

A one-minute Guide to Staff Induction in the Early Years



Effective induction for early years staff is essential for ensuring that new or existing staff who are returning to work are well-prepared and confident in their roles.

Providers must ensure that all staff receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training must include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues. Providers must support staff to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.

Section 3.25 EYFS 2024 Group and school-based Providers

Childminders must ensure that assistants receive induction training to help them understand their roles and responsibilities. Induction training must include information about emergency evacuation procedures, safeguarding, child protection, and health and safety issues. Childminders must support assistants to undertake appropriate training and professional development opportunities to ensure they offer quality learning and development experiences for children that continually improves.

Section 3.25 EYFS 2024 Childminders

Key principles for effective induction:

Develop clear policies and procedures: Ensure that clear policies and procedures are in place to support the induction process, and these are shared, understood, and implemented by all staff. These may include an induction policy, an induction plan, an induction checklist / training plan, and induction review meetings.

Clear communication Clearly explain all relevant policies, including health and safety, safeguarding, and behaviour management and outline job roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations.

Create a welcoming environment: Make new staff feel valued and part of the team from day one. Facilitate introductions to help new staff build relationships quickly.

Provide Structured Training: Ensure training on essential topics such as safeguarding, child development, behaviour management, food hygiene, curriculum planning, and observation techniques is provided.

Mentorship and Support: Assign a mentor or buddy to support the new staff member during their initial period.

Provide Regular Check-ins and ongoing support: Schedule frequent meetings to discuss progress, address any concerns and provide regular, constructive feedback to help new staff improve and grow.

Practical Experience and hands on learning: Allow new staff to observe and participate in daily activities to gain practical experience.

Gradual Responsibility: Gradually increase levels of responsibilities for new staff as they become more comfortable and confident.

Build in performance reviews and monitoring arrangements: Conduct regular review meetings throughout the process to assess integration and performance and collect feedback from new staff about their induction experience through surveys or informal discussions.

Tailoring induction

In some cases, the induction programme may need to be adapted to cater for employees with different needs, for example practitioners returning to work after a break i.e. maternity leave would benefit from an update of the latest changes to early years legislation and practice, for example reading through the revised EYFS framework. Whereas staff who are new to the setting or new to their role would need a more thorough and comprehensive induction.

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The induction process

Planning and implementing an effective induction program for early years staff involves several key steps to ensure new employees are well-prepared and integrated into the team. Some aspects of the induction will need to be covered immediately while other aspects of the induction process will be more gradual and take place over a planned time period. The example induction plan / checklist included as part of our induction toolkit provides an outline of how you might structure and pace your induction programme. Below are a few key activities taken from this:

Pre-start preparation:

- Welcome Pack: with essential information about the setting, policies, and what to expect on the first day.
- Paperwork: Ensure all necessary documentation, such as contracts and background checks, are completed before the start date.

First day orientation:

- Warm Welcome and tour of the setting.
- Policies and Procedures: Go over critical policies and procedures, such as safeguarding, health and safety, and behaviour management.
- Role-Specific Training
- Assigning a Mentor: Pair new staff with an experienced mentor who can offer guidance and support.

First week and ongoing weeks:

- Key tasks and hands-on practical activities to help new staff understand their responsibilities.
- Regular Check-Ins: Schedule regular check-ins to discuss progress, address concerns, and provide feedback.

Induction progress review meetings

Regardless of whether new staff have been appointed on the basis of a formal probation period, regular progress review meetings should be scheduled into the induction for all staff, to check how the staff are settling in and to help, support and guide them, so they can succeed in their new role.

Notes may be taken at each review meeting and kept securely and confidentially in accordance with the GDPR ensuring employees have access to their own records when required. These meetings and notes together with the induction checklist can then be used to inform discussions at following review meetings and inform the content of first performance management meeting once induction/probation is complete.

Overcoming challenges

Inducting new staff in early years settings can come with several challenges. These may include:

- New staff feeling overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information they need to absorb.
- Induction feeling impersonal, and making new staff feel disconnected.
- Pressures on time and trying to cover everything on day one.
- Adjusting to the environment.
- Difficulties understanding policies and procedures.

Many of these challenges can be overcome by carefully planning the induction process and implementing it over time, so staff have time to take in the new information. Ensuring staff are well supported by leaders and managers and a mentor on a day-to-day basis and through regular review meetings will help to addressing any challenges and help new staff feel more comfortable and confident in their roles. Ultimately leading to a smoother transition and better outcomes for the children in their care.

