



Early Childhood Induction Toolkit

Factsheet 8

Inductor

Setting up a Buddy System

What is this for?

This factsheet is part of a suite of 18 resources to support the induction of new team members when they join a new ECEC service. You can learn more about this in the Course Introduction of the accompanying eLearning module.

Who is this for?

This factsheet is for those leading the induction — leaders and managers, or anyone identified as a mentor or buddy.

How do I use it?

Use this factsheet to guide your approach for setting up a buddy system during a new team member's induction.

Use this together with these resources:

- Preparing for your New Starter Guide
- Importance of Induction Factsheet
- Building Relationships and Trust with a New Team Member Factsheet
- Considering Diversity and Inclusion Factsheet

“

I have found that buddying up new trainees with someone who has just completed their traineeship works well. They understand what the new trainee is experiencing and can guide them.”

Ebony, Gowrie Broadmeadows Valley

Research shows that the strongest predictor of teacher retention was formally collaborating with other teachers on planning and practice. One way to support this formal collaboration with teams is to set up a buddy system. Introducing a buddy system into the induction process can greatly enhance the experience for new team members, providing them with a 'go-to' person for support, guidance, and connection with their team from the outset. Buddies provide a bridge between theoretical understanding and the day-to-day experiences and practices of professionals in Early Childhood Education and Care.

A buddy system in the induction process provides new team members with role models, leading to increased skills, knowledge and confidence and greater job satisfaction and commitment to the service.



Here are some tips on how to set up a buddy system effectively:

1. Identify a buddy

Where possible, select an experienced team member who is enthusiastic about supporting others and possesses the necessary interpersonal skills, such as empathy, cultural sensitivity, and patience.

2. Appropriate pairing

Where possible, match a buddy with a new team member based on factors such as role, interests and personality compatibility to promote a productive and supportive relationship.

3. Clear expectations

Clarify the roles and responsibilities of a buddy and new team member, such as sharing information, modelling practice, and providing context. Define the different elements of induction and how the buddy contributes to this. Educators with less experience may need more focused support which may need to be provided by an Educational Leader, rather than a buddy.

4. Introduction

Facilitate an introductory meeting between a buddy and the new team member during the induction process to establish rapport and set expectations for the relationship.

5. Communication

Where appropriate, ensure the buddy is included in induction communications and discussions between the new team member and other stakeholders (e.g. leaders, managers etc), so they can tailor their support accordingly.

6. Time release

Where possible, enable buddies and new team members to have dedicated time and space for support to ensure the best possible outcomes.

7. Recognition and appreciation

Recognise and appreciate the contributions of buddies for their dedication and support of new team members, fostering a culture of collaboration within the service.