



SCHOOL READINESS CONSULTING PRESENTS:

PLCS: A CATALYST FOR PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

An Early Childhood
Investigations Webinar



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PRESENTATION TEAM

POLL

OBJECTIVES

PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- Develop new perspectives on creating partnerships needed to effectively implement a director-led professional learning community(plc)
- Understand the value of a professional learning community for program directors participating in Quality Rating Improvement System efforts
- Examine the development and implementation of a plc while recognizing the potential barriers and identifying strategies for successful integration



HIGH STAKES

- ▶ On a given day, about 12 million children under the age of five will need a safe place to go and someone loving to care for them.
- ▶ The critical period of language learning begins to close around five years old and ends around puberty.
- ▶ Disadvantages (including low quality early learning experiences) that begin early in life have long lasting effects on academic performance.



WHAT TEACHERS SAY: THE IDEAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCE

Despite their dissatisfaction with much current professional development (PD), teachers value its potential as a tool to help them plan and improve instruction. They describe the ideal professional learning experience as:

RELEVANT

“It looks different in every context. It has to be personalized.”

INTERACTIVE

“The best ... usually involve hands-on strategies for the teacher to actually participate in.”

DELIVERED BY SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS MY EXPERIENCE

“The best PD has been when a teacher shows me what has revolutionized their classroom ... anything that a fellow teacher who is still in the classroom [presents] beats out anything else.”

“All teacher driven, with administration only there to support teacher needs. Top down would be gone.”

SUSTAINED OVER TIME

“PD needs to be something that you keep working on for a semester or a year.”

TREATS TEACHERS LIKE PROFESSIONALS

“PD should treat us as adults, rather than children.”

Teachers Know Best: Teachers' Views on Professional Development

Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 2014



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING
COMMUNITY

RESEARCH AND
CORE ELEMENTS

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

The most promising strategy for sustained, substantive school improvement is building the capacity of school personnel to function as a professional learning community. (And,) the path to change in the classroom lies within and through professional learning communities. (Mclaughlin, 1995)





A DEFINITION OF A PLC:

EDUCATORS COMMITTED TO WORKING TOGETHER COLLABORATIVELY IN ONGOING PROCESSES OF COLLECTIVE INQUIRY AND ACTIVE RESEARCH IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE BETTER RESULTS FOR THE STUDENTS THEY SERVE... KEY TO IMPROVED LEARNING FOR STUDENTS IS CONTINUOUS, JOB-EMBEDDED LEARNING FOR EDUCATORS

DuFour, DuFour, Eaker, Many-2006

TO PROMOTE SUCCESS

- ▶ Children are at the center of the work
- ▶ Shared goals that are aligned across the organization
- ▶ Data driven inquiry
- ▶ Teachers and Leaders are learning and improving practice
- ▶ Job-embedded learning
- ▶ Support and resources come from leadership



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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES TAKE PLACE...

- ▶ Once a month
- ▶ When you can find time on the schedule
- ▶ Within the routine work day; plcs are job-embedded

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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES FOCUS ON...

- ▶ What participants are interested in
- ▶ What children need
- ▶ What parents want programs to work on

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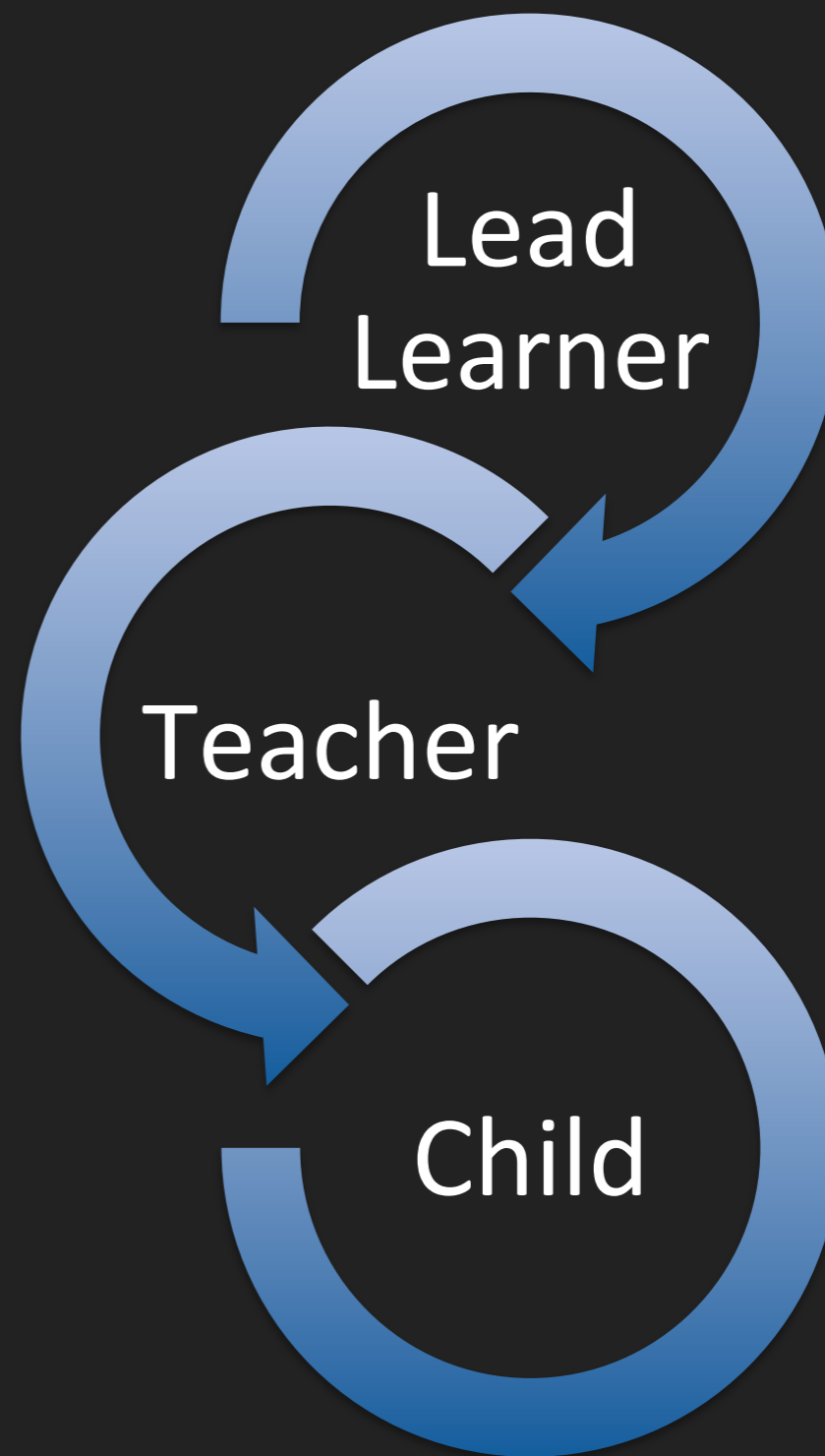
A PROGRAM LEADER'S ROLE IN A PLC IS THAT OF ...

- ▶ Organizer
- ▶ Lead learner
- ▶ Spectator

APPLICATION IN ECE

Prioritize instructional leadership which is learning focused, learning for both students and adults, and learning which is measured by improvement in instruction and in the quality of (children's) learning....it resides within a team of leaders of which the (program director) serves as the 'leader of leaders.'

(Center for Educational Leadership)





PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

AN EXAMPLE
FROM MILE HIGH
EARLY LEARNING



JESSICA SCHERDEN,
PROGRAM DIRECTOR OF EDNA OLIVER

MILE HIGH EARLY
LEARNING CENTERS
DENVER, CO

WHAT DROVE MILE
HIGH EARLY
LEARNING TO START
A DIRECTOR PLC?

Interview Question

DESCRIBE THE
CURRENT WORK OF
THE DIRECTOR PLC AT
MHEL

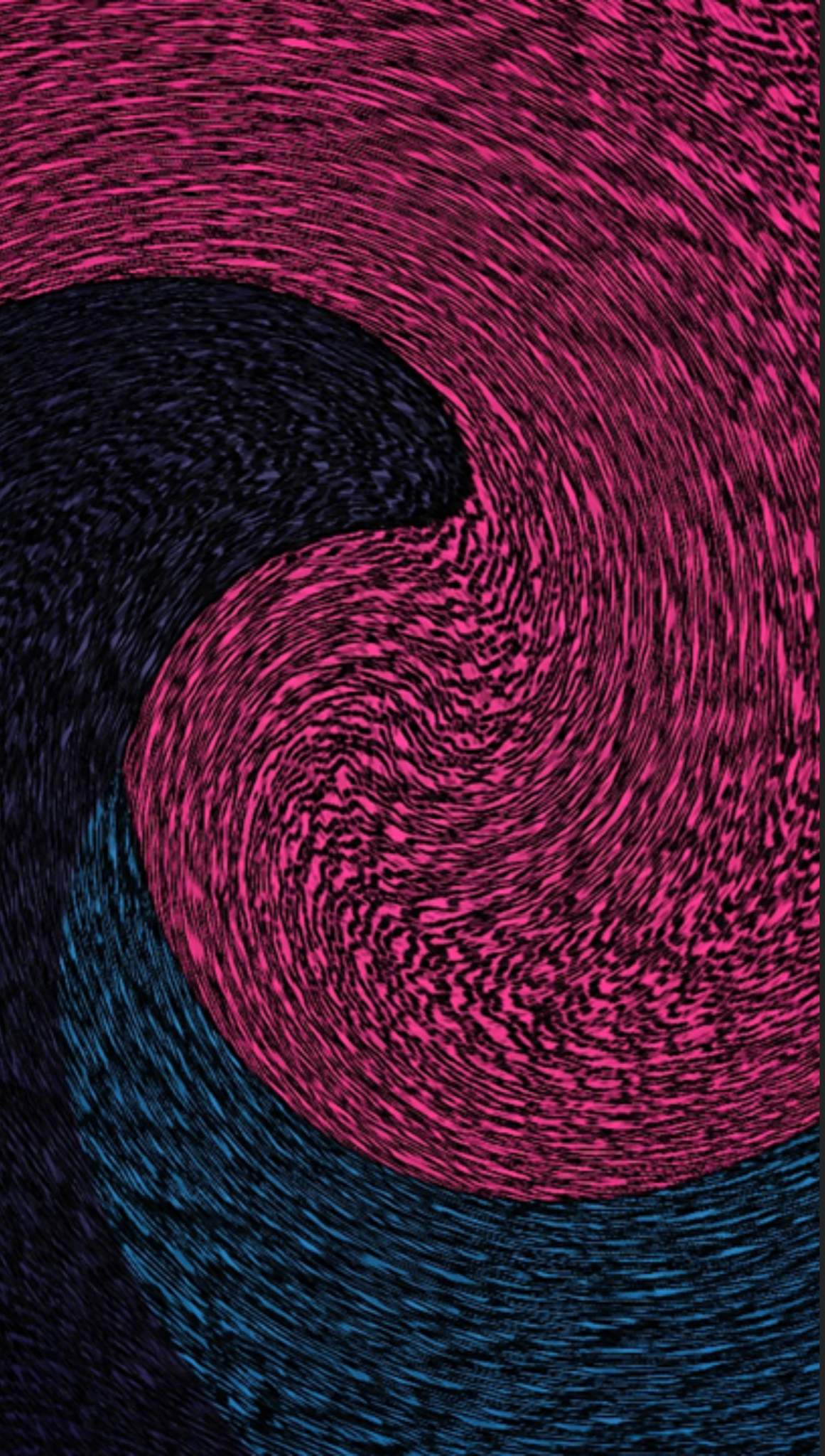
Interview Question

WHAT CONNECTIONS
DO YOU SEE
BETWEEN THIS PLC
WORK & ONGOING
QUALITY
IMPROVEMENT
EFFORTS?

Interview Question

WHAT HAVE BEEN THE
CHALLENGES AND
SUCCESSSES OF A
DIRECTOR PLC?

Interview Question



PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

ESSENTIAL SHIFTS
UNIQUE TO EARLY
LEARNING LEADERS

WHY BE PART OF A PLC?

1. Shared responsibility for the development of all children and their success.
2. Reduced isolation.
3. Powerful adult learning that shifts focus from teaching to learning.
4. Increased understanding of content.
5. Be professionally renewed.
6. Increased likelihood to inspire.
7. Other?

Adapted from *Issues ...about Change* Volume 6, Number 1, Professional Learning Communities: What Are They And Why Are They Important? (1997)



JESSICA SCHERDEN,
PROGRAM DIRECTOR AT EDNA OLIVER

PERSPECTIVE ON
MAKING A SHIFT

DESCRIBE YOUR
EXPERIENCE
WORKING IN A
DIRECTOR PLC?

Interview Question

DESCRIBE THE
PROCESS OF
DEVELOPING THE
RUBRIC WITH YOUR
COLLEAGUES?

Interview Question

HOW DO YOU DEFINE
INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP?

Interview Question

HOW DOES YOUR
INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP SUPPORT
THE NOTION OF
SHARING
RESPONSIBILITY FOR
ALL CHILDREN?

Interview Question

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INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP INCLUDES TASKS AND ACTIVITIES IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

- ▶ Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- ▶ Professional Learning
- ▶ Hiring and on boarding
- ▶ Ongoing staff support(maintaining ratios, breaks, planning time)
- ▶ All of the above

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- ▶ Program director roles are shifting to include an elevated role as instructional leader
 - ▶ Lead by example
 - ▶ Keep children at the center of the work
- ▶ Directors need a strong learning community of their own to make this shift and sustain ongoing quality improvement efforts



THANK YOU! PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH...

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