Program Leadership Development Model:
Year 3 Evaluation, FY 2017-18

February 2021

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Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increased focus on professional development training and mentorship to support early learning program administrators and directors. Goffin and Daga (2017) have documented the growth of leadership development programs and highlighted the need for the early learning field to pay more attention to developing leadership capacity and to the effects it can have on children and the field. Such programs have helped directors increase administrative practices and program quality (Bloom & Shearer, 1998; Doherty, Ferguson, Ressler, & Lomotey, 2015). Child360's Program Leadership Development (PLD) Model supports early learning program directors to improve the quality of their programs and strengthen their leadership skills, including their ability to support teachers' improvement efforts. Program Leadership Consultants (PLCs) are essential to the model and work with directors to increase overall site quality, and to strengthen their leadership skills. 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 Model is founded on several basic principles and practices. Like Child360's coaching model, the PLD model is based on the 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. PLCs begin working with directors by explaining their process and building the relationship using the Getting to Know You form and Partnership Norms. PLCs then guide directors through the 4D Cycle of Appreciative Inquiry, which includes four steps: Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny. This cycle encourages the administrators to share positive aspects of their program and their vision, and develop specific goals with the help of PLCs. Defined goals are typically around program quality improvement and leadership development. Goals are documented in 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. Directors and PLCs reflect mid-year, and again at the end of the year, on the progress or completion of goals. Additionally, a small cohort of directors participate in the Director's Institute, a three-day leadership training series.

PLCs are assigned to multiple directors simultaneously. During the 2017-18 program year, nine PLCs supported 295 early learning directors, while 48 Program Coaches supported the teachers at their programs to improve program quality. On average, each PLC worked with 33 directors, with caseloads ranging from 29 to 35 directors. PLCs were assigned to directors by October, leaving seven to eight months to implement the model. PLCs were assigned to some directors they had never met, and some with whom they had worked in previous years. Most PLCs conducted monthly two-hour visits with each director.

Purpose
This report evaluates the third year of implementation of the Program Leadership Development Model (PLD), from October 2017 through June 2018. It focuses on how closely the model was followed, and identifies the changes directors made during the course of their participation.

Program Summary
The PLD included an intensive combination of supports provided to 295 early learning programs by Program Leadership Consultants (PLCs) and Program Coaches. Nine PLCs provided individualized support to ECE directors on leadership and management skills and on quality program practices, while 48 Program Coaches provided support to the teaching staff. This evaluation focuses primarily on the work of the PLCs with directors. Additionally, a small cohort of 56 directors participated in a three-day Director's Institute training series.

Data Analyzed
Survey answers from PLCs were analyzed to learn how they implemented the model, while survey answers from directors were examined to find out what significant program changes were made over the course of seven months. Survey data from the small cohort that participated in the Director's Institute were used to find out what directors gained from the training series.

Key Findings
Despite the variation in model implementation, directors successfully implemented several changes in their programs. Directors were more satisfied with their systems and more confident in their leadership and management skills, and reported increases in teachers' involvement with program activities and engagement in working together. Directors trusted and felt connected to their PLCs, and were satisfied with the levels of support they received.

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Evaluation Questions

The primary goals of this evaluation were to learn how closely the PLCs followed the model, and to identify what changes directors made while working with their PLCs and participating in the Director's Institute. The specific evaluation questions were:

- To what extent did the PLCs implement activities of the consulting model with fidelity? What variations occurred? Why did the variations occur? Were any variations likely to affect outcomes?
- What success and challenges did PLCs experience in the implementation of the model?
- What outcomes were achieved as a result of directors' participation in the PLD program?
- What outcomes were achieved as a result of participating in the Director's Institute? How was the DI integrated into the PLD model?
- Were directors satisfied with the support they received? How did directors perceive their relationships with their PLCs? Did these perceptions have an effect on the directors' outcomes?

The evaluation findings were based on surveys completed by PLCs and directors. PLCs completed surveys about the implementation of the model at both the start and end of the program year. Directors completed end-of-year retrospective surveys about their program policies and practices, and their experiences with their PLCs. Directors who participated in the Director's Institute also completed an additional survey on their experiences with the DI training series.

Recommendations
Post-study recommendations focused on three areas: creating flexibility around Welcome Visits, extending coaching assignments, and increasing consistency in the delivery of the model. These areas included six specific recommendations:
1) Ask PLCs to conduct Welcome Visits individually rather than in coordination with Program Coaches
2) Create different Welcome Visit processes for directors who had already participated in coaching, versus new directors
3) Extend the PLC director assignments across two years rather than one year
4) Edit the existing forms used, and reduce the number of forms, to ensure that all PLCs use the same forms
5) Identify topics that each PLC must discuss in the consulting process
6) Continue to integrate the Director's Institute into the model.

Figure 1. The Child360 PLD Model includes repeated opportunities for consultation, feedback, and reflection.

Welcome visit
- Establish lines of communication
- Provide consulting overview
- Getting To Know You
- Partnership Norms

Data collection
- Conduct assessments and observation
  - Quality Continuum Framework Assessment
  - 4D Cycle

Goal development
- Discuss findings from data collection
- Use 4D Cycle, QCFA and Tier Report to co-create goals

Consulting visits
- Determine consulting objective
- Engage in dialogue to support directors
- Implement consulting strategies

Mid-year reflection
- Engage in reflective conversation on progress of goals and action plan

End-of-year reflection
- Review goals and determine which goals have been met
- Director provides PLC with feedback

Note: The Director's Institute is attended by a smaller cohort of directors, and builds on the PLC/ Director end-of-year reflection.

Findings

About 75% of the model was implemented as designed. This was determined by calculating the number of PLCs who reported completing each process included in the model design, and who reported sharing documents or forms as part of these processes. The most common limitation in implementing the model as designed was the shorter timeframe. The model was designed to be implemented over ten months; however, PLCs only had about seven to eight months to implement the model, due to assignment of caseloads occurring in October rather than August. Some adjustments were made to the process timeline, including extending the due dates for completion of specific processes and forms were. The following section specifies what proportion of the PLCs implemented each of the processes and forms included in the model.

Most Welcome Visits were conducted as intended by the model; however, the documents and forms reviewed varied. Welcome Visits, the first visits of the program year, were intended to be conducted jointly between the PLCs and coaches. The teams were expected to review twelve documents and forms with directors. Most PLCs (6 out of 8) conducted 100% of their Welcome Visit in coordination with the coaches assigned to their sites. The two PLCs that were unable to coordinate their schedules with coaches conducted the Welcome Visits with the directors individually. Most PLCs (6 out of 8) said that with all their providers, their QI Team was able to review the entire packet of documents and information during their Welcome Visits. However, when PLCs were asked about specific documents and forms, the data showed that about 75% of PLCs reported sharing more than half, but not all, of the Welcome Visit documents or forms. All PLCs shared the *Quality Support Team Member Roles and Responsibilities* and the *PLC Site Visit Form,* a form used to summarize and document next steps for each visit. Most PLCs reviewed the documents that guided their work including the *Quality Continuum Framework Matrix, Collaborative Agreements*, *Consulting Roadmap*, *Meet Your PLC Form,* and the *Child Development Permit Matrix.* These were rated as being helpful or very helpful by almost all the PLCs. Forms that PLCs needed to fill out with directors were shared least often. These included the *Quality Continuum Framework Assessments (QCFAs)*, *Getting to Know You (GTKY) Form*, and *Partnership Norms* (see Appendix A for more details).

By mid-March, more than half of the PLCs (5 out of 8) had completed the Quality Improvement Plans (QIPs) with all of their assigned directors. While most QIPs were expected to be completed by mid-March, three PLCs did not complete QIPs for some of the directors. This delay was due to cancellation of site visits by directors.

When completing the QIPs with directors, 75% of the PLCs (6 out of 8) used the 4D Cycle to develop goals collaboratively and within the designated time period of one to two visits. Several PLCs indicated that the QIPs and 4D Cycle were completed during the third visit, because they had a lot of information to share with the directors during the first two visits. PLCs found the 4D Cycle was a key step in the process of getting directors to create goals and complete the QIPs.

Most PLCs (5 out of 7) referenced the QIP goals and action steps during each visit. PLCs used the QIPs to guide the directors' next steps and track the directors' progress toward goals. QIPs were also used to highlight directors' progress and accomplishments, encouraging directors.

When it came to forms used for ongoing site visits, most PLCs only used the PLC Site Visit Form, and omitted the planning forms. The PLC Site Visit form was used to summarize the visit and establish next steps. After each visit, the PLC and director each kept a copy, helping to track progress toward goals and ensuring shared understanding of next steps. Most PLCs (85%) said the form was helpful or very helpful. PLCs had two additional forms, the *PLC Plan* and *PLC Pre-Visit Planning Sheet*, to help them prepare for each site visit. Most did not use these forms, and felt they were not helpful or only somewhat helpful (Figure 2). Due to this formative feedback, these two forms became optional.

During site visits, PLCs most often provided resources, direct feedback, and trainings. Occasionally, they modeled, observed, and worked side-by-side with directors. PLCs used several strategies during site visits (Figure 3). They selected the strategies that best met the needs of each director and program. As a result, site visits varied by types of strategies used and length of time spent. Most visits were completed in about two hours. Almost all PLCs (6 out of 7) reported spending about two hours on average per visit, and only one PLC said they spent more than two hours per visit.

Figure 2. PLCs rated the Site Visit Form as being very helpful, and also reported using the Site Visit Form more frequently than the PLC Plan or the PLC Pre-Visit Planning Sheet.
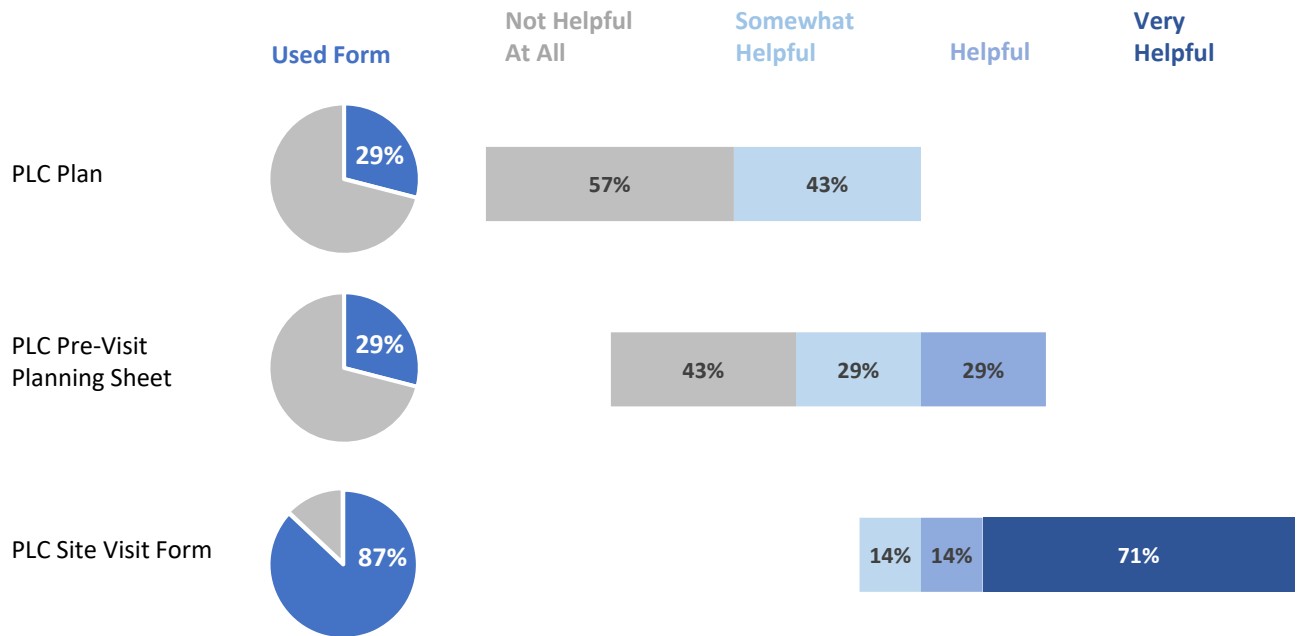
Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100.
Source: PLC Survey, 2018

Figure 3. Of the strategies available to them, PLCs reported that they most often provided resources, direct feedback, and trainings. All PLCs reported occasional use of modeling as a strategy.
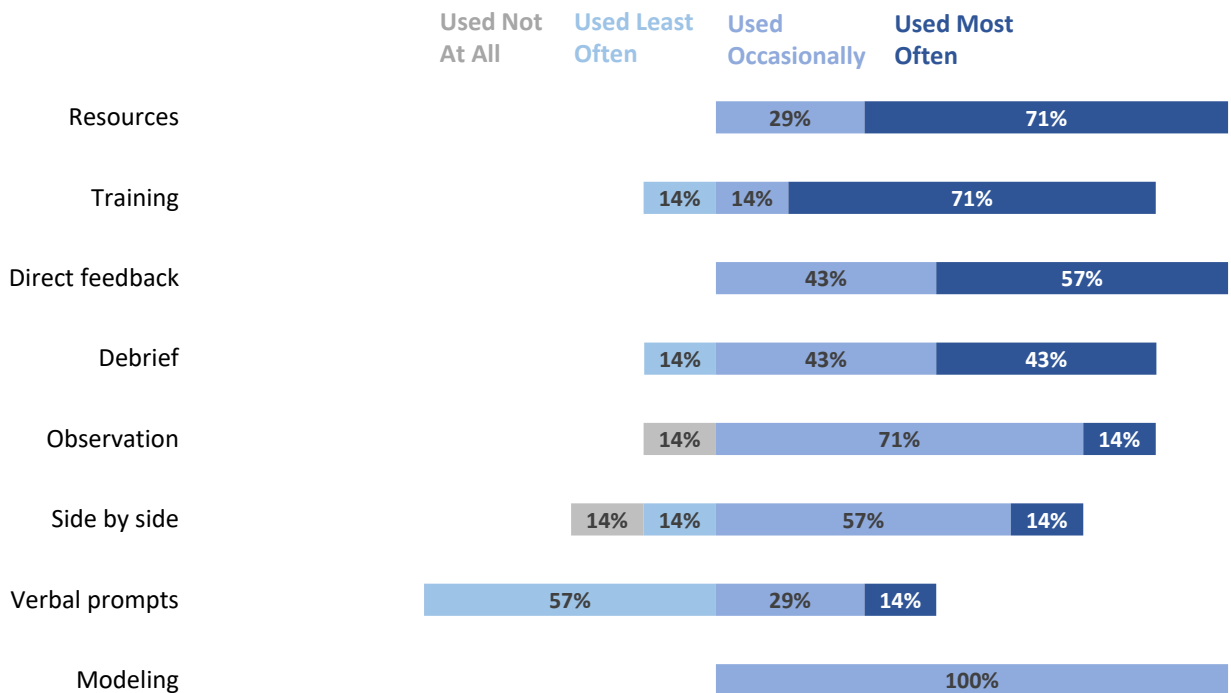
Note: Due to rounding, percentages may not add to 100.
Source: PLC Survey, 2018

PLCs said the most effective technique to complete QIP goals was to focus directors on working on one action step at a time, taking incremental steps toward a goal. Taking incremental steps towards a goal was more manageable for directors. Another effective technique was to engage the directors in reflective conversation about their experiences as supervisors. One PLC created hands-on opportunities, such as a mock feedback session or joint observation of the classroom. PLCs focused on the strengths and needs of directors when selecting techniques.

However, only two PLCs indicated they completed 76% or more of the QIP goals they had developed with directors. The remaining PLCs completed between 26% and 75% of the goals. PLCs attributed the lower goal completion rate to having started the goal development late in the program year, cancellation of visits by directors, high caseloads, and, in some cases, directors having lost interest in some of the goals they had previously identified.

PLCs conducted the year-end reflection with only some directors. Mid-year and year-end reflections were intended to encourage PLCs and directors to discuss their progress toward goals and their experiences thus far. Due to the shorter timeframe during this program year, the decision was made to omit the mid-year reflection, and PLCs only completed the year-end reflection. The year-end reflection process took about 30 minutes to an hour, and was intended to be completed during site visits, over the phone, or email. However, many PLCs were unable to complete year-end reflections; six out of seven PLCs noted that they were having trouble scheduling visits to complete these reflections, because directors did not have enough time. These directors may have been busy with their program's year-end activities.

Implementation of the model may have differed between PLCs as a result of their prior experiences and expertise. Some PLCs had several years of coaching experience with Child360 and were very familiar with the model's approaches, while others were newer to coaching and consulting. Individual PLCs gravitated toward the specific strategies that resonated most with them, and developed their expertise around those strategies. These differences may have influenced how useful they felt specific forms were, and the areas they chose to focus on. The directors also influenced how the model was applied, based on their needs and availability. PLCs focused on using the forms, processes, and model strategies that they felt helped accomplish their tasks, as well as those that were most useful to the directors. Allowance for variation in the strategies used by PLCs is an intended part of the model, allowing PLCs to tailor their support to directors' needs.

Variations in the implementation of the model occurred when it came to using forms and adhering to the timeline; however, PLCs seemed to have closely followed the intended processes. As previously discussed, PLCs used the forms that they felt were most useful and necessary to the implementation of the model. PLCs also had to adjust the timing of process completion, due to having started the work with directors later in the program year. Despite the shorter timeframe and the limitations in the use of several forms, most PLCs followed the processes defined by the model, including building relationships with directors, guiding directors through the 4D process to create goals, conducting regular site visits to support the directors in accomplishing their goals, and reflecting with directors. Of these processes, only the formal reflection was limited (occurring only one time, rather than twice, at mid-year and year-end), and this likely had little effect on directors' outcomes.

The primary barrier to implementation of the PLD model was insufficient time to implement the full model. PLCs began working with directors later in the program year than planned. This resulted in a shorter timeframe to implement the program. More than half of PLCs cited cancellations of visits by directors as a barrier. This also reduced the amount of time and the number of visits PLCs had to implement the program as designed.

The main challenge at the start of the program was the scheduling of Welcome Visits. The intended model for Welcome Visits was for all Child360 coaches serving the site to meet with the site staff at one time, to introduce themselves and outline the coaching process. This team of coaches included a Program Coach and a Program Leadership Coach, and in some cases included a Family Engagement Specialist; these coaches were collectively referred to as a site's Quality Improvement (QI) Team. Almost all (7 out of 8) PLCs indicated that scheduling with the QI Team was a challenge, while half of PLCs had difficulty scheduling with the directors. Two PLCs felt that having the Program Coach lead the Welcome Visit prevented the team from sharing the responsibility of presenting to the directors.

However, when all QI team members successfully attended Welcome Visits together, providers were able to better understand how the team collaborated. The coaches were able to show directors that they worked as a cohesive QI Team, and the visits helped providers and team members understand the distinct roles of each team member better. The visits as a team also allowed the providers to meet the whole team and recognize their faces. On average, each PLC conducted about 20 Welcome Visits with the full QI Team, which accounted for about two-thirds of their caseload.

PLCs felt successful when they effectively collaborated with coaches. Effective collaboration with coaches occurred when PLCs and coaches shared information about their joint sites regularly. This included talking about a site before and after the Welcome Visit, while the site developed goals, and between site visits to assess how the site was progressing on goals. The PLCs and coaches were better able to support the sites, because each had a clearer understanding about the challenges at the site. Collaboration between PLCs and coaches also included co-presenting trainings at their sites.

The new 4D Cycle seamlessly fit into the model and facilitated goal development. All PLCs indicated that the 4D Cycle was helpful or very helpful. One PLC felt that the 4D Cycle was a "great resource" and "made the QIP process of goal development and actions steps seamless." PLCs thought that the 4D Cycle served to guide their questions and conversations with directors, and helped directors "dream big" and "create specific objectives." Some directors shared positive feedback on the QIP process with their PLCs. Directors appreciated the goal-setting process. They indicated that it helped them focus on one action step at a time, and provided accountability regarding their vision and goals.

Overall, directors were satisfied with PLCs' support. PLCs felt that they served as a "sounding board" for directors to discuss ideas with while making decisions. PLCs were able to help directors talk through challenges related to their teams. Directors appreciated that the PLCs helped them stay on task and stay motivated, and kept them accountable.

According to directors, staff in their programs became more aware of their program's educational philosophy. More than 80% of programs had a written educational philosophy at both the start and end of the program year. This may indicate that instead of developing and promoting a new educational philosophy, directors were focused on promoting their existing educational philosophy to increase their staff's awareness. The percentage of directors that indicated staff were more aware of their program's educational philosophy increased by 17% by the end of the year (Figure 4). Only a few directors indicated that staff became more aware of their program vision or mission; these findings were not statistically significant. Directors may have felt that staff were already aware of their program vision and mission, choosing to focus on making staff more aware of the educational philosophy.

Figure 4. Program staff increased their awareness of their program's educational philosophy over the course of the coaching year.
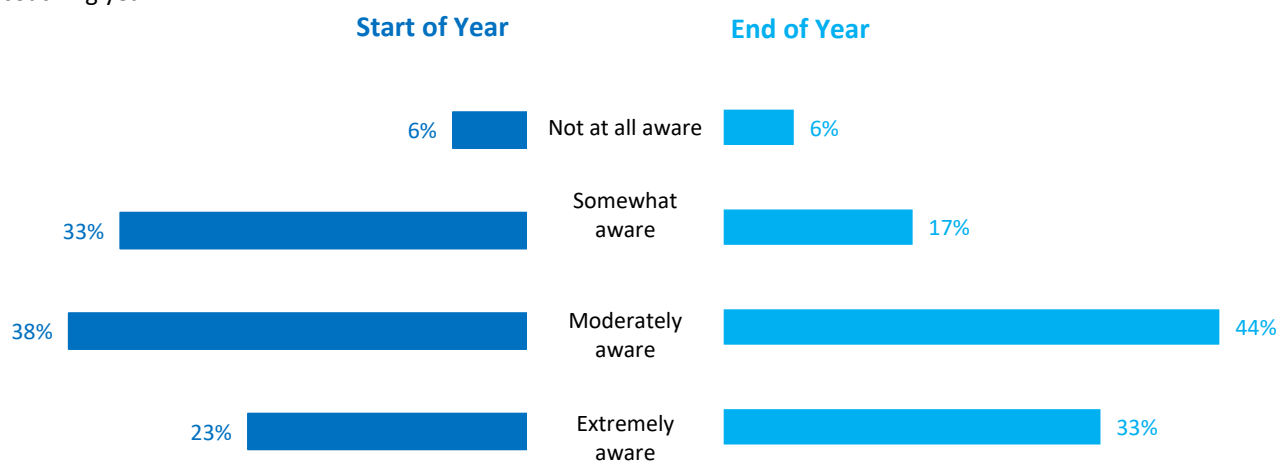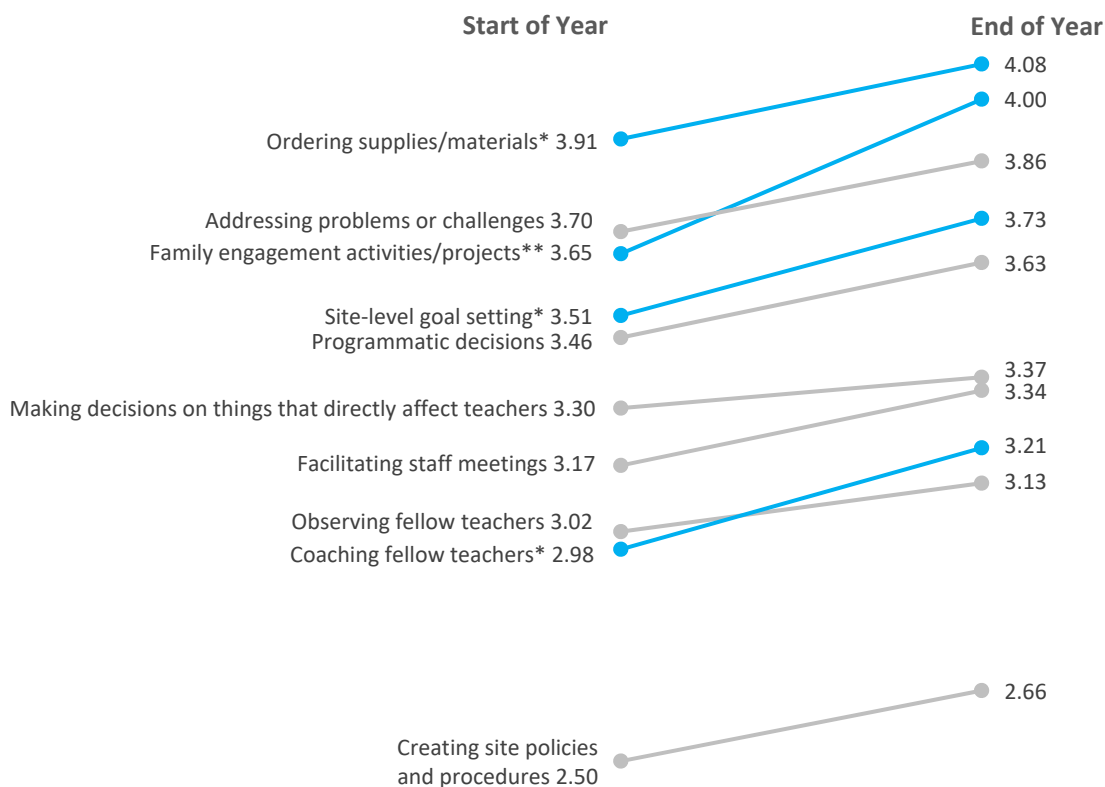

Note: T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Change is significant at $p < .01$.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey, 2017-2018

Directors indicated that teachers' involvement in program activities increased over the coaching period.
Specifically, teachers were more involved in setting site-level goals, creating family engagement activities and
projects, ordering supplies and materials, and coaching colleagues at the end of the year, compared to the beginning
of the year (Figure 5). More than half of directors (56%) reported that teachers were "often" or "always" involved in
family engagement at the start of the program year. By the end of the year, 71% of directors reported that teachers
were "often" or "always" involved in these activities. Similar increases were found in the frequency with which
teachers were involved in site-level goal setting, ordering supplies and materials, and coaching fellow teachers. At
the start of the year, 49% of directors indicated teachers were "often" or "always" involved in site-level goal setting,
and this percentage increased to 60% of directors by the end of the year. At the start of the year, 72% of directors
reported that teachers were "often" or "always" involved with ordering supplies, compared to 75% of directors at
the end of the year. In addition, directors reported that more teachers provided feedback to other teachers by the
end of the year (38%), compared to the start of the year (31%).

PLCs encouraged directors to give teachers more opportunities that would allow them to take ownership over
program activities. According to Bloom et al. (2016, p. 69), respecting teachers' voices in decisions that affect them is
"an integral part of a healthy organizational climate." In fact, when teachers' involvement is increased, directors
notice that "teachers feel a greater commitment to the program." However, Figure 5 also shows that teachers were
"rarely" or "sometimes" involved in creating site policies and procedures and observing fellow teachers. These
findings were to be expected, because for several of these programs, the development of policies and procedures
often occurs at the agency level, leaving even some directors little opportunity in this area. Similarly, the
responsibility of observing teachers often falls on directors, and several of these directors were in the process of
strengthening their own skills to support their teachers through observation and coaching. Like directors, teachers
may need more guidance to develop these skills, and directors may need to provide more opportunities for this
guidance.

Figure 5. Teachers' involvement in program activities increased over the course of the coaching year.

Notes: Item responses were on a scale from 1 (Never involved) to 5 (Always involved)
T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Statistically significant differences between responses at the start of the year (pre) and
end of the year (post) are shown in blue. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey, 2017-2018

Directors noticed changes in staff interactions by the end of the year; staff worked together to achieve common goals, provided feedback to each other, and provided feedback to the director or supervisor more often. At the beginning of the year, staff performed these activities at least once a month, on average, along with praising each other and sharing resources (Figure 6). The frequency with which staff worked together to achieve common goals and provided feedback to each other and to the director or supervisor increased significantly from the beginning to the end of the year; by the end of the year, a larger number of directors indicated that staff engaged in each of these activities weekly. At the start of the year, 34% of directors said teachers were working together to achieve common goals on a weekly basis. By the end of the year, this increased, with 41% of directors stating that staff worked together on goals weekly. Similarly, by the end of the year, more than half of directors (54%) said staff provided each other with feedback in the classroom, as compared to 40% of directors at the start of the year. While the proportion of directors who indicated that staff provided their director or supervisor feedback is lower, the trends were the same. Less than a third of directors (28%) noted that staff provided feedback to them or to supervisors at the start of the year, compared to 42% of directors at the end of the year. A strengths-based approach for feedback was a central topic on one of the three days of the Director's Institute. Perhaps directors provided more feedback to staff, which in turn influenced staff to provide more feedback as well. Working together on goals and providing feedback are key ways in which staff can improve their program and grow professionally.

Figure 6. Staff interactions, collaborations, and feedback increased over the course of the coaching year.
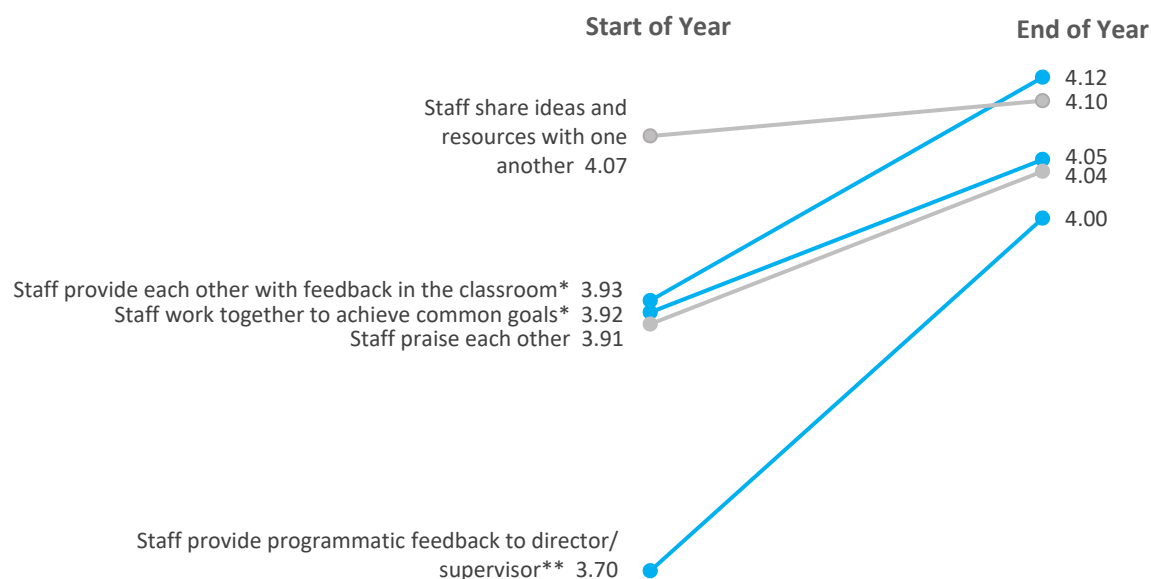
Notes: Item responses were on a scale from 1 (Once a year if at all) - 5 (Weekly).
One item on staff's reluctance to express their feelings was excluded because data was difficult to interpret. It is unclear whether participants correctly understood the item. T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Statistically significant differences between responses from the start of the year (pre) to end of the year (post) are shown in blue.*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey, 2017-2018

From the beginning to the end of the year, directors became significantly more satisfied with the systems they had in place. These included systems for providing frequent and consistent feedback to teachers, assessing classrooms' physical and environmental needs, observing and providing feedback on teacher-child interactions, and providing written performance appraisals of staff (Table 1). The percentage of directors who reported that they were "somewhat" or "completely" satisfied with their systems increased by at least 10% by the end of the year. In addition to this improvement in director satisfaction, an increase was also observed in the number of directors who had these systems in place. At the beginning of the year, about 5% of directors did not have systems in place to provide frequent and consistent feedback to teachers or to assess physical and environmental needs of classrooms; however, by the end of the year, all directors had established systems. With these systems, directors were better able to support their teachers in growing professionally and improving program quality.

Table 1. Directors became more satisfied with their programs' feedback systems.

System	n	Pre	Post	Change	Sig.
Frequent and consistent feedback for teachers	57	3.67	3.98	.316	**
Assessing physical and environmental needs of classrooms	57	3.89	4.16	.263	*
Observing teacher-child interactions and providing feedback	57	3.72	4.05	.333	**
Written annual performance appraisal/ evaluation of staff	57	3.89	4.18	.281	**

Notes: Item responses were on a scale from 1 (No system) to 5 (Completely satisfied)
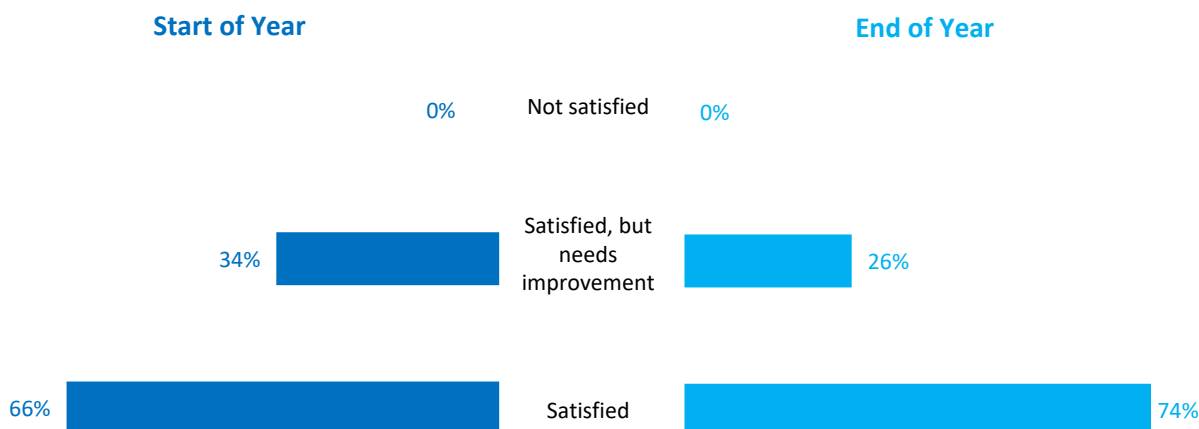T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Statistically significant differences between responses at the start of the year (pre) and end of the year (post) are shown next to the numbers in the "Change" column.
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey, 2017-2018.

More directors reported having clear and explicit risk management systems. At the start of the year, two-thirds (66%) of directors agreed that they had clear and explicit systems for risk management, while one-third felt their systems needed improvement (Figure 7). By the end of the year, almost three-quarters (74%) of directors were satisfied with their risk management system. Directors' responses indicated they also felt more confident in their other systems (see Appendix B, Table B5); however, these changes were not statistically significant. Directors may have focused more on risk management, due to the critical nature of these systems, which specify procedures for emergencies, child abuse/neglect allegations, safety, and more.

Figure 7. Directors became more satisfied with their programs' risk management systems.

Notes: T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Changes are significant at p < .05.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey, 2017-2018

Directors became significantly more confident in their understanding and use of classroom-level tools. By the end of the year, 18% more directors agreed or strongly agreed that they had a clear understanding of the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) tool, and 15% more directors were comfortable using the CLASS tool when observing their teachers (Table 2). More directors also agreed or strongly agreed that they had a clear understanding of the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale and Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS/ITERS) tool (12% more), and that they were comfortable applying the ECERS/ITERS to their indoor and outdoor environments (7% more). Although directors showed greater increases in confidence on items related to the CLASS, overall, directors were more confident in their understanding and use of the ECERS/ITERS, both at the start and end of the year. Directors may have been more familiar with the ECERS/ITERS tool, because most had been assessed using this tool in the previous program year. However, the current program year's assessment was to be conducted using the CLASS tool; thus, many directors were focused on learning more about the CLASS, resulting in their increase in understanding and use of the tool. (Note that some programs were assessed using both tools during this program year.)

Table 2. The number of directors able to understand and apply classroom-level tools significantly increased.

	n	Pre	Post	Change	Sig.
Clear understanding of the CLASS tools	56	3.63	4.05	.429	***
Comfortable using CLASS tools when observing my teachers	55	3.40	3.80	.400	***
Clear understanding of the ECERS/ITERS tools	57	4.14	4.35	.211	**
Comfortable applying the ECERS/ITERS tools to our environment	57	4.16	4.37	.211	**

Notes: Item responses were on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree)
T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Statistically significant differences between responses at the start of the year (pre) and end of the year (post) are shown next to the numbers in the "Change" column.
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey, 2017-2018.

Directors became more confident in their leadership and management skills. Directors seemed to have experienced the most growth in their leadership skills. Compared to the beginning of the year, about 14% more directors agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident in their leadership skills by the end of the year, and 5% more directors agreed or strongly agreed that they were confident in their management skills (Figure 8). In addition, 10% more directors agreed or strongly agreed that they regularly practiced self-reflection as part of their leadership development. PLCs focused on supporting directors in their development of leadership and management skills, during both site visits and the Director's Institute, by encouraging directors to apply these skills as they worked on accomplishing their goals. In addition, PLCs integrated reflection into site visits by asking directors questions about their work and experiences.

Figure 8. Directors' confidence in their leadership and management skills increased from the beginning to the end of the year.

Start of Year   End of Year

91%
89%

Confident in my management skills* 86%   86%

Practice regular self-reflection as part of my leadership development* 76%

Confident in my leadership skills*** 75%

Notes: Item responses were on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses.
*p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey, 2017-2018.

Most directors who participated in the Director's Institute reported that they gained knowledge across all topics. All directors agreed that they learned how to use a strength-based approach when providing feedback as a result of their participation in the DI (Figure 9). Most directors agreed that they gained a better understanding of how to develop systems within their programs, using situational leadership to individualize support to staff, how to analyze work conditions to enhance the workplace, the dual role of manager and leader, strategies to enhance collegiality, becoming more self-reflective, and the importance of creating a workplace inclusive of cultural differences.

The Director's Institute seemed to be well-integrated into the PLD model; PLCs presented the content, and then reinforced the ideas during site visits. PLCs reported that they had conversations following each training session, in which directors discussed what strategies they wanted to implement. When PLCs supported directors in implementing strategies from trainings, directors were able to have their immediate questions answered and may have been more likely to follow through with new ideas. In fact, since findings indicate that directors became more satisfied with their feedback systems over the course of the year, and one of the strategies presented in the DI was focused on strength-based feedback, it is possible that directors implemented and benefited from this specific DI strategy.

Figure 9. Directors reported increases in their knowledge across several areas as a result of participating in the Director's Institute.

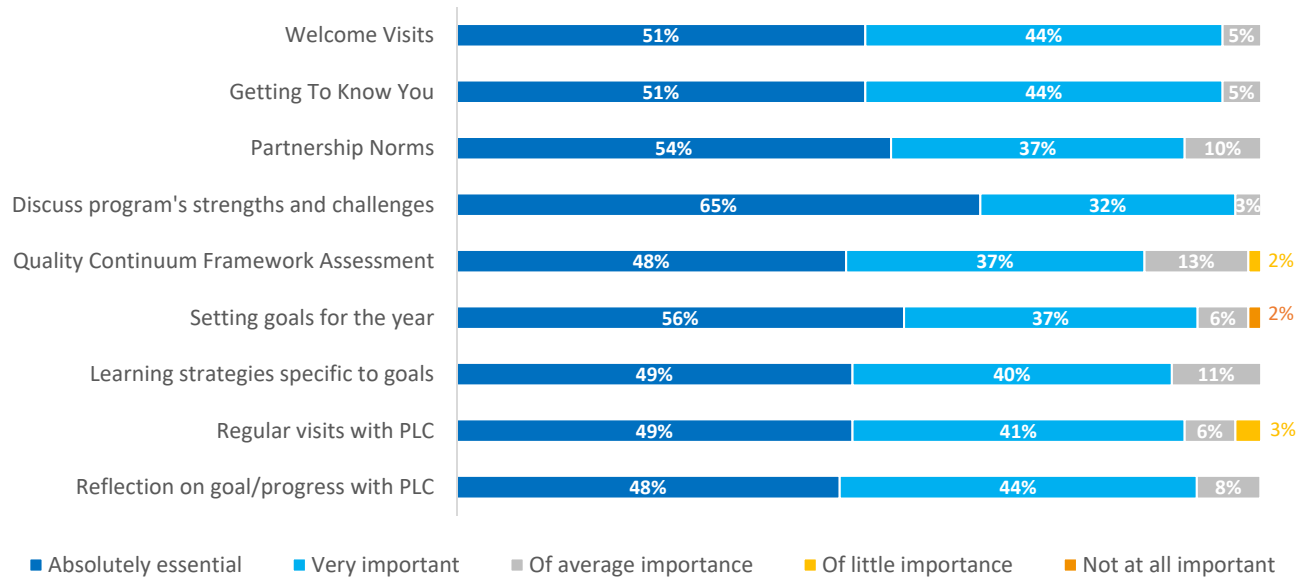| | Strongly agree | | | Neutral | | | Strongly disagree |
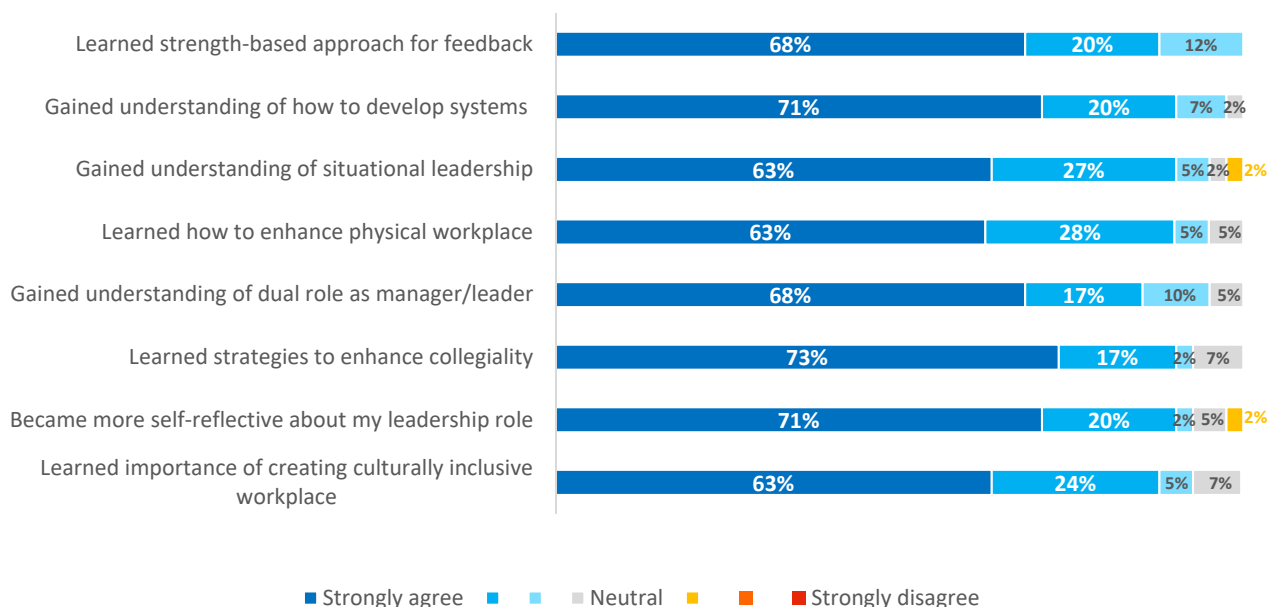
Notes: Item responses were on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly agree).
Source: Director's Institute Day 3 Feedback, 2018.

According to directors, the most essential processes in the PLD model were those that helped determine goals and establish the relationship. The discussions about their program's strengths and challenges seemed to be the most essential; 65% of directors said it was "absolutely essential" (Figure 10). More than half of directors also felt that setting goals for the year (56%), discussions on Partnership Norms (54%), Welcome Visits (51%), and Getting to Know You discussions (51%) were absolutely essential to build the relationship with the PLC and make improvements to their programs. Directors seemed to place the highest value on the processes that established their relationship with the PLCs and helped to define their work for the year. Directors must trust their PLC to guide them to accomplish their goals and improve their program quality, and a positive relationship is essential for building that trust.

The majority of directors trusted and connected with their PLCs. PLCs initially focused on building their relationships with directors by getting to know the director and their program, creating connections with the director through conversations and visits, and building trust. With 91% of directors agreeing that they felt a strong connection with their PLC, and 94% agreeing that they trusted their PLC and the consulting process, PLCs seem to have been effective at building these relationships (Figure 11). Regarding the process of getting to know her PLC, one director commented, "She is really sweet and easy to talk to." Another stated that their PLC "gave me great ideas and follow through to make sure I was on it. He was caring and concerned." In addition, most directors indicated that they felt their PLC was committed to their personal leadership development (88%) and to improving their program's quality (93%). Directors also commented on how committed PLCs were, saying, "She is committed to her role of me becoming a better leader," and "My PLC is great! She makes me believe in myself and continue growing professionally." More importantly, 89% of directors agreed or strongly agreed that the time and effort invested was worthwhile. One director summarized the effects of PLC support by stating, "Any feedback to improve in any area for better quality is worth it. [I] have made some improvement in [my] center; [it] works better for teachers and children."

Overall, directors were satisfied with the frequency of site visits, level of support, and level of collaboration with their PLCs. More than three-quarters of directors indicated PLCs visited them once a month. About 10% had visits quarterly (every three months), while 5% had site visits twice a month. The remaining 5% indicated a frequency of "Other." Only one director clarified what was meant by other, saying site visits occurred more often if needed. Even with these differences, 95% to 97% of directors were satisfied or very satisfied with how often the PLCs met with them, and the levels of support and collaboration they received (Figure 12). These findings demonstrate that PLCs tailored their work with each director to meet that director's distinct needs.

Figure 10. Directors provided positive ratings for all of the PLD Model's processes.

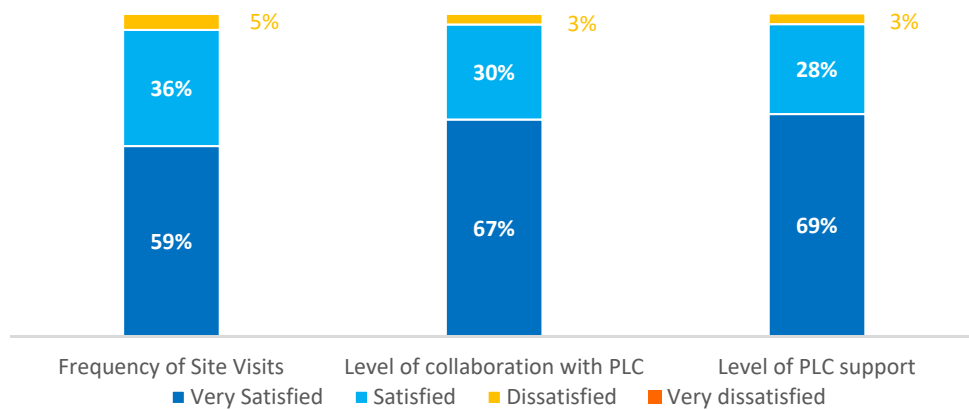| Process	Absolutely essential	Very important	Of average importance	Of little importance	Not at all important
Welcome Visits	51%	44%	5%		
Getting To Know You	51%	44%	5%		
Partnership Norms	54%	37%	10%		
Discuss program's strengths and challenges	65%	32%	3%		
Quality Continuum Framework Assessment	48%	37%	13%	2%	
Setting goals for the year	56%	37%	6%	2%	
Learning strategies specific to goals	49%	40%	11%		
Regular visits with PLC	49%	41%	6%	3%	
Reflection on goal/progress with PLC	48%	44%	8%		

Source: Retrospective Director's Survey, 2017-2018.

Figure 11. Directors exhibited strong relationships with their PLCs.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I felt a strong connection with my PLC	64%	27%	8%	2%	
I trust my PLC and the consulting process	65%	29%	5%	2%	
My PLC was committed to my personal leadership development	61%	29%	10%		
I feel the time and effort I've invested was worthwhile	65%	24%	8%	3%	
My PLC was committed to improving the quality of my program	69%	24%	7%		
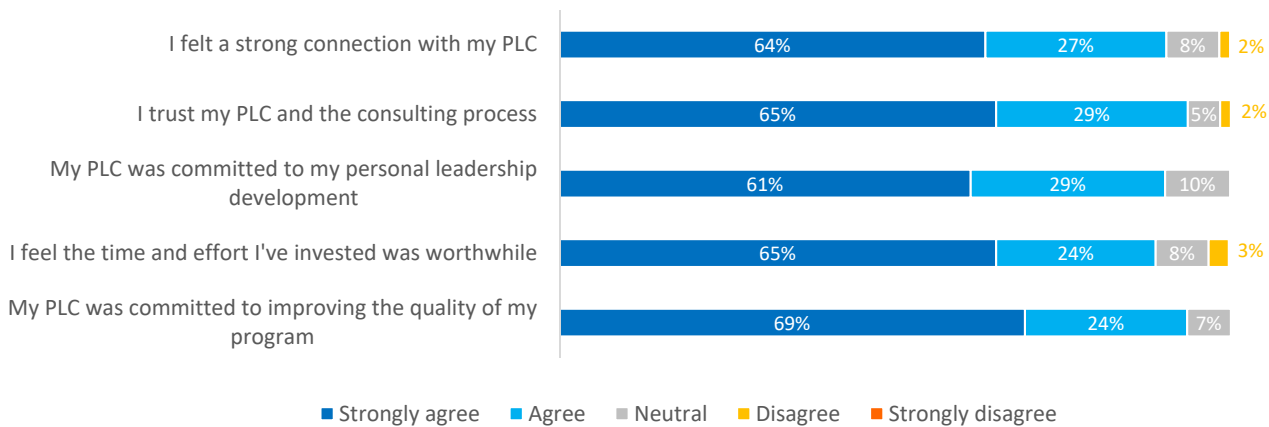
Source: Retrospective Director's Survey, 2017-2018.

Figure 12. Overall, directors were very satisfied with PLC support.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied
Frequency of Site Visits	59%	36%	5%	
Level of collaboration with PLC	67%	30%	3%	
Level of PLC support	69%	28%	3%	

Source: Retrospective Director's Survey, 2017-2018.

The majority of directors trusted and connected with their PLCs. PLCs initially focused on building their relationships with directors by getting to know the director and their program, creating connections with the director through conversations and visits, and building trust. With 91% of directors agreeing that they felt a strong connection with their PLC, and 94% agreeing that they trusted their PLC and the consulting process, PLCs seem to have been effective at building these relationships (Figure 11). Regarding the process of getting to know her PLC, one director commented, "She is really sweet and easy to talk to." Another stated that their PLC "gave me great ideas and follow through to make sure I was on it. He was caring and concerned." In addition, most directors indicated that they felt their PLC was committed to their personal leadership development (88%) and to improving their program's quality (93%). Directors also commented on how committed PLCs were, saying, "She is committed to her role of me becoming a better leader," and "My PLC is great! She makes me believe in myself and continue growing professionally." More importantly, 89% of directors agreed or strongly agreed that the time and effort invested was worthwhile. One director summarized the effects of PLC support by stating, "Any feedback to improve in any area for better quality is worth it. [I] have made some improvement in [my] center; [it] works better for teachers and children."

Conclusions

Although implementation of the model varied, PLCs used this flexibility to appropriately support individual directors. The PLD model's forms and processes were completed as designed only about 75% of the time, but PLCs seemed to preferentially implement the most essential parts of the model, effectively supporting the directors they worked with. Implementation of the model varied between PLCs as a result of the flexibility built into the theories that shaped the model. It is this flexibility that allowed each PLC to individualize how they supported each director.

Directors made several changes in their programs during the seven months they worked with the PLCs. Based on directors' self-reports, some changes were more general (such as staff's increased awareness of their programs' educational philosophies), while some were more specific (such as increases in teachers' involvement in program activities and in positive staff interactions). Teachers were involved more often in setting site-level goals, supporting family engagement activities, and ordering supplies and materials. Staff worked together on common goals, and gave more frequent feedback to each other and their director or supervisor. When it came to systems, more directors were confident in their risk management systems and their systems for assessing and providing feedback to teachers, including formal written appraisals. Directors were more confident in their understanding and use of classroom assessment tools, leadership skills, and management skills. By the end of the year, directors also indicated that they practiced self-reflection regularly as a part of their leadership development, which is key to directors' continued growth as leaders (Abel, 2016; DeHart, 2020). The small cohort of directors who participated in the Director's Institute also gained an understanding of the topics presented during the training series. The training was well integrated into the regular site visits, and PLCs reinforced the information and strategies to support directors in implementing new ideas from the trainings.

Directors most valued the parts of the PLD model that established their relationship with the PLCs and helped to define their work for the year. PLCs were successful in establishing positive relationships with directors. In fact, most directors felt they had a strong connection with their PLCs, and trusted both their PLCs and the consulting process. Most directors were satisfied with the level of support they received from their PLCs. Their satisfaction, despite variation in the implementation of the model, may indicate that PLCs successfully tailored the model to directors' needs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on findings from the data, and on suggestions for improving model implementation which were shared by the PLCs in their survey responses. Some recommendations were shared and implemented prior to the writing of this report.

Conduct Welcome Visits individually in order to address scheduling challenges. It was recommended that PLCs have the option to conduct the Welcome Visits individually, rather than in coordination with the Program Coach. PLCs could share all the necessary information, documents, and forms with the directors, and briefly introduce the role of the Program Coach. The Program Coach would then follow up with a site visit. This recommendation was provided to the PLC team, and was partly implemented the following program year. PLCs and Program Coaches had the option either to conduct Welcome Visits individually, or to coordinate their initial visits and conduct them jointly.

Differentiate the processes and forms used at the Welcome Visit for new directors from those used for directors who have already participated in Child360's coaching process. PLCs will need to provide new directors with more background information, and will follow a more formalized process to start building the relationship. However, PLCs who already have an existing relationship with directors should be able to skip the more formalized process for getting to know directors, so that initial visits can focus on reconnecting with the directors, and PLCs can start the goal development process sooner. In cases where a PLC is newly assigned to a director who has previously worked with a different coach, the PLC will need to work on developing the relationship, but may find a less formal process is best.

Extend the length of PLCs' and Program Coaches' director assignments to two years, rather than reassigning coaches to directors annually. Extending the PLC and Program Coach assignments would provide more continuity for the QI team and the directors. In the second year of the assignment, PLCs could begin focusing on goal development right away, rather than spending time on getting to know a new director. This would allow more time to accomplish goals and make program improvements.

Reduce or edit the documents and forms used in the PLD model. PLCs tended to select which documents and forms they wanted to use. Reducing the number of forms will make it more likely that all PLCs will follow the model more closely. Directors' feedback should be considered when selecting which forms to continue to use. During the 2018-2019 program year, more than half of directors felt the Partnership Norms and Getting To Know You forms were essential to building the relationship with the PLC and making improvements in their program. On the other hand, the PLCs had conflicting thoughts about the usefulness of these forms. Some thought they should be eliminated, while some thought they should be used as a basic guide for discussion and to provide a clear understanding of the intention behind the process of building the relationship. In fact, the decision was made to combine these two forms into one, and to continue using them in the subsequent program year. Other forms should continue to be reviewed, and when necessary, eliminated to reduce redundancy. This will help ensure that forms that must be completed serve a clear and specific purpose. Forms that were developed to help PLCs prepare for site visits, such as the PLC Plan and PLC Pre-Visit Planning Sheet, became optional in the 2019-2020 program year, while others were identified as required, such as the PLC Site Visit form.

PLCs have expressed a desire to implement the model more uniformly across PLCs and directors. Identifying specific topics and strategies that PLCs must share with directors can help make the model more consistent. This could also provide continuity when directors are assigned to a new PLC, and could facilitate the development of a more specific written description of the model.

Continue to integrate the Director's Institute as part of the PLD model. The DI training series provides information and strategies beyond what consulting alone can provide. After directors attended each day of training, PLCs reiterated some of the information and supported directors in implementing new strategies. Typically, participants tend to forget what they learned at a training after a few days; in order to improve recall and implementation of new strategies, information from the trainings needs to be reinforced (Smith, 2018). Directors can benefit most from receiving a combination of training and support from consultants.

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Appendix A. Methods

Surveys were developed to collect data on PLC processes and directors' outcomes. The following is a description of the tools used to collect quantitative data during the program year. The tools included some open-ended questions.

PLC Survey

This survey was conducted to learn how the PLCs implemented the model, and to get their feedback and suggestions for improvement of the model. PLCs completed two online surveys to provide data and feedback on the new processes. The first survey was completed in mid-March 2018, and the second survey was completed in mid-July 2018. The first survey focused on processes specific to PLCs' initial work with the directors, including the Welcome Visit, use of the 4D Cycle, development of the Quality Improvement Plans, and goals and coordination with the QI Team. The second survey asked about processes and forms used for their ongoing site visits, reflection with administrators at the end of the year, and their role in supporting professional development, specifically their support for the Director's Institute. The data collected on both surveys were quantitative and qualitative. Eight out of the nine PLCs completed the surveys.

Retrospective Director Survey

This survey asked administrators to report policies and practices that had been in place at their sites at the start of the school year (August/September 2017), and the policies and practices that were currently in place (April 2018). Two samples of administrators completed the Director Survey in April 2018. The first sample of 60 administrators received an email requesting that they complete the survey online. The instructions indicated that if they completed the survey, they would be entered into a raffle to win a gift card. Due to the low response rate, the second sample was a convenience sample of administrators that attended the second day of the Director's Institute. They completed a paper form and were entered into another raffle to win gift cards of $50 or less.

A total of 76 surveys were completed. Of those that completed the survey, about one-third were directors from the first sample, and two-thirds had participated in the Director's Institute. About half (52%) had received coaching support for two or more years, 38% had received coaching for less than two years, and the remaining 10% did not respond to this question.

The structure of the retrospective survey resulted in low response rates on several items. The survey first asked for a rating of the current policy or practice (post), and then for a rating for the same policy or practice at the start of the program year (pre). Due to this perceived redundancy or to misunderstanding of the question, several of the items asking participants to rate the policy or practice at the start of the year did not have a response. About 15% to 43% of participants per question did not respond to the "pre" items (the second rating), whereas only 4% to 38% of participants per question (with most questions under 17%) did not respond to the "post" items (the first rating). Pre-post analyses were limited to questions for which the respondent answered both the pre- and post- items. T-tests were conducted to identify statistically significant changes.

Quality Continuum Framework Assessment (QCFA)

The QCFA closely follows the Quality Continuum Framework matrix and was completed by the directors, with guidance from the QI team, at the first or second visit. It was intended to assist directors and QI Teams in identifying sites' strengths and areas for potential improvement. Data from the QCFA was collected in the fall of 2017. The post-QCFA data was to be collected in the fall of 2018, but a program decision to stop using the assessment was made. The purpose of pre-post data analysis was to investigate changes from one year to the next. As a result, these data were not analyzed.

Director's Institute (DI) Surveys

Surveys were administered to participants at the end of each of the three training days of the DI. The purpose was to get feedback on the training, and to improve for the next day's training. On the final day, participants were asked about changes they had experienced as a result of the three-day training. Question responses from the final day were analyzed and included in this report.

Appendix B. Data

The following detailed findings provide specifics about the PLD model's processes and forms, including data on how often processes and forms were used, and how helpful the PLCs felt the forms were.

At least 75% of PLCs reported sharing more than half of the Welcome Visit documents or forms. The only two documents all PLCs shared were the Quality Support Team Member Roles and Responsibilities and the PLC Site Visit Form (Table B1). Most PLCs used the Quality Continuum Framework Matrix, Collaborative Agreements, Consulting Roadmap, Meet Your PLC Form, and the Child Development Permit Matrix. These were rated as being helpful or very helpful by almost all the PLCs. One PLC, in providing feedback about the Collaborative Agreements, noted that the agreements were "generic." Because the Collaborative Agreements document also presents a list of tasks for which the QI Team is not responsible, this PLC also mentioned that the document might "sometimes come off as negative."

More than half of the PLCs (5 out of 8) indicated that they used the Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) Toolkit Quality Continuum Framework Assessments (QCFAs). Most PLCs (6 out of 8) said they were helpful or very helpful. However, two PLCs found the QCFAs to be challenging for the directors to complete. The QFCAs were presented to the directors during the Welcome Visits, and were completed at the second visit. Some directors said it was a long process, and did not see the value in rating themselves. Several directors did not complete their QCFA for their program. Due to this feedback, Child360 Program Supervisors decided to discontinue use of the assessment.

Only half of the PLCs used the forms intended to help establish the working relationship between directors and PLCs. These were the Getting to Know You (GTKY) Form and Partnership Norms. PLCs provided specific feedback on these two forms. One PLC felt the GTKY Form would only be necessary if a PLC did not know how to develop a relationship with directors. Another PLC indicated that the GTKY Form should be used internally to train Child360 staff, but that it should not be a tool to complete with directors, as the sharing of personal information should happen organically. A few PLCs had questions about how to use the Partnership Norms and how to encourage directors to think of norms for the PLCs to follow.

The QSLA Guidebook was only used by one PLC. The guidebook was intended to give providers information about the purpose of QSLA, the application process, the tier rating assignments and elements, a description of quality support services, and resources. More than half of the PLCs indicated the guidebook was helpful or somewhat helpful, but most did not share the guide with directors. PLCs may have felt that the information provided was not as relevant to current providers, as it seemed to be more relevant to providers interested in applying to become part of QSLA.

Table B1. Use of Welcome Visit Forms

	Forms Shared	Not Helpful at All	Somewhat Helpful	Helpful	Very Helpful
Quality Support Team Member Roles and Responsibilities	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (100%)
PLC Site Visit Form	8 (100%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	4 (50%)	3 (37.5%)
Quality Continuum Framework Matrix	7 (87.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (50%)	4 (50%)
Collaborative Agreements	7 (87.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	4 (50%)
Consulting Roadmap	7 (87.5%)	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	3 (37.5%)	4 (50%)
Meet Your PLC Form	6 (75%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	4 (50%)
Child Development Permit Matrix	6 (75%)	0 (0%)	2 (25%)	2 (25%)	4 (50%)
Quality Start Los Angeles (QSLA) Toolkit	5 (62.5%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)	3 (37.5%)
Quality Continuum Framework Assessment (QCFA)	5 (62.5%)	2 (25%)	0 (0%)	3 (37.5%)	3 (37.5%)
Partnership Norms	4 (50%)	0 (0%)	4 (50%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (37.5%)
Getting to Know You Form	4 (50%)	2 (25%)	1 (12.5%)	4 (50%)	1 (12.5%)
QSLA Guidebook	1 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	3 (37.5%)	1 (12.5%)	1 (12.5%)

Note: The table lists forms in order of use, from those used most often to least often.
Source: PLC Survey, 2018

Table B2. Program Staff's Awareness

	n	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Change	Sig.
Program's vision	49	2.86	2.94	.082	
Program's mission	55	2.78	2.93	.145	
Program's educational philosophy	48	2.77	3.04	.271	**

Notes: Item responses were on a scale from 1 (Not at all aware) to 4 (Extremely aware).
T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Statistically significant differences between responses at the start of the year (pre) and end of the year (post) are shown in the "Sig" column. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey for 2017-2018

Table B3. Teachers' Level of Involvement

	n	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Change	Sig.
Site-level goal setting	63	3.51	3.73	.222	*
Creating site policies and procedures	62	2.50	2.66	.161	
Family engagement activities/projects	63	3.65	4.00	.349	**
Programmatic decisions	63	3.46	3.63	.175	
Addressing problems or challenges	63	3.70	3.86	.159	
Facilitating staff meetings	64	3.17	3.34	.172	
Observing fellow teachers	63	3.02	3.13	.111	
Coaching fellow teachers	42	2.98	3.21	.238	
Making decisions on things that directly affect teachers	63	3.30	3.37	.063	
Ordering supplies/materials	64	3.91	4.08	.172	*

Notes: Item responses were on a scale from 1 (Never involved) to 5 (Always involved).
T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Statistically significant differences between responses at the start of the year (pre) and end of the year (post) are shown in the "Sig" column. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey for 2017-2018

Table B4. Staff Interactions

	n	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Change	Sig.
Staff work together to achieve common goals	59	3.92	4.05	.136	*
Staff provide each other feedback in the classroom	57	3.93	4.12	.193	*
Staff praise each other	57	3.91	4.04	.123	
Staff share ideas and resources with one another	58	4.07	4.10	.034	
Staff provide programmatic feedback to director/supervisor	57	3.70	4.00	.298	**

Notes: Item responses were on a scale from 1 (Once a year if at all) - 5 (Weekly).
One item on staff's reluctance to express their feelings was excluded because data was difficult to interpret. It is unclear if participants correctly understood the item.
T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Statistically significant differences between responses at the start of the year (pre) and end of the year (post) are shown in the "Sig" column. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey for 2017-2018

Table B5. Clear and Explicit Systems in Place

	n	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Change	Sig.
Internal communications	54	2.54	2.59	.056	
Determining staff schedules	53	2.66	2.74	.075	
Risk management	53	2.66	2.74	.075	*
Staff orientation and training for new staff	52	2.48	2.50	.019	
Ongoing staff development	52	2.56	2.62	.058	
Tracking staff development and qualifications	53	2.34	2.42	.075	
Developing an annual budget	53	2.45	2.47	.019	
Monitoring budget throughout the year	54	2.52	2.50	.019	
Program evaluation process that includes feedback from staff and parents	54	2.61	2.63	.019	

Notes: Item responses were on a scale including 1 (no), 2 (yes, needs improvement), and 3 (yes).
T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Statistically significant differences between responses at the start of the year (pre) and end of the year (post) are shown in the "Sig" column. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey for 2017-2018

Table B6. Directors' Confidence in Leadership and Management Skills

	n	Pre Mean	Post Mean	Change	Sig.
Confident in my leadership skills	56	4.02	4.25	.232	***
Confident in my management skills	55	4.13	4.25	.127	*
Practice regular self-reflection as part of my leadership development	55	4.00	4.16	.164	*

Notes: Item responses were on a scale from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree).
T-tests were conducted to compare pre-post responses. Statistically significant differences between responses at the start of the year (pre) and end of the year (post) are shown in the "Sig" column. *p < .05; **p < .01; ***p < .001.
Source: Retrospective Director Survey for 2017-2018