Abstract

This research paper is a self-study action research paper based on the title “How can I promote positive leadership skills in young children”?

The research site is a private preschool in Ireland. Fifteen children aged three to four years, their parents and four educators participated. Interventions introduced included persona dolls, new roles and responsibilities, books and a leadership elf. A workshop was developed for the educators. Qualitative data was collected using anecdotal observations, focus groups, learning journals, surveys and a reflective diary. Kolb's (1984) reflective cycle was used to reflect and build on developing and enhancing children’s leadership skills. Brookfield’s critical reflection theory (2017) was used to support the self-study element. Critical friends and a validation group supported reflections. The Froebelian principle of unity and connectedness are displayed in the findings chapter. These show the child's disposition, stage of development and learned values are important; while the role of parents is paramount to the development of leadership skills in young children. Educators and the pedagogy of the classroom enhance those skills. Recommendations have been made for future practice.