I first got into childcare quite a few years ago because I wanted a really good educational facility for my young children.

The policies and procedures are there so that the team is all running in the same direction. They're on the same page, basically.

Policies and procedures are really important for the centre to make sure that we are creating a safe place.

Every new staff member gets allocated a mentor who initially on day one shows them around the centre and shows them who everything works and or it's like an orientation process, but they stay with them for basically their entire probation period.

In the early days, it's fairly intensive like it might be a couple of hours a day and then it weans off as they get familiar with everything.

Some staff are very good because they've come from other centres and they're experienced in things and it's really just getting them on the same page as us.

All of our new staff go through procedures every four weeks until the end of probation, and we ask them in-depth questions to challenge their understanding of the policies and procedures.

They then go through mentoring orientation until we believe that we can sign them off that they understand in-depth all the policies and procedures before they're able to be with us permanently.

 We don't just talk about the policy we actually walk through it. For example, what we've done this year already is we've taken all the staff out to the bus and we've stepped through the entire bus policy so it's not just a reading about it or somebody telling you about it but they have physically done it and if they step through it, they physically do it as well as they talk about it as well as they read about it, you've got the best opportunity to have it stick there.

My experience about learning the policies and procedures I loved the different layers and elements we created so it wasn't just reading it, acknowledging it, signing it and handing it back.

There were video tutorials about the different policies and the procedures and being able to see it in action. We did role play experiences and staff trainings where we were able to role play with our staff and our team. There were also quizzes and questions that were asked either on paper or in person with our educational leader and I think that helps with embedding those practises into all the peers because it's done in multiple ways and it's not just a tick and flick.

To make sure that they have done their job, they're really making sure that not only do we know what's part of the policies and procedure but we understand every part of it.

We also have drop-in meetings from our educational leader and our director of operations, where they are able to come in visit the classrooms, observe what we're doing to ensure that we're following all of the policies and procedures at all times. Policies are constantly being updated, so we get policy booklets every week. There are detailed questions in the back to ensure that we have read, understood, and we signed to acknowledge that we have answered all of the questions.

A follow up to that is in our staff trainings that we attend once a month we then go through the policies that we've answered throughout that month and go through that as an entire team and answer more questions to ensure everyone is on the same page. Once again, that's our chance to ask/answer questions and go through it together.

It's a two-way street in that staff can give us feedback as well as us giving staff feedback and we have regular staff meetings. We have feedback twice a week and newsletters twice a week to all staff. Staff do room reports every week. The best thing is to then put them in the scenario and get them to do it. All the staff would be part of the ongoing development of that policy. They would all receive a hard copy of it and all policies are reviewed every year. Everybody gets the opportunity to upgrade, update, add to the policies that we've got.

All the staff get a report, and in the report has the different policies and procedures and it will tell the staff members if they're meeting or they're not meeting it. They then will have an individual meeting with our management team and leadership team and they're able to get feedback on how they could have done that area better while they were being looked at in the room.

It is so good to have them because we're able to have everyone on the same page of the expectations that we want for our centre and it allows us to challenge each of our peers to make sure that the educational environment for all of our children is safe and up to our standards in education.