Employee orientation

An orientation program that can be utilised whenever new employees are appointed is essential in every service. This will ensure that new employees are welcomed appropriately and provided with the essential information and assistance to settle into their new role and the service as quickly as possible.

Effective orientation contributes to setting up the employment relationship for success. It is an opportunity to positively introduce the employee to the service's culture and values, and communicate expectations. It establishes the basis of a successful workplace culture of communication and ongoing dialogue between the employer and employee.

It also assists in presenting the service as a caring, well-managed and professional place of employment with a positive impact on employee retention. (Refer to Tool 2.1: *New employee checklist* and Tool 2.2: *Employee orientation checklist*.)

Responsibility for orientation

The process of orienting new employees is the responsibility of the employer. However, the employer may delegate aspects of orientation to other employees such as the service manager, as required.

Useful tips for orientation

- Provide an opportunity for a site visit prior to the employee commencing work to become familiar with service/resources and meet other employees, parents and children.

- Prepare an orientation pack with essential information about the service and their role including the service's philosophy and vision, strategic plan, policies and procedures (particularly those concerned with safety e.g. OHS policy), constitution, hours of operation, program, key contacts and security procedures/pass codes etc.

- Welcome the new employee on their first day and introduce them to other employees. If a site visit prior to commencement has not been possible, provide a tour of the service, including noting emergency exits etc.

- Prepare a clean work area or personal desk (if appropriate) for the employee to ensure that the employee has an effective start to their employment.

- Ensure the new employee feels valued as part of the team. The induction can also provide an opportunity for the manager and new employee to discuss specific elements related to the service, such as culture of the organisation, and clarify expectations of their role and responsibilities.

- Allow time for the direct manager (if applicable) or committee representatives to be available to the new employee on the first day. This will assist the new employee to feel supported and allow clarification of any residual matters before commencing work.

- If possible and appropriate, provide a support/buddy person for the employee to refer queries and seek support during the probationary period.

Probationary period

The probationary period is an important part of the EM&D process. It is the first few weeks or months of a job during which new employees are closely supported, trained and assessed to see if they're suitable for the position.

The probationary period also allows the employee to assess the employer and the workplace, and make an informed decision regarding continuation of employment. The length of the probationary period and notice requirements for terminating employment during the probationary period are set out in legislation, or in applicable awards or industrial agreements. If an employee is covered by an industrial agreement or award, the employer must ensure that the probationary period is set in accordance with the terms of this agreement.

ELAA recommends setting a probationary period for all new employees. It is important in these instances to:

- advise the prospective employee about the probationary period prior to commencing employment

- confirm the probationary period in writing as part of the letter of employment.

(Refer to Tool 2.3: *Probation implementation checklist* and Tool 2.4: *Probation Review Report*.)

Implementing the probationary period

If there is a probationary period in place, the following actions are recommended:

1. Specify the probationary period clearly in the letter of employment to the successful applicant.

2. Ensure there is a person nominated to support the employee during the probationary period, review the employee's performance prior to the completion of the probationary period and make the recommendation for the decision about confirming the person's employment. In larger organisations, this may be the manager who the employee reports to. In smaller organisations, it may be a member of the CoM or a sub-committee of the CoM which has been delegated this responsibility.

3. Meet regularly with the employee during the probationary period to assess the employee's progress and provide feedback on their performance. Ensure that the employee is provided with adequate support to perform their role. Keep a record of these meetings, particularly if concerns regarding the employee's performance are identified and discussed. Ensure that the record is signed by both the employer and employee.

4. Organise a formal probationary review meeting at least 10 working days prior to the end of the probationary period to discuss the employee's performance, ascertain their willingness to continue in the role, and make a decision regarding confirmation of employment. Document matters discussed at this meeting and ensure that a record of the meeting is signed by the employee and the employer representative. (Refer to Tool 2.4: *Probation Review Report*.)

    Ensure the service's decision-making process regarding confirmation or termination of employment is followed. Depending on the size and internal processes of the employer, the person reviewing the employee's performance may or may not be the person with the authority to make the decision. If that is the case, sufficient time must be allowed for internal decision-making processes to be completed and the decision to be conveyed to the employee before the conclusion of the probationary period.

5. Convey the decision in writing to the employee. The employer may choose to:
    - confirm the employee's ongoing employment, or
    - initiate procedures to terminate the employee's employment prior to the end of the probationary period if the employee's performance is unsatisfactory (see below).

6. A copy of the written communication confirming or terminating employment must form part of the employee's record/file maintained by the service.

Terminating employment during the probationary period

The decision to terminate employment during the probationary period must be made after a careful assessment of factors including the employee's ability to perform their role and their performance during the probationary period. Employers should ensure that the employee has been supported appropriately during the probationary period and received feedback on progress and, despite such support and feedback, the performance of the employee has not met the requirements of the role. (Refer to Tool 2.4: *Probation Review Report*.)

The employer must ensure that the process outlined in the legislation, or the applicable award or industrial agreement as applicable, is followed in terminating an employee during the probationary period.

Setting Performance Indicators for confirmed employees

If the employer and employee decide to continue with the employment arrangement, the conclusion of the probationary period provides the ideal opportunity for the employer and employee to discuss and agree on Performance Indicators and any goals/responsibilities for the service's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for the period leading up to the annual performance evaluation. (Refer to Tool 3.1 for a list of possible Performance Indicators.)

Employers must ensure that the key Performance Indicators, and any goals and responsibilities for the QIP are:

- closely linked with the employee's position description, standards required in the role and the organisation's philosophy and goals
- realistic and achievable given the position of the employee, their qualifications and skills
- linked to any further development or training that the employee may require to perform their role.

This will form the basis of the formal performance evaluation processes that the employer will undertake with the employee, at which point the Performance Indicators, any goals and QIP responsibilities will be reviewed and modified as required.

TOOL 2.1	NEW EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST

(Note: The employer may complete this form with the new employee.)

Full name of employee: _____ Start date: _____

	Completed (please initial)	Date
Prior to appointment		
Reference check		
Qualification check		
Experience check		
Child safety and child protection training		
First aid qualification check (as applicable)		
Evidence of the following: • *Working with Children* Check • Registration (or provisional registration as the case may be) with the Victorian Institute of Teaching		
Prior to commencement		
Letter of appointment, outlining probationary period[1], has been sent to employee and a signed copy received back from employee		
Activate any IT requirements e.g. an email address, internet access etc.		
Notify person responsible for payroll		
First day		
Introduction of individual staff members		
Introduction of committee members/other employees, where possible		
Ensure employee understands nature and length of probationary period		
Provide complete description of the Early Years Manager/committee's roles and responsibilities including any strategic plan		
Collect and record tax and bank details		
Discuss parking arrangements, if applicable		
Discuss break entitlements, such as meal breaks, breaks from teaching duties etc.		

1   For employees covered by an industrial agreement e.g. VECTEA, the probationary period must be consistent with the provisions of that agreement.

TOOL 2.1	NEW EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST CONTINUED

	Completed (please initial)	Date
Discuss local facilities – banks, newsagents, cafés etc.		
As appropriate, organise time for introductions to contacts at local early childhood services (for support network), local government, DET officers, Maternal Child Health, DHS, family services etc.		
Record information on emergency contacts for employee		
First week		
Discuss reporting systems authority and communication processes i.e. management meetings, staff meetings, delegations of authority		
First month		
Organise a briefing with the committee executive/management to clarify their roles and responsibilities		
Arrange a review meeting during the probationary period to provide and receive feedback on the employee's performance/progress in the role		
At the end of the probationary period		
Meet to evaluate the employee's performance during the probationary period		
Confirm employment (or terminate employment) based on the results of the evaluation and all required processes relevant to the industrial agreement		

On completion of this process, this documentation is to be filed in the employee's personnel file.

_____

Signed by employee

_____

Date

_____

Signed by employer

_____

Role/Position title

_____

Date

TOOL 2.2	EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

Full name of employee: _____ Start date: _____

Person/s undertaking orientation: _____

This following list is a guide for discussion and information (if available) that can be provided to a new employee as applicable to the role:

Tour of the service, including security/lock up/keys	☐
Philosophy of the service	☐
Aims of the service (e.g. business plan)	☐
Service information book	☐
Staff employment policies	☐
Service policies and procedures including:	
• Acceptance and refusal of authorisations	☐
• Administration of medication	☐
• Administration of first aid	☐
• Anaphylaxis	☐
• Asthma	☐
• Child safe environment	☐
• Child Safe Standards	☐
• Code of conduct	☐
• Complaints and grievances	☐
• Curriculum development	☐
• Dealing with infectious diseases	☐
• Delivery and collection of children	☐
• Determining responsible person	☐
• Diabetes	☐
• Emergency and evacuation	☐
• Enrolment and orientation	☐

• Environmental sustainability	☐
• Epilepsy	☐
• Excursions and service events	☐
• Food safety	☐
• Governance and management of the service	☐
• Hygiene	☐
• Incident, injury, trauma and illness	☐
• Inclusion and equity	☐
• Information and communication technology	☐
• Interactions with children	☐
• Managing medical conditions	☐
• Nutrition, oral health and active play	☐
• Occupational health and safety	☐
• Participation of volunteers and students	☐
• Payment of fees	☐
• Privacy and confidentiality (including confidentiality of records)	☐
• Relaxation and sleep	☐
• Reportable Conduct Scheme	☐
• Road safety and safe transport	☐
• Staffing including qualifications and WWC check/criminal history record check	☐
• Sun protection	☐
• Supervision of children	☐
• Water safety	☐

(continued over)

TOOL 2.2	EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION CHECKLIST CONTINUED

Other information and records	
Education and Care Services National Regulations	☐
Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010	☐
DET Kindergarten Guide	☐
Attendance record/book	☐
Child enrolment record/book	☐
Medication record/book	☐
Accident, injury and illness record/book	☐
Children's sign-in record/book	☐
Employee attendance record/book and/or sign-in sheets	☐
Locker and/or pigeon hole	☐
Leave/sick leave procedure/forms	☐
Professional Development request process/forms	☐
Noticeboards/online information:	
• Employees	☐
• Parents	☐
Industrial agreement information/employment agreement information	☐

List of committee members and contact phone numbers	☐
List of employees and contact phone numbers	☐
Program planning	☐
Process for employing relief/emergency employees	☐
Emergency/fire drill procedure	☐
List of suppliers	☐
Petty cash/budget information relevant to the position	☐
Quality Improvement Plan	☐
Employee rosters	☐
Maintenance procedures	☐
Rubbish collection arrangements	☐
Discussion of all employee responsibilities	☐
DET Regional contact details	☐
OHS induction	☐
Employee meetings	☐
Computer login/email/online accounts	☐
List of specialist services with contact details	☐
Referral information	☐

TOOL 2.3	PROBATION IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST

The employer should decide whether to have a probationary period when employing a new employee, and must determine/ensure/undertake the following:

Length of probationary period is in accordance with the agreement/award/act, as applicable	☐
Employee has been informed of their probation and the probationary period is specified in the letter of employment	☐
Position description and responsibilities are provided and standards/expectations of the position are clarified	☐
A manager or, if applicable, sub-committee is appointed to have regular meetings to support the employee during the probationary period and review their performance prior to the end of the probationary period. It is recommended that at least two meetings are held during the probationary period so the progress of any agreed goals and role expectations at the first meeting can be discussed.	☐
The employer and employee have met to review performance during the probationary period	☐
The employer has made a decision to confirm employment and has checked with the employee to confirm their willingness to continue employment (Alternatively, if the employee's performance does not meet the requirements of the role, a decision has been made to terminate employment following procedures set in the applicable legislation/award/agreement)	☐
Employee's ongoing employment is confirmed in writing (Alternatively the process to terminate the employee's employment in accordance with applicable legislation/award/agreement has commenced)	☐
Performance Indicators, any goals and responsibilities for the QIP, which will form the basis of the annual performance evaluation of the employee, have been agreed and confirmed	☐

SECTION 2 :: EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION AND PROBATION *continued*

Full name of employee: _____   Name of service: _____

☐ First   ☐ Final   Report date: _____   Date employment commenced: _____   Expiry date of probation period: _____

Key responsibilities/performance standard/conduct (Refer position description)	Comments about responsibilities/performance/conduct	Goals for next review (if a second review is to be held) (Identify training needs)

(continued over)

TOOL 2.4 PROBATION REVIEW REPORT CONTINUED

Issues raised by employee

_____

_____

_____

Issues raised by employer

_____

_____

_____

_____

Conducted by

Name: _____   Date: (write below)

Position: _____   _____

Signature: _____

Employee's signature: _____   Date: _____

Employer's signature: _____   Date: _____

Position: _____

FINAL REVIEW ONLY

Action/outcome: Satisfactory completion of probationary period: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

Note: Original is to be placed in the employee's personnel file. Copy provided to employee.