

New Employees: Orientation + Probation

SECTION 2

ADVISE

STEP 1: PREPARE & PLAN



EARLY
LEARNING
ASSOCIATION
AUSTRALIA



Education
and Training

Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we work and pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past, present and emerging.

This resource was prepared by ELAA in partnership with the Department of Education and Training (DET).

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ACRONYM	TITLE
AITSL	Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership
APST	Australian Professional Standards for Teachers
CoM	Committee of Management
DET	Department of Education and Training (Victoria)
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services (Victoria)
ECA	Early Childhood Australia
ECT	Early Childhood Teacher
ELAA	Early Learning Association Australia
EM&D	Employee Management & Development
EYM	Early Years Management Organisations
NQF	National Quality Framework
NQS	National Quality Standards
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
PD	Professional Development
PI	Performance Indicator
QIP	Quality Improvement Plan
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely
ToR	Terms of Reference
VECTEA	Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement
VIT	Victorian Institute of Teaching
WT	Workings Towards
WWCC	Working with Children Check

ADVISE

EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

An orientation (or “induction”) program for new employees is essential in every service. This will ensure that new employees are welcomed appropriately and provided with essential information and assistance to settle into their new role at the service as quickly as possible.

It also assists in demonstrating that the service is 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.



Effective orientation contributes to setting up the employment relationship and the employee 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.



USEFUL TIPS FOR ORIENTATION

- Provide an opportunity for a site visit prior to the new employee commencing work to become familiar with the service/resources and meet other employees, parents and children.
- Prepare an orientation pack with essential information about the service and their role.

[Refer to Tool 2.2 Employee Orientation Checklist.](#)

- 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, and include information such as the location of emergency exits, bathrooms and other facilities.
- Prepare a clean work area or personal desk (if appropriate) for the employee to ensure that they have an effective start to their employment.
- Ensure the new employee feels valued as part of the team. The orientation provides an opportunity for the manager and new employee to discuss specific elements related to the service, such as the culture of the organisation.
- Clarify expectations of the new employee’s role and responsibilities.
- Allow time for the direct manager or committee representatives (if applicable) to be available to the new employee on the first day. This will help the new employee to feel supported and allow clarification of any residual matters before commencing work.
- If possible and appropriate, provide a support/mentor for the employee to refer queries and seek support during the probationary period.



It is important for employers to understand their role in the process of supporting early childhood teachers from provisional to full registration. This includes access to mentors and orientation/induction processes. Visit the [VIT website](#) for more information.

ADVISE

PROBATIONARY PERIOD

The probationary period is an important part of the employee management and development (EM&D) process. It is the first few weeks or months of a job during which new employees are closely supported, trained, observed 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 agreements. If an employee is covered by an award or agreement, the employer must ensure that the probationary period is set in accordance with the terms of that award or agreement.

It is best practice that a probationary period be set for all new employees on commencement at the service.



It is important to advise the prospective employee about the probationary period prior to commencing employment and confirm the probationary period in writing as part of the letter of employment with reference to the relevant legislation, award or agreement.

Refer to Tool 2.3 Probation Implementation Checklist and Tool 2.4 Probation Review Report.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROBATION

Employers should ensure that there is a person responsible for implementing the probation period for a new employee.

In larger organisations, this may be the manager who the employee reports to. In smaller organisations, it may be a member of the Committee or sub-committee that has been delegated this responsibility.

In some services, the person responsible for reviewing the employee's performance may not be the person with the authority to make the decision. Where that is the case, time must be allowed in the process to ensure decisions can be made in the appropriate timeframe and be conveyed to the employee.

IMPLEMENTING THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

If there is a probationary period in place, the following actions should be carried out to ensure expectations are clear:

- 1 Specify the probationary period clearly in the letter of employment to the successful applicant.
- 2 Advise the employee who is responsible for supporting them and reviewing their performance.
- 3 Meet regularly with the employee during the probationary period to assess the employee's progress and provide feedback on their performance. During this time they should:
 - 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 (or as stated in the relevant award or agreement) to:
 - discuss the employee's performance
 - ascertain their willingness to continue in the role
 - 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 employer and employee.

Refer to Tool 2.4 Probation Review Report.



The performance of early childhood teachers during the probation period could include discussions about their performance in relation to the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST).

IMPLEMENTING THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD *(continued)*

- 5 Ensure the service's decision-making process regarding confirmation or termination of employment is followed.
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.
- 6 Confirmation of the outcome should be provided to the employee in writing and filed in the employee's record maintained by the service.
It is accepted as best practice to have both the employer and employee sign the record of discussions.

TERMINATING EMPLOYMENT DURING THE PROBATIONARY PERIOD

Employers should ensure that the employee has received timely feedback on progress and has been supported appropriately to address any performance issues during the probationary period. Termination of employment should only be considered where the performance of the employee has not met the requirements of the role, despite support and feedback.

The employee should keep communication channels open between themselves and the employer and accept any feedback provided. If this doesn't occur, this should be noted as input into the decision of whether to continue the employee's employment.

Refer to Tool 2.4 Probation Review Report.

The decision to terminate employment during the probationary period must be made only after a careful assessment of factors including the employee's ability to perform their role and their performance during the probationary period.

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

STEP 1: PREPARE & PLAN

SETTING PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR CONFIRMED EMPLOYEES

If the employer and employee agree 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) to be achieved in the period leading up to the annual performance evaluation.

Refer to Tool 3.1 List of Performance Indicators.

Employers must ensure that the performance indicators, and any goals and responsibilities for the QIP are:

- closely linked with the employee's position description, descriptors in the relevant award or agreement, 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.

Refer to Section 3 Annual Cycle: Performance Evaluation and Development.

TOOL 2.1 NEW EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST



GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS IN USING THIS TOOL

The employer may complete this form with the new employee. On completion of this process, this documentation should be filed with the employee's records. This checklist should be reviewed and tailored to meet the needs of the service.

Full Name of Employee: _____ Start Date: _____

Employee Position: _____

Person(s) undertaking orientation: _____

	Completed (please initial)	Date
Prior to appointment		
Two reference checks (current or most recent supervisors)		
Qualification check		
Experience check		
Child Safe Standards training		
First Aid qualification, including Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Epipen, annual CPR update		
National Police Check (Educators)		
Working with Children Check (Teachers and Educators)		
Early Childhood or Dual Early Childhood/Primary Registration (or provisional registration as the case may be) with the VIT (Teachers)		
Prior to commencement		
Letter of appointment, outlining probationary period, has been sent to employee and a signed copy received back from employee. For employees covered by an agreement, the probationary period must be consistent with the provisions of that agreement.		
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		
Emergency management and evacuation procedures		
Provide information related to health, safety and wellbeing of children (allergies, medical conditions), court orders and other policies and procedures		
Provide complete description of the organisational structure and any strategic plans available		

TOOL 2.1 NEW EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST *(continued)*



	Completed <i>(please initial)</i>	Date
First day (continued)		
Provide employee with all the relevant service policies and procedures if not already supplied in an orientation pack		
Collect and record tax and bank details		
Discuss parking arrangements, if applicable		
Record information on emergency contacts for the employee		
Discuss break entitlements, such as meal breaks, breaks from teaching duties etc.		
Discuss local facilities – banks, newsagents, cafés etc.		
First week		
Discuss reporting systems, authority and communication processes i.e. management meetings, staff meetings, delegations of authority		
As appropriate, organise time for introductions to contacts at local early childhood services (for support network), local government, DET officers, Maternal Child Health, DHHS, family services etc.		
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. This may also include informal weekly discussions.		
At the end of the probationary period		
Meet at least 10 days prior to the end of the probationary period 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 agreement or award		

TOOL 2.2 EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION CHECKLIST



GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS IN USING THIS TOOL

The checklist is a guide for discussion and information that can be provided to a new employee as applicable to their role. This tool should be reviewed and tailored to meet the needs of the service.

Full Name of Employee: _____ Start Date: _____

Employee Position: _____

Person(s) undertaking orientation: _____

Service Philosophy		Contact Information	
Aims of the service (e.g. vision, mission/purpose and strategic plan)		DET Regional contact details	
Philosophy of the service		List of committee members and phone numbers	
Service Infrastructure		List of employees and contact phone numbers with key roles identified i.e. Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader*	
Tour of the service including security/lock up/keys			
Service information book		List of specialist services with contact details	
Rubbish collection arrangements		List of suppliers	
Employment Information		Referral information	
Computer login/email/online accounts		* Notify DET of any changes or updates to key roles within the service	
Discussion of all employee responsibilities			
Employee attendance record/book and/or sign-in sheets			
Employee meetings schedule			
Employee rosters			
Award or agreement information/employment agreement information			
Leave/sick leave procedure/forms			
Locker and/or pigeon hole			
OHS induction			
Petty cash/budget information relevant to the position			
Professional development request process/forms			

TOOL 2.2

EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION CHECKLIST *(continued)*



Governance and Management Information			
Accident, injury and illness record/book		<i>Diabetes</i>	
Attendance record/book		<i>Environmental Sustainability</i>	
Child enrolment record/book, including medical conditions		<i>Emergency and Evacuation</i>	
		<i>Enrolment and Orientation</i>	
Children's sign-in record/book		<i>Epilepsy</i>	
DET Kindergarten Funding Guide		<i>Excursions and Service Events</i>	
The <i>Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)</i> (National Law)		<i>Food Safety</i>	
		<i>Governance and Management of the Service</i>	
The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (National Regulations)		<i>Hygiene</i>	
		<i>Incident, Trauma and Illness</i>	
Maintenance procedures		<i>Inclusion and Equity</i>	
Medication record/book		<i>Information and Communication Technology</i>	
Program planning		<i>Interactions with Children</i>	
Process for employing relief/emergency employees		<i>Managing Medical Conditions</i>	
Quality Improvement Plan		<i>Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play</i>	
Staff employment policies, e.g. Code of Conduct or Child Safety		<i>Occupational Health and Safety</i>	
		<i>Participation of Volunteers and Students</i>	
Service Policies and procedures including:		<i>Payment of Fees</i>	
<i>Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations</i>		<i>Privacy and Confidentiality (including confidentiality of records)</i>	
<i>Administration of Medication</i>			
<i>Anaphylaxis</i>		<i>Relaxation and Sleep</i>	
<i>Asthma</i>		<i>Reportable Conduct Scheme</i>	
<i>Child Safe Environment</i>		<i>Road Safety and Safe Transport</i>	
<i>Complaints and Grievances</i>		<i>Staffing (including qualifications and WWC check/criminal history record check)</i>	
<i>Curriculum development</i>			
<i>Dealing with Infectious Diseases</i>		<i>Sun Protection</i>	
<i>Delivery and Collection of Children</i>		<i>Supervision of Children</i>	
<i>Determining Responsible Person</i>		<i>Water Safety</i>	

TOOL 2.3 PROBATION IMPLEMENTATION CHECKLIST



GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS IN USING THIS TOOL

The checklist is suggested information to communicate to new employees and activities to undertake during the probationary period. This tool should be reviewed and tailored to meet the needs of the service.

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. For teachers, employers may wish to consider the APSTs to review performance progression.	
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 Agreement/Award/Act.	
Employee's ongoing employment is confirmed in writing. Alternatively, the process to terminate the employee's employment in accordance with applicable Agreement/Award/Act has commenced, and communicated in writing.	
Performance Indicators, any goals and responsibilities for the Quality Improvement Plan, which will form the basis of the annual performance evaluation of the employee, have been agreed and confirmed. The Performance Development Plan can be completed once the appointment has been confirmed.	



GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS IN USING THIS TOOL

This tool should be reviewed and tailored to meet the needs of the service. The report should be completed as part of the formal probationary review period. On completion of the process, this documentation is to be filed in the employee's records.

Full name of employee: _____

Position: _____

Name of service: _____

First ☐ Final ☐ Report date: _____

Date employment commenced: _____ Expiry date of probation period: _____

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

TOOL 2.4

PROBATION REVIEW REPORT *(continued)*



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

TOOL 2.4 PROBATION REVIEW REPORT *(continued)*



Additional comments by employee:

Additional comments by employer:

Agreed outcomes or actions:

CONDUCTED BY

Name: _____ Date: _____

Position: _____

Signature: _____

Employee's signature: _____ Date: _____

(to record the employee's participation in the process)

Employer's signature: _____

Position: _____ Date: _____

FINAL REVIEW ONLY

Outcome: Satisfactory completion of probationary period: ☐ Yes ☐ No

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