

Guidelines for Employee Retention

The goal of a retention plan is to create a work environment that represents and promotes an atmosphere of open communication, teamwork and cooperation. Your goal as a manager is to set the stage for which each employee works to provide quality education and care to the children and families enrolled in the program.

The Director's Goals:

- The Director takes the time to hire the most qualified employee from the beginning, including the employees past education, experience and personality. Hiring an employee is a process and requires the Director to evaluate the potential employees' contribution to the existing program and the programs future development. Do not just hire "warm bodies."
- It is the Directors responsibility to provide the employee with a proper orientation to the philosophy of the program, the other team members, the children and parents and to the operational policies and procedures of the facility. See the section on Guidelines for New Employee Orientation.
- The Director should ensure that the program has the resources for the employees to be successful. This should include the classroom notebook, appropriate and adequate classroom supplies, and curriculum and child development books to reference.
- The employees should have a clear understanding of how supplies are provided to the classrooms. This should include supplies for special projects, on-going supplies like crayons and paint and how these items are ordered. The Director should clearly communicate what the classroom monthly budget is for those supplies, and if the supplies are ordered by the Director or if the employee is required to purchase them and then be reimbursed.
- The management team sets the tone for teamwork and effective and positive communication among team members. All team members should feel respected and should always conduct themselves in a professional manner.
- The employees should feel connected and that have a vested interest in the success of the school. Their ideas should be heard and they should be and feel like an important part of the overall program community. This is no doubt the Director's job is to connect the team.
- The program should create a employee advisory board. Employees should have input in yearly planning, family events, and training events.
- Employees should get informal coaching often and receive a complete evaluation of their job performance yearly. Value the employees' efforts.
- Employees should be given the opportunity to complete a program evaluation or employee survey at least annually.
- The program should focus on the professional development needs of the employees. This includes going back to school, participating in training programs, sending employees to conferences and career advancement.
- Employees should be provided with the programs annual plan for the school year and for the summer camp program. This plan includes programming themes, special events, field trips, Pre-K graduation, training conferences, school pictures, staff meetings, staff development days, school closings, art shows, family education programs, book fairs, open houses, food drives, etc. See Sample Annual Plan

Other ideas for keeping your team together:

- Implement classroom contests and projects. Contest for the best bulletin board for summer camps, most improved science center, best parent involvement activity, classroom pumpkin decorating contest, etc.
- Take employee field trips like bowling, putt-putt, movies, dinner, have an annual holiday party, an annual picnic, etc. "The staff that plays together stays together."
- Recognize employee birthdays and special events (babies, weddings, graduations, etc.), write special notes on their pay check, send a card for their anniversary, call the employee at the end of a tough day.
- Maintain a list of the each employee's great ideas, projects and accomplishments in their file to be used as a part of their annual review. Show them that you were watching and that you do care about what an important job they do everyday educating young children.

Things to AVOID:

- BURNOUT! Which is caused by overtime, the employee not having the experience to perform their job or the employee not understanding what is expected from them, weak classroom teams, low pay, work/ life issues, etc.