

# Conversations on Leadership and Administration in Child Care



# Acknowledgement of Land



## Gathering Intentions

- Come as you are; BE yourself and use your **voice**
- **Listen** to what is being shared and what is missing
- **Notice** where YOU find yourself pausing and want to know more.
- Be curious
- Challenge the idea not the person
- Be willing to **unlearn** and **relearn** current thinking – EVEN if you experience discomfort
- Come prepared having done the **work**, to **do the work**, to **grow**

# A Quick Revisit of Last Session

- Chapter 4 From Teaching to Thinking
- Brene Brown and Adam Grants Podcast
- Vision and Values exercises with teams?
  
- Anything else?

# Systems and Practices

- Systems and practices should be built on the foundation of vision and values and must “embody and amplify vision and values: how will we express ourselves?” A.Pelo
- Avoid a disconnect between HOW you work on the day to day from the VISION and VALUES you hold as the ideal. Integration of all 3 is critical for organisational integrity.

## A quick word on SoP's

A set of guidelines that outline the expectations we have as an organization and align with our vision and values.

SoPs ensures the consistency and the quality of our work (especially across multiple sites)

So far we have them on Art, Group Time, Outdoor play and Celebrations... more to come.

Article available "We had it all ... or did we?"

The Process we use

## An example – Outdoor Play

- Teams gathered in a designated outdoor space in our City
- They were offered a reflective time in nature (one square foot of earth exercise)
- They walked the land as a team with a view to being with children in this space.
- They returned to their centres to debrief, make a field trip guide to that location and begin research on the benefits of outdoor play (curated articles, podcasts, videos, books) and the SRCC values (The goodness of Rain by Ann Pelo)
- One person from each team formed a working group to share their research and draft the SoP.
- SoP goes out for review and edit
- Final SoP is adopted and enacted

# Recruitment to Retirement

## Some key practices

### FIRST CONTACT

- Job advertisement
- Someone reads your job advertisement and decides to apply.
- Their email to you and your response to them could be the first contact in a long journey together **FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER**
- This is an easy place for your **values** to show up.
  - Prompt response (by telephone?)
  - Relevant questions
  - Clear instructions
  - Interview set up
    - Prompt / polite / respectful response even if the candidate does not make the interview short list

# The Interview

- What considerations should we make about interviews in terms of time and place and process and people involved?
- Time / length of interview / number of candidates / staging / touring / Place / People in the room
- Be professional – use standard questions – keep notes
- Behavioural questions - How would you... When did you...
- Gratitude!!!! They gave you their time – honour that!
- Give realistic and accurate timelines for follow-up
- Now your team discusses the candidate confidentially. Trust your “gut feeling” but recognise your biases

# You're Hired!!

- Consider who makes the offer and how the offer of employment is delivered. This is a place to have legal help to draw up contracts that are legal and fair and meet BC Employment standards.
- Be as clear and as specific as possible about all wages, benefits, working conditions etc.
- Be friendly and welcoming at the same time – this is an important step you and the Educator are taking together.
- Be clear about next steps – there is quite a bit of paperwork that needs to be done (direct deposit, CRC, medical clearance, all certificates etc) Don't lose the human touch in all of that administration.

# Parallel Practice

- Offering to educators experiences we hope they will in turn offer children / families
- Gradual entry for ALL

# Day 1

- The Manager or Supervisor should be in touch to ensure all paperwork is in and discuss the first day shift, where to park, who to look for on arrival etc.
- IF at all possible the new Educator would not be in ratio on day 1 (gradual entry for ECE's is preferable but not always possible)
- *HANDOUT Available: A timeline for new employees - the first 24 weeks*
- The key now is supporting the new ECE / ECEA to learn the job while doing it. This is NOT easy.
- Consider having different team members take responsibility to coach the new hire on certain aspects of classroom programming (Art / Outdoor routines / snack / nap etc.)
- DON'T expect perfection – BE patient – offer resources and time to learn the routines and the families and the style of each team member

# Leadership's Role

- Stay close
- Check in
  - Formally and Informally
- Don't overwhelm
- Don't over disclose information about team members
  - Don't discuss past problems that are resolved
  - Beware of gossiping as a way to establish relationship
- Don't allow the new hire to rely on you – direct back to the team
- Support

# Probation

- A probationary period is standard in most jobs.
- It allows both parties to establish if this working relationship is going to work
- It allows the employer to terminate the employee without notice or cause during the stated probationary period (with several legal caveats – get advice)
- A mid-probation check in allows the new hire to be guided to where they need to improve and where there are potentially some concerns.
- WRITE IT ALL DOWN – especially if there are any concerns
- Prior to the last day of probation the new hire should know if they will be successful or not – NO SURPRISES.

# The First Bump

- There is always that moment when the first conflict, mistake, misstep happens
- How it is handled is critical – this is a place for values to show up.
- Be kind – no matter how bad the issue was (unless child health and safety were compromised) it can be a learning moment
- Be clear and communicate as broadly as needed
- If it involves parents – have your staff's back and state what you have done to ensure the issue doesn't recur
- Reassure the new hire – mistakes WILL happen – how we handle them is what matter the most.



CAREER SCHOOL NOW

“

I emphasize this - no matter how good or successful you are or how clever or crafty, your business and its future are in the hands of the people you hire.

— **AKIO MORITA**  
COFOUNDER OF SONY

# Retention and Rewards

- Retention is the ability to retain (keep) staff and is a key determinant of quality in child care.
- It is the opposite of “high turnover”.
- The question to be answered is WHY do people stay (or conversely why do people leave)?

# Top Reasons ECE's leave

- Philosophy not aligned
- Low wages
- Lack of benefits
- Flexibility of work schedule
- Lack of support
- “Fit” with the team
- External factors (commute / family needs etc.)
- Other?

**This begs the question – what can an administrator do about this?**

## Some Suggestions

- Clarity – as discussed – use the interview to be very explicit about philosophy / curriculum / expectations / wages and benefits / shifts
- As an administrator do your best to advocate for the highest wages you can within your budget. It is your highest cost for your most important asset – this is NOT a place to save \$\$\$. Consider a wage grid.
- Do your best around benefits – weighing the impact vs the cost. Sometimes low cost benefits have high impact eg: Birthdays off.
- If you can't do a pension – consider a matched RRSP – start where you can and build from there

# Things No One Tells You About Becoming a Manager

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1

**You're Going to Be the Bad Guy**

2

**Managing is Time-Consuming**

3

**Feedback is Essential**

4

**People Will Leave**

5

**You May Feel Alone**

6

**You'll Have to Make Tough Calls**

7

**You'll Have a Lot to Learn**

I believe one of the best things about managing people is that we can influence lives in a positive way. That's basically what a manager is about. When I can do that, I am very happy.

Arsene Wenger

[PICTUREQUOTES.COM](http://picturequotes.com)

Management is about human beings. Its task is to make people capable of joint performance, to make their strengths effective and their weaknesses irrelevant.

*Peter F. Drucker*

[meetville.com](http://meetville.com)

# Offerings for Further Thinking and Reflection

- Follow Simon Sinek and Adam Grant on Instagram and read their books!
- SRCC Onboarding module available for reference
- [nbyres@richmondchildcare.org](mailto:nbyres@richmondchildcare.org) for any dialogue or resources
  - ..... And with that I am off to a retirement dinner for one of our Program Managers who I have worked alongside for almost 30 years!