

Standard 1B: Teachers Demonstrate Leadership in the School

The True Meaning of School Improvement

What it means and how it looks in Early Childhood settings



"School Improvement" generally refers to the process of implementing strategies to achieve specific goals or enhance certain aspects of the school environment. These areas can include academic performance, school climate/morale, physical environment, teacher retention, family and community engagement, staff leadership, and more. We acknowledge that the term "School Improvement" may not be universally familiar or consistently used by all teachers. Specifically in early childhood settings, alternative phrases such as "Team Goals," "Site Improvement Initiative," or "School Enhancement" may be more common. Regardless of the terminology, the core principle remains the same: a structured and intentional effort to enhance the quality of education within the school/center. The hope is that educators understand that the emphasis lies on the proactive steps taken to improve the environment, rather than on the specific terms used.

Examples of School Improvement Plan Ideas

Below, you will find a collection of potential School Improvement Plan ideas suitable for Early Childhood settings. This list is not comprehensive, and we encourage educators to develop creative and unique goals that align with their specific school's needs.

School Improvement Team

Consider creating a "School Improvement Team" with one representative from each age level classroom. The team would meet monthly with the administrators, discuss goals, create a plan, and then monitor its progress.

Staff Superstars

Highlight a staff member or two each month. Find a small bulletin board space to post a picture of the "superstars" and describe why they are being celebrated! Then pass out sticky notes for the other staff members to write a positive note about the person to add to the display.



Projects for the Greater Good

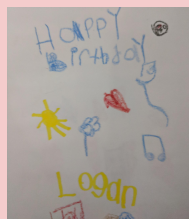
Consider having your class start a food or clothing drive at school to support a local organization or community in need. Organize a volunteer event for staff and aim for 80% participation.

Get Moving

Start up a school-wide virtual step challenge. This would be great for global awareness, leadership, and overall well-being of the staff. If each class at your site could walk a few laps at recess, every two weeks you can add up the distance and find places in the community that you could “visit” and do a virtual exploration! Ex: our class walked 2.3 miles to the post office and we learned about mail carriers.

Staff Birthdays

Provide teachers with a list of birthdays for the staff. Invite children to make authentic, creative signs and write cards for each staff member's birthday and deliver them. Making a happy birthday video or singing in person could also increase oral language skills and build community.



Greatness in Action

Each teacher will receive a box of twenty blank note cards and be challenged to send out at least two notes a week. These notes can be sent home with children or shared with other staff members to highlight something positive. Children can be celebrated for working extra hard, making academic gains, being good friends, taking chances, or being helpful. Similarly, staff members can be recognized for their teamwork, encouragement, or small acts of kindness that brighten someone's day.

Family Involvement

Make it a schoolwide goal to involve families in classroom activities monthly. This includes celebrating diversity as well.



Community Involvement

Make it a schoolwide goal to partner with one community store or organization for each study (Lowes, the library, botanical gardens, clothing store, etc.) The local libraries often do free programs for family nights.

School Beautification

Come up with simple ways to beautify both the inside and outside of the school building. Ask families to help plant flowers, paint rocks, etc.



School Community Involvement

Create a schoolwide vegetable garden to support families and the community.

Lending Library

Promote literacy by creating a lending library for children and families to check out books. Use a location that is easily accessible to children and families. This could be a “Leave a book, take a book” box.



Outdoor Environment

Create an outdoor classroom or make it a goal to enhance your playground to provide children with an enriched learning environment while encouraging physical activity, creativity, and social interaction. One teacher could create an idea board and have others add to it or sign up to help.

Classroom Presentations

Encourage classes to present to each other on something they are learning about once a month. Some ideas are:

- Reading a class-made book to another class
- Singing a song they have learned to another class
- Presenting a parade to showcase something they have learned or created to another class

This is a great way to spread cheer, encourage leadership, and build confidence. Consider older classrooms present to younger classrooms.

Embracing Diversity

Encourage families to celebrate and share their culture by creating a bulletin board display in the main hallway or lobby of the school building. By asking for volunteers at the start of the year, you can even connect families who share the same cultural background to collaborate on a display together. This is a wonderful opportunity to promote diversity, support connections, and build meaningful relationships within your school community.



Outdoor Explorers Bins

Create outdoor learning bins filled with materials that align with the children's interests or the current unit of study. If each teacher at a site contributes one or two bins, they can be rotated or checked out bi-weekly to enrich outdoor play during recess. For example, a bin might include instruments and scarves for creative expression, or tools like bags for collecting tree parts, binoculars, and magnifying glasses for nature exploration. This collaborative approach adds variety and excitement to outdoor learning while supporting curiosity and engagement.

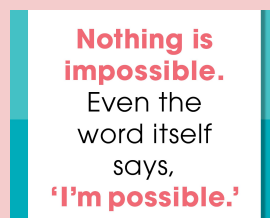


Self Care and Wellness

Staff Wellness themes are a great way to encourage teachers to prioritize their own emotional and physical well-being. Think about choosing a day of the week to focus on a certain skill or exercise such as yoga, walking during lunch, breathing, or stretching. One example may include "Meditation Monday" with an iPad set up in the staff workroom. During a break, they could do the brief guided meditation that has been chosen for the week.

Inspiration Station

Create a bulletin board dedicated to motivational quotes where anyone can contribute. This collaborative space encourages positivity and inspiration, offering a daily boost for all who pass by. Fill it with words that uplift and energize.

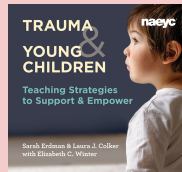


Staff Appreciation

Acknowledge and celebrate things like teacher appreciation day, bosses day, etc. Remember that there could be local businesses or even families in the school community who would be happy to provide a treat for the staff.

Book Club

Facilitate a book study focused on a topic of interest that supports and enhances developmentally appropriate practices. This collaborative experience can inspire meaningful discussions, promote professional growth, and deepen understanding of best practices in early education.



Explore Free Training Opportunities

Explore free training opportunities on early childhood topics of interest, such as the Pyramid Model, Conscious Discipline, inclusion, and challenging behaviors. Encourage staff to participate and share takeaways and ideas for implementation during a staff meeting, PLC, or through an online discussion board. This approach encourages collaboration, professional growth, and practical application of new knowledge.