

Recognizing and Sustaining Leadership

National Indian Head Start Directors Association Conference

June 15 - 18, 2026

Costa Mesa, CA



Head Start Regional TTA Network

Introductions



- Share your name and the Tribal community, Head Start program, or role you represent at your table.
- Name a leadership strength you bring to your position.



Objectives



Participants will:

Understand succession planning practices

Learn systems for knowledge transfer

Discuss risk management during staff transitions

Strengthen organizational sustainability



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Recognizing Leadership Potential

Potential leaders often:

- Take initiative
- Support team members
- Solve problems proactively
- Show consistency and reliability
- Demonstrate strong communication
- Embrace learning opportunities



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Activity Recognizing My Team



Human Resources

ERSEA

Facilities

Fiscal

My Fellow Teammates

Disabilities

Services to EHS

Education

Policy Council

Mental Health

Health

Transportation

Community Engagement

Family Engagement

Data



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Characteristics of Effective Leaders

Effective leaders demonstrate:

- Communication
- Emotional intelligence
- Accountability
- Adaptability
- Cultural responsiveness
- Collaboration
- Problem-solving



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Activity



Table Discussion

What is one or more leadership quality that is most important but not listed here?



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Barriers to Leadership Development

Common barriers include:

- Burnout
- Lack of mentorship
- Limited professional development
- Fear of change
- Poor communication
- High turnover



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Activity



Group Discussion:

- What leadership gaps exist in your organization?
- What systems currently support staff growth?
- What challenges impact succession planning?



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Take a breather!



Building Leadership Pipelines

Strategies include:

- Mentorship programs
- Cross-training staff
- Leadership coaching
- Professional development opportunities
- Shadowing experiences
- Team-based leadership projects



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Leadership Quotes

- Share a leadership quote!





Why Leadership Sustainability Matters

Strong leadership systems help:

- Maintain program stability
- Support staff morale and retention
- Ensure continuity for children and families
- Preserve organizational knowledge
- Meet Head Start Performance Standards

Strong leadership cultures:

- Encourage collaboration
- Value staff voices
- Promote continuous learning
- Support wellness and retention
- Celebrate growth and success



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Activity



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Risk Management During Transitions

Transition risks may include:

- Staff uncertainty
- Communication breakdowns
- Service disruptions
- Compliance concerns
- Decreased morale



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Activity



- What could be a risk to in your workplace?

OR

- Think of a scenario at work that was a risk.



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What is Succession Planning?

Succession Planning:

- Identifies future leaders
- Prepares staff for advancement
- Transfers organizational knowledge
- Reduces operational disruptions
- Builds leadership pipelines



Activity

Plan your own Success!



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Knowledge Transfer

Knowledge transfer protects:

- Program operations
- Relationships
- Compliance systems
- Community partnerships
- Institutional knowledge



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Creating a Succession Plan

Key Steps:

1. Identify critical positions
2. Assess leadership needs
3. Identify potential leaders
4. Create development plans
5. Document procedures
6. Review plans regularly





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Key Takeaways



Let's review...

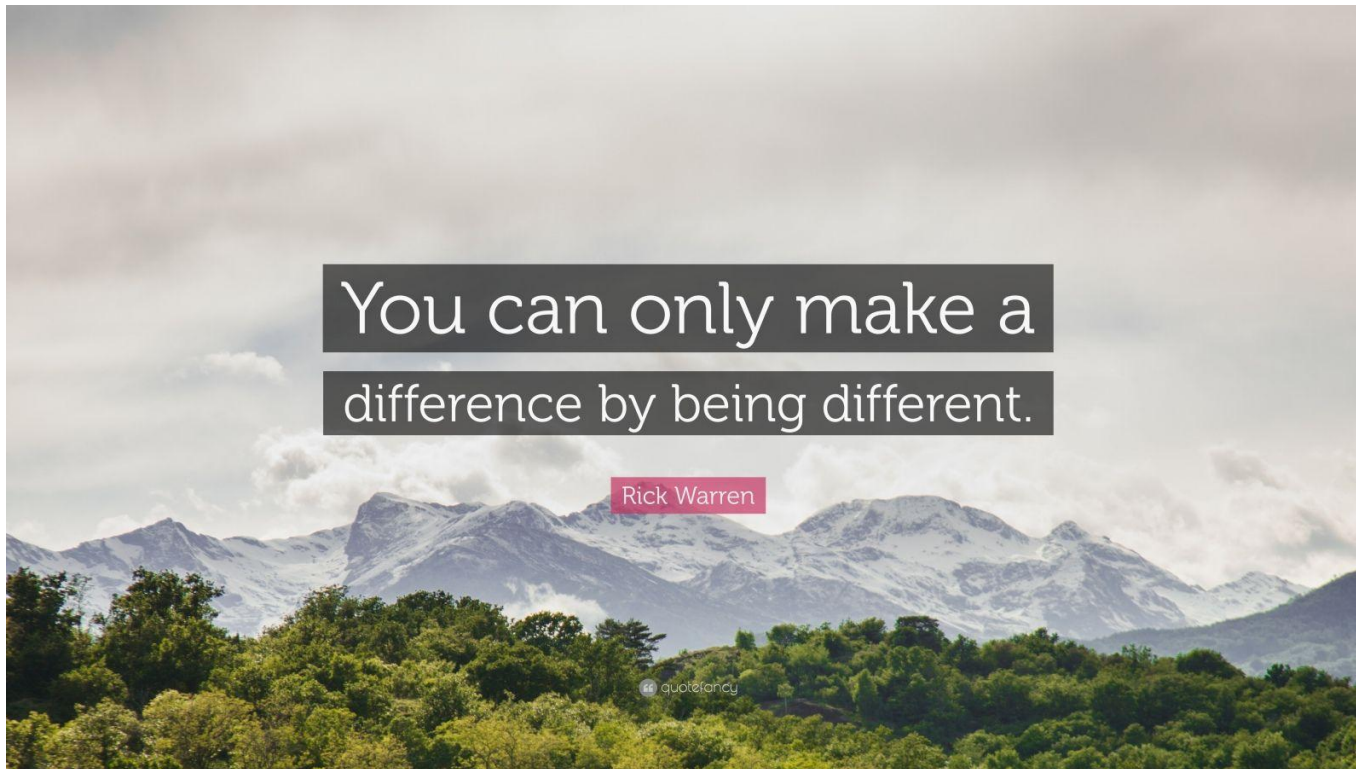
- Leadership development is ongoing
- Succession planning protects program stability
- Mentorship and training strengthen organizations
- Knowledge transfer reduces disruption
- Sustainable leadership supports children, families, and staff



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Thank you!



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