

Inclusive and Instructional Leaders

Center leadership is strategically focused on children's early achievement and nurtures trust and collective understanding and responsibility for excellence and improvement among staff and parents.

The five essentials are based on the premises that researchers found that high-quality teaching and sustained student engagement within the classroom depends in large measure on whether leadership and staff engage in a culture of ongoing support and development. They concluded that improving schools requires coherent, orchestrated action across the following five components of school organization: **effective leadership, collaborative teachers, involved families, supportive environments and ambitious instruction**. Attending to these organization-level dimensions was shown to enhance the day-to-day work of teachers, improving classroom instruction in sustained ways that lead to better student outcomes.

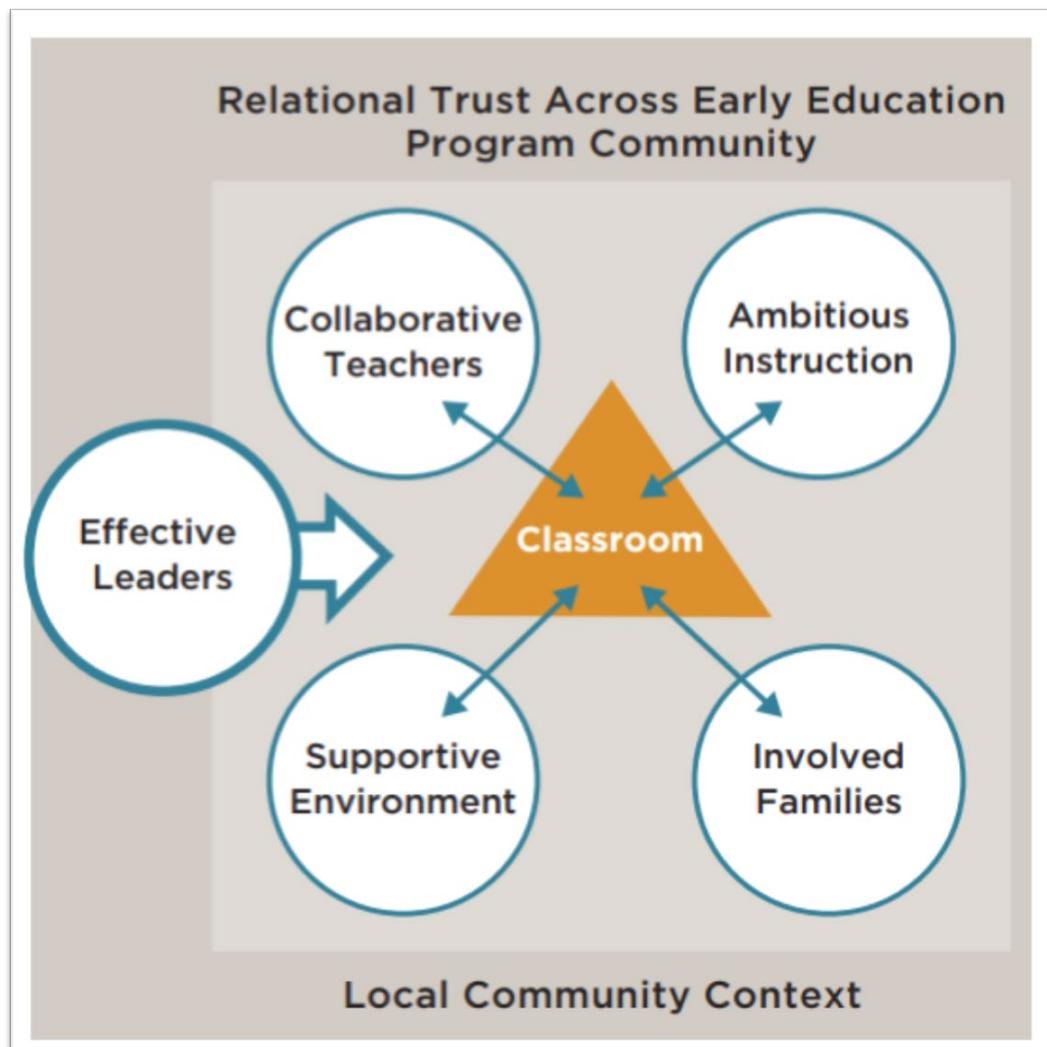
The research review made clear that investments in leadership and organizations are required if the early education sector is to transition toward sustainable practices of evidence-based instructional improvement. They adapted the K–12 definitions of each of the original study’s essential for fit and relevance to early education settings and practices. The aim was to nuance the definitions in order for them to resonate with early childhood professionals, and add details that better described the organizational processes of settings strongly organized to the essentials.

What does this mean?

Inclusive and Instructional Leadership:

- Leaders focus strategically on children’s health, learning, development and school readiness, and with actively supporting teachers to be effective in their daily work with children and families.
- Leaders establish a vision for child-centered supportive learning environments, ambitious teaching and learning, and partnerships with families in accomplishing that vision.
- They hire staff determined to continuously improve learning opportunities and outcomes for young children and families. In daily activities and interactions, leaders build and maintain mutually trusting and respectful relationships.
- They galvanize staff activity in service of improvement and direct resources toward a vision for sustained learning and improvement.
- Leaders build collective responsibility for excellence and improvement by enlisting teachers in improvement efforts and practicing shared leadership that cultivates a cadre of leaders among teachers, parents, and community members.
- Leaders ensure the school is managed effectively, including the facility, budget, staffing, and resources.

Pacchiano, D., Klein, R., and Hawley, M.S. (2016). “Reimagining Instructional Leadership and Organizational Conditions for Improvement: Applied Research Transforming Early Education.” Ounce of Prevention Fund.



Collaborating Teachers

Teachers are committed to the center, build strong relationships with their colleagues, and work together continuously to improve teaching and learning.

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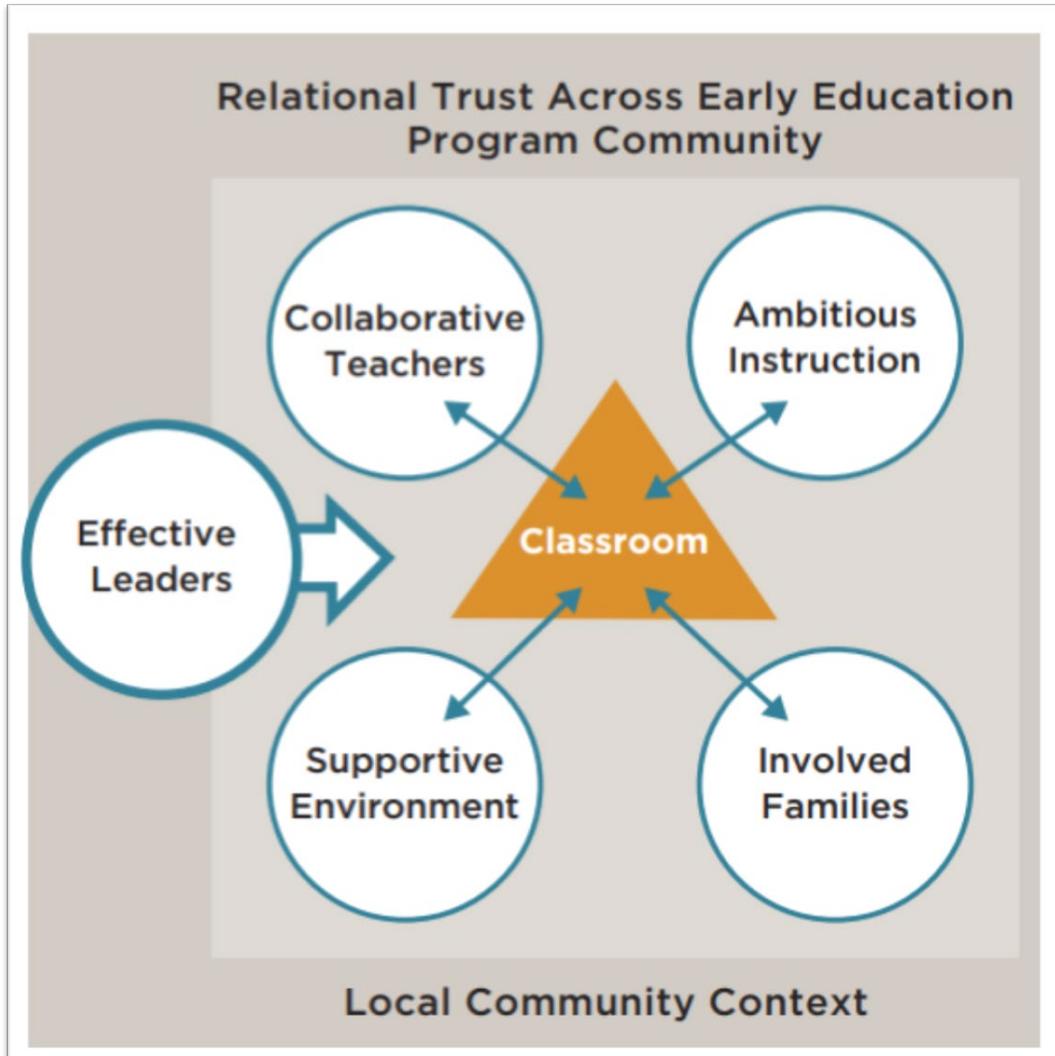
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Routine Teacher Collaboration:

- Leaders use supervisory and professional development resources, performance feedback, and social resources within the staff to build their professional capacity.
- Leaders work together with staff to define their strategic focus and practice improvement goals, and to solve learning and implementation problems along the way.
- Leaders protect time for routine teacher collaboration during the work week, and facilitate those routines to ensure teachers are reviewing data, examining and reflecting on practice, and collaborating to design instruction and try out practice improvements.
- All staff work in collaboration to promote their own and their colleagues’ professional growth.
- In such centers, teachers and staff are active partners in quality improvement, committed to the center and the children and families it cares for and educates, and focused on continuous professional learning, effectiveness, and improvement.

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Child-Centered Supportive Learning Environments

Centers are physically and emotionally safe and engaging environments, wherein staff hold high expectations for children's social-emotional and academic learning, coupled with nurturing, individualized supports for children and families.

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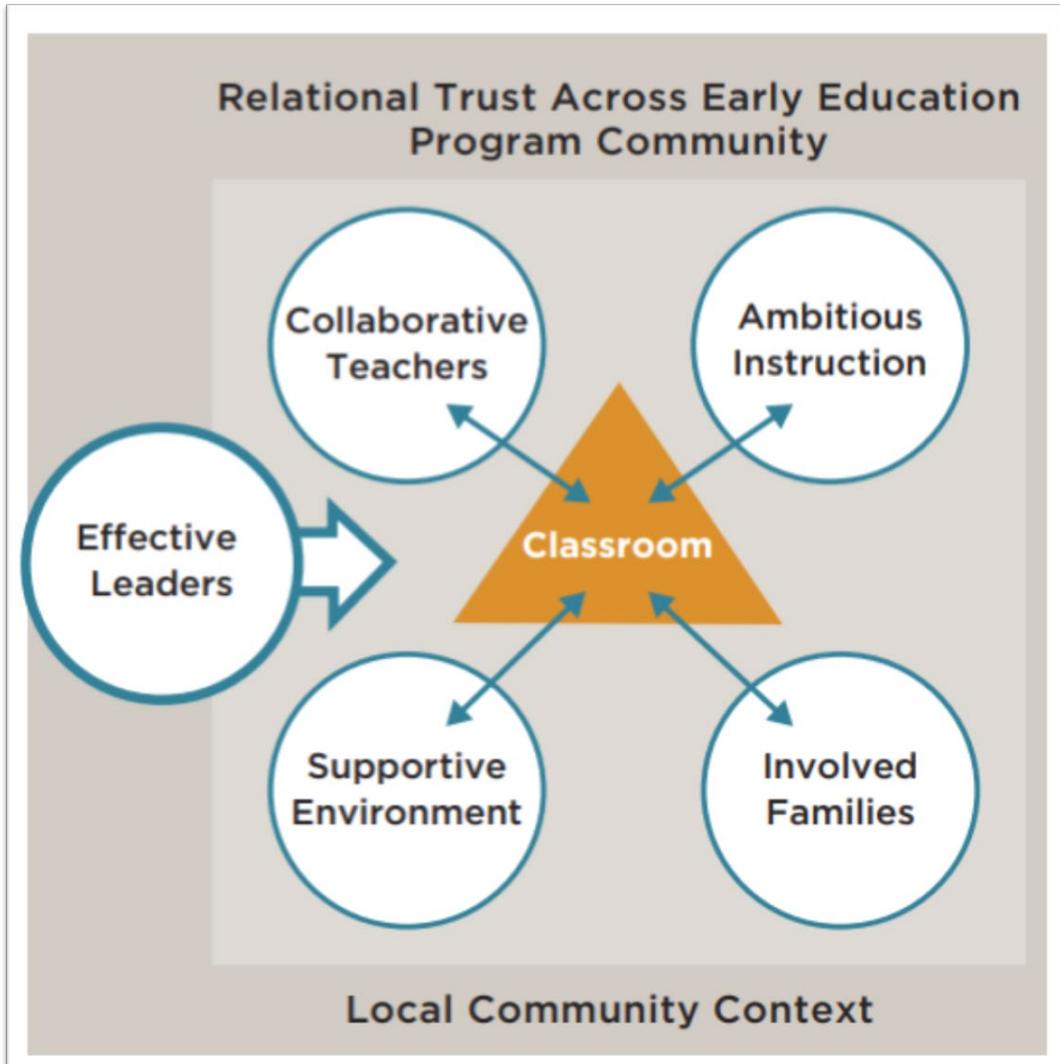
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Child-Centered Supportive Learning Environments:

- In child-centered supportive learning environments, all adults build supportive relationships with each other and with children and their families—the most basic prerequisite for learning.
- In the earliest years, it is critical that children experience child-centered supportive learning environments in order to develop a positive sense of themselves, the ability to trust others, and successful approaches to learning.
- Leaders use resources and establish policies that ensure all adults in the school community create consistently child-centered supportive learning environments.
- All adults attend daily to the use of physical space, materials, daily structure and routines, continuity of care, group size and ratio to create child-centered supportive environments.
- All adults interact with each other and children in warm, positive ways that create a positive emotional climate allowing children to consistently feel safe, liked, able to build relationships and actively explore.
- Teachers are trust-worthy and responsive to children’s individual emotional and intellectual needs, they hold high expectations for children’s capacity to learn, and they affirm and promote children’s exploration, friendships, engagement, and persistence.

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Ambitious Interactions and Instruction

Teachers and staff provide consistently engaging, developmentally appropriate, and rigorous curriculum and instruction.

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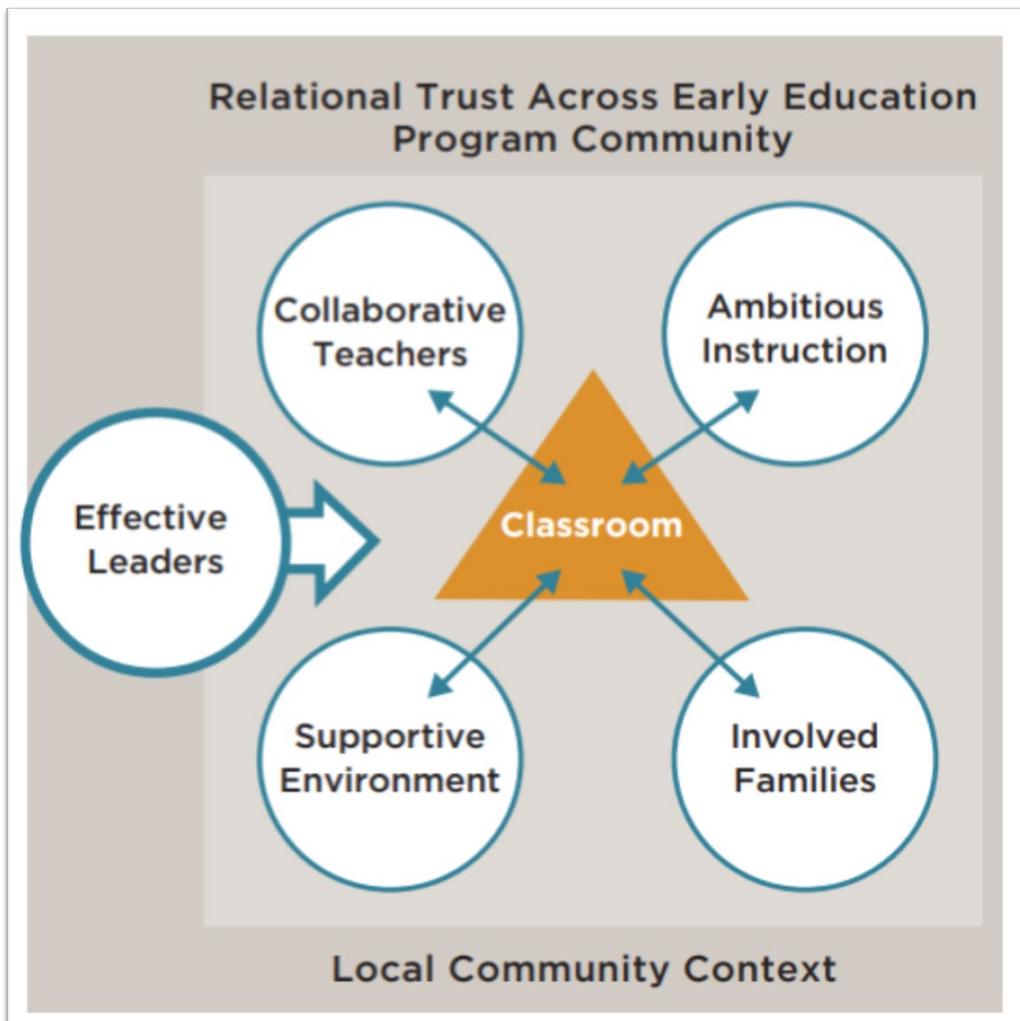
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Ambitious Interactions and Instruction:

- All adults are provided guidance that articulates the what and how of effective teaching and learning for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.
- All adults endorse and use early learning and development standards and assessment information about children’s progress toward the standards to design meaningful learning opportunities.
- Teachers reflect on and plan intentionally for their role in providing children with interactions that are emotionally supportive, organized, instructionally meaningful, and individualized to each child’s needs.
- All adults partner with families in continuing to learn about meaningful and effective learning opportunities for children both at home and at school.
- A guidance system supports high-quality implementation and continuous improvement of teaching interactions, instruction, and children’s learning.
- Structures for the implementation of curricula, assessments, and use of materials are coordinated across the program.
- While teachers may have substantial discretion in how these resources are used, teaching effectiveness depends on the community of practice and supervisory dialogue and feedback that supports implementation.

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Strong Ties and Partnerships Among Families, Schools, and the Community

All staff develop strong relationships with parents and families and support meaningful partnerships with families that support children's learning.

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Strong Ties and Partnerships Among Families, Schools and Community:

- Children do not exist alone; they are a member of a family that lives within a community.
- When families, schools and communities focus collectively on children’s needs, children are healthy, competent, motivated learners who realize long-term social and academic success.
- Early parent-school partnerships shape parents’ awareness and capacity for partnering with educators and advocating for their children’s needs to ensure positive experiences and success in school.
- Through systematic approaches, the entire staff works to build responsive, respectful relationships with families that motivate engagement and goal-oriented partnerships.
- Parents are partners in developing and achieving goals for their child and their family.
- Staff value parents’ perspective and participation and are willing to be influenced by it.
- All staff share and seek information from families to build mutual respect and understanding. They make decisions collaboratively with parents and work cohesively across home and school to support children’s participation, health, learning and development.
- All staff cultivate strong ties with elementary schools and actively support parents, children, and teachers to make successful kindergarten transitions.
- Through referrals and connections to community resources, staff work to reduce material hardships, promote well-being, and increase family capacity to engage with the children’s learning and development.
- By building social networks among families, staff work to reduce isolation, increase social-emotional supports, and open life and learning opportunities that strengthen families and entire communities.

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