providers. This site also reviews 100 free internet providers. A few of the favorites are:

- Gmail - This is from Google and provides good service. You can keep this email account even if you change internet providers.
- Yahoo! - This site has one of the most complete set of email features.
- Hotmail - one of the most popular and provides good service.
- Mail.com - One of the older free email providers that has stood the test of time.
- AltaVista - One of the best suppliers of free email.

## Why is it free?

It doesn't cost you anything because companies receive millions of dollars of advertisements every year.

As a small business owner, email is a vital way to receive important state and federal documents as well as professional development opportunities. Email will become the primary way we communicate with you in the coming year so we urge you to check your email daily. **Don't miss out!**



*“The real leader has no need to lead  
~ he is content to point the way”  
~ Henry Miller*



# Email Information

If you currently do not receive emails from the Northeast Key or if your email has recently changed, please complete the information below so that we can update our systems. Please return the completed form to Beth Gambone at:

Fax: 610-432-5700

Email: [bgambone@cscinc.org](mailto:bgambone@cscinc.org)

Mail: Community Services for Children, Inc.

Attention: Beth Gambone

1520 Hanover Avenue

Allentown, PA 18109

Name of Program:

---

Contacts Name:

---

Email Address:

---