

Employee Management and Development Kit



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INTRODUCTION

Dear Service Provider,

Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) is pleased to present this kit which provides guidance to employers in the early learning sector in implementing an Employee Management and Development (EM&D) system in their services, as required under element 7.2.3 of the National Quality Standard (NQS).

This kit was developed by ELAA in 2014, with funding from DET, as a resource to assist the early learning sector in building its capacity by supporting employee performance and professional development through performance evaluation and the use of individual development plans.

ELAA sought input from the following sources to develop this kit:

- consultations with representatives of Early Years managed services and early childhood services
- consultations with a broad range of stakeholders from the early childhood sector and HR experts
- research into available literature on the need for and importance of having a comprehensive performance evaluation and development process
- from ELAA's experience in working with early childhood services.

The information gathered throughout the research and consultation process enabled ELAA to tailor the kit for the early learning sector, aligning it with the National Quality Framework (NQF) and associated standards.

The information provided in this kit, while tailored to the early learning sector, is generic in focus to be applicable to all employees at a service. It is also a resource that can be applied in all types of early learning services and settings.

ELAA recommends the use of this kit to assist and guide services in providing ongoing support of their employees' performance and professional development. Managers who have direct responsibility for employees should find this kit a useful resource in guiding their practice.

This kit is divided into sections to assist in implementing and managing employee performance from initial commencement with the service, including orientation, probation, evaluation and ongoing development.

The information and tools provided in this kit are designed as a guide and offer a way of meeting the varying needs of a diverse sector. Services may choose to use some or all of the tools provided, and may tailor them to suit their specific needs.

OVERVIEW: EMPLOYEE MANAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations*, Quality Area 7: Governance and Leadership, element 7.2.3 requires that:

Educators, coordinators and staff members' performance is regularly evaluated and individual plans are in place to support learning and development.

What is EM&D?

Employee Management and Development (EM&D) is a systematic approach to creating a work environment that supports employees to perform their best from the time they join a service to the time they leave.

EM&D involves:

- effective employee orientation and probation
- clearly articulating individual employee performance expectations and setting reasonable goals and/or performance areas
- understanding employee strengths and delegating responsibility
- coaching and mentoring
- motivating and providing recognition
- managing performance-related concerns following appropriate processes
- performance evaluation and feedback
- planning and implementing professional development.

Why use EM&D?

Integrated and effective EM&D improves outcomes for children and families by:

- increasing employee effectiveness through supporting reflective practice/self-assessment and learning on the job

- creating opportunities for positive conversations and regular feedback
- supporting a culture of collaboration and teamwork
- supporting ongoing effectiveness of employees in their roles and fostering the overall effectiveness of the service
- increasing employee retention.

What are the elements of successful EM&D?

The key elements of a successful EM&D system are:

- a two-way process that is respectful, objective, transparent and fair
- a model that places the employee at the centre of their own development and acknowledges their skills and capabilities for further enhancement and enrichment
- practices based on contemporary research and literature relevant to perform the role, e.g. principles of visible learning by John Hattie that encourage teachers to become evaluators of their own teaching
- regular feedback (both formal and informal) regarding achievements and areas of improvement, informed by critical reflections and a culture of collaboration and ongoing dialogue between employer and employee
- strategies for effective adult learning such as opportunities for employees to contribute to the development of their own performance goals
- support for employees to achieve their career development aspirations with appropriate resources and professional development opportunities.

What is involved in EM&D?

Employee management is a systematic and ongoing process that leads to better outcomes for employers and employees.

Central to the success of the EM&D process is mutual respect and effective ongoing communication and dialogue between employer and employee.

The following sample schedule of events describes some activities that services might engage in.

Ongoing	Communication, mutual respect, collaboration and co-operation between employees and their employers – this underpins the whole EM&D process.
As needed	Actively managing a new employee's probationary period by providing feedback and support, addressing any concerns and evaluating performance. Reviewing professional development plans for continued relevance, and ensuring that they have been (or are being) appropriately implemented. Ensuring dates for formal mid-year and end-of-year performance evaluation meetings are in place. Clarifying performance expectations with employees as soon as is reasonably possible and addressing any matters regarding ongoing performance in a timely manner. Communicating any concerns about performance to employees respectfully and developing meaningful development plans in consultation with employees. Resourcing ongoing development, which may include providing employees with coaching or other forms of support.
At the beginning of each year	<i>For a new CoM or newly appointed managers:</i> check and confirm that employees have a <i>Performance and Development Plan</i> in place and that both the manager and employee understand the requirements.
Regularly, as applicable	Recognising performance, providing regular feedback to employees, identifying any gaps in performance and providing appropriate support strategies. Acknowledging accomplishments and continuing to motivate high performing employees by supporting them to challenge themselves through ongoing development opportunities. Supporting employees to engage in approved Professional Development (PD).
Middle of the year	Informal mid-year performance evaluation: • reflecting on the employee's performance and encouraging employees to self-assess their own performance in preparation for the evaluation meeting • providing meaningful feedback and opportunities for employee input • monitoring and supporting professional development plans and ensuring that any support options, including PD events, are being implemented/attended.

(continued over)

End of year

Formal annual performance evaluation:

- encouraging employees to self-assess and critically reflect on their performance in preparation for the evaluation meeting
 - evaluating performance and summarising feedback, achievements and challenges during the assessment period
 - planning overall employee development for the next 12 months, including setting performance indicators, aligning any goals with responsibilities and including any specific contribution to the service's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
 - identifying and planning PD support options.
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Importance of employee development

Ongoing Professional Development (PD) is essential for professionals to remain current and effective in their practice. Facilitating meaningful opportunities for employees to participate in PD activities is a critical way of supporting performance, both for employees and the service as a whole. Employers must ensure that adequate resources are set aside to enable employees to participate in PD.

Professional Development events provide employees with the opportunity to network with peers, reflect on issues of importance, gain new ideas and foster best practice.

For employees covered by an Enterprise Bargaining Agreement (EBA), employers must ensure that any PD they agree to through the EM&D process is aligned with the requirements in the relevant industrial agreements¹.

Professional development for regional and rural employees

Professional Development for regional and rural employees comes with its own challenges. Employees working in remote areas can lack the regular interaction with peers that is critical to an overall sense of professional support and wellbeing. For regional and rural employees, participation in a range of PD activities is invaluable.

Technology provides remote employees with various ways to interact with peers, however opportunities for meeting up with other professionals and exchanging ideas is also vital. Despite the challenges associated with travel, costs, time out of the service and the need for replacement employees, employers must ensure that employees working in remote areas are supported appropriately to collaborate with peers and engage in PD.

¹ Please note that not all employees in an organisation may be covered by a single enterprise agreement. An employer may be signatory to more than one enterprise agreement covering different categories of employees.