**LINC 1.1 Activity 2**

**Exploring Different Levels of Education**

**Overview**

A key part of strengthening the learning continuum is gaining an increased awareness of the practices, policies, curriculum, structures, and expectations at different age levels on the continuum. In this exercise, you will observe several different settings. You will also interview a leader in one of the settings. This will help you gain awareness that will inform your own practices.

**Plan**

Identify the settings listed below in which you haven’t had teaching or leadership experience:

* Infancy and Toddlerhood (birth – age 3)
* Early Childhood (Pre-K)
* Elementary School (K-8)
* High School (grades 9-12)

Contact a center or school leader for each level for which you need to gain some experience and arrange to observe several student learning experiences. Also arrange for a 20-minute interview with the school principal/center director.

**Observe and Interview**

Arrange to spend some time observing student learning. Think about the following questions:

* In what ways are the students’ experiences the same at this age/grade level as at the age/grade level in which I usually work?
* In what ways are the students’ experiences different at this age/grade level from the age/grade level in which I usually work?
* How can I use this knowledge to inform what I do?

Meet with the principal/director. Discuss, as appropriate, the following questions:

* What practices are currently in place that support alignment from one age/grade/school level to another?
* What are some of the barriers to improved alignment?
* Describe your relationships with people in the (previous/next level of education).
* Do you collaborate with people in the (previous/next level of education)? If so, how?
* Do your faculty/staff have a good understanding of what the child experiences at the (previous/next level of education)? If so, what strategies are used to help them stay up to date?
* What do you think the role of the leader is in ensuring that education is a cohesive continuum for each child?

**Reflect**

Reflect on your experiences. Write down some of your personal reflections. The following questions may help you organize your thoughts:

* What did you learn about the learning continuum and the education system?
* What would you do as a leader to improve alignment and transitions given what you observed and learned?