

Principles of LEAP

LEAP Gathering - March 10, 2002

The following principles were generated in our small groups and categorized in the following manner by the CCW Staff.

LEAP is more than a course or a retreat.

- LEAP incorporates on-going community coordination, support and mentoring
- LEAP facilitates organizing through community action projects.
- LEAP unites voices of those who work with children to impact decision-making in the community and in the profession.
- LEAP is action-oriented.
- The course and the action projects are tailored to the needs of individual communities.
- Actions are rooted in the community.
- There is self-determination within communities of where to focus leadership/action/organizing.
- LEAP fosters on-going connection/networking with others in the field and in the community.
- LEAP builds the movement for better child care and improved compensation.

LEAP is inclusive.

- Promotes intentional leadership development for people of color.
- Recruits from groups that previously have not had a chance to find a voice
- Is about "shifting the center" - a new paradigm of leadership development that looks at systems of oppression (racism, classism, sexism...)
- Ensures that cultural groups and traditionally under-represented groups are participants and planners at all levels
- Provides authentic representation of the field among community planners, coordinators and support staff; students (teachers, providers, directors); decision-making/advisory group; and instructors/trainers...
- maintains inclusiveness

Content of LEAP course/retreat:

- Certain information is always included in the curriculum; there is a common framework
- There is integrity of course content and a focus on building relationships.
- Maintains a core body of knowledge that includes issues of equity, oppression, empowerment, advocacy, public policy, what is going on in a community...

- Explores non-traditional leadership
- Provides opportunities to be a leader
- Includes: storytelling, reflection and analysis, and action-planning

Some structural elements of LEAP:

- small group size
- free or affordable course work
- includes both center-based and home-based providers

Teaching Methods:

- characterized by collaborative learning; classroom dynamic is NOT teacher-directed. Students teach and learn from each other as well.
- reflect a culture of listening, encouragement & support
- instructors are prepared to teach the course and are provided on-going training, support, and opportunities for networking
- continues to encompass both models (i.e. credit-bearing class and two-day retreat)
- co-facilitation and use of guest speakers
- literacy and language supports
- evaluation

LEAP promotes a connection between personal and professional growth and empowerment

- Enables participants to identify their strengths
- Advisory groups include 'LEAPers'; they own and govern the project.
- There is a commitment to involve LEAP graduates in the development of the program
- There are different ways to remain active in LEAP
- There is on-going sharing of resources, ideas, funding strategies...

What we learn through LEAP about empowerment connects to our work with children.

LEAP embodies a spirit of connection, enhances relationship-building, and incorporates FUN!