

The Director's Link

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Improving Leadership and Management Practices—One Step at a Time

Jill Bella

All change, even the changes we perceive as positive, can create stress. As a result, many people naturally resist change. In our society we celebrate those who make bold, grand changes, taking on monumental tasks or implementing ground-breaking, innovative initiatives. But rather than inspiring outstanding achievement, this mindset often leads to heightened fear among those directly impacted by organizational change.

Fortunately, there are other ways to approach change. In the Japanese culture there is a concept referred to as *kaizen*. *Kaizen* emphasizes taking small, doable steps in any change process, personal or organizational. Approaching change from this perspective helps eliminate the fear and resistance that can accompany the change process. By re-conceptualizing change as a series of small incremental steps, real improvements seem more achievable yet the ultimate goal remains great.

Taking small steps toward change is a sensible way to improve the leadership and management practices in your early care and education program. As a program director you deal with a wide range of

"The most efficient and effective route to bold change is the participation of everyone, every day in incremental change."

—Tom Peters

administrative issues. You are the gatekeeper to quality. Your role as both leader and manager is pivotal to program success. Without efficient and effective systems in place at the organizational level, quality teaching practices cannot be sustained at the classroom level. The *Program Administration Scale* (PAS) is an assessment tool designed to help you make change in small incremental steps.

The Program Administration Scale

Designed to complement the environment rating scales that measure the quality of learning environments, the PAS measures the quality of leadership and management practices of early care and education programs on a 7-point scale (from 1 meaning inadequate to 7 meaning excellent) on 79 quality indicator strands.

These indicator strands comprise 25 items clustered in 10 subscales: human resources development, personnel cost and allocation, center operations, child assessment, fiscal management, program planning and evaluation, family partnerships, marketing and public relations, technology, and staff qualifications. The 7-point continuum for each quality indicator strand allows you to easily see your program's strengths and target areas for improvement. As such, the PAS is a convenient and powerful tool for you to use in your early childhood program improvement efforts.

Continued on page 2

Figure 1: Supervision and Performance Appraisal

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Inadequate		Minimal		Good		Excellent
N 1.1 Written annual performance appraisal is not conducted for teaching staff.*	Y 3.1 Written annual performance appraisal is conducted by supervisor for teaching staff.*	Y 5.1 Teaching staff participate in annual performance appraisal process (e.g., written self-appraisal in file along with supervisor's appraisal).*	Y 7.1 Written performance appraisal includes goals and professional development targets for the next year.			
Y 1.2 Criteria used for performance appraisal are mostly subjective and trait-based (e.g., teacher is warm, friendly, caring).	N 3.2 Criteria used for performance appraisal are mostly objective and behavior-based (e.g., teacher uses positive guidance techniques, asks children open-ended questions).	N 5.2 Performance appraisal criteria differ by role and are tied to the specific responsibilities detailed in each job description.	N 7.2 Performance appraisal includes multiple sources of evidence (e.g., artifacts, parent feedback, co-worker feedback).			
N 1.3 Teaching staff are not formally observed as part of the supervision and performance appraisal process.**	Y 3.3 Teaching staff are formally observed as part of the supervision and performance appraisal process.**	Y 5.3 At least three times a year, supervisors provide teaching staff with written or oral feedback based on observation of the teacher's performance.	N 7.3 A system is implemented to provide ongoing feedback and support to teaching staff.***			

Comments:
 1.2-3.2: Performance appraisal criteria are mostly subjective
 5.2: Performance appraisal forms are the same regardless of teaching role (i.e., Lead Teachers and Apprentice Teachers complete the same form)
 7.2: Performance appraisals do not include multiple sources of evidence
 7.3: The only element of a system for providing ongoing feedback and support is concrete

Circle the final score based on the scoring rules on page 5.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. Supervision and Performance Appraisal

From Talan, T. & Bloom, P.J. (2004). Program Administration Scale. New York: Teachers College Press. Fourth printing. Reprinted for training purposes with permission from the authors.

The Program Improvement Process

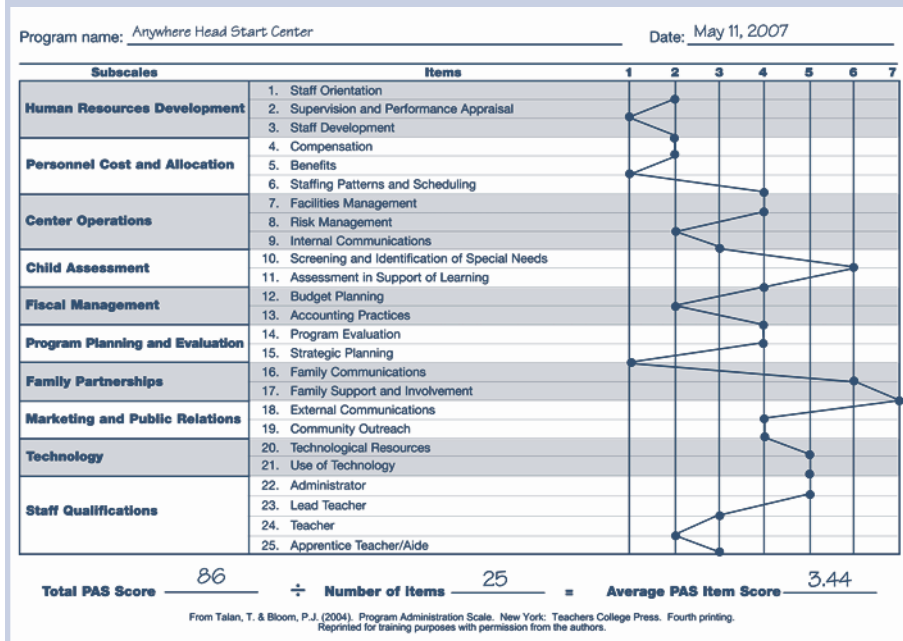
The program improvement process using the PAS is straightforward and involves five steps:

Rate individual PAS indicators. For each item in the PAS, begin by rating the indicator strands, progressing across each quality rubric from 1 (inadequate) to 7 (excellent). Note in the spaces provided a Y (yes) or an N (no) depending on whether or not the indicator is met. For example, in the item Supervision and Performance Appraisal, one of the indicator strands includes the following indicator: "Written performance appraisal

includes goals and professional development targets for the next year." If the performance appraisal in your program includes these components, you would respond with a Y in the designated place. **Figure 1** provides an example of a completed PAS item.

Generate a score for the PAS items. Once all of the indicators for an item have been rated, you can determine the item score by following the scoring rules found in the PAS book. An average PAS item score is generated by totaling all of the item scores and dividing by the number of items assessed. This score gives you an

Figure 2: The Program Administration Scale (PAS) Profile



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Our Mission

The McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership is dedicated to enhancing the management skills, professional orientation, and leadership capacity of early childhood administrators. The activities of the Center encompass four areas: training, technical assistance, research, and public awareness.

Figure 3: Action Plan

Goal: To improve performance appraisal processes. (PAS Item #2)

Objectives	Action Steps	Person Responsible	Time	Resources Needed (people, materials, \$\$\$)	Evaluation Checkpoints
To change performance appraisal criteria so they are mostly objective and behavior-based (e.g. teacher uses positive guidance techniques, asks children open-ended questions). (Indicators 1.2 & 3.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review currently used and sample performance appraisals for objective and behavior-based criteria and determine which criteria should be included in performance appraisals ▶ Create new performance appraisals that are mostly objective and behavior-based. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Director ▶ Director and Administrative Assistant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 8 hours to research and refine self-appraisals ▶ 4 hours to create, format, and edit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Internet, <i>Blueprint for Action</i> book, community Director's Network members ▶ Computer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Feedback from staff on new form at weekly meeting. Feedback from mentor at next meeting. ▶ Review forms after using for mid-term appraisals.
Change current performance appraisals so they reflect the different teaching roles at the program. (Indicator 5.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review job descriptions for lead teachers, teachers, and apprentice teachers and determine which responsibilities are not included in the current performance appraisals for each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All teaching staff and director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Approximately 2 hours of planning time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Current job descriptions, current performance appraisals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ At next program meeting staff will submit edits to current performance appraisals
Improve performance appraisal methods to include multiple sources of evidence (e.g., artifacts, parent feedback, co-worker feedback) (Indicator 7.2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop parent feedback form ▶ Develop co-teacher feedback form ▶ Implement portfolio system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ All teaching staff and director ▶ All teaching staff and director ▶ Director 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Approximately 1 hour ▶ Approximately 1 hour ▶ Approximately 50 hours over the year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Sample parent feedback forms ▶ Sample co-teacher feedback forms ▶ <i>Visionary Director</i> book, digital camera (\$150), color printer (\$125) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ At next program meeting staff will go over both feedback forms ▶ At end of each month add 2 items to each portfolio

overall picture of the quality of administrative practices in your early care and education program.

Create a PAS profile. Once scoring is complete for all items, you can plot your scores on the graph provided in the PAS book. This profile will give you a visual picture of the areas of strength in your program and areas in need of improvement. Your PAS profile provides a snapshot of the current level of quality from an organizational perspective. **Figure 2** provides an example of a completed PAS profile.

Target areas for improvement. The distribution of scores on the PAS Profile can help you determine where to begin making improvements in your program. Look for trends—items in a particular subscale that are consistently high or low. Determining which areas to target for improvement will depend on several things—your program's strategic priorities, the fiscal and human resources available, and the time you have to devote to the program improvement process. In some cases you'll want to tackle

items that are easily achievable. In other cases, you may decide to tackle items that require a long-term commitment.

Develop an action plan. Targeting an area for improvement will be an idle exercise unless you follow-up with a concrete action plan. Your action plan should embrace the concept of kaizen, noting improvements in small achievable steps. **Figure 3** provides a sample action plan for improving Item 2 on the PAS, Supervision and Performance Appraisal.

This action plan focuses on the second indicator strand in Item 2—the criteria used to measure performance in the center's performance appraisal system. As you see in the example, the objectives are precise statements of what needs to be done to achieve a positive rating in this indicator strand. For each objective, detailed action steps are described and the individuals responsible for completing the action steps are noted along with the resources and time needed to accomplish each action step. In addition, the action plan includes evaluation checkpoints to assess progress

and determine if the objective has been met.

Small Steps Can Support Big Changes

Using the PAS for self-assessment and creating an action plan to improve program quality based on the results may seem like a daunting task. But following the kaizen approach and making small incremental changes can help reduce feelings of anxiety, encourage creativity, and increase effectiveness. By choosing one item on which to work and crafting an action plan for improving that item's score, you will be taking an important step in creating a norm of continuous improvement in your program and helping to achieve your goal of program excellence.

Jill Bella is Director of Special Projects at the McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership. The Program Administration Scale (PAS) by Teri Talan and Paula Jorde Bloom is available from Teachers College Press (www.teacherscollegepress.com) and New Horizons (www.newhorizonsbooks.net).

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Program Administration Scale Assessor Reliability Training

August 20-22, 2007

The *Program Administration Scale* (PAS) measures leadership and management practices of center-based early care and education programs. Assessor reliability training includes an overview of reliability of the instrument, interview protocol for collecting data, and information on how to score indicators and items. Individuals who successfully complete the training are eligible to become certified PAS assessors.

This three-day training is designed for technical assistance specialists, quality monitors, management consultants, researchers, and other professionals interested in using the PAS to reliably assess early childhood leadership and management practices and help center directors improve the quality of their programs.

Location: McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership
NLU Wheeling Campus Annex

Fee: \$650, includes all texts, handouts, and meals

Participants may receive 2 semester hours of graduate credit (ECE582C, Workshop/Early Childhood Program Evaluation) by paying an additional fee.

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This institute is designed for center directors, assistant directors, education coordinators, and other family support staff who work with families who have limited financial resources. Guest presenters will be Evelyn Prasse and Susan Taylor, consumer and family economics educators with the University of Illinois Extension. Ms. Prasse provides training in financial management, consumer decision making, housing, and indoor environment issues for low- and moderate-income individuals. Ms. Taylor provides leadership to numerous civic groups and social agencies on budgeting, credit, consumer fraud, decision making, resource management, and consumerism.

Location: McCormick Tribune Center for Early Childhood Leadership,
NLU Wheeling Campus Annex

Fee: \$100 on or before August 31, 2007, \$150 afterward
Includes all institute materials, breakfast and lunch

**For more information, contact Debra Trude-Suter at debra.trudesuter@nl.edu
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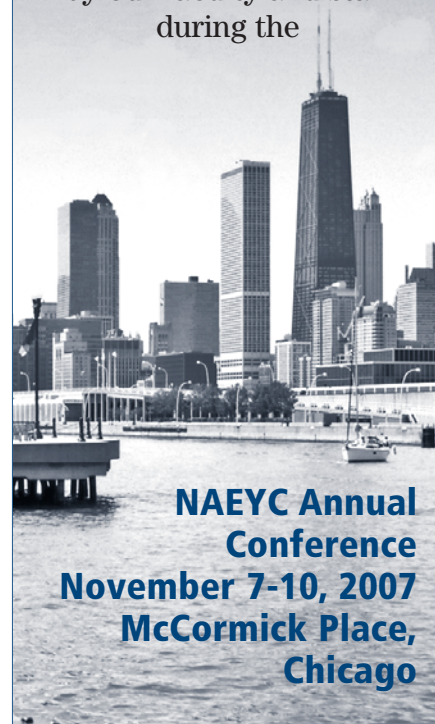
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"All of my southern Illinois colleagues, as well as my statewide friends commented that this was the "best" event ever. I loved getting my intellectual and emotional fix for the year." — Diane King, Southeastern Illinois College

"My head is still reeling with ideas, thoughts and inspiration; from the opening keynote speaker, the workshop presenters, to the closing keynote speaker. This was, without a doubt, the best conference I have ever attended!" — Barbara Volpe, McHenry County Head Start



LEADERSHIP Connections May 8-10, 2008

Look for registration materials in your mailbox this fall or log onto our Web site (<http://cecl.nl.edu>) for details.

From the Inside Out The Power of Reflection and Self-Awareness

By Paula Jorde Bloom

The quest for excellence begins with an inner quest to discover who we are—our passions, values, talents, personal resources, and even those foibles and annoying habits we might prefer not to acknowledge. Having a better understanding of ourselves is the first step toward achieving a better relationship with others.



From the Inside Out is your passport for self-discovery. Through thought-provoking questions and engaging exercises you'll have an opportunity to reflect on where you are in your journey through adulthood, determine

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From the Inside Out will help you gain clarity about your purpose and passions and understand the values and beliefs that shape your behavior. It will help you to appreciate your strengths and internal resources, learn how to avoid the comparison trap, and practice strategies to reduce stress and avoid burnout. The book is a helpful guide for creating an action plan to achieve greater job fulfillment

Just Published

From the Inside Out is the latest release in the Director's Toolbox Management Series for Early Childhood Administrators. Written in a concise format, each book provides a theoretical overview on a focused topic, ample examples from the day-to-day world of child care administration, exercises, checklists, and suggested resources. They are perfect as self-paced guides for the busy director eager to learn practical suggestions for improving administrative effectiveness or as a training tool for workshop presenters.

\$18.95, soft-cover, 120 pages. Available from New Horizons (www.newhorizonsbooks.net) and Gryphon House (www.ghbooks.com).