



Unit 4 – The Role of the Administrator Getting Ready for the Unit and Connecting to Experience



Focus Statement

Students begin to explore the role of the administrator in early care and education programs by reflecting on their own experiences in work situations where they felt supported or not supported in sharing and discussing ideas and experiences.

Curriculum Alignment Project (CAP) Student Learning Outcomes

The Curriculum Alignment Project's (CAP) lower division eight courses, CAP expansion courses, and student learning outcomes are mapped onto each instructional guide learning experience. See Appendix A for the specific student learning outcomes, objectives, and examples of course content and topics for the courses listed below.

- Observation and Assessment
- Practicum-Field Experience
- Administration I: Programs for Early Childhood Education
- Administration II: Personnel and Leadership in Early Childhood Education

Instructional Methodologies

- Brainstorming
- Class discussion
- Pairs or small groups
- Personal reflection
- Reflective discussion

California Early Childhood Educator Competency Areas to Consider

These competency areas are from the California Department of Education, Early Education and Support Division's *California Early Childhood Educator Competencies* (CDE 2011). The "Competency Areas to Consider" below are listed in this instructional



guide as a preliminary exploration of how particular competency areas might be addressed through these learning experiences.

- Observation, Screening, Assessment, and Documentation
- Leadership in Early Childhood Education
- Professionalism
- Administration and Supervision



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Getting Ready for the Unit

This unit has been developed to support students in becoming familiar with the contents of Chapter 4 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. This chapter provides an overview of the role of the administrator as it is described in the guidelines themselves. The guidelines are found in Part Three, Chapter 8 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. Chapter 8 is not addressed in this instructional guide for Part One and Part Two but will be explored in a future instructional guide for Part Three.

Before faculty begin working with students on Chapter 4, there are some considerations that might be helpful:

1. All of the guidelines are relevant to the administrator's role, as it is the administrator who is ultimately responsible for seeing that the guidelines are followed. However, it would be particularly helpful for faculty to be acquainted with Guideline 1 (Aspiring to Be a High-Quality Program), Guideline 9 (Supporting Professionalism and Continuous Learning), and Guideline 10 (Administering Programs and Supervising Staff) before beginning this unit.
2. It would also be helpful for faculty to become acquainted with the set of two DVDs that accompany the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*, titled the *California Preschool Program Guidelines DVD Set*. Segments of these DVDs will be used in key topics in this unit, but it is important to keep in mind that this instructional guide is not a guide for the DVDs themselves.
3. This chapter describes recommended practice but is not a "how to" manual. For example, reflective supervision is described and recommended, but detailed guidance regarding how it is done is not included. There are references and resources at the end of the chapter that might prove useful for those who want to guide students further in any particular practice.

Also keep in mind that the guidelines are part of the California Early Learning and Development System. As part of the system, they support and are supported by the *California Preschool Learning Foundations* and the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework*. These publications are concerned with the learning and development of children and the curriculum decisions and practices that support optimal child development in the early years. In addition, there are underlying pieces of the foundations and curriculum framework that are relevant to the administrator's role.



Among these are the eight overarching principles upon which the foundations and curriculum framework are based and the curriculum-planning process. The overarching principles relate to the development of a program's mission and vision statements and underlying program philosophy. The curriculum-planning process supports and provides structure for a reflective and collaborative process of curriculum development. The overarching principles and curriculum-planning process are described in detail in Chapter 1 of each volume of the *California Preschool Curriculum Framework*.

Key Topics 2 and 3 in Unit 4 of this instructional guide deal with two categories of administrative practice: leadership and management. These are introduced in the first two pages of Chapter 4 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines* and are briefly explored in the overview contained in Key Topic 1 of Unit 4 in this instructional guide. It will be important to remember that these two categories are not discrete and are explored in separate key topics to separate out some key components of each. Key Topic 3, focusing on management, will help students understand how some leadership qualities play out in management functions. Therefore, even though these are separate key topics, they likely will be most effective if done as a set.

Motivator and Connection to Experience

Before You Start

Before beginning the following learning experience, it is strongly suggested that faculty read through all its components. Be alert to the possibility that the reflective process could recall situations of conflict for some students. No student should be required to discuss or share situations unless they are willing to do so. Hopefully, they can learn from the situations and responses of other students.

Information Delivery



Slide 2

Let students know that they will be exploring the content of Chapter 4 of the *California Preschool Program Guidelines*. One of the important topics in this chapter is the role of the administrator in setting a program tone of collaboration and reflection. This includes ensuring that staff are included in planning and reviewing curriculum decisions as a team as well as supporting staff in their own development as professionals.

In this chapter, there is an emphasis on collaboration and reflective practice. Both of these processes require administrators and staff to be able to share ideas and observations through expressing their thoughts and experiences and listening to others. Let students know that it will help us understand the importance of this if we can reflect on our own experiences.



Active Learning

Getting it started

Let students know that they will have an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences, with guiding questions provided to support them as they do this. Be sure that they understand that they will not have to share any of their reflections if they would rather not do so. Also, remind them that if they do share their experiences, it will be important not to attach any names to any of their reflections.

Start by letting the students work individually. Ask students to briefly jot down some notes in response to these questions:



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1. Have you ever been in a situation in a work environment where you felt you were not being heard?
2. Have you ever been in a situation at work where you felt your skills and ideas were not being acknowledged and recognized?

Keeping it going

At this point, students can be organized into pairs to share their experiences and to respond to the next set of questions. However, faculty might decide that it is best for students to continue individually without asking students to share any of their responses with another student.

Ask students to answer the following sets of questions:



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- How did you feel in that situation?
- Was there anyone with whom you could talk about the situation?
- If you were able to talk to someone about it, what made you feel that it would be acceptable to do so?
- What were you able to do about it? Were you able to work with someone to resolve the situation?
- If you could not discuss the situation, what kind of environment would have helped you feel you could talk about it?



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Be sure you also ask students if they have been in work situations where there was a collaborative environment and openness to asking questions and making suggestions. Also ask how they felt in those environments and how that made them feel about their work.



Then guide the students in comparing the two situations—collaborative and open versus not collaborative and not open:



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- How do you think each would affect you in a work environment?
- How do you think each would affect your commitment to a program?



Slide 8

Putting it together

Ask students to generate single words or short phrases to describe how they felt when their ideas were being acknowledged and when they weren't. These can be listed in a way so that all can see them, either electronically or on two separate sheets of chart paper.

Online Options

Because students will be asked to recall and reflect on experiences that may surface memories of difficult work situations and evoke strong emotions, it is suggested that instructors carefully consider doing any part of the learning experience online. When making this decision, faculty may want to gauge the students' oral and written communication skills and the class's overall level of trust and emotional safety.

Students could individually respond out of class to the questions in the "Getting it started" and "Keeping it going" segments. They would not be asked to post their responses unless they choose to do so. Students then post words or phrases describing their feelings as explained in the "Putting it together" segment and review their classmates' postings. The instructor concludes the learning experience by facilitating an in-class or online discussion based on the questions in the "Reflection" segment.

Reflection

Close this learning experience with the following reflective questions. These can be addressed in a class discussion or individually in writing although students will not submit their written responses. A third option is to ask students to first write their responses and, if there are some students who would like to share their responses, then hold a class discussion. This discussion might be helpful for all students.



Slide 9

- What stands out to you most in this learning experience?
- What did you learn about yourself?



- What did you learn about the value of collaboration and reflection?
- How could this influence the work you do with staff, families, and children?