

# Ten tips for Employee Retention

*Valued Opportunity acknowledgement*      *Respected Open Communication*      *Challenged Learning Feedback*      *Involved Listening support*

The National Reform Agenda requires a well qualified, experienced and knowledgeable early childhood education and care workforce. The workforce issue of recruitment and retention is now more important than ever in order to support the achievement of the reforms. Similarly, ongoing professional learning and development is imperative as the reforms also demand increased qualification requirements along with ongoing professional learning to ensure educators are equipped with current knowledge, information and insights that support, inform and enrich decision making about children’s learning. This view is supported in Principle 5 of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF): *Ongoing learning and reflective practice: Educators continually seeks ways to build their professional knowledge and develop learning communities. Reflective practice is a form of ongoing learning that involves engaging with questions of philosophy, ethics and practice.*

The importance of consistent, responsive educators is a key to supporting *secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships* between educators and children and their families is highlighted in Principle 1 of the EYLF. Therefore, employers must have strategies in place not only to recruit but to retain employees in the sector so as the vision of the EYLF - *belonging, being and becoming*, along with the Principles, Practices and Learning Outcomes are achieved.

Whilst a ‘job for life’ is not a term often used now, employers need to consider the importance of employee retention as it affects turnover, productivity and the importantly the Australian Governments vision: *“All children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and their nation”.*

Tips to assist in keeping employees include:

## **RECRUIT THE RIGHT PEOPLE**

To ensure you have the best people, write a job description and key performance indicators before advertising the position. Think through the key interview questions and ask each candidate the same questions so you can ‘compare apples with apples’. Know the type of person you are seeking, what you want them to do and their employment conditions.

## **FAVOURABLE WORK ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE**

Make you workplace supportive so employees feel comfortable in the environment. They spend a considerable amount of time at work, so it pays to make it somewhere they want to be. Establish a system where employees can regularly express their opinions and ideas freely – and act on any that are worthwhile and have merit.



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## **PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

Employees need to feel welcomed, wanted and that they are given a chance to succeed in their job. Have a program in place where new people are brought up to speed quickly and continue it by allowing them to develop and take on new challenges. Ongoing professional development means employees can grow over time, move into new positions and increase their value to the organisation. Provide employees with regular reviews and support so they know what to aim for, when they are doing well and when they need to improve. Without feedback staff will perform below standard.

## **OFFER INITIATIVES**

Incentives, both financial and non financial, can be offered based on performance and be applied consistently across the board. These are great ways of showing employees what they are worth to the organisation. They build a positive and supportive culture.

## **CONTINUE TO EDUCATE EMPLOYEES**

Good performance management systems will lead to a professional development plan for each employee. Use a variety of strategies to improve the performance of individuals, which in turn enhances the performance of the team and ultimately the services provided. An effective system will help recognise and reward good performance and to manage under performance of employees.

## **KEEP EMPLOYEES INFORMED**

Silence can be the greatest enemy. Regularly update employees on any important changes in the organisation. People like to be associated and know what is happening. Tell them about the organisations vision, goals and plans so they can be familiar with the direction of the organisation and feel it is worth their while to be working with it.

## **MANAGE EXPECTATIONS**

Employees need to have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. They cannot be expected to perform when they are unsure of what is required. Write down the expectations with a clear, unambiguous basis for measurement.

What do you see as your major priorities in relation to educators and support staff within your service



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## **MAKE LEADING SALARIES AND REWARDS**

Ensure employees are aware of how their salary is calculated so they can see they are paid fairly and on an equitable manner. Make sure any benefits paid or provided are included so employees can see the total package they are earning. For example: employer superannuation contributions, employee discounts, salary packing benefits, car parking, uniform allowance etc.

## **EFFECTIVE EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT**

A good management system will help employees achieve their personal and professional goals and, at the same time, promote the organisations vision and goals. Of particular importance is managing Generation Y's expectations and wants with their need for instant gratification, quest for constant fun, and questions about relevance to them.

## **LISTEN AND EMPATHISE**

Ensure a smooth working environment by regularly talking to employees and being a good listener. Take advantage of others being asked for their opinion and use them as part of quality improvement. If an interest is not shown in your employees, the message is that you do not care about what they have to say.

*People need to feel a sense of achievement  
People need to feel a sense of belonging  
People need to feel acknowledged and rewarded  
People need to feel respected and valued  
Most senior people want responsibility and autonomy.*

*Most people need their home, lifestyle and workplace to be harmonious*

*Adapted from: Marriott, D. Winning Teams. Australian Anthill. Issue 31 (2009) Australia*

*Reference: DEEWR. Belonging, Being, Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. (2009). Australian Government . Canberra, ACT*

