

# Dispositions

- Qualities that characterize a person as an individual: the controlling perceptual (mental and emotional) qualities that determine the person's natural or usual ways of thinking and acting.
- *Synonyms:*  
*temperament, nature, character, constitution, makeup, mentality*
- The National Council for Accreditation in Teacher Education (NCATE) Online Glossary has the following definition for dispositions:

The values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility and social justice. For example, they might include a belief that all students can learn, a vision of high and challenging standards, or a commitment to a safe and supportive learning environment.

## Five Dispositions of Effective ECE Teachers

1. **EMPATHY** - Seeing and accepting the other person's point of view. Believes that a true grasp of the learner's point of view, and an accurate communication of that understanding, is a most important key to establishing a significant teaching/learning relationship. Commits to sensitivity and to establishing a relationship with each learner. Sees that the beginning point of learning is dependent upon a clear acceptance of the learner's private world of awareness at the time. Respects and accepts as real each person's own unique perceptions.

2. **POSITIVE VIEW OF OTHERS** - Believing in the worth, ability and potential of others. Believes that trust and confidence in the learner's worth, ability and capacity for change is a key to learning. Sees other people in essentially positive ways. Honors the internal dignity and integrity of each learner and holds positive expectations for her or his behavior. Typically approaches others feeling that they "can" and "will" rather than that they "can't" or "won't".

3. **POSITIVE VIEW OF SELF** - Believing in the worth, ability and potential of one's self. Having an established self concept that is fundamentally positive and provides an overall sense of self-adequacy. Sees one's self as essentially dependable and capable and thus is accepting of inadequacies. Sees one's self generally but not exclusively in positive ways—with a positive, abiding and trustworthy sense of actual and potential worth, ability and capacity for growth. Honors the internal dignity and integrity of self and holds positive expectations for one's own actions.

4. **AUTHENTICITY** - Feeling a sense of freedom and openness that enables her or him to be a unique person in honesty and genuineness. Seeks ways of teaching (procedures, methods, techniques, curricular approaches) that are honest, self-revealing and allow personal-professional congruence. Sees the importance of openness, appropriate self disclosure and being "real" as a person and teacher. Develops a personal "idiom" as a teacher and melds personality uniqueness with curricular expectations. Does not feel that one must "play a role" to be effective.

5. **MEANINGFUL PURPOSE AND VISION** - Committing to purposes that are primarily person-centered, broad, deep, freeing and long range in nature. Feels a compelling and abiding sense of allegiance to democratic values, the dignity of being human, and the sacredness of freedom. Sees the importance of being visionary and reflective as a teacher. Commits to growth for all learners in mental, physical and social-emotional realms through a sense of "mission" in education. Seeks to identify, clarify and intensify knowledge and personal beliefs about what is really most important.