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**Pre-K Education Directors & Instructional Leaders’**

**Use of Coaching Strategies to Support Effective Teaching**

A key challenge for the Early Care and Education (ECE) field is identifying key features of program quality that matter for children’s learning and social-emotional outcomes. In recent years, the role of leaders in ECE programs has been recognized as critical to achieving and maintaining effective teaching and other aspects of quality.[[1]](#footnote-1) These leaders are often called education directors in community-based ECE programs; in public schools, principals or assistant principals may serve as PreK leaders. Leaders can provide a variety of supports to teachers, including guidance about their use of effective practices and coaching. This brief presents key findings from a study of Pre-K leaders in NYC preschool programs. The following questions were addressed:

* How do leaders at diverse sites support teachers’ practices to strengthen program quality?
* What factors help or interfere with leaders’ efforts to positively influence learning for all children through teacher support?

**METHODS**

Pre-K leaders and teachers at 36 preschool sites located across nine community districts and four boroughs were recruited to participate in the study from August 2016 to November 2016. The final sample was comprised of 30 professionals in leadership roles: 24 were education directors in community-based sites and 6 were site directors or assistant principals in public school sites. In addition, 70 lead teachers, 52 assistant teachers, and 4 paraprofessionals/aides participated in the study.

Findings reported here are based on structured interviews with leaders and teachers. This analysis includes participants from Time 1 (October/November 2016): 28 professionals in leadership roles (education directors (68%) in community-based settings and instructional leaders (32%) in school-based settings) and 60 lead teachers.

**KEY FINDINGS**

* 90% of the leaders hold a Master’s degree, 75% a NY State Teacher Certification, and 53% an Early Childhood Education Teaching Credential; 21% a state-issued supervision certificate.
* Most leaders make frequent visits to classrooms needing strong supports (62% visit at least once a week), and most report that visits are at least 15 minutes.
* Most leaders (61%) report strong support for practices that promote social-emotional skills; half or fewer report strong support for other practices (e.g., practices that promote language and math skills; help teachers individualize).
* Leaders spend the most time observing classroom activities and much less time in activities that actively engage the teacher (e.g., asking the teacher to reflect on or plan practices and teaching).
* Factors that predict strong coaching methods and content are: having state teaching certification that included “early childhood,” having fewer obstacles to conducting classroom visits, and being in a low-resource versus high or moderate resource community.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

* Establish standards for ED/IL visits to classrooms (e.g., teachers with lower quality classrooms should receive classroom coaching visits at least once a week).
* Provide ED/ILs with training and support to use practice-based (PB) coaching in classroom visits.
* Assess and work with ED/ILs to limit or manage responsibilities that reduce leaders’ time to support teachers.

**Please use this link to access the full report for this study:**

<http://nccp.org/publications/pdf/text_1226.pdf>

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1. Pacchiano, D., Klein, R., and Hawley, M.S. (2016). “Job-Embedded Professional Learning Essential to Improving Teaching and Learning in Early Education.” Ounce of Prevention Fund. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)