Leadership Training Response 2: Parent Programs

Parent Café was a wonderful experience. I actually was unaware of what parent café was until they came into our class at Chico State. I truly had an informative, enjoyable, and beneficial time. Parent Cafe believes in working with parents, caregivers, grandparents and other providers in a respectful way in order to ‘strengthen family’s framework’ and provide emotional support. There is no judgments or advice given, just confidential conversation that is not only guided for meaningful content but it is therapeutic as well. Parent Café helps by offering support and promoting conversation, expression, and self-reflection to create connections and also to foster personal growth. Parent Café has specific family goals that are important to Café’s process. These family goals are to “respect” every person that attends through “liberation”, be authentic in your commitment to being present and in the moment with “vitality”, “collaboration” in working together, and “excellence” in regards to being intentional and productive. Parent Café is inclusive of everyone from every background, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, age, and gender. The program is free, and there is free food and childcare. Some of the activities that are done by Parent Café are, one on one conversation that consists of each person talking for two minutes completely uninterrupted. There are cards that are placed on a table that initiate conversation and have various questions. People gather in different groups and answer these various questions. Groups are constantly switched as well so you get a chance to work with a variety of different people. I think Parent Café is wonderful in promoting relationships, openness, communication and fostering ideas. This approach is great because it is inclusive and draws in a large amount of people because its more person directed instead of professionally directed. I also think that it is effective in respects to therapeutic needs because each person gets to speak their mind and opinion freely. Since Parent Café came into our classroom, I have taken some approaches that they use such as, letting parents share their feelings without adding your input or advice into the conversation and I have used this at the preschool I work at. I think this is a useful tool because some parents need to speak or talk to you about certain things and they just want to be heard. It can be hard not to give advice or say anything in return but I know that if I let them speak freely it will make them feel great and in turn I think it will help foster trust between the parent and I. I hope that more parents become aware that this service is available in our community so that they can benefit from this amazing service that is provided.