

VISION

Leading for Children (LFC) promotes self-empowerment and equitable partnerships among adults to improve outcomes for children. Through their Humanity First Model, LFC takes a holistic approach to early care and education.

LFC's Mutual Learning Method utilizes facilitation strategies to elevate the diversity, wisdom, and dignity of all adults in the child's ecosystem.



MISSION

Children's optimal development relies on positive relationships with, and among, adults.

However, educators, family members, and other adults who care for young children increasingly experience stress and burnout in professional and personal contexts. The inequitable distribution of power among adults in the child's ecosystem leads them to feel unseen and undervalued. This contributes to an unhealthy growth environment for children.

LFC's Mutual Learning Method promotes positive relationships by supporting adult well-being and social-emotional skills.

Through the Mutual Learning Method, adults learn tools to foster leadership development, improve adult-adult interactions and model positive behaviors for children.

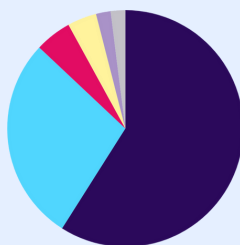


“[The Mutual Learning Method] really helped me to internalize the power that I have as an educator and also as a human.”

EVALUATION

LFC and the Institute for Child Success conducted a mixed-method evaluation of the Mutual Learning Method. Three partners participated: Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (AL), Marin County Office of Education (CA), and Tallahatchie Early Learning Alliance (MS). 56 individuals participated in the evaluation.

EVALUATION RESPONDENTS



- 59% Ed. Admin, Coach, or Staff
- 28% Teacher
- 5% Home-Based Care Provider
- 4% Community Member
- 2% Community Leader
- 2% Other

ACTIVITIES

12 to 24 months of focused dialogue on experiential learning

Spaces of safety and belonging that enable active listening and self-regulation

Opportunities for ongoing facilitated individual and group reflection

Practical application of learned concepts in everyday life

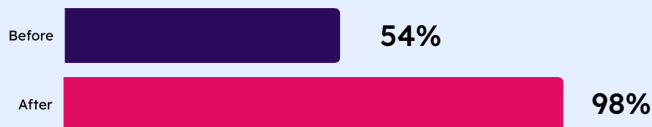


HOW DID RESPONDENTS CHANGE?

- GAINED SELF-EFFICACY AND AGENCY
- ENGAGED IN MORE EQUITABLE RELATIONSHIPS
- RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARING POWER
- INTERACTED MORE INTENTIONALLY WITH CHILDREN

SELF-EFFICACY & AGENCY

Respondents' crediting of their own strengths nearly doubled through the LFC experience.



"I'm a leader in the classroom, but I can also be a leader outside of my classroom to those around me, even to my administrators."



Reflection makes me more effective



Setting intentions helps me see myself as an agent of change



Respecting the dignity of myself and others guides my decisions



Being flexible improves my work and life



Sharing power fosters more equitable communities

EQUITABLE RELATIONSHIPS

The Mutual Learning Method emphasizes how adults impact both children and adults in the community. Children emulate adults' treatment of – and assumptions about – others

- Respondents identified active listening and perspective-taking as critical to fostering equitable relationships.
- Almost 91% endorsed the idea that after participation, they slow down their thoughts so that they can hear another's.
- Respondents —across all roles— credited the safe environment facilitated by LFC as a factor in having more honest dialogues, sharing of similar experiences, and learning about diverse backgrounds.

"It's so easy to assume how someone should be... But [when] you really sit and have a true conversation and get an understanding of why something may be the way it is, it [can] be very revealing."

"I allow children to have a stake in what we're doing, I respect them and I treat them like they're equal humans. When you give up power, you really get so much more back from the children."



SHARING POWER

Power imbalances amongst adults are detrimental to a child's learning environment, whether in school, at home, or in the community. So too are imbalances between adults and children.

72% believed 'sharing power fosters more equitable communities' and are practicing that in their own classrooms and communities.

INTERACTING INTENTIONALLY WITH CHILDREN



Strongly agreed they have learned ways an adult can impact a child's learning environment (e.g., through direct/modeled behaviors).



Strongly agreed the children they work with have directly benefited from the educator's participation.

LFC strengthens meaningful adult-child and adult-adult relationships that in turn result in more positive and enriching learning environments for children.

LFC's Mutual Learning Method successfully harnesses the internal capabilities of adults who care for and educate young children. It emphasizes how adults' positive interactions with each other, children, and the community have real potential to bring about system change.