Strategies for working with difficult people

Leadership Training Written Assignment 1: Working with Difficult People

Parents: some strategies when working with difficult parents is mainly to remember that we all have the same goal, and that is for the benefit and well being of their child. Parents, although sometimes difficult, only want what's best for their child at the end of the day. If you take that into account, then it will be easier when trying to work with them and come up with ways for their child to flourish in your care. Also, just like children, adults have bad days, months, weeks, etc. Try to find the reason behind their behavior and this should help you be more understanding to their situation.

Coworkers: Similar to what I said above, realize that you and your coworkers most likely have the same goal at heart, and that is to provide the best care and environment to the children in your center or school. Also recognize that people go through different things and those issues may surface in their time at work. The best thing you can do is to engage in conversation with your coworker and see what you can do to help the situation. Being open and understanding goes a long way with people. Especially if they see that you actually care about what they are going through.

Describe five strategies for working with difficult children. For each one, identify the resources provided in the training that addressed this strategy.

1. First, ask yourself how you will engage with the difficult child. "What should I do?" This was one of the first things that was addressed in the training. Asking what you should do to help the situation enables you to figure out a way to approach the child and the situation with a plan of action.

2. Next, ask yourself what exactly the difficult behavior means. What is the underlying issue the child is having? Are there problems at home? Did they skip a meal or nap that day? This will help you in understanding where the child is coming from, or what may be contributing to their difficult behaviors. These were things that were mentioned in the presentation as being helpful in assessing why a child may be acting the way that they are at that given moment. Being able to see where someone is coming from is so helpful in being able to work with them and provide optimal care to them.

3. Try to avoid engaging in a power struggle with the child(ren). It's important to choose your battles when dealing with difficult children, as many of them are trying to test boundaries and see if you are an adult who will actually follow through with what you say. I see this with some of the children I work with quite frequently. A lot of the behavior is them trying to test your limits and expectations of them.

4. Try to see what actually 'triggers' a difficult child, and then implement strategies to help the child. If you are able to identify their triggers then you can be anticipatory of what may set them off and be able to strategize to prevent undesirable behaviors. Honestly, a lot of the presentation focused on working with difficult adults, so I am trying my best to find ways to relate what was said to the prompts in this exercise.

5. Follow through with your rules and expectations of the children in your care. More often than not, children want to make sure that you will keep them safe. Providing boundaries shows them that you will in fact keep them safe, and hold your ground when engaging with them. It is also a great way to earn their trust.

Based on your previous knowledge and experience with children and families, list three ideas for new strategies (ideas not incorporated from this training). For each, identify resources or experiences that addressed this issue.

1. One thing that I try to do when engaging with difficult children is to recognize my own emotions and limits with the child. It does not help the situation if I am not patient enough to deal with a child behaving undesirably. I pretty much do this on a daily basis since all of my jobs are working with children. I am aware of my threshold, and fortunately I am pretty patient, so I rarely am at a boiling point with my work. Plus I make sure to get enough sleep at night, because this really can be a make or break in my patience level for that day.

2. One big strategy that I have put into action is shadowing difficult children. Shadowing a difficult child allows you to be proactive as well as preventative with certain behaviors. It also shows them that you care and are interested in what they are doing by being close to them. Some children may take it differently, but my experience with shadowing has actually been extremely productive and helped. Depending on your adult to child ratio, this may be harder in some programs. However, I feel it is an effective strategy when dealing with difficult children.

3. Be flexible when working with difficult children and families. Flexibility shows that you are willing to work with others to try to find the best strategy or schedule for a child an/or their family. If you are closed off it could send the message that you do not care about the individuality of children and families, and want to fit into a 'one size fits all' model. People who work with children and families know that this is not the way to approach the families in your care. Treating each as a unique and individual persona will go a long way in your work, and will also show the respect that many families are searching for in the first place.

Research the topic of a working with difficult children. Find a strategy that could be implemented in the classroom or within a relational context (e.g., parent-child, teacher-child, or peer relations). Provide the link and explain why you feel this would be a valuable strategy.

http://www.brighthubeducation.com/teaching-preschool/111456-managing-difficult-or-disruptive-preschool-students/

I chose to focus on the strategy in this article of developing an Individualized Learning Plan. It reminded me of an IEP in that you are finding the best strategy possible to make sure that a child flourishes in your care. Some children have further issues than behavioral, it could be a developmental delay or special need that is either diagnosed or not diagnosed at the time. Finding a learning plan that fits the needs of that particular child shows them and their families that you care and you want that child to continue in your program or care. Showing them you care and are willing to work with their needs is more important than many people realize and works in the best interest of EVERYONE involved.