

April 2014

How Can Directors Help Teachers Be Teachers?

A teacher has a very specific role in the life of a child. Usually teachers are thought of as someone who helps children learn academic skills. Teachers also help children learn how school works. In order to do their work, it helps when teachers know where a child has been before the child arrives in his/her care. Directors of child development centers play a key role in this process, from when the child is enrolled until the day the child leaves for kindergarten.

When children are enrolled in full day settings, just like all “students” , they have a teacher who helps them learn new things and helps them figure out how school works. Teachers of young children are also put in the position of needing to help children with their bodily needs, in ways that teachers of older children are not.

Teachers of young children have to help children with bodily care tasks; tasks that are usually attended to within the context of their attachment relationships at home. Teachers of young children wipe noses, change soiled clothing, assist with feeding children and support all aspects of helping children manage in the context of the group setting....all without mommy or daddy.

Teachers of young children comfort children when they cry, rock them in rocking chairs, read their favorite book to them, and walk with them when they get restless.

Teachers of young children do mommy like things with the children in their care. It is up to the director to support teachers and parents understanding the boundaries.

Sometimes busy parents want teachers to do things with or for their child that is not the teacher’s job. Sometimes busy teachers want parents to do things that they can’t or won’t do. This is not easy work for either of them.

The directors understanding and guidance sometimes is all it takes to get things running smoothly for all parties. The director has the benefit of a little “distance” and can not only can see the individuals involved, parent, child and teacher, but she also has the opportunity so see the “bigger picture” of how all of the partners , parent, child and teacher work together, as well as how the decisions made in this circumstance impact the program in general.

So, what does this mean.....

As directors, we need to?

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