

# Guide to Vocational Placement

## What is Vocational Placement?

Vocational Placement is required where a student is not currently employed in a position relevant to the job role they are studying for. In this case – employment within the Early Childhood industry as an Educator.

Both the Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care and the Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care require certain units within the qualification to have some assessment conducted in real life situations with real children. Both qualifications also have a minimum number of hours required in a regulated education and care service. The Certificate III requires 120hrs with the Diploma stating 240hrs.

## How do I find Vocational Placement?

Vocational Placement can be completed in any regulated education and care service but needs to be one that you can access by your own means or via public transport. Keep in mind, you could be required to attend any time from 6am and finish times may be anywhere up to 6pm.

You need to source your own placement, but if you can demonstrate you have at least tried and all approaches are failing, a TLC Trainer or our Training Manager may be able to assist. We have trainers at most regions around Brisbane so we may have Centres we can approach on your behalf.

We do prefer you to make contact yourself though, as approaching Centres is a crucial part in obtaining future employment in the industry and the vocational placement process provides excellent practice.

You will need to source placement that covers all age groups – birth to 5years, so if a Centre you have found only starts from 15mths you will need to source a second vocational placement.

If any Centre you approach has questions you are unable to answer, or they require further information, please have them call us on 1300 327 708.

## Before you Begin

As part of your class schedule, time will be allocated for you to prepare a brief summary about yourself which will include your photo. This will usually be displayed in the foyer of the Centre and will provide details to staff, families and other members of the community that you are a student currently on vocational placement at the Centre.

You will include the following:

- Your name
- Dates you will be on vocational placement
- What qualification you are studying
- The institution you are studying with
- A brief description about yourself
- The reason for pursuing a career in Early Childhood
- A photo

Before your placement starts, the Training Manager will contact the Centre Director and confirm your placement, start time and who you should report to on your first day.

It's a good idea to do a practice run to the Centre to see how long it will take you to get there. You don't want to be late on your first day!

Your trainer will also prepare a Vocational Placement Agreement for you to take with you on Day One. With this will be copies of TLC's Workcover Policy. In some cases, this may be sent to the Centre prior to you commencing.

Please note: Before you can start Vocational Placement you must also have your actual Blue Card. You cannot start at any Early Childhood service without your actual card.

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## Vocational Placement Hours

In order to gain a detailed and valuable insight into working in the Early Childhood Industry we recommend that you experience several shifts. Shifts at Child Care Centres usually start at 6am with varying start times up until 9.30am. Finish times will vary usually between 2.30pm and 6 / 6.30pm. Obviously this all varies between Centres. A full day's shift is classified as working 7.6 hours per day.

As a Vocational Placement student, you will need to attend a minimum of 5 hours per day, but we encourage attending some full shifts to maximise your experience and benefits from placement. It is also important and extremely valuable to experience an open and a close at some point over your course to see what this involves.

When working over 5hrs, you will also be required to take a 30min - 1 hour lunch break (depending on Centre policy).

## During Vocational Placement

Day One will start with an orientation of the service. You will cover many things and it's important you take notes and ask questions if at any time something is unclear. Your trainer will go through the Orientation Checklist with you prior to commencing placement.

For the duration of placement, you will be considered as part of the team, where your fellow staff members will support and mentor you throughout the day. You will be given duties and tasks to complete such as engaging in children's play, setting up activities, cleaning up during meal times, reading stories during group time, completing art and craft with the children etc. It's all part of the day's work. In addition, your trainer will give you assessments tasks and activities that need to be completed during placement.

Since you are a student though and only there on work placement, and not as a paid employee of the Centre, you will not be left alone with a group of children or counted as part of the ratios. A staff member will always be with you.

You should also be given enough time during the day to complete any tasks and assessments you may have. When doing tasks or activities which require more planning such as setting up a particular learning environment, observing a child during a specific experience, adding materials to an activity, gathering information from the Centre, etc. you should discuss this with your room leader first in order to get enough time to complete the task .

Your trainer will also visit at stages throughout your placement to assess how you are going regarding your on the job tasks. During this time, they will observe you while you interact and engage in the environment and make notes on what you have done well or where you can improve. It can be a little unnerving to have someone watch you, however your room leader and trainer will support you as best they can to make you feel at ease.

Everyone will be aware that you are at the Centre to learn so they will provide you with as much help and support as you need.

Working with children is one of the most fulfilling experiences you can be a part of and a great career choice. Vocational Placement enables an excellent opportunity for a "real hands on" experience in this industry and can often lead to casual or even ongoing work.

## Tips and Strategies for a Successful Vocational Placement

### Staff and Families

- Listen to what your room leader and fellow staff tell you.
- Show initiative. Ask questions.
- Greet parents with a smile.
- Introduce yourself to families.
- Welcome children.
- If a parent has questions or concerns with their child, direct them to the room leader.

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## Personal Attitude

- Behave in a mature manner and use appropriate language.
- Be polite and communicate clearly.
- Have a positive attitude, show interest and enthusiasm.
- Respect the Centre's guidelines, follow policies and procedures
- Listen carefully and follow all instructions.
- Apply your skills and knowledge where appropriate.
- Show initiative.
- Don't use your mobile phone unless on breaks.

## Dress Code / Personal Hygiene

- Follow the dress code. Typically, smart casual wear such as black long pants / long shorts and a polo t-shirt. In some Centres a uniform may be provided.
- Wear a name badge (if provided)
- Be aware of personal hygiene. Clean hair and clothes and remember deodorant.
- Closed in shoes (Joggers and Flats are popular choices).
- Wear a broad brim hat while outside at all times.
- Long hair should be tied up and kept out of your face.
- Remove dangling earrings.
- Cover up tattoos if requested and remove any piercings.

## Attendance

- Be punctual. Arrive at least 15mins prior to your stat time.
- Sign the visitors log when arriving and departing.
- If you are running late, ring the Centre and advise them.
- If you are unable attend contact the Centre Director and your Trainer as soon as possible to let them know (you will need to make up the time).
- Please ensure that you make any phone calls to the Centre personally - you are training to be an employee with responsibilities.

## Clarifying Matters

- Don't be afraid to ask questions.
- If you don't understand something or don't know what to do ask the room leader or other educator.
- If you have any concerns or problems speak to the room leader or Centre Director.

## Health and Safety

- Wash your hands regularly throughout the day.
- Use gloves when handling food, wiping noses etc.
- Report any accidents/incidents to a staff member immediately.
- Clean up spills etc.
- Become familiar with the Centre's health and safety procedures.