



Team Building

A vital aspect of working in Education and Care Services is also around how educators work with one another, as individuals and as members of a team. This summary exists to share with nominated supervisors, educators, coordinators and other interested people, some perspectives around building and working in teams, and to encourage further thinking about how teams and relationship building amongst educators can be further explored.

Working in education and care teams is essentially about relationships – forming relationships with children, families, and communities – and assisting children to form deep and meaningful connections to the world around them, as evidenced in the quotes below, from the Framework for School Age Care, and the Early Years Learning Framework respectively:

Experiencing belonging – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. In school age care, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. (DEEWR, 2011, p. 5)

Educators who give priority to nurturing relationships and providing children with consistent emotional support can assist children to develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others. They also help children to learn about their responsibilities to others...and to value collaboration and teamwork. (DEEWR 2009, p. 12)



Researchers have identified that integrity (truthfulness, honesty) is the most important element in building trust. Without trust, any organisation of any size cannot progress successfully and grow their teams. Educators need to trust that those who make decisions at a management level will treat them fairly, and managers need to trust that their employees will do the right thing (Cole, 2005, p. 139)

10 ways to build trust

When it comes to building trust, Cole (2005) has a list of 10 ways to build trust:

1. Be considerate and empathetic
2. Remember the little things
3. Keep commitments and promises
4. Communicate fully: clarify expectations, speak your feelings and tell the truth
5. Be consistent
6. Demonstrate competence, and make things happen
7. Be fair
8. Be reliable
9. Be sincere
10. Maintain confidences

An additional consideration regarding the formation of effective teams is that of a strengths based perspective. As McCashen (2011, p. 11) notes, having a perspective or approach that is concerned with people's strengths and aspirations, as opposed to concern with problems and where people are going wrong, allows teams to have open and ongoing development.

The development of common goals and a shared philosophy is important in building teams in early childhood where membership and ownership is strong for all participants (Mogharreban and Bruns, 2009, p. 408) It is important that members of the team have a philosophy which aligns with the

continued next page.

broader philosophy of the organisation, and that educators feel a sense of connection between the service in which they work and their pedagogy.

Staff being involved in strategic planning also supports greater involvement in team building. As Wong and Press (2013, p. 8) note, greater involvement of staff at all levels in planning... and more effective communication of changes in staffing/direction will likely increase the degree to which new staff are welcomed and integrated into the organisation.

So what do these discussions about team building mean for nominated supervisors, educators, and coordinators? How can building a strong sense of collegiality among educators and educational leaders support quality in an early childhood education and care service?

These discussions highlight what many people know to be true through lived experience – that working in teams is sometimes complex, often worthwhile, and a key aspect of many people's working lives. There are numerous strategies to enhance team cohesiveness, which are outlined below, however it is important to recognise and respect that teams are as diverse as the individuals within them. The research points clearly to the need to have team building be participative, collaborative, and responsive to the needs of the members of the team. ■

Further Resources

To access more resources around leadership in the IPSP online library (www.ipsplibrary.net.au), search for terms such as "team building", "leadership" or "partnerships".

Read more about team building:

Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework – Evidence Paper 2 – Partnerships with Professionals: <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/providers/edcare/pracpartner.pdf>

Building a winning team – self guided learning package: http://www.gowrievictoria.org.au/Portals/12/Documents/Professional%20Development/SGLP/Building%20a%20Winning%20Team_Dec12.pdf

If you would like further support, please email the project officer, at enquiries@gowriesa.org.au

References

Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments 2009. *Being, Belonging and Becoming The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*, Canberra.

Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments 2009. *My Time, Our Place The Framework for School Age Care in Australia*, Canberra.

Cole, P 2005, 'Leadership and professional learning: Fourty actions leaders can take to improve professional learning', Seminar Series No. 150, Centre for Strategic Education

McCashen, W 2004, *Communities of Hope: A strengths based resource for building community*. St Luke's Innovative Resources, Bendigo.

Mogharreban & Bruns 2009, Moving to inclusive pre-Kindergarten classrooms: Lessons from the field. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, Issue 36, No. 5, pp. 407 - 414

Wong S & Press F 2013. *The Art of Integration: Attracting and Retaining Staff in Integrated Early Childhood Services*, Wagga Wagga