Fostering Essential Dispositions in Young Children

Guidance for use of the video within your program

Have staff read page 10 Fostering Competent Learners: Essential Dispositions in the ELDS document. Have each member of the team consider their current ability to foster these dispositions and identify their greatest strengths. Have them all view the video.

- Depending on the size of your staff, have either one individual or teams work together to find an article related to their area of strength to share. Have them also identify the strategies that they use in their classrooms to foster those dispositions. Have each person/team share with the group. Discuss the video as a group. Identify connections to their work and some new ideas to try. Might focus on one segment each week.

- As a group, create a list of strategies to try in all classrooms. Also identify those practices that might undermine positive dispositions. What are some alternatives? Post the list in an area where they plan, or print and give copies to each classroom team.

- Teachers could also identify areas that they could use support to improve. Team each person up with a peer that listed that area as a strength. Teachers could do peer observations and look for evidence of useful strategies in each other’s classrooms. Work in teams to create a walk-through checklist to use in classrooms. Identify what to ‘look for.’

- Acknowledge what’s working. Identify areas for improvement. Do program policies support teacher’s efforts to foster positive dispositions in children? Review philosophy and curriculum and identify which dispositions are emphasized. Also identify whether policies at the center are supportive of these dispositions in the adults who work there.

- Explore the possibility of developing a Community of Practice to further study this topic. Support staff who are interested by providing: time to meet and discuss, resources to expand their thinking, and an opportunity to share what they learn.

- When teachers feel that they have made significant progress in this area, celebrate their efforts and discuss what they’ve noticed about the children’s responses to the changes. Finally, have them reflect on their own dispositions and consider how they could make these more visible to children through modeling.

- How does the program communicate this topic with families? Consider how to share the work that is being done and lessons learned with families. A web resource to share: http://www.pbs.org/wholechild/parents/play.html

Resources:

Dispositions as Educational Goals by Lilian Katz

Why Children’s Dispositions Should Matter to all Teachers by D. DaRos-Voseles and S. Fowler-Haughey