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The voice for parents and
service providers

Employee Management + Development

RESOURCE

A resource for community based and private providers
of early childhood services in Victoria, to assist in
building capacity in the sector and delivering positive
outcomes by supporting and developing employees



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and Training



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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

Introduction

Early Learning Association Australia (ELAA) is pleased to present this resource as a guide for employers operating private and community based early childhood services in implementing an Employee Management and Development (EM&D) process, as required under element 7.2.3 of the National Quality Standard (NQS).

For many years, employee management has been a standard practice in corporate employment settings for motivating and developing employees, and as the basis of effective dialogue between employees and managers who invest in professional development and continual improvement. This practice also applies to the education sector where the positive relationship between effective employee management and teaching¹ and learning outcomes for children is well documented in research². Motivated and engaged employees develop positive relationships in the workplace, succeed with their own ongoing professional development and apply it to their practice, consequently delivering stronger learning outcomes for children.

Employee management is much more than a formal annual performance appraisal. It is multifaceted and includes all aspects of effective adult learning such as motivation, feedback, opportunity for employees to contribute to developing their own personal and career-related goals, opportunities for peer learning, and the chance to apply the professional inputs they receive into their own work. Employee management processes can differ from service to service but all processes are more likely to be successful if the process is undertaken with a genuine desire to support and develop employees, rather than simply an annual obligation and a form-filling exercise.

In an effective process, the employer and the employee cooperatively identify specific areas of strength that can be applied effectively in the employees work. Furthermore, collaboratively they will consult and determine areas for improvement or enhancement and determine how

the employee can be further developed in their skills. Critical elements of this process include acknowledging where the employee has experienced both success and challenges, providing clear and objective feedback, and recording progression and development. This process helps to maintain a future-focussed approach. Therefore, conversations between the employer and employee are frequent, constructive, ongoing and cumulative to enable employees to demonstrate impact and outcome. Employees who can contribute to their own professional development, receive clear and consistent feedback, and are supported by their managers to achieve their goals are usually more motivated and effective in their workplace.

Cultural and linguistic diversity is an important aspect of the early childhood workforce in Victoria. When planning and undertaking the EM&D process, employers must follow inclusive policies and practices which ensure that all employees are treated equally and with respect, and are provided with the opportunities they need to develop professionally.



Successful workplace relationships evolve from effective dialogue that motivates and engages employees.



BENEFITS OF THIS RESOURCE

This resource contains information and useful tools that will help you to implement an EM&D process shaped by best practice.

1 Hattie, J. 2003 "Teachers make a difference: What is the research evidence? Paper presented at ACER Research Conference

2 Hattie, J 2009, "Visible Learning: A synthesis of over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement", Abingdon: Routledge, United Kingdom

BACKGROUND

This resource was first developed by ELAA in 2014, in partnership with the Department of Education and Training (DET), as a tool to assist the early childhood sector in building its capacity by supporting employee performance and professional learning and development. The resource was then revised in 2020.

ELAA and DET sought input from a broad range of stakeholders from the early childhood sector to develop and review this resource. Research was undertaken into available literature on the importance of having a comprehensive performance evaluation and development process. ELAA's experience in working with early childhood services also provided information that informed the development and revision of this resource.

The information gathered throughout the research and consultation process enabled ELAA to tailor the resource for the early childhood sector, aligning it with the National Quality Framework (NQF), Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST) and Victorian Early Childhood Teachers and Educators Agreement (VECTEA) Teacher standards.



Employers are strongly encouraged to review this resource and tailor the tools provided to meet their individual needs, ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation, service policies, regulations, awards and agreements that are applicable.



Where supporting the development of early childhood teachers, performance planning can reflect the importance of the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers in registration and renewal.

KEY ICONS

These icons and call outs are used throughout the document to guide you to areas of importance or relevance.



Tool:
a tool or template is available that will assist you with the EM&D process



Benefits:
the advantages and benefits you or your employees will experience



Information:
important information for you to take note of



Question/Explanation:
a key question or explanation relating to the information



Tips:
suggestions that will help you with the EM&D process



Further Reading:
suggested further reading for you to delve deeper into the EM&D process

STEP 1: PREPARE & PLAN

PREPARE

EM&D process box: highlights the relevant activity/step in the proposed EM&D process that that section of information relates to.

Overview: Employee Management & Development

PREPARE

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?

EM&D is a systematic approach to creating a work environment that supports employees to perform at their best and to continually improve from the time they join a service to the time they leave.

EM&D involves:

- effective employee orientation and probation
- understanding employee strengths, capabilities and responsibilities
- clearly articulating individual employee performance expectations and/or setting reasonable goals
- coaching and mentoring
- motivating and providing recognition
- ongoing feedback
- performance reflection and evaluation
- planning and implementing professional development
- using appropriate processes to manage performance-related concerns should they arise.

Refer to the Managing Performance Related Concerns resource for information & tools on this process.



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

It assists the employer in early childhood services to meet their obligations under the:

- National Quality Standard (NQS)
 - Quality area 4 (Staffing Arrangements)
 - Quality Area 7 (Governance and Leadership)
- the *Education and Care Services National Law Act (2010)* (National Law)
 - Part 5 – Assessments and Ratings
 - Part 6 – Operating an Education and Care Service
 - Part 7 – Compliance with this Law
- the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (National Regulations)
 - Chapter 3 – Assessments and ratings
 - Chapter 4 – Operational requirements.



WHAT ARE THE ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL EM&D?

The key elements of a successful EM&D process 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 that are based on contemporary research and literature relevant to perform the role
- regular feedback (both formal and informal) regarding achievements and areas of required 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
- effective and complete recordkeeping for both employer and employee as evidence of progress
- support for employees to achieve their career development aspirations with relevant resources and professional development opportunities.



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



BENEFITS OF THIS RESOURCE

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



PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES

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

The following is a suggested timeline of some activities that employers might engage in.

TIMEFRAME	ACTIVITY
Ongoing	Encourage a culture of respect and regular feedback between employees and their employers in an ongoing and systematic way.
At the start of a new appointment ADVISE	<p>Ensure that the new employee is provided with all information required (during orientation) to perform their role to the best of their ability and understands the philosophy, values and operations of the service etc.</p> <p>Refer to Tool 2.1 New Employee Checklist and Tool 2.2 Employee Orientation Checklist</p> <p>Actively manage a new employee's probationary period by providing feedback and support, addressing any concerns and evaluating performance in a timely manner.</p> <p>Refer to Tool 2.3 Probation implementation Checklist and Tool 2.4 Probation Review Report</p>
At the commencement of the performance period or beginning of each year STEP 1: PREPARE & PLAN	<p>Check and confirm that employees have a completed Section A of the Performance Development Plan and Evaluation Record (Tool 3.2) and that the employer and employee understand what is required of them. A face-to-face meeting is not required unless there are significant changes to the agreed plan, it was not completed at the end of the annual evaluation period or participants in the process have changed. For new employees – this should be completed once employment has been confirmed (usually at the end of the probation period).</p>
Regular and/or as applicable STEP 2: PROGRESS MEETINGS	<p>Clarify performance expectations with employees and address any matters regarding ongoing performance in a timely manner.</p> <p>Conduct regular meetings with individual employees to check progress with their work generally and review the employee's Performance Development Plan (Tool 3.2) in consultation with the employee as needed in any progress meetings.</p> <p>Refer to Tool 3.3 Progress Meeting Agenda</p> <p>Ensure dates for formal mid-performance period (usually mid-year), annual performance evaluation (usually end of year) and any progress meeting dates are in place.</p> <p>Recognise performance, provide regular feedback to employees, identify any gaps in performance and provide appropriate support strategies.</p> <p>Acknowledge accomplishments and continue to motivate employees by supporting them to challenge themselves through ongoing development opportunities.</p> <p>Encourage and support employees to engage in approved professional development. Ensure professional development plans are being appropriately implemented.</p>

TIMEFRAME	ACTIVITY
<p>At the mid-performance period evaluation or middle of the year</p> <p>STEP 3: MID-PERFORMANCE</p>	<p>In conjunction with the employee, undertake a mid-performance period evaluation to formally assess progress.</p> <p>Encourage the employee to reflect on and assess their own performance prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Provide meaningful feedback and opportunities for employee input.</p> <p>Confirm the performance indicators and/or goals noted in Section A of the Performance Development Plan and Evaluation Record (Tool 3.2).</p> <p>Review and support professional development plans and ensure that any support options, including professional development events, are being supported and attended.</p> <p>Refer to Section B of Tool 3.2 Performance Development Plan and Evaluation Record</p>
<p>At the end of the performance period or end of the year</p> <p>STEP 4: ANNUAL EVALUATION</p>	<p>In conjunction with the employee, conduct the annual performance evaluation summary which is a formal assessment of the entire performance period.</p> <p>Encourage the employee to reflect on and assess their own performance and to prepare prior to the meeting.</p> <p>Evaluate performance over the last 12 months against expectations outlined in the Performance Development Plan and apply a rating if this is applicable at your service.</p> <p>Refer to Tool 3.4 Performance Ratings Table</p> <p>Summarise achievements and challenges and provide feedback.</p> <p>Refer to Section C of Tool 3.2 Performance Development Plan and Evaluation Record</p>
<p>After the annual evaluation has taken place or at the end of the year prior to the next performance period commencing</p> <p>STEP 1: PREPARE & PLAN</p>	<p>In consultation with the employee, plan the development activities for the next 12 months, including setting performance indicators and/or goals, and aligning responsibilities with any specific contribution to the service's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP).</p> <p>Identify and plan professional development support options.</p> <p>Commence a new record.</p> <p>Refer to Section A of Tool 3.2 Performance Development Plan and Evaluation Record</p>



IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Ongoing professional development is essential for employees to remain current and effective in their practice. Facilitating meaningful opportunities for employees to participate in professional development activities is a critical way of supporting performance, both for employees and the service. This can assist in leading to improved outcomes for children. Employers must ensure that adequate resources are set aside to enable employees to participate in professional development.

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

It is essential for employers and employees to consider their individual regulatory responsibilities in relation to ongoing professional learning as certain standards (e.g. National Quality Standards (NQS), Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (APST)) place obligations upon the development of individuals to improve practice. For example, Standard 7.2.3 of the NQS require approved providers to actively engage in the development of all employees whilst Standard 6 of the APSTs require Teachers to identify and plan their professional learning needs.

Employers must ensure that any professional development they agree to through the EM&D process is aligned with the obligations in the relevant award or agreement and the service's policies and procedures³.

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 professional development activities is invaluable.

Technology provides remote employees with various ways to interact with peers. However, opportunities for meeting with other professionals face to face 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 professional development. Support can include time to attend professional development events off-site and covering travel costs.

³ Please note that not all employees in an organisation may be covered by a single agreement. An employer may be signatory to more than one agreement covering different categories of employees.