

## Guidelines for New Employee Orientation

Your new employee orientation should not be overwhelming or boring. The orientation process should leave the new employee feeling connected and confident in their new surroundings.

- The employers' orientation to the program starts before the new employee comes to work on the first day. Provide information about the new employee; their name, experience and when they are joining the team to the parents and the other employee's in the program. This can be done in a newsletter, in an email or as a formal introduction letter.
- Provide the new employee with the employee manual, parent manual and key forms before the employee starts. Ask them to please read and complete that paperwork before their first day. The intent of reading the those manuals is NOT to skip a formal orientation process, but to allow the new employee to ask questions on things they did not find clear or things they did not understand.
- Make sure you have a plan for when the new employee walks through the door. Do not have the new employee wait. Make sure they have a mailbox, nametag, timecard, and place to store their personal items.
- The first part of the orientation process should be a tour of the program. During the tour, provide a quick introduction to the new employee's buddy. During this time focus on engaging the new employee and getting the employee motivated about the quality education and care that your program provides to its families. Do not answer the telephone or become distracted in the classrooms, with staff issues, etc.
- Make the new employee's first day a celebration! Have a pot-luck lunch where the new employee can have an extended lunch in order for them to get to know the other employees. Consider sending a welcome card from the center employees to the new employee.
- Divide the orientation responsibilities between the Director, Assistant Director and other key employees that are experts in certain areas of your program. Example: Have the bus driver provide the orientation on transportation procedures.
- Design a Scavenger Hunt with the key areas of orientation. When designing this Scavenger Hunt, ensure that the new employee must go into all classrooms and interact with most of the teachers, bus drivers, and the cook.
- Allow time for the new employee to perform on-the-job training and observations in other classrooms. They should be familiar with the other employees and operation of the other classrooms. The new employee should spend most of their time in the classroom with the teachers they will be working with on a daily basis, meeting the children, other teachers and parents.
- All classrooms should have a notebook with detailed information the new employee can reference specifics in the center and classroom on allergies, the children, policies and procedures (cleaning, emergencies, diapering, playground, medication, etc.) and emergency forms for staff and children. See the section on Suggestions for the classroom notebook as a reference.
- After the first day, call the new employee after their shift is over and tell them you just wanted to again welcome them to the team.
- Do not have the new employee responsible for sole supervision on the first couple days of work. The more time you take to introduce the new employee to the school, children, staff and parents, the smoother the transition. Schedule the employee to work different shifts the first week in order to meet all parents.
- As a part of the orientation process, during the first two weeks, the employee should work an opening and a closing shift to become familiar with those procedures.
- The new employee should be given the opportunity at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> week to provide feedback on how the week has been. They should do this with their buddy and the Director. At this time the new employee should share anything they still feel like they do not know or understand in regards to policies and procedures.
- Orientation and training in a quality early education and care program is an on-going process. Training and education plans should be designed to improve, grow and enhance the overall program as well as the each employees own professional growth.

Do not make new employees learn "The Hard Way."