Program Leadership Development Model: Year 2 Evaluation, FY 2016-17

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Introduction

Background

As the leaders of early learning program sites, directors are responsible for all facets of program operations and overall quality. Administrative practices and program leadership contribute to overall program quality. Program administration and organizational climate have been correlated with measures of the global quality of preschool programs (Dennis & O'Connor, 2013; Lower & Cassidy, 2007). Strong program administration and management can have positive effects on program quality.

Research shows that administrators and directors who participate in leadership and management training designed for the field of early care and education are able to improve their practices. One evaluation of a leadership training program found that directors who participated in training workshops and were supported by mentors reported gains in knowledge and competence in implementing staff development. Their teaching staff felt that their work environment was more positive and productive (Bloom, Jackson, Talan, & Kelton, 2013). Such professional development opportunities have resulted in significant increases in administrative practices and global classroom quality (Doherty, Ferguson, Ressler, & Lomotey, 2015). This highlights the importance of supporting directors of early learning programs to improve their leadership and management skills.

Child360's Professional Leadership Development Model

In order to help early learning program directors improve the quality of their programs, Child360 wanted to work with these directors to strengthen their skills, including their ability to support teachers' improvement efforts. This concept led Child360 to include leadership development as a key aspect of its program improvement model in 2015. Before 2015, Child360 Program Coaches had supported preschool teachers' ability to improve their programs at the classroom level. With the introduction of the California Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS), which considers quality at the site level, Child360's model began to provide early learning programs with a range of supports for their overall quality improvement. These supports included Program Leadership Development (PLD), in which Program Leadership Consultants (PLCs) work with directors to strengthen their leadership skills and to increase overall site quality. Child360's strategic approach combines the support of the PLC for the director and the support of the Program Coach for the teachers in order to maximize improvements in early learning programs.

Child360's PLD focuses primarily on support provided by experienced consultants to early education directors. The PLD program builds on Child360's coaching model, using its basic principles of Servant Leadership, Process Consultation, and Appreciative Inquiry. The goal of PLCs is to build the capacity of directors to lead, manage, and develop systems for quality improvement. Directors, with the help of the PLCs, define goals for program quality improvement and leadership development, and create a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) that serves as the focus of the consultation visits for the year. PLCs conduct monthly site visits throughout the year, during which they provide individual consultation and mentorship to directors based on each director's goals. Additionally, a small cohort of directors were invited to attend the three-day Director's Institute training series.

Purpose

This report evaluates the second year of implementation of the Program Leadership Development Model (PLD), spanning the period from September 2016 through June 2017.

Program Summary

The PLD included an intensive combination of supports provided to 228 early learning programs by Program Leadership Consultants (PLCs) and Program Coaches. Nine PLCs provided individualized support to directors on leadership and management skills and on quality program practices, while 50 Program Coaches provided support to the teaching staff. Additionally, a 3-day Director's Institute training series was provided to 19 directors.

Data Analyzed

Data analyzed to document the successes and challenges of implementation included PLC Monthly Case Notes for FY 2016-2017, notes from the year-end PLC Focus Group, and the Director's Institute Feedback Surveys.

Key Findings

Analyses demonstrated PLCs successfully implemented new systems to keep directors' focused on goals and found concrete ways of discussing directors' leadership development.

Difficulties were encountered among some PLC-Coach teams around developing joint site goals to provide cohesive support, and communicating regularly about sites' progress on goals.

Recommendations

Suggestions for future practices are outlined in the Recommendations section of this report.

Evaluation Overview

The goals of this evaluation were (1) to document the second year of implementation of the PLD model, including the ways in which PLCs worked with Program Coaches; (2) to attempt to assess site progress toward quality improvement; (3) to identify the successes and challenges of implementation; and (4) to make recommendations to improve the model. The intent of the evaluation was to discover innovations and changes that might improve and refine the PLD model (see Appendix, Design of Program Leadership Development Model and Figure 1: Program Leadership Development Model). The primary focus was on the program's second year; however, some comparisons were made between the first and second year of implementation, based on the PLCs' reflections.

The following evaluation findings were based on trends in the data and information gathered from the limited PLC Monthly Case Notes for FY 2016-2017, the year-end PLC Focus Group, and to a lesser extent, from the Director's Institute Feedback Surveys (see Appendix, Methods and Analysis, for more information).

Findings: Description of Implementation

PLCs and Coaches seemed to be knowledgeable and well-coordinated for the initial visits to sites, resulting in a smooth start to their working relationships with sites. The PLCs coordinated with the Quality Improvement (QI) team members (Program Coaches and Professional Development Specialists) to clarify their roles for an initial Welcome Visit that took place prior to the first coaching visit. On average, Welcome Visits took about an hour and 20 minutes. PLCs felt that the roles of each member of the QI team were clearer as compared to the first year. In cases where the PLC already had a relationship with the director, the PLC's role was to lead the conversation. The PLCs also allowed time for each QI member to introduce themselves and explain their roles. The Program Coach took the lead in cases where the PLC did not have a relationship with the director. At times, the coach shared inaccurate information. This caused some confusion. Overall, however, PLCs and the QI team knew the information they needed to share with staff at the site visits, resulting in clear and well-coordinated starts to their working relationships with sites.

PLCs spent the fall quarter building relationships with new directors. During these first two or three months of visits, including the initial visit and QIP development, several PLCs working with newly assigned sites spent time developing their relationships with the directors. This allowed the PLCs to learn about the directors and gain their trust. Establishing trusting relationships was essential to the work of the PLC. Once the relationship was established, directors were willing to allow the PLCs to guide them on building their capacity, and to work toward their goals.

Most consulting contacts were in-person meetings with individual site staff. The nine PLCs worked with an average of 25 directors (sites) and a total of 228 sites during the program year. PLCs documented contacts with 139 directors. Contacts were defined as any contact PLCs had with directors and included both in-person communications and those via email and telephone. The great majority of contacts (98%) were in-person meetings. The remaining contacts were conducted via email or telephone. Most contacts (83%) were meetings with directors and/or site staff. Less typical were training and sharing of resources with directors and/or site staff (see Table 1). About 72% of all contacts included the PLC and one staff person at the site. The remaining (27%) contacts included the PLC and an average of four site staff. The range of staff members present at these contacts was from 2 to 17. These contacts tended to be meetings or trainings provided to the site teaching staff.

Table 1. Methods of Assistance (N = 621 contacts)

Method of Assistance	Frequency	Percent
Meeting	513	83%
Resource Sharing	66	11%
Training	61	10%
Observation and Feedback	39	6%
Modeling	8	1%

Note: PLCs identified more than one method of assistance for each contact.
Source: PLC Case Notes, September 2016 - June 2017

The most common topics of PLC consultations were classroom-level assessment tools, including CLASS and ERS. The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) was discussed during 62% of contacts, while the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) were discussed during 58% of contacts. This finding corresponds with the resources that were most often provided - 35% of resources were connected to CLASS (for example, a CLASS booklet for each age group), and 30% of resources were connected to ERS. These findings also reflect the fact that the CLASS and ERS tools were the primary focus of most trainings provided to site staff and directors. CLASS and ERS are critical frameworks for both the teaching staff and the directors to understand, in order to improve program quality. A clear understanding of these tools provides directors with concrete ways to observe and support teachers.

The Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) is a set of observational tools used to assess the quality of teacher-child interactions. Similarly, the Environmental Rating Scales (ERS) are a set of observational tools used to assess the structural and process quality of classrooms.

PLCs also frequently discussed teacher qualifications and child-level assessment tools. Teacher qualifications were identified as a topic in 33% of PLCs' contacts. PLCs dedicated 43% of their contacts to discussing child-level assessments or tools. More specifically, 24% of contacts included discussion of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire (ASQ), and 19% included discussion of the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP). On average, PLCs spent 21 minutes discussing each of these tools. However, in total, PLCs spent more time on the ASQ (52 hours) than on the DRDP (41 hours). The time dedicated to these three areas is likely a reflection of the importance of developing systems for each of these areas in a way that works for teachers. Teachers need to understand the processes and systems involved in order to successfully implement the submission of teachers' qualifications and child assessments.

Although the topics of Systems Thinking and the Program Administration Scale (PAS) were addressed in a smaller proportion of visits, the amount of time spent discussing these was substantial. These two topics were each identified in about 16% of contacts; in contacts when PLCs discussed Systems Thinking, they spent an average of 49 minutes in discussion, and when PLCs discussed PAS, they spent an average of 45 minutes. PAS booklets made up 14% of the resources shared with directors. The relative infrequency of discussions around these topics might indicate that not all directors are ready for these types of higher-level discussions. It was also a reflection of the PLCs' confidence in their knowledge on these topics; only a few PLCs felt comfortable discussing Systems Thinking or the PAS.

Systems Thinking is a transformational approach to learning, problem-solving, and understanding the world. The Program Administration Scale (PAS) is a tool that measures leadership and management practices for early learning programs.

When PLCs conducted trainings for their sites, it was typical for them to do so jointly with the sites' Program Coaches. PLCs conducted 60 trainings, of which 80% were conducted with Program Coaches. An average of 7 site staff attended each training, with attendance ranging from 1 to 19 staff members at each training. The most frequent subjects of the trainings included CLASS (49%), ERS (16%), and both CLASS and ERS (18%), making up 83% of trainings combined. The PLCs reported that they trained site staff primarily on CLASS and ERS but at times combined these trainings with other topics, such as DRDP assessments, challenging behaviors, and intentional teaching. This may have been done in order to cover as much as possible when site staff were available.

Table 2. Training Topics

Topics of Training Contacts	Frequency	Percent
CLASS	30	49%
ERS	10	16%
Both CLASS and ERS	11	18%
Early Literacy	3	5%
Best Practices and Licensing Requirements	2	3%
QIP	2	3%
Enrollment and Marketing	1	2%
Supervision	1	2%
Best Practices for Infant Curriculum	1	2%
Total	61	100%

Source: PLC Case Notes, September 2016 - June 2017

The 2016-2017 Directors' Institute (DI), with a focus on Servant Leadership behaviors, was a well-received training provided to a small group of directors. The participants reported that they felt the trainer from the Servant Leadership Institute was well prepared and engaging at each of the three days of the DI. The participants indicated that they enjoyed the activities and their interactions with their peers and the PLCs. The PLCs were integrated into the training by participating in activities with directors, and then supported directors in applying knowledge from the training. Participants said that they became more aware of themselves as leaders, and that they were able to focus on the areas they needed to improve. Participants self-reported changes in how frequently they practiced two servant leadership behaviors ("living my values" and "demonstrating courage") from the start of the DI to the end. The median increases found were not statistically significant. Despite the success of the training among directors who attended, attendance was low. About 19 of 27 participants attended the first day, and attendance decreased each day, with the lowest attendance on the third day. The reasons for decreasing attendance were unclear. However, it may have been due to the timing of the last day coinciding with the sometimes-busier last days of the school year for several sites.

Findings: Implementation Successes

PLCs felt that their roles were clearer in the second year of implementation. In a focus group, the PLCs reflecting back on their first year of implementation talked about feeling unclear about their purpose and role. They mentioned being unsure of their new responsibilities, and discussed knowledge around leadership and management that they needed to share with directors. During the focus group, PLCs also discussed the fact that in the second year, they each self-defined their own role and felt a greater sense of intention in their work with the directors. PLCs defined their own roles based on their experiences in the first year of implementation, in which they had learned the most effective approaches to use with directors and had further developed leadership knowledge based on familiar resources. PLCs did express some concern about the idea that each PLC could be performing different tasks, based on how they individually defined their roles and the different resources they relied on. However, overall, PLCs felt more confident in their self-defined roles.

PLCs developed their individual systems in order to make ongoing site visits more intentional. PLCs found it necessary to create more concrete systems to track and document their ongoing site visits. Several PLCs noted that in the first year, directors spent time venting during the site visits; some PLCs struggled to get the directors focused on goals and action plans. Developing forms and/or specific protocols for themselves helped the PLCs and directors more effectively concentrate on the defined goals and move forward on action steps. Having structure to guide and direct ongoing site visits was necessary to ensure that directors made progress toward their goals.

PLCs found that the most effective way to work with directors on leadership development was to ground the theory of leadership development within the context of their own management and supervision. A management decision to implement a new practice, such as conducting child assessments, led to conversations between the PLC and director on the logistics of the new task and how the director would

communicate with staff about the new task. These questions typically lent themselves to discussions about the director's communication style and their support for staff; by asking these questions, PLCs made leadership more tangible. These discussions provided opportunities for PLCs to help directors find different ways of doing things, and ultimately led to improvements in management and leadership skills. Embedding leadership development discussions into real situations and examples helped PLCs talk more concretely about leadership behaviors, and allowed directors to practice these behaviors and strategies.

Outcomes of consulting and coaching most often noted by the PLCs included the progress sites made toward their goals and the policies and systems developed around the Quality Continuum Framework (QCF) Elements. Examples of the progress PLCs documented in their case notes for individual sites included: teacher participation in CLASS/ERS training; entry and uploading of DRDPs to DRDP-Tech; director monitoring of DRDP assessments; site implementation of ASQ; teacher-driven enhancement of environments; and teachers' creation of a more positive classroom climate. Through the consulting process, PLCs guided directors to develop and implement new policies. For example, one director developed a policy that all children in the program be required to provide an annual Physician's Report. Directors also developed systems around the QCF elements, such as systems identifying teachers' needs in terms of qualifications and trainings on specific topics.

Findings: Implementation Challenges

The process of developing goals and Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) varied across PLC and Program Coach teams, and resulted in disjointed goals between the PLCs and Program Coaches at several sites. The PLCs learned from the directors themselves about the goals they wanted their sites to accomplish during the fiscal year, in order to improve their overall quality. Similarly, Program Coaches learned what the teachers wanted to work on to improve their quality. Goals and QIPs were then developed to guide what the site would focus on, and how the PLC and Program Coach would support the site. In teams with high collaboration, the PLC and Program Coach met to discuss the director's and teachers' goals, and then developed the goals and action steps to meet those goals together. Other teams collaborated less, and discussed the goals but developed action steps for the QIPs individually. In teams with the least collaboration, PLCs learned about the teachers' goals by reviewing the finalized classroom-level QIPs. Overall, in teams with low collaboration, the goals documented by PLCs and Program Coaches did not always align, making it difficult for them to work toward the same goals and provide cohesive support to the sites.

Internal communication between PLCs and Program Coaches about regular site visits and ongoing site progress varied greatly – from almost no communication to joint site visits. While some Program Coaches initiated communication with PLCs, several PLCs indicated that they regularly initiated communication with their Program Coaches, often via email. Some Program Coaches were reported to be unresponsive, or to have given very little information back to the PLCs. One PLC invited the Program Coach to meet with the director biannually, in order to jointly discuss progress. This allowed them to work as a team, and to be involved in how the site would move forward. Several PLCs mentioned that they would have liked to have communication systems and procedures included in the PLC manual, to ensure better communication and coordination among field staff. When communication and coordination is effective among field staff, sites are more likely to accomplish their goals and improve quality.

Conclusions

This evaluation primarily documented the second year of implementation of the PLD model, including the ways in which the PLCs worked with directors. Despite limited data, the trends in the topics of site visit meetings, trainings, and shared resources showed that PLCs most often focused on CLASS and ERS. In addition to focusing on these assessment tools, PLCs also focused on child-level assessment tools, though to a lesser extent. These assessment tools were part of the Quality Continuum Framework that was used to measure program quality. Directors wanted to be knowledgeable about these tools and/or wanted to begin using these tools at their sites. Less time seemed to be spent on topics more directly related to leadership and management. PLCs, rather than focusing on more abstract leadership topics, grounded the theory of leadership development within the specific management and supervision tasks of implementing these tools or other new systems. This allowed directors to practice the new leadership and/or management strategies in practical ways.

Short-term outcomes of the PLD model were reported by the PLCs and directors. In PLC Monthly Case Notes, PLCs noted the progress directors made towards completing their site improvement goals and in developing policies and systems around program quality improvement. The small cohort of directors who participated in the Director's Institute, a professional development training series focused on Servant Leadership, indicated that they had become more aware of themselves as leaders, and that they were able to focus on the areas they needed to improve. Participants self-reported increases in the frequency with which they practiced two servant leadership behaviors of "living my values" and "demonstrating courage."

The strengths identified through this evaluation were the PLCs' confidence in their roles, and their intentional approach to working with directors. PLCs discussed feeling more comfortable because they had self-defined their role in their second year of implementation. This included becoming familiar with specific resources on leadership development and developing individual systems to ensure more intentionality at the ongoing visits. These systems were helpful additions to the model.

The manner in which PLC-Coach teams consistently worked together and provided cohesive support to directors and teachers at a given site varied across teams and tasks. When it came to the Welcome Visits, the expectation that PLCs and Program Coaches needed to coordinate to meet the director was clear. For the most part, they were able to come together to present information to each site as a cohesive team. Some PLCs felt they were able to more clearly and accurately share information directors when they led the Welcome Visits. When it came to the development of goals and QIPs, the processes varied – not all teams found a way to work together. A result was that the goals developed for the overall sites and those developed for the teachers were not always linked with one another. This made working toward the same goals and providing cohesive support challenging for PLCs and Program Coaches. Teams with little communication about ongoing site visits were also unable to provide cohesive support. Cohesive support, in which PLCs and Program Coaches communicate regularly and work toward similar goals, allows teams to more effectively guide sites in making changes to improve their programs.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations to improve the PLD model and the work of the PLC – Program Coach teams.

Promote sharing of leadership tools among PLCs. PLCs have different strengths in different areas of leadership development. At times, PLCs reported that the information they presented on leadership to directors varied greatly from PLC to PLC. Shared information can help to develop a more cohesive model, with a shared toolkit of resources and a shared understanding of leadership.

Implement a consistent system for keeping directors on track with goals and program improvement. Several PLCs shared that they developed these systems on their own in order to keep the site visits focused on the directors' goals and program improvement. The PLCs should share their systems, and agree on a system that all PLCs can implement with directors. The development of these various systems by the PLCs was a helpful innovation, and a shared system should be part of future implementation of the PLD model.

PLCs should lead the Welcome Visit/Initial Visit with directors. Initial visits seemed to work best when PLCs led these meetings. PLCs felt communication between the PLCs and directors was clearer and more accurate. The first visit to the site is an opportunity for PLCs to begin their relationship with directors. They will be the ones primarily contacting the directors and working with them going forward; by leading interactions from the beginning, PLCs will make their role clearer to directors.

Create a protocol for communication between the PLC and Program Coach. The findings show that communication between the PLC and Program Coach varied greatly; teams with lower levels of communication did not develop cohesive goals and did not work together on the same goals. When communication and coordination is effective among field staff, sites are more likely to accomplish their goals and improve quality. A protocol for communication should include specific steps that outline when communication should happen, what should be communicated, who should initiate the communication, desired frequency of communication, and types of information that should be communicated. Communication about each staff member's role on joint site visits should also be specified. It can include limiting the number of Program Coaches that the PLCs

work with to allow the teams to begin to develop better communication and find more common times when they are available to discuss their joint sites. The goal of stronger communication is to provide support to sites as a cohesive team.

Create a leadership assessment to be completed by directors, to help inform areas for growth. The findings showed that topics directly connected to leadership development were not discussed as often as classroom assessments. Results from a leadership assessment could provide PLCs with data on the directors' leadership and management skills. This would help guide the conversation around areas of growth for directors. Completing a leadership assessment might encourage directors to focus more on their leadership development as a whole, rather than focusing on each of the individual elements of the Quality Continuum Framework. This could provide PLCs with a more strategic way of working with directors, and the results of the assessment might guide PLCs to use specific tools with directors.

Continue to promote a culture of confidence, collaboration, and learning, both with directors and with fellow PLCs. One of the strengths observed in this evaluation was the confidence and intentionality of the PLCs in engaging with directors. The PLCs should continue to use Process Consultation and Appreciative Inquiry to learn about the goals and improvements directors are most interested in implementing. By using these strategies to focus on directors' goals and program improvement areas, the PLCs can keep the directors engaged in the consultation process and invested in site visits. Embedding leadership development discussions into real situations and examples allows PLCs to talk more concretely about leadership behaviors, and allows directors to practice these behaviors and strategies. PLCs should also continue to work together to increase group knowledge and discover additional innovations that could result in a more effective implementation of the PLD model.

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Appendix A. Methods and Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to understand the implementation and adaptations of the PLD model in its second year, and to identify key learnings to refine the model going forward. The following describes the sources of data used for analysis.

Director's Institute Feedback Surveys – The directors that participated in the DI training completed paper surveys at the end of each of the three days. On the survey, they rated the training objectives, their participation opportunities and interactions, the content and materials, and the overall training and PLC support that was provided.

PLC Monthly Case Notes from September to June – PLCs documented their contacts with sites. Case notes were reviewed to be able to quantify and describe PLCs' contacts with sites. Quantitative data provided information on the topics and resources that PLCs discussed, and how much time was spent on specific topics. Qualitative data on visit highlights, successes, and challenges from a sample of case notes across the year were reviewed for trends.

PLC Focus Group – A focus group was held with eight of the nine PLCs in October of 2017 to learn about their experiences implementing the PLD model, what worked, and what needed to be improved.

Early Childhood Work Environment Survey (ECWES Short Form) – This short survey measures the perceptions of staff on ten dimensions of organizational climate (Bloom, Hentschel, & Bella, 2016). The survey link was sent to directors to complete. They were encouraged to forward the link to their staff. The incentive was to participate in a raffle for gift cards. The pre-survey was sent in October 2016, and the post-survey was sent in April 2017. This was part of a larger survey to collect data on readiness to change and mental health. Due to a low matching response rate, we were unable to analyze these data.

Limitations

Data from case notes were used to describe how PLCs work with directors. However, case notes were incomplete. PLCs failed to document all contacts with sites in the case notes. The 9 PLCs documented 621 contacts with sites. The data show that almost half of the contacts in the case notes were entered by only two of the PLCs, while two other PLCs each entered 2% of the contacts. As a result, data from case notes was not equally distributed across PLCs; therefore, it is not representative of contacts between all PLCs and all assigned sites, and may not accurately reflect how PLCs worked with directors.

Case note data were incomplete because several PLCs encountered difficulty with the new system of documenting their work. This was the first year in which PLCs were directed to use a Microsoft Excel template to document each visit. The primary complaint by PLCs was that the system lost data they had already entered. In addition, the steps required to open and save the templates were detailed, and were not easy for all PLCs to follow.

Appendix B. Design of Program Leadership Development Model

The Child360 model is guided by three theories: 1) Appreciative Inquiry/Humble Inquiry, 2) Process Consultation, and 3) Servant Leadership. Appreciative Inquiry is a strength-based approach, focusing on what the site does well. In Process Consultation, the site is involved in deciding what will work best to move them forward. PLCs and Program Coaches build the site's capacity for continuous quality improvement. Servant Leadership is "a set of principles and practices that turn the traditional positional leadership model upside down, creating engaged people and a more caring world" (Servant Leadership Institute, 2015, p. 7). PLCs and Program Coaches use these principles to empower staff at the sites and bring out the best in them.

The model focuses on providing individualized support to directors on leadership and management skills, and on quality program practices, through the work of the PLCs. These program practices are guided by California's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) and Los Angeles County's Quality Continuum Framework (QCF). The QCF was developed under the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) grant, a federal grant intended to improve the quality of early learning programs and to ensure children enter kindergarten ready to learn. The QCF includes seven elements that are used to rate the quality of early learning programs. The elements include: 1) child observations, such as the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP); 2) developmental and health screenings, including physician health reports, Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ), and Ages and Stages Questionnaires: Social Emotional (ASQ-SE); 3) teacher-child ratios and group size; 4) director qualifications; 5) lead teacher qualifications; 6) environmental ratings, including the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), Early Childhood Rating Scale (ECERS) for centers, and Family Child Care Environment Scale (FCCERS) for family child care homes; and 7) effective teacher-child interactions, as measured by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Early learning programs are rated on these elements and then given an overall quality tier rating between 1 and 5. Higher ratings indicate that programs are meeting the higher end of the quality standards set by the framework.

At the time of this study, programs with tier ratings of 1 to 3 received an intensive combination of support from the PLCs and Program Coaches.[1] The early learning programs with lower tier ratings need intensive and comprehensive support across all the elements of the QCF, and therefore benefit from the support of a PLC and a Program Coach. The PLC works with the site director and coordinates with the Program Coach to ensure upward tier movement and quality improvement. While the PLC works with site directors, the Program Coach works with the teaching staff. Having both a PLC and a Program Coach work with the director and teaching staff at a site ensures that the director and teaching staff have the same goals and can support each other.

The PLC and the site director collaboratively select the areas they want to work on, and create program improvement goals. The goals are guided by the needs assessment, which includes the quality tier rating report, data on teacher-child interactions from the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), data on the early learning environment from the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) or the Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale (ITERS), and data from the Quality Continuum Framework Assessments (QCF Assessments). The QCF Assessments are checklists of practices based on the elements of the QCF. The director and lead teachers at the sites complete the assessments in order to provide a snapshot of the practices sites are currently implementing. After the PLC and director discuss the findings and the needs of the director, program improvement goals are identified. The PLC then helps the director plan how to address those goals by developing Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs). The QIPs include areas that the Program Coach will work on with the teachers at the site.

Through consultation during monthly site visits, the PLCs build the director's leadership capacity and the site's quality. More specifically, PLCs support site directors in their development of the following areas:

1. Ability to inspire and capacitate others toward a shared vision of equitable and effective outcomes for children, families, and their communities;

(continued on the next page)

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[1] Programs with tier ratings of 4 or 5 received support from a Program Coach and a Family Engagement Specialist.

2. Program management skills, such as retaining highly-qualified teachers, developing budgets and work schedules, planning goals and approaches to reach them, evaluating staff performance, and evaluating program effectiveness;
3. Program quality increases focused on the elements of the QCF, including child observation, development and health screening, lead teacher and director qualifications, effective teacher-child interactions, program environment, and ratios and group size;
4. Understanding of Peter Senge's Systems Thinking approach, to develop a transformative outlook, clear vision, reflective practice, strategic decision-making, self-awareness, and empathic connections to others.

To support directors in each of these areas, PLCs provide learning resources such as videos, books, and trainings to directors and their teaching staff as needed. Directors are guided by PLCs in putting the learnings into practice. PLCs also facilitate mentoring and networking relationships with other directors.

PLCs and Program Coaches are expected to communicate with each other in order to best support the sites they work with. A team approach is encouraged. Professional Development Specialists (PDSs) may be called upon to deliver professional growth advisement, child development permit application assistance, permit trainings, and increased access to higher education.

Additional support for directors includes opportunities to attend Provider Network Meetings and the Directors' Institute. The Provider Network Meetings are regional, in-person meetings that allow for group interactions on key topics in education leadership. The Directors' Institute (DI) is a series of full-day trainings on leadership in early learning programs, offered to about 40 directors.

The 2016-2017 DI focused on the Servant Leadership theory discussed above. The three-day training series was provided by the Servant Leadership Institute, a leadership training and development organization, over the course of three months (from March to May, 2017). Servant Leadership suggests that when leaders "serve first," they bring out the best in staff, and staff improve their performance and become more engaged and fulfilled. Overall, the DI balanced sharing of information, discussion at the tables among participants and PLCs, engaging activities, and entertaining short videos, in order to illustrate specific messages about Servant Leadership.

PLCs attended all three days of the DI, in order to ensure that they would be informed about the specific content of the training and would be able to support the participants with the implementation of specific practices. PLCs conducted site visits between each of the training sessions, so that they could provide DI-specific support to site directors, along with their regular support focused on leadership development and program quality.

The team of PLCs included nine PLCs and the PLC Supervisor, whose role is to guide and supervise the team. The PLC Supervisor has expertise in program administration and experience providing mentoring and coaching support to early learning programs. PLCs met with the PLC Supervisor as a team when needed, and engaged in ongoing professional development. In addition, the PLC Supervisor shadowed each PLC on their site visits with directors two to three times throughout the year, and completed a Field Shadow Assessment for each visit, which was used to provide feedback on PLC work. After each visit, the PLC and PLC Supervisor met to debrief and discuss strengths and areas for improvement.

Figure 1. Program Leadership Development Model

Resources/Inputs	Activities	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
Quality Continuum Framework Matrix Approaches:	PLCs and Program Coaches conduct Initial Site Visits with Directors	Increases in Quality Continuum Framework Assessment scores	Increase in tier rating
Appreciative Inquiry	PLCs help Directors complete Quality Continuum Framework Assessments twice per year	Directors' leadership and management improves	Directors lead high quality programs, resulting in positive child outcomes
Servant Leadership		Directors implement new/revised systems	
Process Consultation	PLCs assist Directors in development of Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs)		Integrated systems are well established and help sustain program quality
Senge's Systems Thinking	PLCs conduct regular site visits to support Directors' development of leadership and management skills, and support implementation of QIPs and new systems		
	Professional Development for Directors • Provider Network Meeting • Directors Institute		

Internal Processes/Activities
PLC Case Notes
PLC Team Meetings
Supervisor support to PLCs
Field Shadow Assessments
Internal coordination with field staff to support sites