

How do you develop Administrative Leadership Skills?

BY TARAH KADZIELAWSKI

In last week's [Whole Leadership](#) post, Teri Talan started us in a new direction, [Administrative Leadership](#). My personal background is similar to many other program leaders in our field—I was a strong teacher who was promoted into administration. In my personal experience with administrative leadership, I felt I could handle pedagogical leadership and thought I had many leadership essentials; however, **I knew I was in need of some support and resources to build up my administrative leadership skills.** (In hindsight I'm sure I was in need of more resources for pedagogical leadership and leadership essentials as well, but that is a different blog post.)

To build up my administrative leadership skills, I turned to the resources at my disposal. There were director's networks—I was involved in—related to different funding sources such as Head Start and state pre-K. However, these didn't provide the administrative leadership skill development that I sought. Two professional learning opportunities that I participated in did help develop my administrative leadership skills:

- [Taking Charge of Change](#): Opened my eyes or caused me to rethink aspects of leadership such as: Building a vision and clearly communicating it to staff; recruiting, hiring, and orientating; and how to give effective feedback to name a few.
- [Technology of Participation](#) (ToPs): Taught me facilitation methods to help groups think, talk, and work together. Great for shared decision making.

I probably could have read more books, articles, or journals, but I felt overwhelmed as a new director. I was constantly putting out fires. If I could go back and give my younger self any advice, it would be to make time to learn about, develop, and practice the administrative leadership skills. I think if I had more administrative leadership skills working at the time, I would have been putting out fewer fires.

As I have continued my journey, I think about administrative leadership skills more broadly. Lately, I have been finding myself talking with colleagues about how administrative leadership skills—at their core—should be transferable to other professions. I noticed in many e-mails I receive from [Exchange Everyday](#), they often provide information from the Harvard Business Review related to leadership and management topics. I was also at a training not that long ago when someone told me about ATD. What's ATD you ask? It is the [Association for Talent Development](#). They provide resources on a variety of topics including leadership.

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