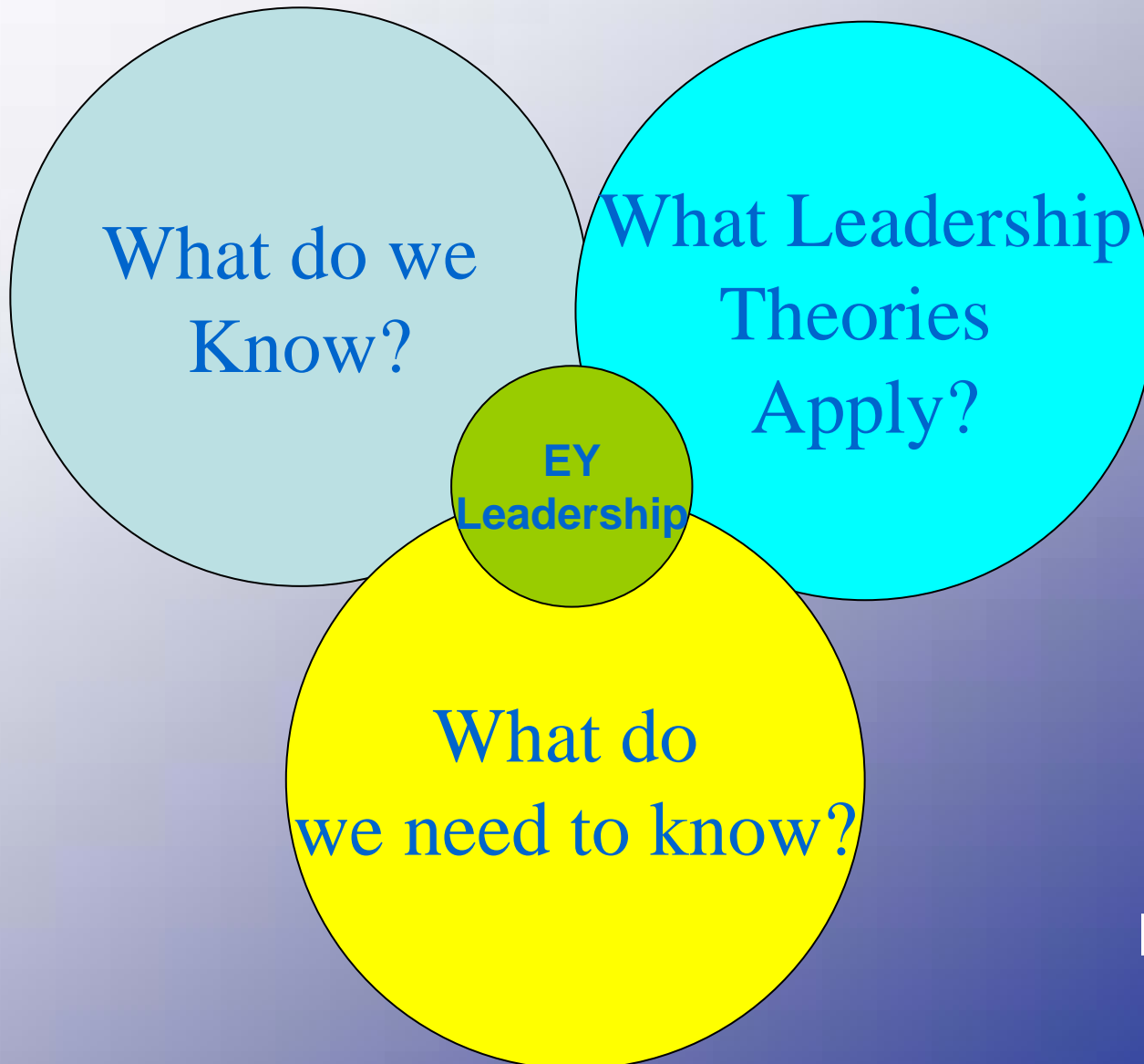


# Leadership for Early Childhood Professionals: *How do they manage?*

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# *Three Themes*



# *Two Key Questions*

*What type of leadership enhances learning in the EYC?*

*What type of leadership generates, supports and sustains improvement in EYC?*

# Objectives



- *to identify, describe and analyse what leadership means (implicit models/theories);*
- *to consider roles, responsibilities,*
- *To investigate core components, characteristics;*
- *To capture leadership practice/how understood/practised;*
- *To explore what types of preparation required.*

# *What do we know?*

- Literature dominated by small number of researchers and much anecdotal;*
- Identified as key element of quality provision;*
- Much literature focused on multiplicity of context-specific roles;*
- Few case studies of effective leaders;*
- Lack of EC leadership development programs.*

# Methodology

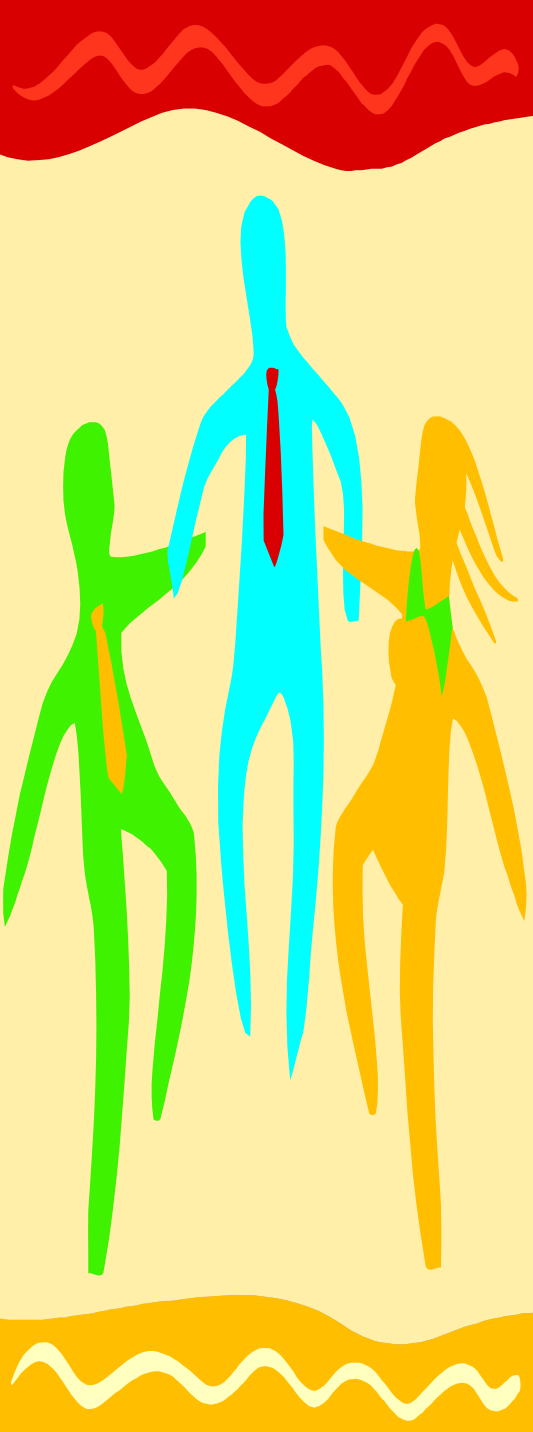
*Sampling 12 settings:*

- *Private daycare & nursery*
- *Voluntary family centre*
- *Nursery/reception  
(Foundation unit in primary schools)*
- *Early Excellence Centre*
- *Sure Start programmes*



# *Data gathering methods*

- *Questionnaires to all staff and governors;*
- *Interviews with 12 leaders;*
- *Focus groups of 6 other staff, including 'middle leaders' where they existed;*
- *In-depth 'day in the life' leader vignettes , using video-tape and journal records*
- *Leader review and identification of challenges/opportunities internal to setting and in external environment.*



# *Survey Results*

- *194 questionnaires (overall 68% returns with 81% from leaders)*
- *Workforce mainly female and under 40 years*
- *Majority had at least Diploma in nursery nursing*
- *Respondents in Foundation Units and Children's Centres had significantly higher initial qualifications than those in private or voluntary*



# *continued*

- *Majority (76%) viewed delivering quality service as most important;*
- *Followed by engaging in ongoing professional development (63%);*
- *Being accountable to/acting as advocate for children, parents, staff, profession & community (61%);*
- *Few (5%) attributed importance to an entrepreneurial approach.*

# *Significant relationship between:*

- Delivering quality service and encouraging professional development as important;*
- Seeing professional development and sensitivity to need for change as important;*
- Higher level initial leader qualifications and rating philosophy/vision as important as well as collaborative leadership;*
- Older respondents articulating philosophy/vision and being less likely*

# *Does EY Leadership Matter?*

- 95% regarded equally professional confidence and kindness, warmth, friendliness, nurture and sympathy as very important;*
- 94% regarded being knowledgeable and the ability to mentor and guide as very important;*
- Least favoured were being business-oriented, economically competitive and risk-taking.*

# *Why are Leaders IN EYC Important?*



- Respondents with higher qualifications more likely to believe leaders should be authoritative, goal-oriented and show kindness, warmth and sympathy;*
- Older/experienced respondents more likely to say leaders should be authoritative, less likely to think that they should be proactive, empowering, visionary, kind, warm and sympathetic and systematic planners.*

# *Early Years Context*

*Rotated factor analysis revealed 4 interpretable factors:*

- Leaders as guides*
- Leaders as motivators*
- Leaders as strategists*
- Leaders as business-oriented.*

# *Contribution of EC leadership to sustainability of provision:*

- *Community leadership seen as contributing highly (by 91%)*
- *Advocacy leadership and career development closely following*
- *Performance-led and administrative leadership seen as making small contribution*
- *Respondents from children's centres and voluntary day care significantly more likely to feel community leadership and entrepreneurial leadership important than private day nurseries and FS units.*



# *External requirements:*

- OFSTED inspections regarded as very helpful impact on role of leader*
- Performance-related appraisal almost as helpful*
- Older respondents more likely to regard OFSTED inspections and staff scarcity as unhelpful*
- Respondents in children's centres more likely to see inspection as very helpful*
- Respondents in private & voluntary more likely to say competition no impact;*
- FS respondents more likely to see competition as very helpful*
- Senior management seen as key role-players in decision-making some of the time by 86% cases*

# *EY Leadership in Action: typical day*

- *Rich and varied responses (staff interactions, training, visiting, meetings, paperwork, phone calls, communication parents/children)*
- *Leaders of private organisations admitted to taking home paper work*
- *One third of leaders still carried heavy teaching loads.*



# *Meaning of leadership*

- Ideas came from own experience and, in case of children's centre leaders, from taught courses;
- Not different from other sectors as theories applied across settings but most leaders female who tend to differ from male leaders;
- Particular needs of young children, parents and families identified, as well as overall low status of sector;
- Majority thought children's achievements highly important ('core', 'whole point')
- Performance-led management described as target- or standards-led, appraisal, performance-related pay;
- Moral and ethical of public body distanced from private/profit-making;
- Majority admitted decision-making mainly top-down and whilst hierarchical in structure, collaborative in culture (most self-critical of way decisions communicated to staff).

# *Interviews with staff*

- Perceptions/definitions similarly wide-ranging;*
- Theory and principles common across sectors;*
- Female leadership and multi-agency working and/or quality in caring for young children distinct;*
- Raising children's achievement and business/entrepreneurial skills regarded as very important;*
- Staff performance important;*
- Decisions seen as made at team level though ultimately leaders/senior team decision*

# *'Day in the life' videos*

- *Actions consistent with interview reports*
- *Integrated centre leaders are working in unstable and shifting organisations in a wider shifting and volatile environment;*
- *FS leaders are working in more stable school environments;*
- *There is some blurring of distinctions with private providers and schools involved in extended school days and voluntary*



# *Leadership in action*

- *Leaders in Foundation Units have very demanding roles, balancing teaching, administration and pedagogical leadership;*
- *Leaders in private/voluntary are more likely to be pre-occupied with low-level administrative tasks;*
- *Leaders in integrated centres carry huge responsibility for large multi-agency teams, with large budgets and high capital expenditure in a fast changing environment.*

# *Who leads the leaders and/or how are they managed?*

- Integrated Centre leaders and Foundation stage leaders in schools tend to be line managed;*
- Mentoring/clinical supervision is rare (one case);*
- Leaders in private and voluntary sector are less likely to be line-managed.*

**Leadership is thinking and decision-making as  
much as action**

**Presentation based on ESRC grant RES-000-22-  
1121**

**Aubrey, C., Harris, A., Briggs, M. and Muijs,  
D.(2005)**

***How Do They Manage: An Investigation of Early  
Childhood Leadership***

# *Cultivating leadership in early childhood settings*

- *If you want one year of prosperity, grow grain, If you want ten years of prosperity, grow forests. If you want one hundred years of prosperity, grow leaders (Chinese Proverb)*
- *Early childhood leadership is a growing field that is facing unprecedented challenges*

# *Contact*

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