

# Leadership and Management

## Decisions as a team



One of your key roles as a leader is to engage all relevant members of your team in identifying the challenges and opportunities for improvements in your setting and then sharing responsibility for transforming ideas into action. It can be easy for a manager to make decisions on what is best for the team, whether it is the agenda for a staff meeting or how the room should be set up; however this is not always the best way to guide a team. Leaders should emphasise listening and communicating, and the team should be encouraged to express opinions to inform decision-making. Practitioners who feel that their opinion is valued and have contributed to decision-making will often feel empowered, will have a better understanding of why decisions have been made and are more content with the outcome. This can be a driving motivation leading to a passionate workforce.

### **TASK 1**

Reflect on your own practice and consider the following questions:

- How do you currently make decisions?
- Do you involve your team in decision making? If not, why?
- What do you think would be the benefits of involving your team in decision making?

- Does every team member have an opportunity to be heard when important decision need to be made?
- Is there adequate space and time to explore and have meaningful discussions?
- As a leader, are you conscious of not dominating the discussion yourself or ensuring that others do not steal focus?

## TASK 2

When leading a team, it can be difficult to get a group of people to reach consensus, especially when personalities, viewpoints, and attitudes differ. Understanding why and how best to organise decision making with your team is a skill in itself! This is where the Hartnett's Consensus-Oriented Decision-Making (CODM) model is useful. Consider using the CODM 7 step model below to support you in involving your whole team when you are next faced with a decision to be made e.g., developing the outdoor space, creating a new menu, recruiting a new member of staff etc.

1. **Framing the problem:** You need to ensure that you have the right people involved in the process, and that everyone has the information, tools, and resources available to come up with good ideas.
2. **Having an open discussion:** Meet with your group/team, present the problem again and encourage an open discussion. Your goal here is to generate as many initial ideas and solutions as possible. If the discussion seems to be in a rut or your team are only coming up with 'safe' ideas, use creative thinking techniques to encourage them to come up with fresh ideas. Click on the link for 16 techniques you can use for creative thinking [16Techniques for Creativity | Indeed.com](#)

3. **Identifying underlying concerns:** the next step is to identify any “underlying concerns” – these are the constraints that you need to meet, and the problems that you want to solve once you have decided. Brainstorm a list of possible underlying concerns ensuring everyone in the group participates in the discussion.
4. **Developing proposals:** Now, using the initial ideas that you came up with in step 2, your team can come up with proposals that address the underlying concerns identified in the previous step. To do this, go through each idea in turn, and encourage everyone in the group to contribute developing it into a possible solution. It is really important that everyone is open-minded about the discussion, that everyone focuses on one idea at a time and that people don't criticize any ideas.
5. **Choosing a direction:** You now need to decide on the best proposal to take forward. Begin by going through each proposal in turn, asking group members to highlight what they think are the pros and cons of each one making sure everyone is involved in the discussion. Finally, decide on the best proposal to take forward, ensure you have considered whether you want everyone in the group to agree on the final decision unanimously, or will a simple majority suffice?
6. **Developing a preferred solution:** The aim of this step is to look for ways to improve the final proposal further. As part of this, look back at the underlying concerns that you have identified in step 3. If there are any concerns that you haven't addressed, look for ways in which you can improve the proposal.
7. **Closing:** By now, you should have a solution that most people in the group are happy with. Make sure you have decided on a decision rule to ensure there is still consensus to move forward on your decision. Depending on your situation, you can also use this step as an opportunity to ask for everyone's cooperation in implementing the final decision. This cooperation can be anything from simply supporting others as they implement the solution, through to training, providing resources and expertise.

## Useful Links

[Importance of Leadership in Early Years Management \(blossomeducational.com\)](https://blossomeducational.com)

[6 Ways Of Managing An Effective Early Years Team \(earlyyearscares.com\)](https://earlyyearscares.com)

[Why Decision-Making Matters When Learning to Lead in Early Years - Teachwire](#)

[The Best Workshop Exercises For Decision-Making | Workshopper](#)