



## Self Guided Learning Package

### Building A Winning Team Outside School Hours Care



PsCTas is a program of Lady Gowrie Tasmania. The Australian Government through the Minister for Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaCSIA), funds the Professional Support Coordinator initiative as part of the Inclusion and Professional Support Program.

## Self Guided Learning Packages

Welcome to the \***Community Child Care Victoria**, Self-Guided Learning Package.

Self-Guided Learning Packages offer an alternative to attending training sessions and can be completed at your convenience in your own time. They are also a valuable resource for Directors/Coordinators wishing to undertake staff training in-house. This series of Learning Packages aims to develop skills and knowledge which will be valuable to you in providing quality child care programs.

### **Self-help Questions**

Throughout the Package there are self-help questions. These are designed to enable the reader to reflect on the learning which has taken place and to encourage further exploration of the topic if questions remain unanswered.

### **Support and Assistance**

PsCTas is available to support you/your staff while working through the package. Should you require assistance with any of the tasks within the package, or further information on the topic, please contact PsCTas:

P. **1800 647 718**

F. 62 306 839

E. [psctas@gowrie-tas.com.au](mailto:psctas@gowrie-tas.com.au)

W. [www.psctas.org.au](http://www.psctas.org.au)

**\*This Learning Package has been made available to PsCTas by Community Child Care, PSC Victoria. All material is copyright to Community Child Care.**



Produced by  
Community Child Care Victoria Funded by the  
Department of Families and Community  
Services under the In-service Training project.

# Building a Winning Team - OSHC

You have chosen to complete the **Building a Winning Team - OSHC** Self-Guided Learning Package. For the development and happiness of the children in care, it is vital that staff in any service work productively alongside each other. This package will cover the development of a successful team that generates energy and enthusiasm, strives and achieves, works together, supports each other and works to support the children and parents.

If you are currently studying to gain a qualification in Children's Services and are able to submit this Learning Package to an assessor from your training institution, this work may contribute to completion of the following competencies from the nationally accredited Community Services Training Package:

## **CHCORG3B      Participate in the work environment**

3.4 Different roles and responsibilities are identified and respected

It addresses the following learning outcomes:

- *Identify strategies to assist in efficient and effective team functioning*
- *Recognise personal leadership styles in order to motivate and value others*

## Introduction

The ideal Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) environment is one where:

- staff work as a team
- staff cooperate and get along with each other
- the programming is child-centred and inclusive
- activities are planned by staff and children together
- equipment is in good working order
- the surroundings are pleasant and safe.

Outside School Hours Care is a professional service and the staff are individuals with specialised knowledge and skills in their positions. Parents trust staff to provide a caring, safe and supportive environment for their children. **Being professional means to be continuously improving skills and knowledge and to be open to learning new skills.** It is also about continually improving oneself, as well as the program/service.

**Working together as a team can be a very rewarding experience for all involved. Job satisfaction and the quality of the program will increase if the staff work and function successfully as a team.**

### Self Help Question 1

1. Describe your work place. Is it a happy place to work in? Why, why not?

2. What are some of the aspects of work you enjoy? Why?

3. What aspects of your work do you find frustrating? Why?

## Working Cooperatively with Others

### What Is a Team?

A team is a group of individuals who come together to work towards a common goal. These individuals may have different backgrounds, experiences, values and beliefs but come together and work effectively to achieve common goals. In OSHC, staff do come from all types of different backgrounds, all ages, different value systems and talents. Combining these differences at work allows for a rich and varied work environment.

### Why Are Teams Important?

It is impossible to run a quality service if teamwork between the staff (paid or unpaid) is not happening.

What is a good team?

Staff need to be efficient and effective members of the team, working towards a common goal, encouraging and supporting each other and using their various skills and abilities to create an effective service. Without this contribution and support from every staff member the quality of both the team and the service may decline.

What qualities does a responsible OSHC team member possess?

**Tick the ones that relate to you the most:**

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accountable for their actions | <input type="checkbox"/> Accepting change | <input type="checkbox"/> Adaptable       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approachable                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Caring           | <input type="checkbox"/> Committed       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good communicator             | <input type="checkbox"/> Competent        | <input type="checkbox"/> Dedicated       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Efficient                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Empathetic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Reliable        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys working with children  | <input type="checkbox"/> Tolerant         | <input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Enterprising                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible         | <input type="checkbox"/> Sense of Humour |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledgeable                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Open minded      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patient                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Punctual         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive        |  |

### Self Help Question 2

1. Consider two of the qualities above that you possess and explain why?

2. Consider two qualities that you could improve on and explain why?

PSC TaS

## **The work environment**

When each person contributes to the team effort, staff often find greater job satisfaction, contributing to a more effective work environment.

The work environment: -

- Has a more harmonious atmosphere
- Goals are reached more effectively
- Responsibilities are shared
- Skills, opinions and abilities are valued by colleagues
- Staff work together to help each other achieve and succeed
- Conflict is dealt with more effectively
- The work load is shared happily

## **Standards of Teamwork**

What does Teamwork mean?

To be an effective team member you need to:

- Understand the roles and responsibilities expected of you and of other staff
- Understand the way the service operates
- Share information, knowledge and skills with other staff
- Understand the program's policies and procedures
- Be able to take on extra duties where necessary
- Work together on required tasks

All staff need to be active in work performance by completing assigned tasks according to the planned workload. The different roles and responsibilities of the staff need to be identified and respected.

There also needs to be procedures in place for dealing with grievances and conflicts. There needs to be clear set guidelines on the steps they should take when they are in conflict with other staff. When conflicts arise staff need to feel supported by these guidelines and understand the steps required.

Regular staff meetings need to be held where concerns are voiced. Communication is clear, concise and focused on the issue. The staff need to be flexible, adaptable and accepting of change.

When there is effective teamwork the atmosphere is happy and positive and provides positive role models for the children. There is a relaxed atmosphere at the program as

staff are friendly to each other, joke with each other and the children, are happy to be at work, help each other out and have fun at work.

The children will pick up on the happy and caring environment modelled by the staff and will also benefit from the effects of the good strong team. They will look forward to coming into care to have fun, will feel comfortable in themselves and play happily together.

A program with happy energetic, fun loving staff and children is so much better than one with tense feelings and staff that feel undervalued.

### **Self Help Question 3**

1. What do you consider to be your strengths when working in a group situation?

2. What do you consider to be your weaknesses when working in a group situation?

3. You have seen a staff member do something that you think is inappropriate. How do you handle this situation?

### **Effective Practice**

Procedures that foster team work help to produce a work culture where individuals are able to contribute to the operation of the program and work with colleagues from a basis of mutual respect and effective communication. To have an effective and efficient team requires regular maintenance. Continually maintaining good relations between staff is vital and should be incorporated into the policy and procedures of the service.

Effective and efficient teams recognise that everyone can contribute to decisions about what is done in the workplace and how it is done. Ensuring that everyone is involved, to some extent in decision making – within clearly defined boundaries and regularly encouraging all team members to contribute their ideas and suggestions about how to do things better.

## **Staff Meetings**

Regular staff meetings ensure that staff are allowed to voice any concerns or ideas regarding the program. They should be scheduled regularly ie. once a fortnight, and have a structure to them. Staff meetings should have an Agenda setting out items for discussion. Minutes need to be recorded and actions documented. If necessary, roles during the meeting can be given to staff ie. chairperson, writing up agenda/ minutes/ program/activities etc.

Minutes need to be accepted from the previous meeting. Any business arising from the meeting is discussed and actions are taken where appropriate. Time is set aside for discussion and all staff have the opportunity to table items for discussion. Time should also be set aside to plan forthcoming program activities with the children. This allows each staff member the opportunity to input his or her ideas and hobbies/areas of expertise into the program.

Agendas and minutes need to be prepared and circulated to all members.

## **Icebreakers**

The turn over of staff in an OSHC program can be quite high. Often staff are students, casual workers or volunteers who don't work every day of the week. It is important to include these members of staff in staff meetings as they are important to the team and this will help to foster a sense of cohesiveness.

Icebreakers are a wonderful way to have fun and to get to know the people in the team. They can be as easy as going around the room and saying their names and a detail from their background. They can be fun by using props to engage a sense of teamwork into the group. Icebreakers or "Getting to Know You" exercises are a wonderful way to introduce new staff to an established team. Everyone will learn something different about the other person and can break down any barriers.

## **Rhyming Name Game**

This icebreaker is very easy and simple to use when there is a large group of people who do not know each other. It is good to use in Holiday programs as there are large numbers of staff and they change from term to term. It is also a good one to use with the children at the start of the year or at the beginning of each term.

The leader says their name and adds a rhyming adjective to it ie, Mad Mary. The next person in line repeats 'Mad Mary' and adds his/her name to it - 'Tricky Trevor'. This continues down the line. People have to remember all the previous names and add their own at the end. It is a memory game and people can be helped along the way. The person who began the game traditionally finishes it by repeating all the names in the room!

It is surprising how many people can remember each other's names after they play this icebreaker!

### Self Help Question 4

Find and write down three icebreakers

1.

2.

3.

### Professional Development

Professional Development is an important part of the OSHC program/service. Ideally, funds should be set aside in the budget so that all staff have the opportunity to attend PD sessions annually. This gives staff the feeling that they are valued as workers and allowed to expand their knowledge and skills in the work place. It also reinforces the worth of the person and how important each and every person is to the team.

### Social Events

It can be difficult to foster friendships in a busy OSHC program, so time out of the program should be used to socialise. This allows people the chance to get to know each other outside of the work environment. People act differently outside of work pressures and a social event is an easy way to get to know everyone better.

Some suggestions:

- Social dinners through the year
- Christmas Dinners
- Go to the pub once a month
- Social functions with the Committee members
- Birthday celebrations
- End of term drinks

### Self Help Question 5

1. List two examples of situations where it is important that people work as a team (relate the situation to your daily work environment)

A

B

2. Choose one of your examples and briefly describe why teamwork is so important to this situation.

### When the Team Breaks Down

Teamwork relies on every person to be committed. If this does not happen, the team becomes a group of individuals who are moving in different directions. As a team member you work cooperatively in support of your service's smooth running and effective service provision.

**When team work is lacking, the:**

- Atmosphere is tense, unwelcoming and negative
- Efforts are not acknowledged or are disregarded
- Staff are suspicious of one another
- Staff work in isolation
- Work is not a fun place to be – there is no humour or joking around
- Children pick up on the negativity and can become more disruptive as a consequence
- Children will not enjoy attending the service

**When mutual cooperation and support breaks down, people can often feel like this:**

- I do not feel valued
- My goals are different from yours
- I work harder than anyone else
- I do not need to bother about it, someone else will do it
- Morale is low
- I do not treat others with respect
- I do not value other people's skills and knowledge
- I do not know my role and responsibilities
- Are people talking about me behind my back?
- I do not like coming to work
- I hate meetings, nothing is ever resolved
- I do not have a voice; I am not heard
- I do not like working with .....

**Self Help Question 6**

1. Have you said or thought any of the above statements recently? Why?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How does it make you feel when you are valued at work?

PSCITAS

### **Team members should try to work toward the following: -**

- Treat each other with respect
- Listen to the views of other team members
- Share the day's responsibilities
- Be willing to pull their weight
- Communicate their ideas without dominating others
- Try resolving conflicts –not adding to them
- Be appreciative of the different abilities, values and backgrounds of other team members
- Be sensitive to the needs and demands of the team
- Knowing their role and responsibilities

### **Developing Your Team Skills**

Take this checklist to work with you. As you progress through the week tick any of the following that you achieve:

- I discussed a pleasant, funny or happy event with another team member
- I was able to appropriately express anger, frustration or disappointment to a team member
- I did the task that I needed to do
- I listened sympathetically to a team member who was not having as good a day as I was
- Another team member was extremely busy, so I willingly did one of his/her tasks
- I gave sincere praise to a team member
- I suggested how to improve an aspect of our service, without hurting anyone's feelings
- I accepted constructive criticism without feeling angry or hurt

***If you managed to achieve any of these items during the week, then you probably made a positive difference to the team and made work more enjoyable and rewarding.***



They can be as simple as:

- Arriving at work on time or 5 minutes earlier to calmly start the day
- Returning from breaks on time
- Completing all the tasks you have been set

**Long-term goals obviously take more time but can be achieved by breaking them up into smaller goals that lead you to complete the larger goals. For Example:**

Long-Term Goal: *to reorganise the storeroom.*

Why: If the storeroom is well organised and tubs are labelled clearly, then it will be easier to see equipment and materials and to get items needed for the day's activities. More storage space is needed for the archived files.

Decide on a Time Line:

- How long do you want the whole process to take?
- Break up the workload into smaller more attainable jobs
- Decide on who will help
- Decide on when in the day it will be done.

Short-Term Goals:

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| Week 1 | Buy archives and storage boxes. Organise a skip or bins or shredder (for confidential outdated files). |
| Week 2 | Sort through shelves one by one, throwing out any rubbish  |
| Week 3 | Reorganise where equipment/materials and archive boxes will be stored and label boxes/shelves.         |
| Week 4 | Tidy areas up and finalise storage areas   |

### **Self Help Question 8**

1. Think of a long-term goal for the program or yourself. Break the goal into smaller short-term goals and draw up a time line to achieve it.

PSC TAs

It is important to continue to review and develop your own work performance. By recognising your own strengths and weaknesses, you can continuously improve your work place performance and avoid an embarrassing or confronting situation.

### **Time Management**

Often work performance begins to decline when time runs out or boredom sets in. If you are finding either of these issues affecting you, talk to your supervisor. Perhaps they are unaware that the time you have been allocated for certain tasks is insufficient for you to carry it out in a professional and productive manner.

They may also not be aware that you have been assigned the same set of tasks all week and that you really need a change.

Sometimes, tasks that need to be completed are mundane – washing dishes, tidying the play area etc. It is important to be willing to accept daily tasks in a responsive manner. If you do not listen and accept those tasks or complete them in the required time frame, they may not be done at all because everyone thinks it is someone else's responsibility, or someone else will have to find time to do it. In the end, the program will look shabby, dirty and uncared for. Having pride in everything that you do will show through to other areas of work. Realising that the rooms need to be clean and tidy and pleasant to be in will make working in them more enjoyable. If you are doing a task that you find boring, try and make it fun by asking for volunteers to help you and making the whole process a fun activity with the children involved.

Try to remember that you are relied upon by the rest of the team to carry out the work to ensure the smooth and productive running of the service for that day.

By continuously reviewing and developing you own work performance; you will not only achieve your goals, but also those of the team and in doing so, gain greater job satisfaction.

## COMMUNICATION

OSHC is a busy work place with many things going on all at once. It can be difficult to find the time or the way to pass on information to all staff. There needs to be effective communication methods employed so that all staff are informed of the goings on at the workplace.

### **The key to good work place relations is communication:**

- **Meet** with staff to discuss issues and problems in a non-blaming manner
- **Listen** to other staff
- **Discuss** any issues after the program and away from children and parents
- **Never discuss issues about a child in front of other children or parents**
- **Discuss** issues in private
- **Have** regular staff meetings
- **Incorporate** “ice breakers” into meetings to introduce new staff to the regular team
- **Introduce** new staff to the children.

## **Staff Meetings**

As discussed earlier staff meetings are an important and integral part of a successful program. They need to be held regularly at the same time so that the staff can plan activities for the meeting ahead of time.

It is a platform to:

- Discuss and express concerns
- Share information – eg PD sessions attended, in-services, seminars, newsletters.
- Discuss programming and policy issues
- Discuss relevant information on children/families
- Discuss any issues or concern from staff
- Debrief on any relevant issues occurring in the previous fortnight

## **Communication Book**

A Communication Book is useful for day to day information that needs to be passed onto all staff attending on that day.

Items can include:

- Cancellations and casual attendances
- Staff roster
- Messages for staff and children
- Changes to permanent bookings

Everyday, when a carer arrives at the program the first thing they need to do is to look at the Communication Book to find out what they will be doing for the day and reading any other relevant messages.

## **Notice Boards**

Notice Boards are a great way to catch the attention of passers by, being parents, staff or children. A good notice board is eye-catching, clear, bright and changed often – about every 2-3 weeks. If it is not changed regularly people will lose interest in it very quickly.

Notice Boards can be used for displaying:

- Posters
- Information
- Coming events
- Program activities
- Holiday programs
- Children's work/notices
- Lost and found notices
- Community notices

There can be a notice board for parents, another for the children and another for the staff. The staff notice board is useful for staff to place requests for special food and/or equipment needed for the next day/week or upcoming social events. These boards are very versatile with endless communication possibilities.

## **Newsletters**

A newsletter is a great promotional tool for the program. It can be circulated to the whole school community and or to the wider community.

Items to include in the Newsletter could include:

- Introduction to the service
- Information on bookings, payments, etc.
- Description of the staff
- Any important upcoming events
- The latest program of activities
- Children's news and accomplishments
- Children's drawings
- Interviews of staff/children

## **Performance reviews**

Performance reviews are a positive tool to gain an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the team. All staff complete them annually, and are then given individual interviews with the Coordinator and the School representative (usually the Principal or Assistant Principal). The Coordinator also completes the Performance Review (PR) and is interviewed by the School Representative. Included in the PR is a list of topics, for example: Administration, Communication, and Planning. Each staff member then writes down his or her strengths and weakness in each area. In the interview the staff member has the opportunity to discuss these issues and to raise any other issues regarding the program. Through this process, Professional Development needs are discovered and problems in the work environment are raised and resolved.

It is an important learning experience that helps to continually improve the program.

## **Feedback**

For many people, self-evaluation can be a difficult thing to do. It is not always easy to be completely objective about ourselves. We are often unaware of the non-verbal messages we send, or the effect we may have on others. For these reasons, it is vital we ask other team members for feedback about our performance.

- All members of the team can give and receive feedback.
- Consider carefully which team member to ask for the feedback
- Do not ask a new member of the team or a relief worker.

- Choose a member who has seen you working over a period of time and who is willing to give constructive criticism, rather than generalised praise.
- Choose a person who will be honest enough to tell you where you could make improvement. Evaluation is about praise and encouragement, but it is also about change and self-development.
- Consider the feedback with an open mind. Remember that the objective of evaluation is not to hurt or offend. This is supposed to be a learning experience, so be prepared to learn.

### **Self Help Question 9**

A. Ask a team member to give you feedback about a particular task you do, or skill you are developing.

1. The task or skill you chose was
2. What was your team member's feedback?
3. What did you say in response to the feedback?
4. Now you have the feedback would you change the way you approach the task or skill you chose?

B. What methods of communication are working well in your program. Which ones need to be worked on?

PSCITAS

## CONCLUSION

Outside School Hours Care is a dynamic industry where change is ever present and the people that work in this industry are hard working, dedicated and multi-skilled. To continually offer high standard programs and services, staff need to be provided with the opportunity to continually improve themselves by acknowledging their worth and importance to the team. **A well run team means a well run program.**

### Teamwork means to:

- Show initiative
- **Be enthusiastic**
- Encourage others
- **Help others when needed**
- Accept your own and others' strengths and weaknesses.

## References and Resources

### Community Services Ministers' Conference, (1995) **National Standards for Outside School Hours Care**

The Standards represent baseline standards for the provision of child care for primary school age children across all states and territories in Australia.

Cynthia Scott & Dennis Jaffe (1991) **Empowerment: A Practical Guide for Success**, Crisp Publications Inc., USA

### Health and Community Services, (1996) **Implementation Guidelines for National Standards for Outside School Hours Care**

*The Implementation Guidelines have been developed to clarify the standards and provide information which is relevant to all outside school hours care services in Victoria.*

### National Childcare Accreditation Council, (2003) **Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance: Quality Practices Guide**

*Quality Assurance aims to provide school age children in outside school hours care throughout Australia with high quality care that promotes learning and development with particular emphasis on play, social interactions and recreation. OSHCQA is a Commonwealth Government initiative linked to Child Care Benefit funding approval.*

Phillip Bozek (1991) **One-Minute Tips to Better Communication**, Crisp Publications Inc., USA

Sue Tarrant & Alison Jones, (1996) **Before 9 After 3: A Handbook for Outside School Hours Care**, Pademelon Press.

Now that you have completed  
this Learning Package you may like to try :

**Developing Policy For Your Service (OSHC)**

**Partnerships with Families and Community Links (OSHC)**

**Orientation to Vacation Care**

also available on this website. PsCTas welcomes your

feedback by email to [psctas@gowrie-tas.com.au](mailto:psctas@gowrie-tas.com.au)

by phone on 1800 647 718 or through the

**request** page on this website.

PsCTas