

# Maintaining good communication in childcare



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

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1. 1 Explain the process for maintaining effective communication within the setting team.

Effective communication allows all members of the team to work together to provide the highest quality of childcare possible. The key skills needed for effective communication are;

- Verbal communication.
- Non-verbal communication.
- Reading.
- Writing.
- Listening.

Good communication is essential in achieving and maintaining strong working relationships with all members of staff within the nursery environment. It will also help to keep the standard of work within the nursery to a high standard, achieving the maximum results with governing bodies such as OFSTED and ESTYN.

Poor communication in the nursery will inevitably lead to unmotivated staff that may begin to question their own confidence in their abilities or look for a job in another nursery.

Employers who invest time and energy into delivering clear lines of communication will rapidly build up levels of trust amongst employees, leading to increases in productivity, output and morale in general.

( *Michael Page*. [www. michaelpage. co. uk](http://www.michaelpage.co.uk). 15/11/13) .

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Strategies for effective communication:

- Weekly staff meetings with minutes to be taken, typed and given to all members of staff.
- Have a quiet room on site. i. e. an office.
- Correct body language, making sure it's appropriate in different situations.
- A good listener, understanding all areas of communication correctly.
- Be approachable to all members of staff, maintaining a professional relationship with all.
- Respond to situations calmly and not react out of anger or frustration.
- Use the 4c's. Comprehension (Keep it simple)

Credibility (Get to the point)

Connection (Be as interesting as possible)

Contagiousness (Motivate the staff in to action)

*(Isabelle Albanese. (2007) The 4cs of truth. United States. Paramount Market Publishing.)*

Barriers of effective communication and solutions to the barriers.

Barriers in communication usually fall in to two categories, verbal and non-verbal. Verbal barriers are when the surroundings or a person's personal circumstances effect how/what they interpret when speaking and listening to someone else. A non-verbal barrier is when somebody's actions or body language effect the communication.

On the next page are some examples of these.

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Barrier	Description	Solution
	Nursery buildings are often quite large with lots of	5 minute team meeting at the beginning or end of the day with all staff members involved. A staff meeting held every week to discuss items in depth.
Environment	little rooms therefore it can be difficult to talk to all members of staff.	Get to the point of the team the conversati on as

easily and  
 quickly as  
 possible.  
 confused if  
 the  
 communica  
 tor uses  
 long  
 complicate  
 d words or  
 talks too  
 fast.  
 Make sure  
 everyone  
 has  
 understood  
 what has  
 been said  
 and  
 answer any  
 questions  
 they may  
 have.

Stress      Different      Diffuse the  
 situations      situation.  
 can arise      Talk in a  
 that can      calm  
 create      manner.  
 friction or      Give  
 stress in      people  
 the      time to  
 nursery.      calm down  
                  by sending  
                  them on a

break. Try  
to sort the  
situation  
out only  
when all  
members  
of staff  
involved  
have had  
time to  
reflect.

		Always
		maintain a
	Letting	profession
	personal	al
	problems	relationshi
	and	p with all
Personal	attitudes	members
Attitude	effect the	of staff.
	running of	Leave
	the	personal
	nursery.	problems
		at home

Culture	People	Try to
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		meet the
		needs of
		all staff
	from	members.
	different	Treat them
	ethnic	equally to
	groups	everyone
	might find	else at the
	some	nursery.
	situations	Make sure
	difficult to	they
	understand	understand
	.	fully what
		has been
		said.
		Provide a
	The	quiet room
	nursery	or an office
Noise	environme	to hold
	nt is often	conversati
	very noisy.	ons where
		possible.
Body	It's quite	Make sure
Language	difficult to	the body

language  
being used  
is open  
and  
matches  
the context  
of the  
situation,  
interpret a environment  
situation nt and  
by just the conversati  
words on being  
someone is said. Keep  
saying. in mind not  
to intrude  
on  
people's  
personal  
space.  
Keep eye  
contact at  
all times.

1. 2 Understand the importance of the appraisal process and how records for staff can be logged.

Reasons for the appraisal process to take place in a nursery setting are;

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- To identify areas of the job description in which the member of staff is succeeding.
- To focus on any areas in which the required standard is not being achieved and to offer help, advice and support in these areas.
- To agree with the member of staff targets for future development in areas within the nursery setting.
- To assist the member of staff to develop their skills, knowledge and expertise.
- To encourage and motivate staff by listening to what they want to achieve.
- To help members of staff identify their own strengths and weaknesses.
- To make sure that members of staff and the nursery are working together.
- To encourage effective communication, it is ideal to communicate on a 1-1 basis the staff.

It is very important for both the nursery as a business and personal staff development to encourage and provide on-going training in every aspect of the nursery nurses role. This creates more effective staff relationships with nursery management and also helps the nursery as a business to move forward and set a high standard of professional practice.

Staff appraisals are not for discipline and should never be used as a grievance procedure. It is purely for both staff and nursery management to work together to improve standards of achievement and care for the children that attend the nursery. It also provides an opportunity for effective communication on a 1-1 basis with staff.

Performance appraisals should be carried out every year, around the same month the employee started working for the nursery. This is an opportunity to look over the previous year's appraisal form and to discuss any targets that might/might not have been achieved. It is always best practice to allow the staff member to time to achieve targets which have not been met in order for them to qualify for any pay rises due. Pay rises are linked to the nursery pay scale. Therefore the staff member should be given the previous year's personal appraisal form in advance of the meeting taking place.

#### Example of an appraisal form.

	Achieve
Main tasks	d
from job	required Commen
description	Standar ts
	d ?
	Yes/No

Help prepare  
and fully set  
out/tidy up all  
play  
areas/equipme  
nt.

Help plan,  
provide, take  
part in &

evaluate

nursery

activities

Attend team

meetings &

help prepare a

forward plan

for the group

Take part in

special events,

outings & visits

Encourage

parental

involvement

Listen to,

encourage,

stimulate &

ensure

safekeeping of

the children

Attend relevant

evening

meetings/cours

es as directed  
by the  
Manager.

Advise the  
Manager or  
Supervisor of  
any concerns  
about a child or  
equipment

Keep  
information  
about the  
children,  
families & staff  
confidential

Assist with  
regular  
observations of  
children and  
activities

Act as a  
Keyworker,  
conducting

regular  
observations,  
building up  
developmental  
records &  
working in  
close  
partnership  
with the  
children's  
parents/carers

Awareness and  
adherence to  
Pre-School  
policies &  
routines

Targets set to improve performance in specific areas:

What practical help/further education would support the member of staff in developing further skills, knowledge and expertise?

Any other comments?

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

www. silkysteps. com (13/12/13)

1. 3 Identify the correct procedures to follow in regard to disciplinary and grievance issues.

The disciplinary procedure happens when an employer has concerns or a complaint about an employees work and so they may decide to take disciplinary action against them.

There are a number of reasons why an employer may decide to take disciplinary action against an employee. These include the member of staffs:

- Behavior at work
- Absence from work
- Standard of work.

*www. adviceguide. org. uk (14. 12. 2013)*

The disciplinary procedure should always start with a letter to the employee stating that a meeting is to take place. This needs to include the date, time and place where the meeting is to be held. The letter would need to clearly state who would be present at the meeting and it also needs to include information the employee may find useful i. e. that they are allowed a witness to be present on their behalf. The letter should be given to the employee at least 72 hours before the meeting is to take place.

All evidence must be collected by the management before the meeting is to take place so that all facts can be stated and discussed during the meeting. Witnesses can be called in to the meeting to give accounts of the disciplinary incident/incidents.

Minutes/notes of the meeting should be taken by another member of the management team so that the member of staff conducting the meeting can give their full concentration to the meeting.

Members of management staff should always stay impartial and be fair to all sides of the disciplinary process. “ Innocent until proven guilty” should always be at the core of any disciplinary action.

The employee should always be given time to give their account of incidents. Support should always be given no matter what the outcome; anger has no place in a disciplinary procedure.

The meeting can be adjourned if new evidence comes to light so that both parties can have time to think/investigate these matters.

There are three potential outcomes of the procedure;

1. No action taken.
2. Formal warning issued. Either Verbal, first written or final warning depending on any previous disciplinary procedures.
3. Dismissal.

The outcome of the meeting should always be given to the employee in writing along with information on the appeal process.

Written evidence should always be taken and kept on file in case the employee should go to tribunal for unfair dismissal.

Everything should be done to support the employee before a written warning is given, i. e.

- Additional training/courses that would improve standards of work.
- A mentor scheme whereby the employee works alongside a senior member of staff for a short period of time to gain a better understanding of procedures.

1. 4 Evaluate the relevant employment policies required for the recruitment and management of staff in the organisation.

To ensure that equal opportunities are met, the nursery should advertise any job vacancies fairly. This procedure should include the role being advertised in a wide range of places so the information is accessible to all. The advert is to be released to all areas at the same time and it should include a statement welcoming all applicants that meet the minimum requirements and qualifications, thus to promote that the nursery is an equal opportunities employer.

When the deadline for the application forms to be sent in has passed. The management team should then go through the applicants and choose which they should shortlist and invite for interview. The management team need to make sure that all applicants that are invited for interview meet the minimum requirements that were stated in the advert and set out by the nursery management. The reasons for selection or rejection of an applicant should be recorded on a scoring sheet and be kept on file for 3 months. It is best practice to send a letter to all applicants notifying them if they have been successful or not.

It is useful if the management team put together a list of key questions for the interview. This insures that all applicants receive a fair and equal



opportunity during the interview process. All answers should be written down by the interview panel so that all information is accessible when deciding who they will employ.

All staff involved in the recruitment and selection process should be trained appropriately, especially in the area of equal opportunities.

Again, all interviewees should be notified if they have been successful or not, by a letter. It is best practice to welcome the interviewee to phone the manager for feedback on how the interview went. This encourages development of qualifications and skills where needed. The letter should include a formal job offer for the successful candidate.

The manager should then organise an induction meeting with the successful candidate. During this meeting, the manager can go through the day to day running of the nursery. The new employee can be introduced to other staff members. Uniform can be given if needed. The manager should also give the new employee a copy of the nursery policies and procedures and asked to read them before they start their new role. Both the manger and the new member of staff should sign to say these policies were given and recieved. The manager could also discuss with the new employee any training development opportunities that may be available and a personal development plan should be filled in. During this discussion, the manager may also talk about future promotions that may be available within the nursery and give the new employee any help and advice they may need to further their career and achieve their personal goals.

During the first week of the new employee's job, it is good practice to pair them up with an existing member of staff so they can shadow and observe the staff member to see how the nursery works on a day to day basis. The new employee should be told of all the nurseries policies and procedures such as forms that regularly need filling in, times of the day that certain events take place i. e., toileting times, lunch times etc. The new member of staff should also be made aware of any special requirements that the children may have such as allergies, medication, illnesses and dietary requirements.

This is an example of an employment policy;

#### Employment Policy

##### Policy statement

We at Early Learners' Nursery School ensure that adults looking after children, or having unsupervised access to them, are suitable to do so.

We meet the Safeguarding and Welfare Requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage, ensuring that our staff are appropriately qualified, and we carry out checks for criminal and other records through the Criminal Records Bureau in accordance with statutory requirements.

##### Vetting and staff selection

- We work towards offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.

- All staff have job descriptions, which set out their staff roles and responsibilities.
- We welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applicants will be considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, regardless of disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, sex, age, marriage or civil partnership. Applicants will not be placed at a disadvantage by our imposing conditions or requirements that are not justifiable.
- We use Ofsted guidance on obtaining references and enhanced criminal record checks through the Criminal Records Bureau for staff and volunteers who will have unsupervised access to children. This is in accordance with requirements under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act (2006) for the vetting and barring scheme.
- We keep all records relating to employment of staff and volunteers, in particular those demonstrating that checks have been done, including the date and number of the enhanced CRB check.
- Staff are expected to disclose any convictions, cautions, court orders, reprimands and warnings which may affect their suitability to work with children - whether received before, or at any time during, their employment with us.

### Disqualification

Where we become aware of any relevant information which may lead to the disqualification of an employee, we will take appropriate action to ensure the

safety of children. In the event of disqualification, that person's employment with us will be terminated.

### Changes to staff

We inform Ofsted of any changes in the person responsible for our setting.

### Training and staff development

- Our setting leader and deputy hold the CACHE Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce or an equivalent qualification and a minimum of half of our staff hold the CACHE Level 2 Certificate for the Children and Young People's Workforce or an equivalent or higher qualification.
- We provide regular in-service training to all staff - whether paid staff or volunteers - through the Pre-school Learning Alliance and external agencies.
- Our setting budget allocates resources to training.
- We provide staff induction training in the first week of employment. This induction includes our Health and Safety Policy and Safeguarding Children and Child Protection Policy. Other policies and procedures will be introduced within an induction plan.
- We support the work of our staff by holding regular supervision meetings and appraisals.
- We are committed to recruiting, appointing and employing staff in accordance with all relevant legislation and best practice.

### Staff taking medication/other substances

- If a member of staff is taking medication which may affect their ability to care for children, we ensure that they seek further medical advice. Staff will only work directly with the children if medical advice confirms that the medication is unlikely to impair their ability to look after children properly.
- Staff medication on the premises will be stored securely and kept out of reach of the children at all times.
- If we have reason to believe that a member of staff is under the influence of alcohol or any other substance that may affect their ability to care for children, they will not be allowed to work directly with the children and further action will be taken.

#### Managing staff absences and contingency plans for emergencies

- In term time only settings, our staff take their holiday breaks when the setting is closed. Where staff may need to take time off for any reason other than sick leave or training, this is agreed with the manager with sufficient notice.
- In all year round settings, managers organise staff annual leave so that ratios are not compromised. Where staff are unwell and take sick leave in accordance with their contract of employment, we organise cover to ensure ratios are maintained.
- Sick leave is monitored and action is taken where necessary, in accordance with the contract of employment.
- We have contingency plans to cover staff absences: There are several banks staff that are contactable in case of absences and also staff which can be contact from another Nursery.

www.earlylearnersnurseryschool.co.uk (25. 01. 2014)

### Conclusion.

It is essential to maintain good communication with in a nursery setting because the nursery as a business depends on it. Good communication produces a high standard of work thus creating maximum results with governing bodies.

The appraisal process is important in supporting all members of staff to achieve a high level of qualifications and further advance their career. This achieves a better environment for all the children in the nurseries care as they would receive a high standard of care.

The disciplinary and grievance procedures with in the nursery setting are never a nice time for both employee and employer but these procedures are a must for the nursery to maintain a high standard of care.

The recruitment and selection process is very important to “ get right”. The manager needs to employ the right staff for the nursery whilst offering equality of opportunity by using non-discriminatory procedures for staff recruitment and selection.