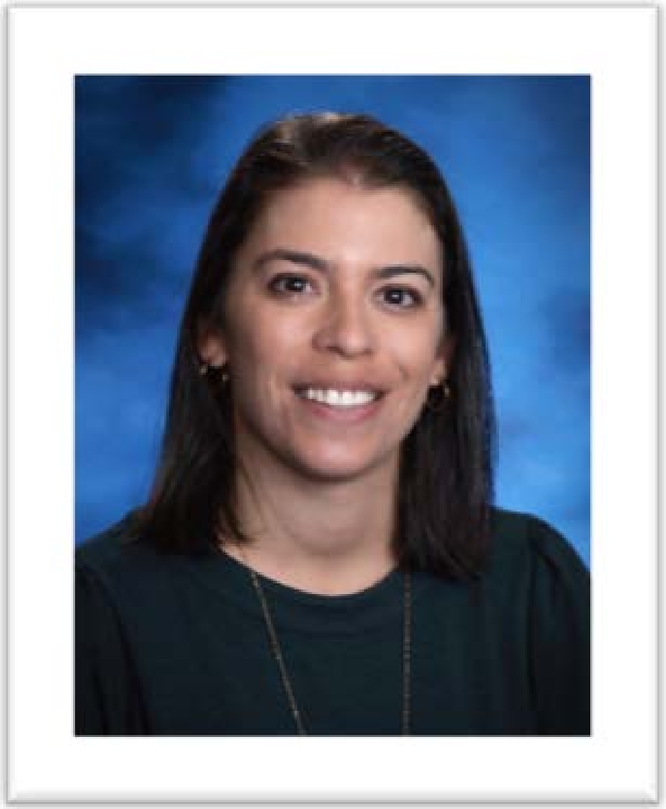
Leadership Development: Change Management for Emerging and Experienced Child Care Directors

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Meet Your Facilitators



Christine



Paula

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

RowanUniversity
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Session Overview & Objectives

Understand the difference between technical and adaptive change in early childhood settings.

Explore the ADKAR framework as a tool for guiding individual change in your team.

Learn the six conditions of change and how to apply them in your child care program.

Apply practical leadership strategies for managing change effectively in early childhood settings.

Why Change Management Matters



Reflection 1:
Your Experience with Change

Take a moment to reflect on your own leadership experience. Think about a recent change in your program.

- What was the change?
- How did you feel as a leader?
- How did your staff respond?
- What aspects of that experience felt successful?
- What felt challenging?

Understanding Change: Technical vs. Adaptive

Technical Change: Clear problem with a known solution.

Example: Updating a sign-in system or adding a new safety protocol with clear steps.



Both change types require leadership. Knowing which type you face helps you choose the right approach for your child care program.

Adaptive Change: Complex, no clear solution.

Example: Shifting staff culture toward inclusive practices or trauma-informed care.

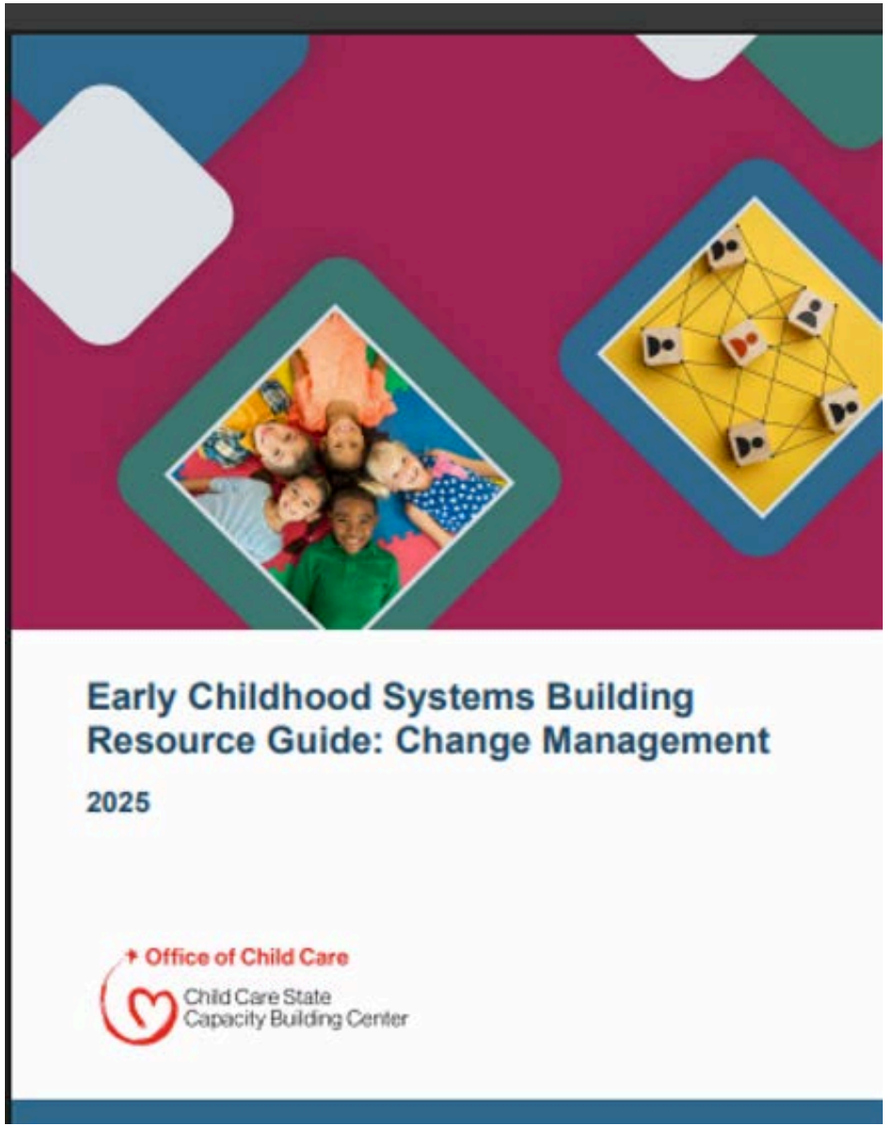
Let’s Take a Poll...

Thinking of the change experience you shared in Reflection #1, would you say it was a Technical Change or an Adaptive Change? Why?

Reflection 2: Reaction to Change

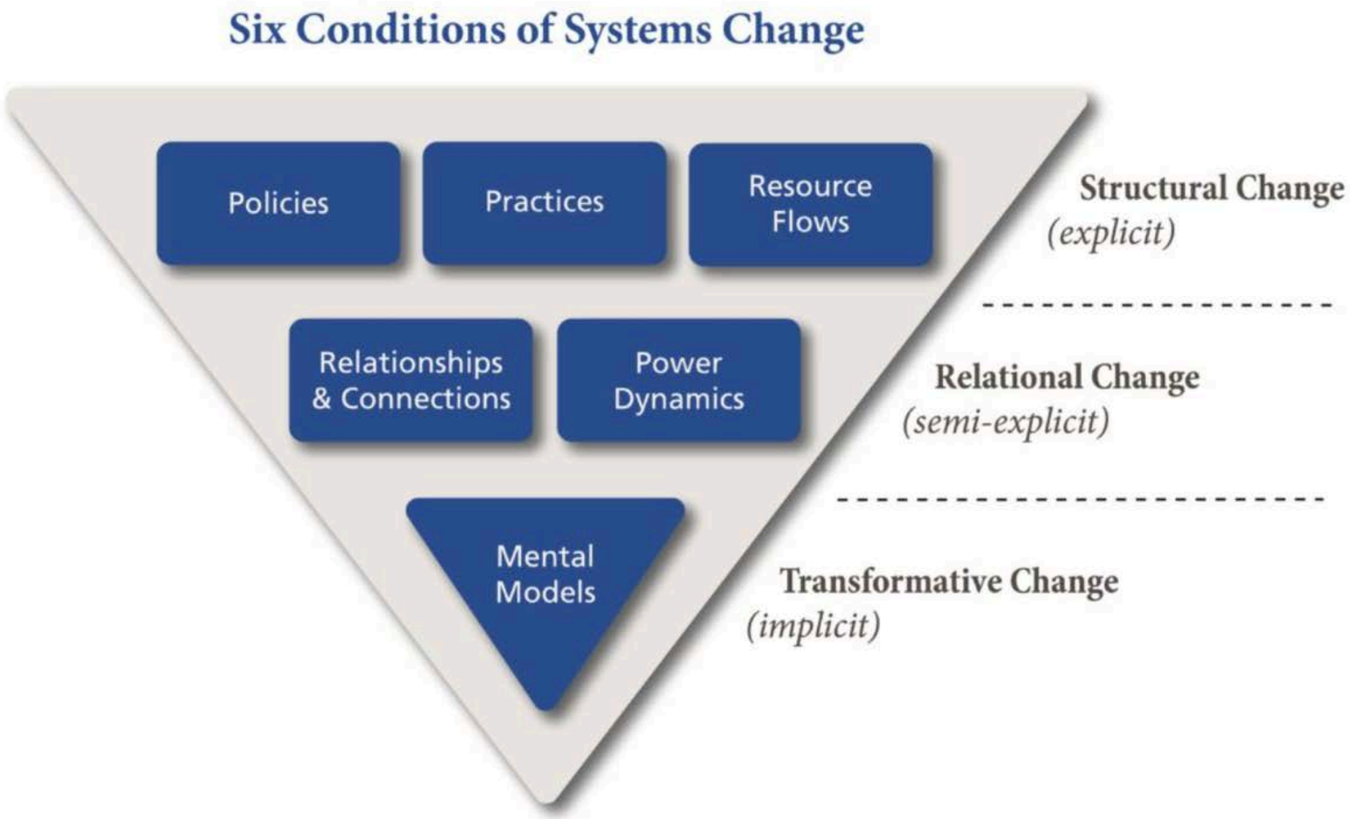
- Thinking about a change you led or experienced, how did people initially respond to the change?
- What do you think influenced people's reactions to the change?





https://childcareta.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/new-occ/resource/files/sbrg-change-management.pdf

The Six Conditions of Change



(Kania, Kramer & Senge, 2019)

Scenario

Restructuring Staff Schedules for Reflective Planning Time

The Situation: Teachers are burned out. Research shows that dedicated, uninterrupted planning time improves classroom quality. Your center decides to implement a new schedule where teachers get 2 hours a week, protected "reflection and collaboration" time—but you are already struggling to maintain state-mandated child-to-staff ratios.

Structual Change (explicit)

Policies (Rewriting the rules): Change the official employee handbook and time-clock rules. Note the weekly two-hour reflective time.

Practices (Redesigning the routine): Co-create a supportive, flexible framework for that hour to help teams make the most of this valuable time together.

Resource Flows (Shifting the budget and people): Reallocate funds and knowledge

Structual Change (semi-explicit)

Relationships (Breaking the silos): Currently, infant teachers eat lunch separately from pre-K teachers, and they never share strategies. The new schedule forces their planning hour to overlap.

Power Dynamics (Shifting decision-making): During that 2-hour planning block, the teaching team now has equal voting power to decide their own curriculum pacing, environmental rearrangements, and targeted interventions for specific children.

Transformative Change (implicit)

Mental Model #1 (The "Martyrdom" Belief): The deeply ingrained belief in ECE is "Good teachers are exhausted; if I am sitting down and thinking, I am not really working."

Mental Model #2 (The "Expert" Belief): Veteran teachers unconsciously believe, "I've been doing this for 15 years; I don't need peer coaching."

Mental Model #3 (The "Fixed Schedule" Belief): The assumption that "children must be in a group with the same teacher all day."

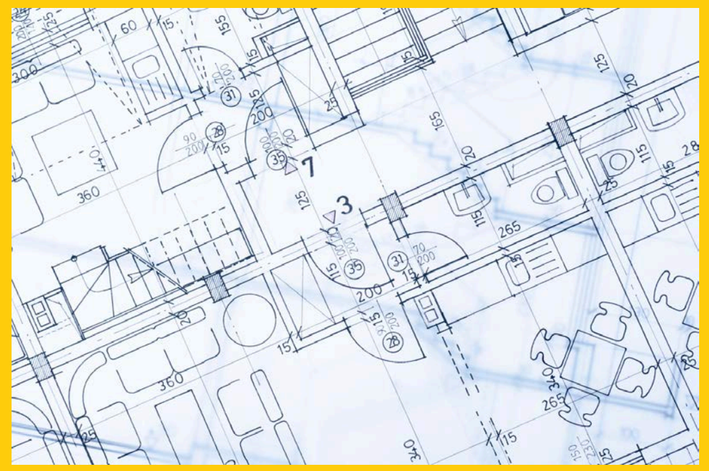
The Six Conditions Ask...

What structures must shift?

Where do we allocate resources?

How do we redistribute power?

What beliefs hold this in place?



The ADKAR model Asks...

Is each person aware of why this matters?

Do they desire to be part of the change?

Do they have the knowledge and ability to act?

Will we reinforce their new behaviors so they stick?



Introducing the ADKAR Framework

- Awareness
- Desire
- Knowledge
- Ability
- Reinforcement



(Prosci, 2022)

ADKAR:

Building Awareness Among Staff:

- Communicate the "why" clearly and early
- Share data, feedback, or trends driving the change
- Use team meetings, newsletters, and one-on-ones
- Address misconceptions and rumors promptly



Example:
A director introduces a new health and safety protocol by sharing recent incident reports and licensing updates with staff, explaining the direct impact on children's well-being and program compliance.

(Prosci, 2022)

ADKAR:

Engage staff in the "why", connect change to shared values and mission

- Involve directors and teachers early in the planning process
- Address fears and concerns with empathy and transparency
- Highlight personal and program-level benefits of the change
- Identify and empower internal champions who model enthusiasm
- Celebrate small wins to build momentum and sustain motivation

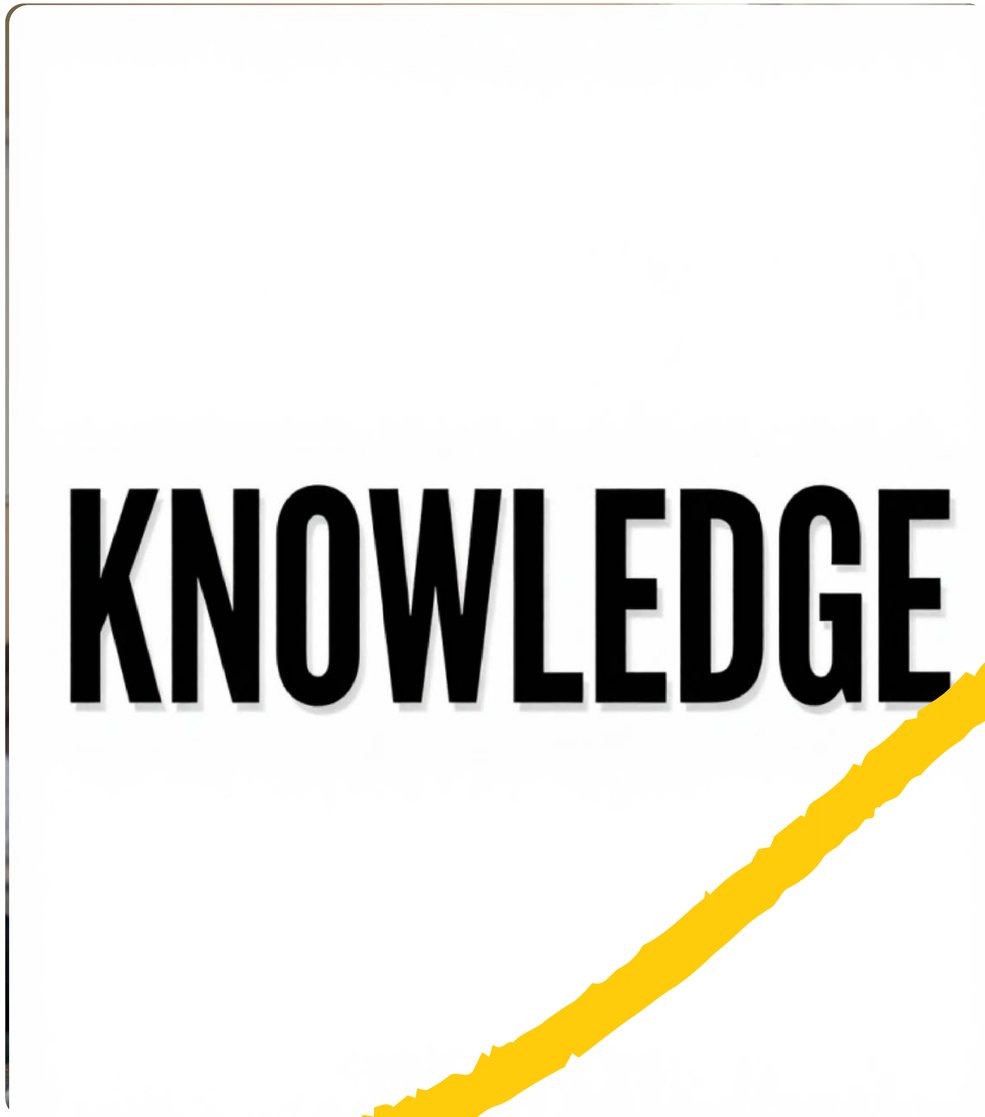
DESIRE

Tip for Directors: Desire cannot be mandated; it must be cultivated through trust, inclusion, and meaningful communication.

(Prosci, 2022)

ADKAR:

- Provide structured training on new policies, curricula, or protocols
- Use role-playing, workshops, and peer learning circles
- Share written guides, videos, and job aids for reference
- Leverage coaching from experienced directors and mentors
- Communicate step-by-step expectations clearly and consistently
- Tailor learning to different staff roles and experience levels



(Prosci, 2022)

ADKAR:

- Provide hands-on coaching and guided practice opportunities for staff
- Create safe spaces to try new approaches without fear of failure
- Pair staff with mentors or peer coaches during transitions
- Identify and address individual barriers to performance
- Celebrate small wins to build confidence and momentum
- Monitor progress and adjust support as needed

Ability

(Prosci, 2022)

ADKAR:

- Recognize and celebrate staff milestones and progress
- Provide consistent feedback to reinforce desired behaviors
- Align policies and procedures to support the change
- Address resistance promptly to prevent regression

Reinforcement

Example: A director implements monthly recognition meetings to highlight staff who model the new curriculum approach, embedding the change into program culture.xt

(Prosci, 2022)

Applying Change Management: A Case Scenario

Scenario: Your center wants to implement a new hiring process for onboarding new staff. You want to be sure everyone you hire understands the importance of early brain development and your center's commitment to continuous learning. You found a short, informative video that you would like introduced to current staff and any potential staff.



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Applying the Six Conditions:

Build a compelling story around child outcomes, identify a sponsor among lead teachers, co-create a shared vision, provide skill-building workshops, reinforce progress through feedback, and adjust scheduling structures.



Applying ADKAR:

Build Awareness through staff meetings, faster Desire by involving staff in planning, share Knowledge through training, develop Ability via coaching, and sustain Reinforcement through recognition.



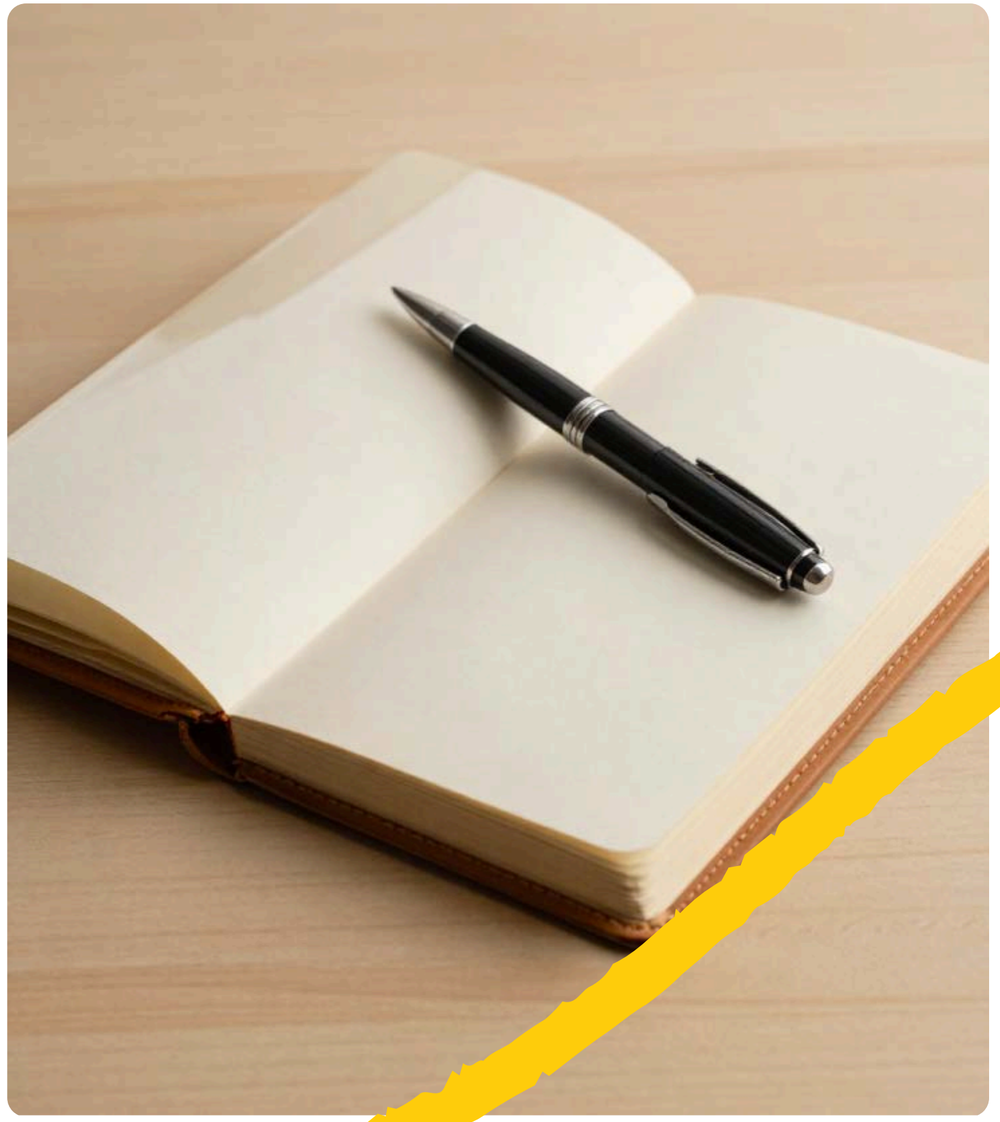
Reflection:

What's your plan? Create a plan with your small group discussing how would you apply these frameworks in your program? Please be prepared to share out with the larger group.

Reflect and Act.

What is one change you will lead differently using these tools?
Take a moment to reflect:

- Which condition of change is most relevant to your program right now?
- Where are your staff in the ADKAR journey?
- What is your first concrete next step?



Resources & Further Learning

Guides:

- Early Childhood Systems Building Guide: Change Management (Office of Childcare)
- Caring for Our Children Basics (Office of childcare)

Books:

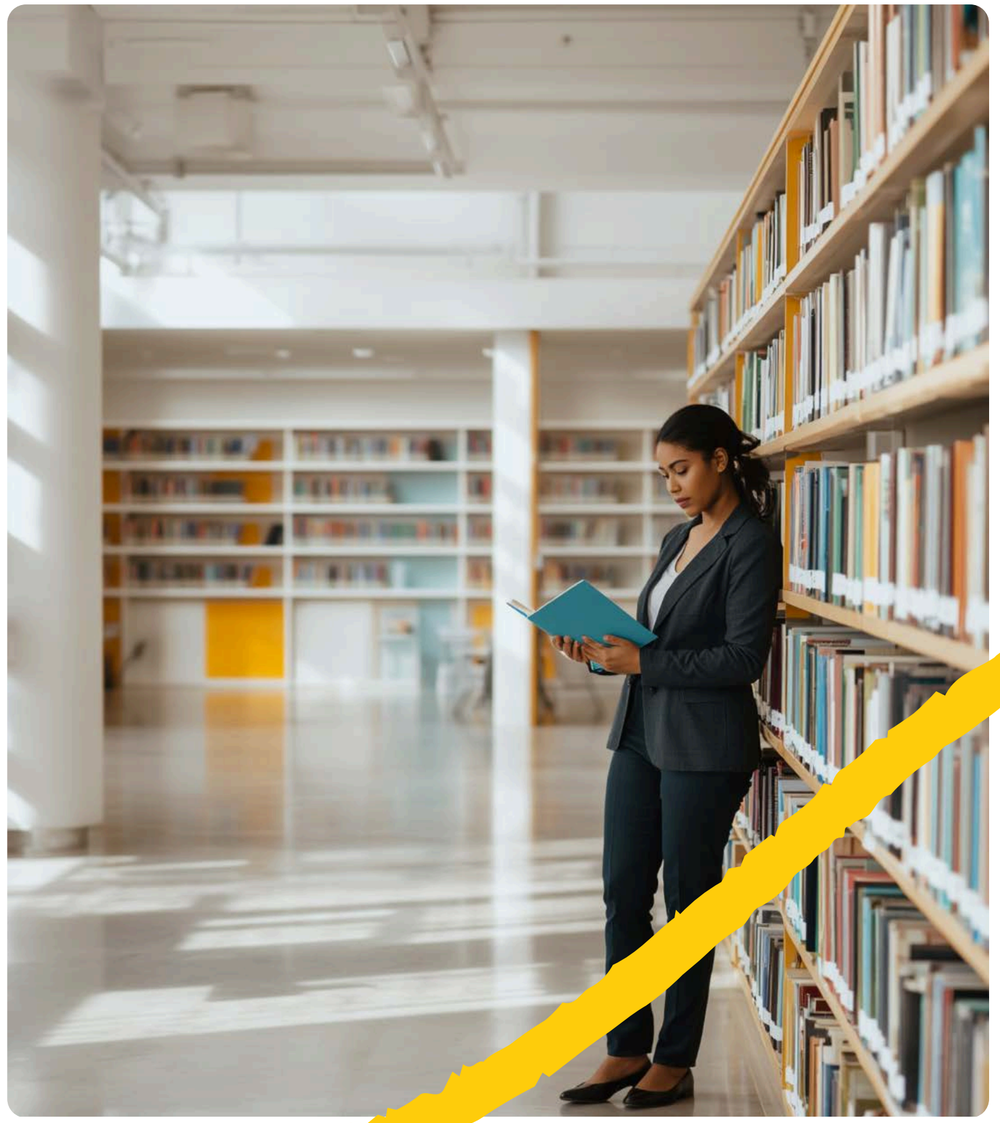
- "Switch" by Chip & Dan Heath
- "Leading Change" by John Kotter
- "The Heart of Change" by Kotter & Cohen

Websites:

- NAEYC.org
- ProSolutions Training
- Center on the Developing Child (Harvard)

Articles:

- Prosci ADKAR Model resources at Prosci.com | Change Leadership in Early Childhood Settings (Exchange Press)



Thank You



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