

What do staff want from their leaders?

By ASSETS and EON Consulting & Training

Project JOY, a HR programme by Workforce Singapore, helped over 90 preschool brands to conduct a staff engagement survey, provide HR training and advisory by HR consulting professionals. The survey results revealed that **centres with high staff retention and engagement had good leadership and supervisory support.**



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As a centre leader, you can translate such support to HR practices so that staff feel supported through their working life cycle at your centre, from recruitment, orientation, mentorship, training and development, performance management to career progression.

Let's look at the first support statement – “I understand my individual goals, performance expectations and standards”. How can you and your staff be “on the same page” in understanding what are those expectations and standards in a consistent manner?

How the Skills Framework can help clarify job expectations

You can use the Skills Framework (SF) for early childhood (available on <http://www.skillsfuture.sg/skills-framework/ecce>) in your conversations with your staff to clarify and align expectations.

The Skills Framework has 3 main occupation tracks: Educarer, Teacher, and Leader.

Each track has a range (eg. Beginning Educarer, Educarer 1, Educarer 2, Senior Educarer).

Each occupation track has a list of skills or work activities. This list of skills is grouped into 4 areas:

- Developing the Child Holistically
- Collaborating with Families and the Community
- Building Professional Capacity
- Building Organisational Capacity

As a centre leader or supervisor, you can adapt the list of skills in the SF to the needs of your centre. It is a useful reference point to standardise the job requirements and expectations for the occupations or roles in your centre.

You can use the SF as a basis for conversing with your staff to clarify and align job expectations because it sets a consistent standard to help your staff to:

- be clear about her job scope and goals so that your staff knows what she is expected to do;
- understand what are key tasks within her job scope and how these should be carried out (eg. clarify what the outcomes should look like when those key tasks are carried out well);

After clarifying the expectations, it is useful for your staff to receive feedback on how she is doing. The SF can once again be a reference point in providing and receiving feedback. It can be used to:

- identify strengths and highlight your staff's achievements based on the skills listed for her occupation as listed in the SF (eg. educator track, teacher track, leader track);
- identify the skills that your staff is lacking in her current or next occupational role so as to plan for her training (professional development) needs;
- to identify the resources she needs to do her job well such as referring to SOPs as a guide, or provide coaching by a senior or a specialist in an area she needs help with.

So back to the first support statement – “I understand my individual goals, performance expectations and standards” – centre leaders can help provide such support to staff in the way you clarify and set consistent work expectations, provide feedback so she knows if she is on the right track, and provide the necessary support so that she can do her work well.