

Most people that are teachers are involved in the childcare field have been involved in the industry one way or another most of their lives. These people might have started by baby sitting or working in home centers. They have all wanted to be teachers or work with children most of their lives. These are the type of people that populate the childcare industry. No one is working at Wal-mart or Jiffy lube and one day say, “let’s try that daycare thing”.

By the time they have come to your center they may have been through 3-4 centers already. The main reason that they leave their jobs is that they were treated like dirt or that they could be replaced easily and was.

People work at a job for two reasons and two reasons only: One is money. People work at a dangerous job or a job that they hate if they are being paid a lot of money. No one wakes up in the morning and is happy and whistles a tune, to go work in a dangerous and hot steel plant. But they do because it pays a lot of money. The second reason is they love what they do and they are treated well. People will work at jobs like this and barely get by and be happy to go to work every day because they love what they do and are treated with respect and dignity.

ASK ANY TEACHER IN THE WORLD.

Unfortunately, childcare does not pay a lot of money to teachers. So, you’d better create a great work environment and appreciate these people for the job they are going to do for you and your company.

To retain your teachers, is one of the most cost-effective tools that your center possesses. The cost to advertise to acquire candidates, the time of interviewing from your most expensive salaried individual, your director, as she takes time away from her normal duties, the hours to train this new person while on the job interacting with your clients and children is expensive. I would suggest that any new teacher would train in a room and not be on her own. Therefore, you are actually paying on an hourly basis for two people. The new employee should not count in ratio yet. That is why hiring and replacing a new teacher is very expensive to any center. The concept in childcare is sometimes to throw as many bodies against the wall and keep the ones that stick. This is not my theory and do not believe that it works well in childcare. A person should be hired like a puzzle with each piece fitting into the next piece to form a complete picture. Two people or three will have to work side by side in a room with children as a team for 8 hours a day. Make sure that those two people have the right personality and complement each other, which is key to an enjoyable working environment. Tell the teachers that they need to work out how they are to split up the responsibilities of that room, lesson plans, diapering, cleaning... and that if they cannot come to a friendly, good working decision, that you the office will make the decision and that they might not like it. This insures that the division of work was divided by the people that have to do it all.

People that have worked in other childcare centers are not treated like teachers but as glorified babysitters.

Your teachers have to be inspired with the idea that they are teachers, not daycare workers. They need to feel the same pride and joy that any teacher with a degree in any school would feel. They have to be given the tools and direction that allows them to grow and nurture the joy of their job. You have to create a work environment that they feel like teachers. The business would give teachers a standard of what is expected for the school year. The teachers are given the opportunity to create their own lesson plans to meet these goals. They should be turning in weekly lesson plans and given the resources by the company to meet these goals. This is important for morale. As business owner, you should be acting as the principal, like

in any school, to assist them with any student behavioral problems, any parent issues and being a coach and cheerleader for their accomplishments. Teachers should be in charge of testing their students three times a year so that they can see their own progress as well as the parents. Teachers should be making up their own homework. Teachers should also be setting their own timelines in each of their classrooms.

There should also be at least twice a year parent-teacher conferences with each student and parent in their room. This will give the teacher direct access to feedback from the parent in a one on one relaxed atmosphere. In the childcare field, parents and teachers usually only talk for minutes a day as parents are busy picking up or dropping off their children. A parent teacher conference makes the teachers feel like teachers.

Your center will have a set of rules that are designed by each state as well as a set of rules designed by you the owner with the help of the director. These rules will include break time, personal time, diapering, cleaning floors, tables, bathrooms, etc. These are jobs that have to be done within the course of the workday. Hopefully you've hired the right people and treated them with the respect that they can work out who does what chores at what times of the day. Some people prefer diapering while others prefer cleaning a bathroom. , It all has to be done. I tell my teachers, "you know your responsibilities and you should work it out." This gives your teachers the feeling of having autonomy and not someone looking over their shoulder. I let them know, as well, that if you can't work it out, "the office will work it out for you." Everybody wants to be their own boss and I believe that you want to give your teachers as much of that feeling as possible.

This feeling of being your own boss is universal. This is what drives people to work hard and do their best. The childcare field does not make the kind of money to be giving a lot of benefits. I believe that it is cost effective in retaining your teachers to give a certain amount of sick days, vacation days and any other possible benefits. Buying lunch to show your appreciation is important from time to time.

It is important to show your teachers that you, as the owner, are no bigger or better than they are. If you, as the owner, are at the school and a child should throw up or toilet was clogged, you the owner should go a clean it up for the teacher. This is a great way to build morale and have them see you as being on their team and willing to get your hands dirty. You should, as owner, go to work in each of the rooms for an hour or so once a month. This will give the teachers a break in their routine and the teachers will know that you feel what they feel.

At the end of every day, the owner should be thanking each and every teacher for their work that day and letting them know that you appreciate them. Say thank you EVERY DAY to EVERY TEACHER! These people are your most important assets. It is your job, as the owner, to make sure your assets come back every day happy and ready work.

The reality is that you have a daycare and the people who work in it are daycare workers. It is your job, as the owner, to create a positive mental image of a school that they are teachers in. Never use the words daycare or worker. Always say teacher, students, principal and school. Your job, as owner, is to get everyone to buy into the concept that they are teachers at a school and that they are doing important, meaningful work. And that their lives and work count tremendously in their community and to their students and the students' family. They need to feel that it is possible to be remembered forever by their work just as you, the person reading this, remember teachers that made a difference in your life. , As the owner, you must create an illusion of reality. That this is a school and that they are teachers who create lessons, homework, grade papers and so on. You are like the "wizard of oz" – ignore the man behind the curtain. You should never take credit for the school's success or greatness. It is always the teachers who should get the credit. Always have the parents recognize this fact and never put you above them in any way.

It is great to hire teachers that have children. They are more sympathetic to the parents of the clients using your center. They are easier to motivate to be teachers. They want to be thought of as more than just “mom”, who works. They are eager to work and be productive. The teacher who finds themselves with a job and a child is more likely to work harder to feed and clothe their children than the person who only has to take care of themselves. , I always like hiring these people first. I always let the children of the teacher you hire come to the center for free. It is a great work benefit and a tremendous incentive to a teacher at their job. What could be better than getting a child ready in the morning to take with you to work every day and have that child in the same building with them and then get to drive home with their child at the end of the day? A teacher in childcare can never have their child in the same room as them. This is a rule of step ahead and the state regulations. If there is a problem financially with your business by letting teachers bring their children for free, then let them pay a reduced tuition and take it out of their pay checks by deducting pre – tax dollars over an extended period of time.

There has been many times when a teacher has come to me with a financial problem, and they are looking to borrow money. This can be a tricky situation. I have always based whether I’m going to lend that person money on certain criteria. First is their performance over an extended period of time. If this is a valuable teacher, this is the time to show it. You need to have the teacher in written detail show how they can repay the loan out of their pre-tax hours and still pay their bills. Next, are they robbing Peter to pay Paul or is this just a certain situation that they are in and need help?

You should consult with the director of the center on this matter and make him or her part of the decision. Next write up as legal document that states the terms and pay back conditions and have everyone sign including the director as a witness. If you help a teacher in this manner, you show that you really care about them and their families. You cement a relationship that can only grow in time.

The rule is, “if you treat people as they are then that is what they remain, but if you treat people as they should or could be, then that is what they become”.