

Early Childhood Leadership Development Framework



Supporting the Progressive and Holistic Development of Leaders

An early childhood (EC) leader plays a critical role in delivering quality EC services in preschools. The transition from educator to leader is both rewarding and challenging, as leaders need to be equipped with strong curricular and pedagogical leadership skills as well as strategic and administrative leadership skills. Upon taking up leadership roles, leaders would need to continue deepening and sharpening their skills in response to evolving challenges.

The Early Childhood Leadership Development Framework (LDF) is developed with both current and future leaders in mind. It articulates the desired attributes and competencies required for leadership roles and is supported by a training roadmap. The focus is currently on Centre Leaders but the goal is to expand this progressively to include other leadership roles.

Using the LDF to Guide Leadership Development

Existing leaders and employers can use the LDF as a guide to deepen their own competencies or groom potential leaders.



Identify and develop competencies at different stages

- Refer to the LDF to identify the competencies or cluster of competencies to develop at different junctures of their leadership journey.
- For example, senior educators with the potential and aspiration to be a Centre Leader might focus on strengthening their Curricular and Pedagogical Leadership first, before developing competencies in Strategic and Administrative Leadership, either through courses or on-the-job training.



Consider job requirements & organisation needs

- Consider the job requirements and competencies needed, taking into consideration the scope, structure and settings of the organisation.
- Assess the current proficiency of the potential and existing leaders and engage them on their developmental needs.
- For example, a Centre Leader working in a large preschool operator with HQ support for corporate services may require different competencies from a Centre Leader working in a smaller independent preschool.



Select suitable courses & programmes

- Refer to the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Roadmap and the leadership training roadmap to identify suitable recommended CPD courses or milestone programme.



Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.

John F. Kennedy

Standing, right:
Ms Jaime Natalie Tan
Centre Leader
MY World @ Ang Mo Kio Central
ECDA Promising Early Childhood Leader 2019

Desired Attributes for EC Leaders



EC Leaders should exhibit the following **RIPPLE** attributes that are articulated in the Skills Framework for Early Childhood:

Resilience

- Builds resilience in others through mentoring/coaching and facilitating self-care and teamwork

In a Team (Collaborative)

- Encourages and promotes collaboration with other educators within and across centres and actively partners families, the community and other stakeholders in the sector

Passion for Children

- Leads and makes decisions with children's growth, well-being and development as priority

Professionalism

- Holds to high standards of excellence, integrity and accountability in nurturing children, leading people and managing the centre
- Builds a culture of professionalism and professional mastery among staff

Love for Learning

- Establishes a culture of lifelong learning and reflective practice within the centre

Empathy

- Champions the embracing of diversity
- Role-models empathy and respect in working with centre staff, children, parents and key stakeholders

In addition to having the RIPPLE attributes, an EC leader is also someone who:

Is a People Developer

- Has a growth mindset and shows genuine care for the personal and professional development of both fellow educators and co-workers
- Encourages active growth among educators and the fraternity by promoting collaboration and sharing good practices

Leads with Vision

- Is mission-driven, forward-looking, and capable of anticipating both opportunities and challenges
- Sets clear directions, communicates goals and inspires others to forge ahead together

Champions Innovation

- Purposefully explores new ideas and solutions that can improve the centre
- Encourages and empowers others to also do likewise
- Leads change management

To know how the RIPPLE attributes can be applied to Educators, please refer to the Skills Framework for Early Childhood at <https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/skills-framework/earlychildhood>.



Leadership Competencies

The LDF Clusters of Competencies emphasise the holistic development of leaders and enables you to identify the competencies that you would like to focus on at different junctures of your leadership journey.

What competencies do EC Leaders need to develop to perform their role well?

The skills and competencies for all job roles, including leaders, are articulated in the Skills Framework for EC. The LDF groups the competencies for leaders into three clusters to guide the development of EC leaders holistically so that they can perform their role effectively.

These competencies can be broadly categorised into three clusters – Core Leadership, Curricular & Pedagogical Leadership and Strategic & Administrative Leadership.



Cluster of Competencies	Definition
Core Leadership	Competencies that are foundational and cross cutting
Curricular & Pedagogical Leadership	Competencies related to leading educators in quality curriculum design, instruction approaches and practices, and children engagement and interactions
Strategic & Administrative Leadership	Competencies related to setting goals for centre, leading people and managing resources to ensure smooth operations, continuous people development and centre growth

The Leadership Development Framework (LDF) captures the interdependence of the three clusters of competencies required of EC leaders. It also reflects the importance of the EC leader's role in engaging and balancing the needs of internal and external stakeholders.

The **LDF** is meant to guide the development of leaders and not to prescribe performance targets. The operator, centre, leaders and educators need to work closely together to develop and grow competent and successful leaders.

As a Centre Leader, one needs to be adaptable and expect the unexpected, especially when new to the role.

Nurfahran Abdul Kadir

Ms Nurfahran Abdul Kadir (left)
 Centre Leader
 NTUC First Campus'
 My First Skool @ Blk 803 Tampines Ave 4
 ECDA Promising Early Childhood
 Leader 2020



Leadership Development Framework

Clusters of Competencies for Centre Leaders

Core Leadership

Critical Core Skills	Description	Proficiency Level
Building Inclusivity	Oversee the development and implementation processes and practices which build an inclusive work environment and enable diverse groups to work effectively together	Advanced
Communication	Synthesise information and inputs to communicate an overarching storyline to multiple stakeholders	Advanced
Decision Making	Implement structured decision-making processes and analyse multiple sources of information to propose/formulate solutions	Intermediate
Developing People	Foster a conducive environment to enable employees' professional and personal development, in alignment with the organisation's objectives and goals	Advanced
Digital Fluency	Identify opportunities and evaluate risks of integrating digital technology tools, systems and software in work processes and activities	Intermediate

Strategic & Administrative Leadership

Technical Skills Competencies	Description	Proficiency Level	
Family & Community Partnership	Community Partnership	Lead the establishment of professional collaborations with the community	5
	Family and Caregiver Engagement	Establish partnerships with parents and families to develop a climate of care, respect and trust among Early Childhood and Early Intervention teachers, families and caregivers	5
	Situation Management with Families and Community	Develop and review the effectiveness of strategies, processes, and workplace practices for managing challenging situations	4
Operations & Management	Centre Innovation and Change Adoption	Establish the Centre's innovation and change management strategies and policies and mobilise internal resources to support critical transformations	5
	Data and Information Management	Develop guidelines and SOPs for collection and management of data and information and drive the use of analysed data and information to improve child development programmes and the Centre's operations	6
	Financial Administration	Plan budget to meet the needs of the Centre and monitor the use of funds to ensure accountability	3
	Operations Management	Establish resources, systems and processes to ensure operational efficiency in the Centre and business continuity during emergencies in compliance with relevant standards	5
	Visioning and Strategic Planning	Develop and review the Centre's vision, mission and values, and formulate a strategic plan and set directions to guide the Centre to achieve its goals	5
Staff Development & Engagement	Staff Communication and Engagement	Develop staff communication plans and engagement programmes within the Centre	4
	Staff Continuous Learning	Foster a culture of continuous learning by putting in place structures and processes to support staff's continuous learning and setting measures to assess effectiveness of these learning strategies within and across Centres	5
	Team Management	Develop manpower resourcing and performance management strategies to achieve desired organisational goals and succession planning	5

Curricular & Pedagogical Leadership

Technical Skills Competencies		Description	Proficiency Level
Child Learning & Development	Child Development Assessment	Promote the use of a variety of assessment methods to gather information on children's development, to plan appropriate curriculum and effective instruction, and to design child-centric learning experiences and create a conducive learning environment	5
	Child Observation	Lead adoption and refinement of observation and documentation tools to enhance teaching effectiveness and reinforce and/or extend children's learning and development	4
	Classroom Management and Guidance of Children's Behaviour	Evaluate the implementation of developmentally appropriate child supervision strategies and guidance techniques to ensure that they cater to children's diverse needs	4
	Diversity and Inclusion	Engender a culture of diversity and inclusion in the Centre through curriculum leadership, staff training and partnerships with stakeholders	5
	Early Childhood Curriculum Design	Evaluate the Centre's curriculum approaches to incorporate key theories, trends and good practices so as to ensure holistic learning experiences	5
	Early Childhood Pedagogical Practice	Develop the Centre's pedagogical practices and lead educators to implement developmentally appropriate pedagogical practices so as to facilitate care and meaningful daily learning experiences	5
	Early Childhood Programme Planning	Formulate the Centre's programme objectives, structure and implementation to ensure that they cater to the development and well-being of children of various age groups and needs	5
	Learning Environment Design	Reviews the design of the Centre's learning environment to ensure alignment to Centre's teaching philosophy, vision, mission, values, and programmes	5
Child Safety and Well-Being	Child Safety and Protection	Establish policies and processes on safety standards and procedures, and appropriate course of action for the safety and protection of children	5
	Health, Hygiene and Nutrition for Children	Establish health, nutritional and hygiene standards and procedures	6
	Interaction and Relationship	Mentor staff to develop and enhance trusting and respectful relationships with children	4
	Responsive Caregiving Approaches	Monitor and review caregiving approaches and practices for improvement	4
Professional Practice and Development	Coaching and Mentoring for Educators	Develop team leaders' coaching and mentoring capabilities to build a culture of mentoring in the Centre	4
	Collaborative Practices with Stakeholders across Disciplines	Design processes for collaborative practices facilitation in the Centre to provide integrated care-giving and education for all children	5
	Ethical Conduct and Professional Integrity	Drive the standards of professionalism, ethics and values to lead in the resolution of ethical dilemmas	5
	Practitioner Inquiry	Oversee inquiry projects in the Centre by harnessing research findings to review, innovate and design the curriculum and pedagogical approaches	5
	Reflective Practice for Educators	Foster a culture of reflective practice through providing opportunities for reflection and sharing in the Centre to improve professional practice	5
	Resilience and Self-care	Set policies and systems to help staff build resilience and overcome barriers to effective management of health and well-being	5

Refer to the following website for the full information on the Skills Framework for Early Childhood and the competencies for other EC roles: <https://www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/skills-framework/earlychildhood>



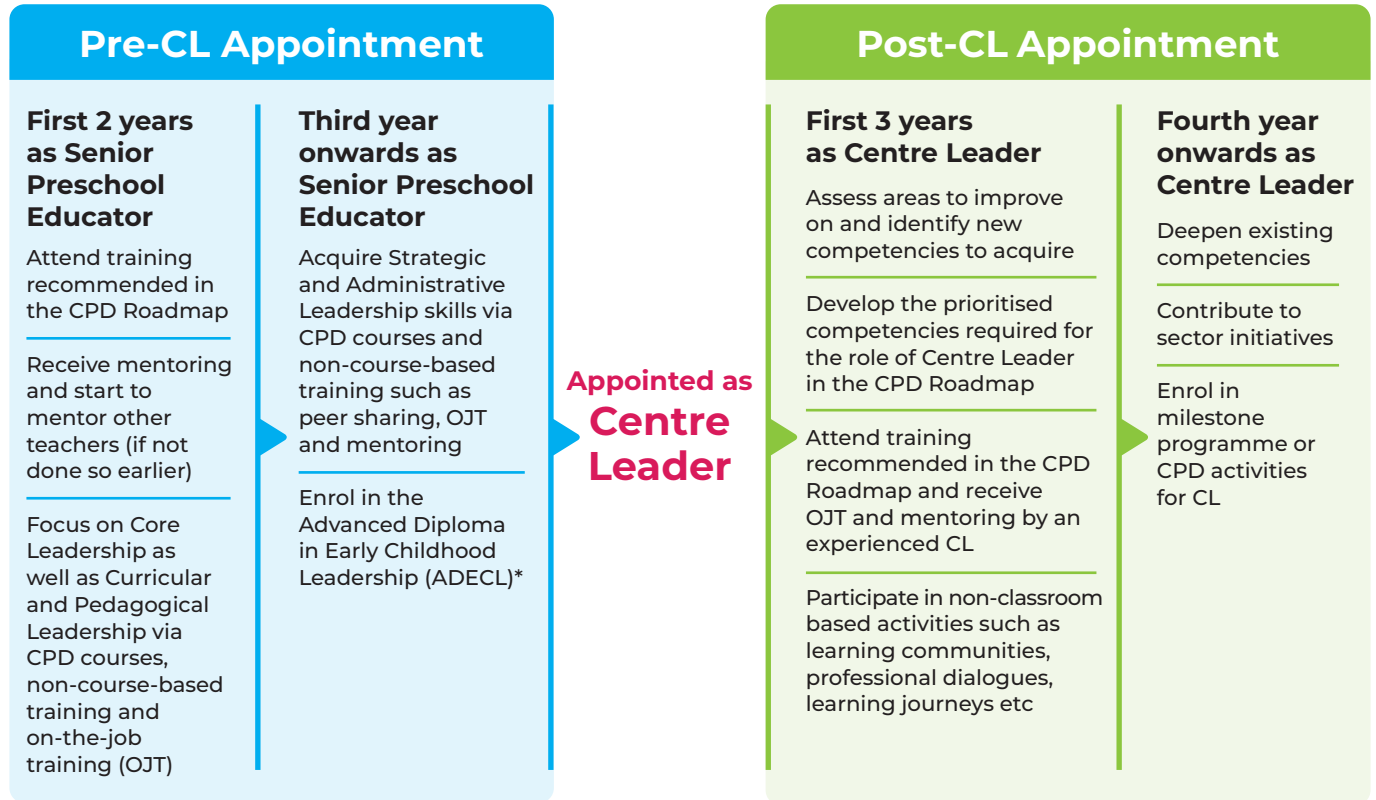
Leadership Training Roadmap

This roadmap will guide you on the professional development activities you can participate in to develop and strengthen your leadership capabilities.

To complement the LDF, ECDA will be developing a leadership training roadmap as a guide for potential and existing EC leaders to acquire LDF competencies in a progressive and holistic manner through milestone programmes and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses. This will complement the CPD Roadmap for educators that ECDA is rolling out in 2022.

Leadership Training Roadmap for Centre Leaders (CL)

Pre & Post-appointment



* Information on ADECL and the existing CPD courses available for leaders can be found at the following website: <https://www.ecda.gov.sg/Educators/Pages/CPD.aspx>





Inspiring Views on Growing Self & Others with LDF

*If you're a leader, do everything you can
to grow yourself and create the right
environment for others to grow.*

John C. Maxwell



MRS HEPHZI SEE

ECDA Fellow
Principal, Hebron Christian Preschool

Mrs Hephzi See, an ECDA Fellow and Principal of Hebron Christian Preschool joined the EC Sector 30 years ago. Today, she has over 20 years' experience as a Centre

Leader and still relishes the opportunity to contribute to the sector. She is especially excited by the opportunities to develop new and existing Centre Leaders.

“When I was a teacher, there was no roadmap or framework to guide me and my peers to prepare for leadership roles. The learning was not structured and we picked up skills through ad-hoc courses and from our seniors and other or fellow Centre Leaders,” she recalled.

Now, with the Leadership Development Framework (LDF), the acquisition of leadership competencies can be done in a structured manner. “The leadership competency clusters aid understanding of the competencies required for Centre

Leaders and the LDF training roadmap guides leaders to learn in phases and build on their prior knowledge incrementally,” she said.

Mrs See observed that there are times Centre Leaders may feel overwhelmed by their work and feel like they have no one to turn to.

To this, she said: **“I would like to assure them that there are resources and support available to help them in their leadership journey. They must be positive, resilient and willing to learn. Most importantly, they should not be shy to ask for help. I believe existing Centre Leaders can make a big impact on future generation of leaders by supporting new Centre Leaders as mentors and role models.”**



MS ZAITON MOHD ALI

ECDA Fellow
General Manager, Iyad-Perdaus Ltd

Ms Zaiton Mohd Ali's journey in the EC sector is a testament to her belief that there is always something new to learn. As an ECDA Fellow and General Manager of childcare operator, Iyad-Perdaus Ltd, she is constantly upgrading her knowledge and skills. This

process, coupled with the leadership skills gained from her corporate experience, allows her to remain relevant and meet the changing needs and demands of her role as a Centre Leader.

She believes that an openness to learning is especially important for new Centre Leaders.

“A new Centre Leader may be a master in teaching and learning but is usually a novice in leading. That's why it is important they acquire the leadership competencies as reflected within the LDF cluster. With this, they will have the full spectrum of skills to lead teams not just in curriculum and pedagogy, but across all aspects in early childhood.”

Ms Zaiton added that the LDF would help Centre Leaders to build stronger teams and enable

educators to achieve their leadership potential. As a Skills Future Fellowship Award recipient, she reiterated the importance of giving senior educators guidance and support as they prepare for and assume the role of a Centre Leader.

“For existing Centre Leaders, they too must continually learn and re-learn and the LDF training roadmap can help guide them through the process,” she said, adding that it is meaningful to facilitate the development of emerging leaders, and to see them discover their strengths and potential.

“It is a privilege to empower others through reflective practice, deliberate exploration and focused action. It brings me immense satisfaction when I witness them grow as they work on their areas of improvement,” Ms Zaiton concluded.



www.ecda.gov.sg