

Administrative Training—The Why

RE: The Early Learning Leadership Institute, home of the Early Learning Leadership Credential

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am Andre Ransom, a former owner of 14 early care and education centers in the Denver metropolitan area. Since selling my centers nearly 20 years ago, I have dedicated myself to consulting with owners, directors, staff, and government and business leaders on various areas related to the field of early childhood care and education. I actually began my consulting career as a result of people initiating contact with me requesting assistance with particular problems that they were encountering in various aspects of the operations of their child care facilities.

Since then, I have traveled to many states conducting training seminars and workshops that have provided directors, owners, managers, supervisors, school principals, and even attorneys, firemen, police chiefs, and accountants with information specific to the operation an early care and education center. The response to these training sessions has been extremely positive.

Based upon these experiences, and also with encouragement from those who have me train their trainers, I have developed a comprehensive course on child care center administration and management. This course is designed to initiate the novice into the complicated world of the daily and long-term operational needs of an early care and education center. It also serves as an update for the more experienced persons with regard to federal laws, curriculum trends, staff management, development and use of systems, as well as the need for and proper use of the vision and mission statements of an organization. The course format enables participants to improve their leadership and management skills with the ultimate goal of providing both programmatic and fiscal soundness in operations.

It has been my experience that an early care and education center is only as good as its leadership and management. It was my experience as an owner and operator that directors with optimum training and skills thrived in their positions. They were successful in providing both a wonderful care and educational format for young children but also adhered to a sound business model. This led to the long-term sustainability of the center. Unfortunately, I also learned that the opposite was just as true. My hands on experience as a multi-site owner were a vital part of developing managers and leaders needed to make an organization successful.

Extensive review of literature in the field, it is apparent that research shows that well managed centers provide high quality early care and education. My personal experiences as an operator proved this to me, and I have been pleased that research strongly validates this point.

The Early Learning Leadership Credential provides an opportunity for persons involved in the administrative functions of an early care and education center to assess, analyze and improve their skills. Most national child care companies have developed training programs for their directors. However, the owners of smaller organizations have little time or money to develop these sophisticated programs for themselves or their directors. The course that I have designed provides an answer for those in these situations. Additionally, I have had many participants in my classes from national organizations, and they have shared with me how much the course has benefitted them.

The course is interactive and the training is tailored to the needs of the various participants. It promotes self confidence in the less experienced learner as well as those more experienced and imparts vital information for consideration, review, and discussion by all.

A college professor who took the course has stated: "Pedagogically speaking, Ms. Ransom's course allows students of various background and learning types to critically and actively engage with the materials presented. I have had the unique opportunity to pursue both the highest academic qualifications and also work in a center as a teacher. There are so many nuances and variables in human interaction- emotional, social, cultural, and linguistic- that are not captured in an academic discussion of the administration of a center. Each center has very specific needs that are tangible and this knowledge can only be communicated through experience."

The advantage of Ms. Ransom's approach is that it balances academic discussion with practical examples and draws upon both the experience of the course leader and the participants to enhance their understanding of administration and propose best practices tailored to the specific micro-cultures of their respective centers. I was thoroughly impressed by André's course and highly recommend its continued support as a critical step in the professional development of early childcare administrators."

I have noted that in the licensing requirements for the director of a child care center in Wyoming, a person may meet the requirements if they have a professional credential recognized by the Department of Family Services. I am seeking such approval, and am including as an addendum more information about what I have developed, which is known as the Early Learning Leadership Credential.

It would be my pleasure to come to Cheyenne to discuss this with you, and provide a walk-through of the course training manual, which is continually updated in every aspect of the operation of an early care and education center.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Andre Ransom MUA

Reasons for the Development of the Early Learning Leadership Credential:

1. Absolute need for owners, directors, managers, administrators, and Board members to understand the many and complicated dynamics of running a successful early care and education center that provides high quality services and curriculum to families and children.
2. Up to date manual regarding federal laws, stressing the need to understand the budget and financial aspects of managing a center, enabling participants in understanding the use of systems, the importance of curriculum, risk management, staff management, and the role of leadership in bringing high quality early care and education to families and children.
3. Author of the manual has presented a multitude of classes and workshops to those responsible for the administration of an early care and education center, listened to the participants concerning problems they encounter, and has tailored content to these needs.
4. Author has also developed content in those areas of operations and management—such as federal laws relating to early care and education-- that are not in typical college courses.
5. Course combines academic content with practical hands on experience.
6. Each class is tailored to the needs of the students of that particular class.
7. The 45 hour course (minimum time spent) allows participants to experience that others encounter the same or similar operational problems, and to hear their solutions, as well as develop their own solutions.
8. Author has more than 35 years experience in early care and education administration (owning and operating several centers), has earned a Masters Degree closely related to administration, and is devoted to the concept of improving the quality of all child care centers through management and leadership training and development.

What Others Have Said

“Now I will be able to talk to my staff about how budgets work and help them to understand why supply lists and other needs cannot always be done.”

“When OSHA and the Health Department come to observe our center I can now relax and know exactly why they are there.”

“The class has truly helped my performance in many ways.”

“Having the opportunity to grow and learn alongside others in the same position was priceless.”

“The training has afforded me the opportunity to look at my center rewards and successes. I know that through this training we will have a better year planning and coordinating activities for children and families.”

“The course is very well organized and dynamic touching various concrete aspects of owning and operating a child care facility.”

“The course balances academic discussion with practical examples and draws upon both the experience of the course leader and the participants to enhance their understanding of administration and propose best practices tailored to the specific micro-cultures of their respective centers.

“This was a wonderful experience.”

“Thank you for an amazing course.”

“I was not aware of the differences between exempt and non-exempt employees.”

“Thank you for providing logical, vital and useful information.”

“This class was eye opening for me to see how much it takes to open a center.”

“I have learned so much this week that my brain is truly on “overload.”

“What a life changing experience for me both personally and professionally.”

“This has been an ‘awe inspiring’ week.”

“This class has brought a ‘renewal’ of sorts to me and in regards to my position as I am finding myself with a wealth of thoughts and ideas to take back with me.”

“I have learned so much. It has been an awakening, and I have been encouraged.”

“I will use the skills taught-- forever.”

“After taking this course, I feel I am going back to my program a much better and prepared director. I am excited about making the program the best it can be.”

“You’ve really made me think about childcare as a whole, and what is going on around me.”

“The information and delivery this week has been amazing. I had no idea what I didn’t know until now.”

“I’ve learned so much. Now, I have one eye opened instead of both of them closed.”

“I really enjoyed the class and learned a lot. It is going to make me a better director.”

“Had I taken this course prior to opening our center, my life would have been more stress free and my center more solid.”

“In many state requirements for center directors, there is a lack of administration and management training required. The emphasis is mainly on early care and education coursework. A center director must understand how children learn and grow and develop, but knowing how to manage staff to have a quality curriculum and how to design and adhere to a budget without violating federal wage and hour laws etc. is just as important. Without good financial planning and administration a center will not succeed. This course will help me succeed.”