

A new
employee



Effective staff retention

The importance of retaining staff

Staff retention will of course save you and your business both time and money if you can retain and train existing employees instead of recruiting.

Employees who feel valued in their role are most likely to stay in post so ensuring the culture of your provision is one of value, respect and collaboration will help staff feel their contribution to the setting is noticed, valued and rewarded.

Ideas to help employees feel valued – benefits & support

- Have a transparent pay scale which complies with legislation such as the National Living wage. This should consider role, experience and qualification level. As well as demonstrating consistency and fairness, a transparent pay scale can give staff an incentive to progress within your setting. Monitoring the advertised local early years positions and salaries can help you stay competitive.
- Ensure all employees are aware of the additional benefits you offer, for example a day off on your birthday, reduced fees for your own children attending, training paid for by the setting, employer pension contribution rate, bonus scheme, gym membership. Non salary benefits can encourage staff retention especially if there is minimal salary incentive.
- Staff wellbeing is vital, especially in the varied and sometimes challenging early years sector. Employers have a legal responsibility to help their employees and to support their physical and mental health under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- Supervisions should be robust and regularly held for all employees who work with children. As well as their importance in discussing children's wellbeing, development and progress, "Supervisions should foster a culture of mutual support, teamwork and continuous improvement, which encourages the confidential discussion of sensitive issues" (EYFS 2021). As such, supervisions provide an opportunity for individual and specific feedback, praise and support. They should also allow for discussions around professional development and for discussing staff wellbeing on a one to one basis.



Ideas to help employees feel valued – opportunity & progression

- Professional development and training can help employees feel motivated and interested in their work, particularly if this can lead to progression. A well qualified staff team is most likely to help children in attaining the best outcomes. It is better to discuss career progression and explore options openly, even if ultimately an employee moves elsewhere to progress. Your open discussions may encourage an employee to stay with you longer whilst training for their next goal and give you time to fully prepare for recruitment and handover.
- Succession planning – A culture of open communication, sharing your expectations for each role and employees' goals and progression wishes, will reduce sudden unexpected resignations. This in turn allows you to better manage long term staffing plans and budget for and arrange the training and development of existing staff ready to step up into more senior roles.
- Provide short term projects, short CPD courses and other opportunities, especially when training leading to a further qualification is not possible. This can help maintain motivation and shows you value your employees by providing them with specific opportunities. Ensure you facilitate opportunities for staff to be able to use their new learning and show the impact of their increased knowledge and ideas.
- If you have employed unqualified staff, apprentices or you provide opportunities for volunteers, ensure you also consider this group of staff for training and development as part of your succession planning. Liaise with training providers for any funding or training programmes which can be used for existing employees or volunteers while they are working, such as apprenticeships or foundation degrees.
- Ensure you provide support, mentoring and a robust induction process for new staff, particularly those new to the early years sector such as apprentices. As working with children is varied and, though rewarding, can be challenging, new staff may need extra support to acclimatise to the expectations and positives of being an early years practitioner. Strong levels of support early in an employee's early years career can be a key part of retaining them in the sector.

