

Who Are You and Why Do You Need to Know?

HOW SELF-AWARENESS, REFLECTION, AND SELF-MENTORING PROPEL US FORWARD

Who are you? How well do you know yourself? For some, these questions are easy to answer. For others, the answers may be perplexing. As administrators of early care and education programs, the answers to these questions play an important part in your ability to successfully lead others. It has been said that to lead others most effectively, you need to know who you are as a person. I think the following quote makes another case for building self-awareness.

“Who we are is how we lead.”

– Brené Brown

Your leadership style is influenced by who you are in a number of ways; your attitudes, beliefs, values, communication style, behaviors, definition of success, confidence, insecurities, and motivations are just a few of the key ingredients that form your identity. Many other considerations also come into play when becoming aware of who you are and who you want to be, such as influences from your early years, family upbringing, education, groups you have been a part of, social events you lived through, life experiences, physical characteristics, personality, and developmental career stage. Self-awareness involves becoming knowledgeable of these influences and how they contribute to your interactions with others.

As you increase your self-awareness, you will undoubtedly realize that all of these influences and considerations are not stagnant. They change like the days in a year, thus making self-awareness a continuous process that involves reflection. Reflection can be used to gain clarity about who you are, to think critically, and to propel you forward. When you use self-awareness and reflection to shape your behavior, you are essentially mentoring yourself or self-mentoring. In other words, you are “intentionally developing and strengthening those aspects of who you are that will move you toward who you want to be” (Bloom, 2007). If you would like to learn more about who you are, complete the [Getting Started Self-Awareness Questions](#). To gain more self-awareness specifically related to your role as an early childhood administrator, you may also be interested in the [Administrator Role Perceptions Survey \(ARPS\)](#).

Interested in training a group of directors on how to be self-mentors? The McCormick Center offers a full-day session for administrators of early care and education programs titled, [From the Inside Out: The Power of Reflection and Self-awareness](#). Please [contact us](#) for more information. The session is also offered as part of our four-month leadership academy for administrators of center-based early care and education programs who are new to their administrative role, titled, [Ready to Lead](#).

Jill Bella, Ed.D., is Director of Professional Learning for the McCormick Center for Early Childhood Leadership and Assistant Professor of Early Childhood Education at National Louis University (NLU). In these roles, she oversees professional learning, conducts research, and consults for local and state initiatives on the [Early Childhood Work Environment Survey \(ECWES\)](#), the [Program Administration Scale \(PAS\)](#), the [Business Administration Scale for Family Child Care \(BAS\)](#), and leadership topics in early care and education. Dr. Bella is also the co-author of several books and trainer’s guides including [A Great Place to Work](#), [Inspiring Peak Performance](#), and [Building on Whole Leadership](#).