

# Are Leadership Essentials the Foundation of Whole Leadership?

BY BARB VOLPE

My colleague Mike Abel, in an [earlier blog post](#) raised a question I keep coming back to: **Are leadership essentials (LE) the foundation on which administrative leadership (AL) and pedagogical leadership (PL) are built?**

As I think back on my career working in Head Start, it seems that it was those Leadership Essential competencies (awareness of self and others, cultural competence, and ethical conduct) that helped our program be successful through some challenging times. Changes in education requirements for teachers, increased diversity of staff and parent policy council, and changes in curriculum and assessment tools were a few of the challenges that gave me the opportunity to use and grow the LE competencies necessary to meet changes in our organization.

My role, as the education coordinator, involved both Administrative Leadership and Pedagogical Leadership. However, awareness of self, others, and the profession; communication and team building; cultural competence; and ethical conduct absolutely were the foundation that supported my work as an education coordinator. Being authentic and conducting my work in an ethical manner helped me earn a trusting relationship with teachers and staff so that, when changes in policy or initiatives occurred, they were willing to walk with me to meet and exceed the outcomes set for us.

It seems to me that anyone who is in an Administrative or Pedagogical leadership role for any length of time develops his or her own LE foundation and is mindful that the competencies and qualities of Leadership Essentials may not be fully developed or consistently used.

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