



Team Building and Motivating Staff

Team building and teamwork skills are critical for your effectiveness as a director. Even if you are not in a leadership role yet, better understanding of teamwork can make you a more effective employee and give you an extra edge in your office.

Team building success is when your team can accomplish something bigger and work more effectively than a group of the same individuals working on their own. You have a strong synergy of individual contributions. But there are two critical factors in building a high performance team.

The first critical factor of a teamwork success is that all the team efforts are directed towards the same clear goals, the team goals. This relies heavily on good communication in the team and the harmony in member relationships.

The other important element is the diversity of skills and personalities. When people use their strengths in full, but can compensate for each other's weaknesses. When different personality types balance and complement each other.

Here are some additional team building ideas, techniques and tips you can try in your situation:

1. Make sure that the team goals are totally clear and completely understood and accepted by each team member.
2. Make sure there is complete clarity in who is responsible for what. Do your best to avoid overlaps of authority. For example, if there is a risk that two team members will be competing for control in certain area, try to divide that area into two distinct parts and give each more complete control in one of those parts, according to those individual's strengths and personal inclinations.
3. For issues that rely on the team consensus and commitment, involve more the whole team in the decision making process. For example, use group sessions with collective discussions of possible decision options or solution ideas. What you want to achieve here is that each team member feels his or her ownership in the final



decision, solution, or idea. The more he or she feels this way, the more likely he or she is to agree with and commit to the decided line of action.

4. Make sure there are no blocked lines of communications and you and your people stay fully informed.
5. Build trust with your team members by spending one-on-one time in an atmosphere of openness and honesty. Be loyal to your employees, if you expect the same.
6. Allow your team members build trust and openness between each other in team building activities and events. Give them some opportunities of extra social time with each other in an atmosphere that encourages open communication. For example, in a group lunch on Friday.
7. Be careful with interpersonal issues. Recognize them early and deal with them till full resolution.
8. Never miss opportunities to empower your employees. Say thank you or show appreciation of an individual team player's work.
9. Do not limit yourself to negative feedback. Be fair. Whenever there is an opportunity, give positive feedback as well.

Finally, though teamwork and team building can be challenging, the rewards from high team effectiveness are well worth it.

25 Tips for Motivating Staff

1. Find out why each staff member comes to work. Take a moment to sit down with each staff member and ask them, "Why do you come to work each day?" The goal here is to find out why your teachers work with young children. Use this information as a motivational tool. Avoid getting answers such as, "I need a paycheck." This should not be an answer given. You may want to gather each teacher's feedback and make a list to hang in your break room or by the time clock as a reminder of why your staff works in a preschool program.



2. Allow staff to propose new ideas. Our staff has wonderful ideas and we need to gather this information from them. A strong team allows input from all individuals and recognizes ideas and solutions from the staff.
3. Encourage staff to have solutions ready when coming to you with a problem. Train your staff that when they have a problem, that instead of coming to you looking only for an answer, that they come to you with problems and a few possible solutions. While some proposed solutions might not be acceptable, remember to praise staff for their efforts.
4. Always provide appropriate humor in the program. Laughter creates a positive environment that everyone wants to work in.
5. Celebrate successes. Set small, achievable goals. Celebrate when you reach these milestones.
6. Stomp out gossipmongers. Gossiping is a disease! Stop it quickly or it can destroy a team.
7. Education, education, education! Provide quality training for your staff
8. Keep private lives PRIVATE!! What happens in your preschool program, stays in your preschool program!
9. Be an active participant. A good manager is willing and able to do anything you ask your staff to do.
10. Develop peer recognition programs. Studies show us that staff prefer to be recognized by peers over anyone else.
11. Be great! Being great is contagious.
12. Teach staff to pick their battles.
13. Hold staff accountable. When a staff fails to perform, you hold them to this. Use performance improvement plans to help set goals.
14. Feed them!
15. Sing. Music is the way to a person's heart
16. Empower your team. Make sure your staff feels comfortable making decisions that are in the best interest of the children.
17. Coach staff on communication.
18. Give staff history behind policy, procedures, and regulations.
19. Staff are confidential with each other's information.
20. Keep staff healthy. Develop a physical fitness and nutrition program for your staff.



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Email: tym@tymthetrainer.com

21. Before you speak, ask yourself, "Is it nice, is it true, and is it necessary?"
22. Encourage professionalism.
23. Smile. The smile is the universal language of friendship
24. Have a passion.
25. Be there for your staff.

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*Children see ~ Children do.
You don't stop playing because you grow old, You grow old because you stop playing.*