

Book Review

Professional and Ethical Consideration for Early Childhood Leaders by Cunningham, D.D.

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It is well documented that the quality of leadership can have a direct influence on the quality of provision within the education sector (Douglas, 2019). *Professional and Ethical Consideration for Early Childhood Leaders* aims to be a resource to leaders in the complex early childhood sector. The title acknowledges that the role of the early childhood teacher requires multifaceted leadership abilities, with teachers often leading in pedagogical, administrative and management roles. Drawing on the knowledge and research of international early childhood professionals, each chapter explores a specific area of leadership within the early childhood context.

Written from an American perspective the chapters are organised under the three primary domains of the *Whole Leadership Framework* (Abel et al., 2017) leadership essentials, administrative leadership, and pedagogical leadership, which has been developed to support continuity in the area of educational leadership within the early childhood sector.

Arranged under the heading of leadership essentials, section one consists of three chapters that provide the reader with a range of leadership strategies. Chapter one focuses on developing effective relational leadership, highlighting the dual dependency of relationships and leadership and that effective leadership is underpinned by relationships informed with trust, honesty and communication. Chapter two discusses identifying and overcoming external and internal barriers to lead successful professional learning, while chapter three outlines the opportunities for bi-directional learning that can be accessed through developing leadership networks and learning communities.

Chapters within section two may be of most use to positional leaders within the early childhood sector. Focusing on administrative leadership, the seven chapters outline topics and strategies from how to create a work culture that encourages retention of teachers, to the use of data to inform leadership and teaching practice.

Section three focuses on pedagogical leadership, consisting of six chapters that provide strategies and information to the early childhood practitioner regardless of experience or position. This is particularly true of chapter eleven that focuses on democratic curriculum leadership discussing the structural, practical and leadership aspects of implementing quality curriculum. Highlighted is the importance of critical awareness and evaluation of the multiple factors (including political aspects) that influence the implementation of curriculum within the early childhood sector.

Although touched upon within previous chapters, the final three chapters of the book focus on culturally responsive pedagogy and leadership practices that support equitable outcomes for all learners. The significance of play as a culturally responsive pedagogical approach is outlined within chapter fourteen, delving into play theories the authors position the importance of the pedagogical leader's role in providing robust culturally relevant play

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opportunities. The volume concludes with discussion of the ethical commitment of early childhood leaders to develop critical consciousness and cultural competence within their teaching and leadership practice.

The range of leadership concepts and issues outlined will enable those outside of an American context to draw correlations to their own experiences positioning *Professional and Ethical Consideration for Early Childhood Leaders* as a useful resource for those involved in the early childhood sector.

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References

Abel, M., Talan, T., & Masterson, M. (2017). Whole leadership: A framework for early childhood programs. *Exchange*, 39(233), 22-25.

Douglass, A. L. (2019). *Leadership for Quality Early Childhood Education and Care*. OECD Education Working Papers, No. 211. OECD Publishing. <https://one.oecd.org/document/EDU/WKP%282019%2919/En/pdf>