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STAFF INDUCTIONS

Put health & safety first

With all the challenges that come with recruiting new staff, once you have got them on board it's important to keep them! A good induction is critical to that effort, as it helps practitioners familiarise themselves with both their new surroundings and colleagues, and their job role and what is expected of them.

What's involved?

An induction is a fundamental part of your recruitment process and should begin on new employees' first day, ensuring all of the areas described below are covered. You should never assume that any new staff member already knows the information, regardless of their level of qualifications or experience. There are many different parts to an effective induction for an early years practitioner, which include making sure they understand your company's values, aims and objectives, their individual job role and responsibilities, and all policies relating to childcare, employees and health and safety.

Make a plan

Having a well-structured induction plan will make for a smooth start for both you and your staff, and health and

safety should feature predominantly in the first couple of days.

A tour of the premises is the best place to start: show new starters where they can store their belongings and the location of the toilets and break facilities. Nursery security is a major part of safety, so it's also vital that you explain procedures for letting people into your building, including requesting identification when required and not being afraid to say no to people they don't know – everyone's safety may depend on this.

Fire safety is an area that should be covered in detail. Give new employees information regarding the location of all fire exits, evacuation routes, the location of the fire assembly point and the designated place of safety should it be needed. Discuss the location of firefighting equipment and company policy regarding its use; however, the most common and safe approach to adopt is that employees should not fight a fire unless it's blocking their only exit – the priority should be getting the children and staff out as quickly and safely as possible. Fire awareness training should also be given; whether this is completed via a short e-learning course or face-to-face is entirely up to you. Information regarding the procedure on discovering a fire and how often you carry out fire drills should also be included.

First aid

First aid provision will need going over, and this should include the location of all first-aid boxes, who the first-aiders are in the building, procedures for reporting accidents and the forms that need to be completed. You should cover COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) safety, detailing the location of such products, the MSDS (manufacturer's safety data sheets) and also any PPE (personal protective equipment) that may be required. It's important that



COSHH risk assessments are given to new employees to read, and it's a good idea to have a sheet for all to sign to say they have understood what they've read.

All risk assessments relating to an employee's job role, equipment and locations should also be read by any new starter and, once again, keeping a record of this is best practice.

And finally...

Explain any other safety procedures that are an expected part of new starters' job roles, for example, opening and closing checks of the children's food – showing them exactly how each check should be carried out will actively demonstrate that this shouldn't become a 'tick-box exercise'. Other areas of health and safety training that you may want to consider, depending on job role, include manual handling, display screen equipment safety, 'slips trips and falls' or even a course touching on all areas.

Understanding health and safety policies and procedures is crucial for all employees, and a focus on safety objectives, reporting procedures and employee responsibilities should not be a one-off event but an ongoing practice.

MCW Nursery Support Service Ltd is a family-run business specialising in health and safety, auditing and training for the childcare industry. Visit mcwnss.co.uk



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Injuries suffered by employees at work in 2017/18.

SOURCE: HSE.GOV.UK