



What Teachers Expect

Exchange Everyday: January 19, 2010

The Art of Leadership: Managing Early Childhood Organizations, outlines what teachers expect of a center director:

- **Staff expects you to be an expert.** Staff respects a director who knows her stuff, who really understands how to deliver quality child care. Staff needs to know that if they have a problem they can turn to the director and know they will get the support and guidance they need.
- **Staff expects you to know what's going on.** The most frequently voiced complaint about bosses is that they are out of touch with what is happening on the floor. A director loses credibility when teachers perceive (whether correctly or not) that he doesn't understand (or care about) the day-to-day issues they face.
- **Staff expects you to make good decisions.** Most decisions a director makes involve a mix of financial, organizational, and tactical factors, factors that few staff are aware of. For staff to have confidence in their director, they must trust that she is balancing all these factors wisely and making decisions that are in the best interests of the organization.
- **Staff expects you to listen.** Nothing is more demotivating than to believe that others do not respect your judgment. Teachers need to believe that the director values their opinions and takes their input (whether requested or volunteered) seriously.
- **Staff expects you to be fair.** In order for staff to respect you, they need to be convinced that you will treat them fairly when it comes to scheduling, raises, discipline, and attention.



Leadership

The task of the Leader is to get his people from where they are to where they have not been.

Henry Kissinger

Difficult Supervisory Conversations

Exchange Everyday: March 3, 2010

As a supervisor you may find it necessary to have conversations with employees who are not performing well. While we don't like the name of the book, Bad Apples: How to Manage Difficult Employees, Encourage Good Ones to Stay, and Boost Productivity (Avon, MA: Adams Business, 2009), we did find the advice it offered on conducting such a conversation to be helpful:

- **Avoid confrontation.** A discussion between a manager and employee should never become a confrontation pitting one person against the other. There is nothing in the dynamic that will improve the situation.
- **Don't be afraid of silence.** If you feel like things are escalating or becoming confusing, take a deep breath and a moment to gather your thoughts.
- **Keep your annoyance to yourself.** Sometimes it can be useful to let someone know how much they have annoyed you or made your life difficult, but in most situations it just muddies the waters. Treat the employee with respect and the conversation will be much smoother.
- **Give your employee room to speak.** Refusing to let your employee offer an explanation will cause resentment, so allow him some time to account for his behavior.

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We would like to hear from you and encourage your suggestions for newsletter content. Contact the editor: Christine Killen

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