

The Five Commitments of Optimistic Leaders

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What you do has far greater
impact than what you say.
– *Stephen Covey*

Leadership. Leadership means recognizing the impact you have on others and using that knowledge in productive ways.

The Five Commitments of Optimistic Leadership can support you as an educator of young children.

1. Think Impact to make informed decisions. Everything we do and say — all of our actions — has consequences or benefits.

2. Cultivate Self-Awareness to guide thought, emotion, and behavior. Self-awareness is the capacity to recognize your own feelings, behaviors, and characteristics, and to understand your cognitive, physical, and emotional self.

3. Nurture Relationships to support learning and collaboration. Research has consistently shown the importance of high-quality trusting relationships in achieving educational outcomes.

4. Refine Communication for mutual clarity and understanding. Communication is key to maintaining positive and effective relationships.

5. Activate Curiosity to find connections and continue learning. When we activate curiosity, we are more willing to take risks, experiment, and try things out.



The Five Commitments

What questions can I ask myself to shift my thinking in the work I do?

A Reflection Tool

Optimistic Leaders take responsibility for enhancing their own professional engagement as they support the best outcomes for children and families. Use the questions below to help guide your thinking about the work you do as an Optimistic Leader.

Think Impact to make informed decisions.

- Why is it important to me to think about the impact of this decision?
- In what ways am I already effective in thinking about the impact of my decisions?
- How can I use past decisions I've made to better equip me to make future decisions?
- How will I stay focused on the impact of my actions?

Cultivate Self-Awareness to guide thought, emotion, and behavior.

- Why is it important to me to use self-awareness to guide my thinking, emotions, and behavior?
- In what ways am I already effective in using self-awareness to guide my thoughts, emotions and behavior?
- How can I remember to stay present and in the moment to be aware of myself and simultaneously consider the perspective of others?
- How will I sustain my commitment to self-awareness from moment to moment as I keep colleagues, children and families in mind?

Nurture Relationships to support learning and collaboration.

- Why is it important to me to nurture and strengthen relationships with my colleagues, children and families?
- In what ways am I already effective at nurturing professional relationships with my colleagues, children, and families?
- How do I model trusting relationships for the people around me?
- As I reflect on professional relationships that directly impact my work, how am I sustaining ongoing, open dialogue and partnership with each of them?

Refine Communication for mutual clarity and understanding.

- Why is it important to me to refine communication in my work with colleagues, children and families?
- In what ways am I already effective in communicating my ideas, thoughts, and needs?
- How can I practice remaining aware of my verbal, non-verbal, and written communication techniques in situations that are easy and those that are more challenging?
- How do I practice active listening for understanding and to inform my own ability to communicate effectively?
- What are some questions I would feel comfortable asking to help ensure mutual clarity and understanding?

Activate Curiosity to find connections and continue learning.

- Why is it important for me to remain curious as I work with colleagues, children and families?
- In what ways do I activate curiosity in my personal and professional life (for example, ask questions, read, observe, converse)?
- How can I remain curious even when I know people and situations well?

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