

# Work/Home Balance to Decrease Burnout and Optimize Productivity

FCSC EARLY LEARNING CENTER  
LITTLE SPARTANS PRESCHOOL

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# Background Leading to this Inquiry

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I was an Elementary School Principal for three years in Richmond, before accepting a Director of Early Childhood position in my hometown (Connersville) in July 2022. The position was taken with the intention of establishing a better work/home life balance in order to spend more quality time with my family. In Fall 2022, I quickly found myself working 12 hours a day and on weekends to complete tasks and still not feeling successful.

IPLI has helped me identify my leadership strengths and weaknesses through the Process Communication Model (PCM). Through this study, my phase and base were both identified as Thinker. As a Thinker Phase, I strive on recognition of productive work and time structure. Planning and accomplishing tasks and having a clear schedule are both rewarding to me.

# Purpose of This Inquiry

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Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to create a schedule to establish a work/home balance to decrease burnout and optimize productivity.

As a Thinker Phase, I have the need to check things off on a schedule. I need to go home at the end of the day feeling as if I have accomplished tasks in a timely manner.

# My Wondering

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With this purpose, I wondered if leaving at a specified time and creating a detailed daily schedule would give me a better sense of overall job satisfaction and work/life balance. This would allow me to see what all I have completed within the day.

# My Actions

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The evening before I determined the time I would leave the next day by noting it on my daily organizer. My personal goal was to leave at 5:30p.m. or before at least two days a week to do a more concrete activity such as yoga, walking, etc. I also used a scale of 1-4 to note how I was feeling at the beginning of the day, and then how I was feeling at the end of each day. Data was collected from January 4<sup>th</sup> – February 28<sup>th</sup> (40 work days).



# Data Collection

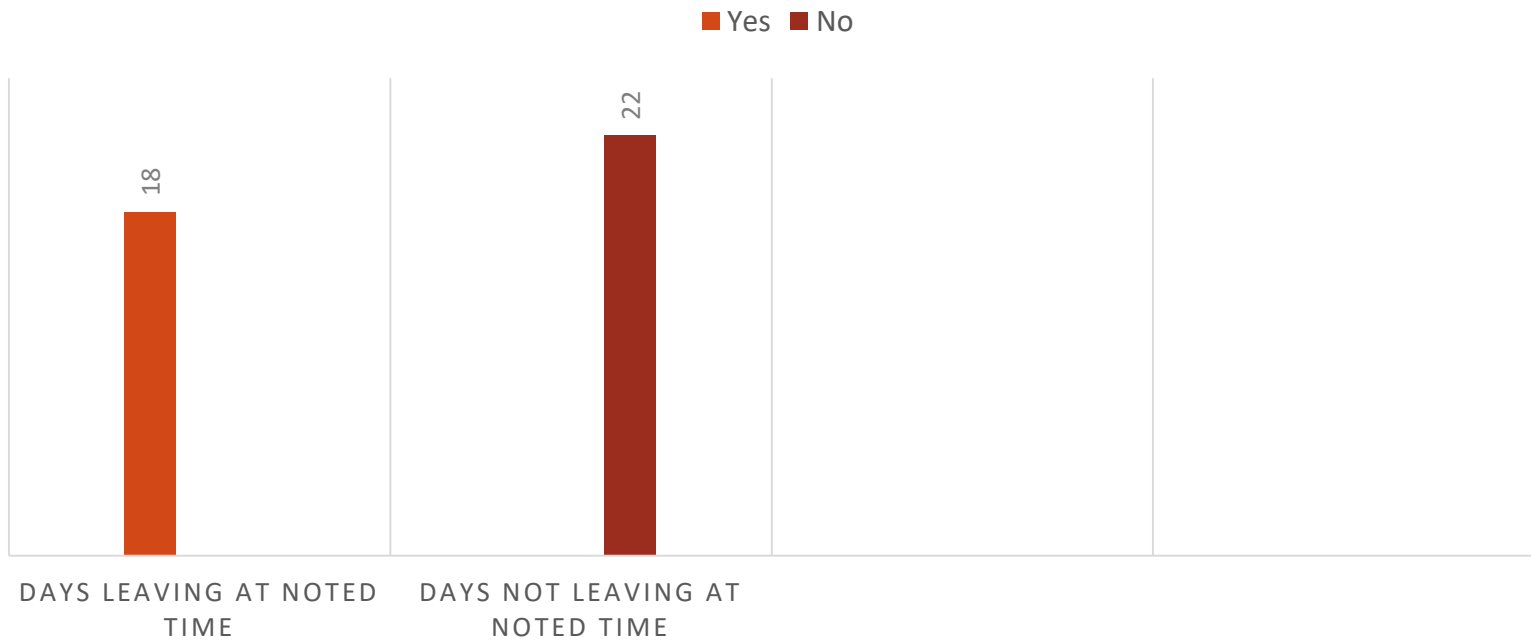
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# My Data

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## DID I LEAVE WHEN I SAID I WOULD?

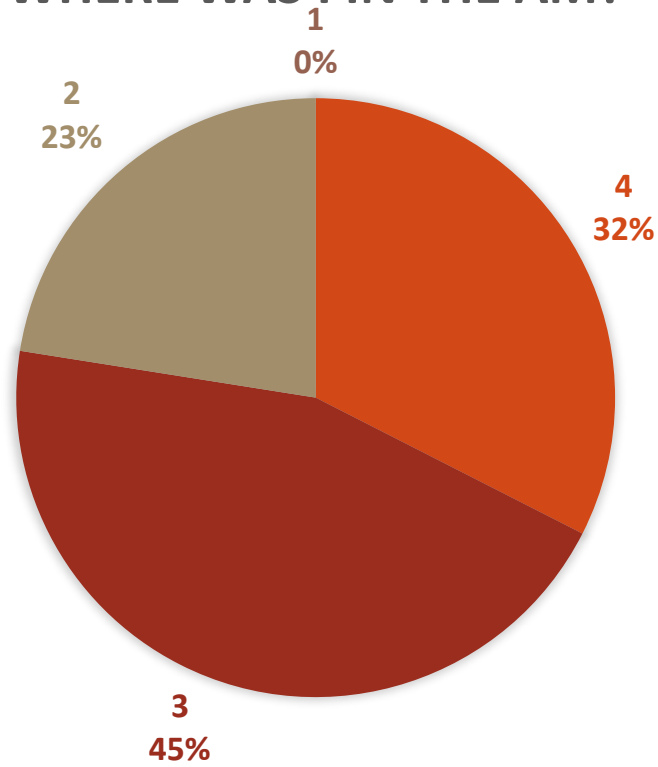




# My Data

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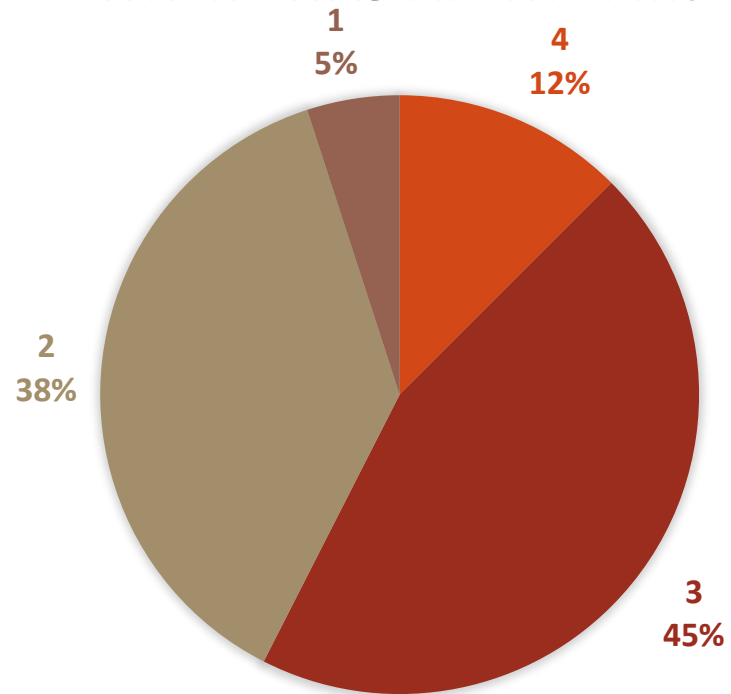
## WHERE WAS I IN THE AM?



# My Data

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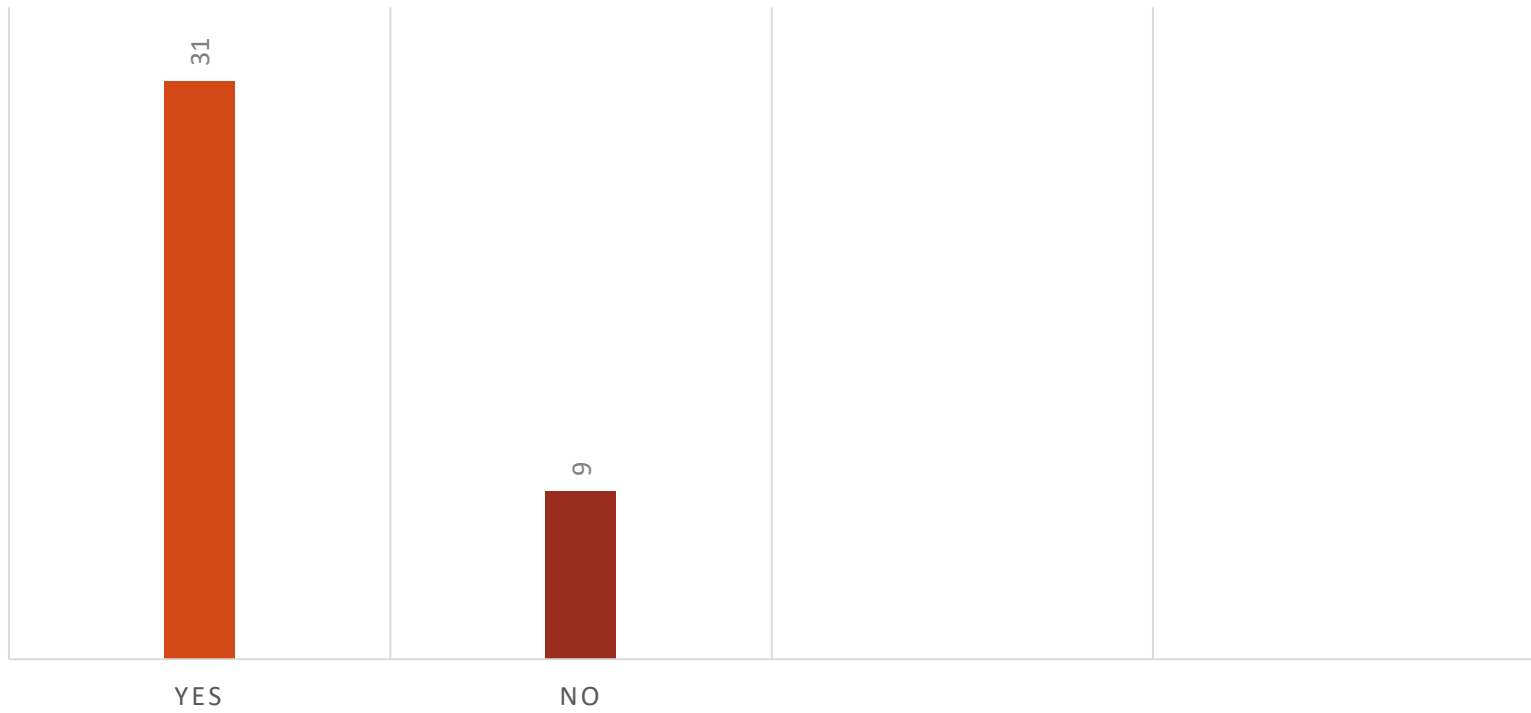
## WHERE WAS I IN THE PM?



# My Data

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## DAYS WITH SELF-CARE ACTIVITY



# My Discoveries

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Exercising in the AM makes for a better mindset for the day.

Leaving without finishing tasks (on days leaving at noted time) caused anxiety/stress the next morning.

Mondays and Tuesdays tend to be better days, as I felt more caught up for the week.

# My Discoveries

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Exercising in the AM makes for a better mindset for the day.

- 19/20 days noted as (4) in the AM also included AM exercising.

# My Discoveries

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Leaving without finishing tasks (on days leaving at noted time) caused anxiety/stress the next morning.

- 18/40 days were noted as leaving at predetermined time
- 9/40 days were noted as starting at a (2)
- 9/9 days of starting at a (2) were days left at predetermined time, but not all tasks were completed for the next day

# My Discoveries

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Mondays and Tuesdays tend to be better days, as I felt more caught up for the week.

- 7/8 Mondays started out as (4) in the AM.
- 6/8 Mondays also ended as (4) in the PM.
- 6/8 Tuesdays started out as (4) in the AM.
- 8/8 Tuesdays also ended in (3 or 4) in the PM.

# Where Am I Heading Next

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Starting a new position for the 2022-2023 school year has required extra time for learning. A large portion of the position is writing federal grants during January and February. I feel like this new experience wasn't the best time to collect data. I would like to continue to prioritize work/home time balance as the grant is now complete, while continuing to collect and analyze data.



# Where Am I Heading Next

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Key Priorities March-May:

Set boundaries on time (work/home)

Use PCM motivators and least developed strengths to improve leadership skills

-Examples: delegate projects to maximize people's skills and time, keep track of most important tasks and make note when they are finished, finish a project/task before it is perfect

# Bibliography

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Mallory Cameron  
IPLI Summary  
Action Research Project

## **Work/Home Balance to Decrease Burnout and Optimize Productivity**

### ***Background***

I was an Elementary School Principal for three years in Richmond, before accepting a Director of Early Childhood position in my hometown (Connersville) in July 2022. The position was taken with the intention of establishing a better work/home life balance in order to spend more quality time with my family. In Fall 2022, I quickly found myself working 12 hours a day and on weekends to complete tasks and still not feeling successful.

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Therefore, the purpose of my action inquiry was to create a schedule to establish a work/home balance to decrease burnout and optimize productivity.

As a Thinker Phase, I have the need to check things off on a schedule. I need to go home at the end of the day feeling as if I have accomplished tasks in a timely manner.

### ***Wonderings***

With this purpose, I wondered if leaving at a specified time and creating a detailed daily schedule would give me a better sense of overall job satisfaction and work/life balance. This would allow me to see what all I have completed within the day.

### ***Methods/Procedures***

To gain insights into my wondering, the evening before I determined the time I would leave the next day by noting it on my daily organizer. My personal goal was to leave at 5:30p.m. or before at least two days a week to do a more concrete activity such as yoga, walking, etc. I also used a scale of 1-4 to note how I was feeling at the beginning of the day, and then how I was feeling at the end of each day. Data was collected from January 4<sup>th</sup> – February 28<sup>th</sup> (40 work days).

The daily organizer included increment of times throughout the day, to do list, classrooms to visit, staff/students to check in with, and an IPLI challenge. The IPLI challenge area was used to keep track of the time I wanted to leave by, the time I actually left, how I was feeling in the AM, how I was feeling in the PM, and any notes I needed to add for the day.

I used a smiley face system on a scale of 1-4 to keep track of my feelings/mental health for the day. 4 was the highest rating and 1 was the lowest rating. This was an easy and quick way for me to keep track of my mental health.

### ***Findings***

As a result of analyzing my data, three important things I learned include:

- Exercising in the AM makes for a better mindset for the day.
- Leaving without finishing tasks (on days leaving at noted time) caused anxiety/stress the next morning.
- Mondays and Tuesdays tend to be better days, as I felt more caught up for the week.

Of the forty work days data was collected, twenty days were noted as being a 4 in the morning. 4 is the highest mental health rating on the scale I used. Of those twenty days, nineteen of them involved morning exercising. The data was evident that morning exercise increased my mental health for the day in a positive way.

Leaving work without finishing tasks caused me a lot of anxiety/stress the next morning. Eighteen out of forty days I left work at the time I predetermined the previous day. Nine of the forty days were noted as starting the day at a 2. 2 is the second lowest rating on my mental health scale. Of those nine days, all were days I left at the predetermined time I determined the evening before.

After analyzing my data for this project, I also found Mondays and Tuesdays were better days for my mental health, as I felt more caught up for the week. Of the eight Mondays, seven of them started out as a 4. Six of those eight Mondays also ended as a 4. Six of eight Tuesdays started out as a 4 and all eight Tuesdays ended in a 3 or 4 rating.

### ***Conclusions***

Starting a new position for the 2022-2023 school year has required extra time for learning. A large portion of the position is writing federal grants during January and February. I feel like this new experience wasn't the best time to collect data. I would like to continue to prioritize work/home time balance as the grant is now complete, while continuing to collect and analyze data.

Key Priorities:

- Set boundaries on time (work/home)
  - Use PCM motivators and least developed strengths to improve leadership skills
- Examples: delegate projects to maximize people's skills and time, keep track of most important tasks and make note when they are finished, finish a project/task before it is perfect

From this project, I have learned that I struggle the most when my checklist of items to complete is not finished. However, I have found that more times than not, staff do not notice when it takes

an extra day for something to be completed. Continuing to work on the work/home balance will continue to be a long-term focus of mine.