

Are you and your Educators working as a team?

We provide tips and strategies to help you create and maintain an effective team of Educators.

To function at an exceeding level of the NQS an Early Childhood Education and Care service needs a group of individuals working cohesively and respectfully toward a common vision.



Educators and Staff often come together from various background, cultures, experiences, qualifications, beliefs, skills and talents. Respecting and utilising these differences can enhance the effectiveness of the team.

A team needs to have a common vision to establish what they are working toward. Perhaps they have an overall goal however they may be currently focusing on one particular aspect. Maybe they are working toward an element of the National Quality Standard that they know they have not yet met and it may be an identified issue in their Quality Improvement Plan.

An effective team has is made up of team members that:

- ✓ can rely on each other for assistance, guidance and support.
- ✓ are committed to achieving a common vision or goal.

- ✓ trust each other to do what they say they will do and to competently perform their roles/tasks.
- ✓ always act professionally and are considerate and respectful.
- ✓ communicate efficiently.

If the team/s at your Service doesn't have these qualities, your Service is at risk of operating with a group of individuals who are each trying to achieve their own goals and ideas in isolation from each other.

Below are some tips for creating and maintaining an effective team at your Service.

1. Understand the quality expectations that apply at your Service.

Does your Nominated Supervisor clearly state their expectations about the quality standard that applies at the Service? Make sure you understand what these standards are and follow the example set by the leaders at the Service.

2. Value each member's positive attributes.

Value the positive attribute of other team members. Each team member will have at least one positive attribute that is an asset to the team and it should be used to the team's benefit. For example, if Sally likes to garden at home her role at the Service may include overseeing the garden and recycling.



3. Value all team members equally.

All team members, regardless of the position they hold, must have equal rights. This includes the right for their view to be heard and genuinely considered. Not allowing some ideas and understandings to be fairly considered will hold the team back and this may also be seen as a form of “bullying.” Diverse ideas will strengthen effective teams by adding to the richness and scope of the team's understandings.



4. Have an open mind and be willing to listen, learn from others and try new ideas and methods of teaching.

So much has changed with the implementation of the EYLF and NQS. We need to keep up with these changes and expectations, be willing listen to what others have learned and to undertake new training and ways of doing things. This is especially important for educators who gained their qualification a long time ago, or for educators who have worked in the industry for many years. Their understanding of modern developmental theory and educational strategies may not be current.

Keeping an open mind might also mean trying new things. Just because you have never tried something, or you tried something a long time ago without success doesn't mean it won't work now.

5. Make informed decisions.

If there are divided opinions, research and investigate the issue and bring findings back to the team to make informed decisions. Always use reputable sources. Centre Support may be able to assist. Email Centre Support admin@centresupport.com.au.

6. Be open, honest and accept professional, constructive criticism.

It may be difficult to receive criticism, but if done honestly and professionally, criticism can be a valuable learning experience. We often view criticism as a negative thing but criticism is also simply a critique or analysis of something that can be used to improve.

7. Praise the efforts of other team members

Do you feel happier and more positive about your work if somebody praises how you are achieving quality outcomes? We all need a little bit of appreciation and positive feedback to keep us focused and committed to doing our best. Without this we begin to feel like our efforts don't count, are worthless or not valued.

If individuals feel like this disharmony grows and the team becomes a group of individuals all with their own personal disgruntled agenda. Instead of grumbling about what someone hasn't done praise what they have done. Don't forget to praise other team members when you notice something that they do well.



8. Celebrate the achievement and effort of the team in different ways.

Make sure you participate in any celebratory activities which are organised by your Service leaders, or maybe organise your own.

9. Meet regularly as a team.

Make sure all team members attend and contribute to team meetings. Use the meeting as an avenue for raising any issue or concern. If team members are absent they should read the meeting minutes and investigate anything they don't understand.

10. Communicate information and outcomes

The most crucial factor in teamwork is communication. All team members must be 'kept in the loop'. Make sure everyone is given relevant information, that messages are passed on and that all team members know when things are happening. You could use a diary or a white board in the staff room.



11. Grievance resolution

Resolve grievances in a professional, mature and effective manner. Grievances can emerge when individuals don't consider the effect of their actions on others, or there is nastiness that should be left in the high school playground. Team members should speak directly to the person with whom they have the grievance regardless of their position (always away from the children). If this does not resolve the situation or the situation escalates then advise the Nominated Supervisor immediately so they can intervene to resolve the conflict.

12. Individual team members must reflect on how their actions affect other team members.

Each team member must consider how their actions impact other team members. It may be as

simple as not washing up your dishes after lunch, trying to ignore a nappy that needs to be changed, or arguing it isn't your turn to clean the bathroom or put resources away in the correct place. Thoughtless actions such as these may be little things but they can fester into unhappy teams. It doesn't take much to do the right thing.

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