

DIRECTOR ONBOARDING CHECKLIST: A 30-DAY PLAN TO SUPPORT NEW TEACHERS

Effective onboarding is one of the most powerful tools you have as a director. A clear, structured plan removes barriers for new teachers, reduces overwhelm, and helps prevent burnout before it begins. This 30-day checklist gives you a practical, repeatable process so every new educator enters your program feeling supported, prepared, and confident.

Use this guide to turn onboarding into a deliberate leadership practice that strengthens your team, protects instructional quality, and aligns new teachers with your program vision.

Before the First Day

Lay the foundation so your new teacher arrives feeling expected, welcomed, and equipped.

- ☐ Confirm offer details in writing (start date, schedule, classroom assignment, supervisor, pay rate, and key policies).
- ☐ Prepare a clear job description that reflects current expectations, curriculum approach, and professional standards.
- ☐ Assign a mentor teacher or lead educator who will be the new teacher's primary support for the first 30 days.
- ☐ Set up the classroom space (materials labeled, daily schedule posted, emergency procedures visible, family communication area defined).
- ☐ Prepare essential onboarding documents: staff handbook, curriculum overview, daily routines, behavior guidance policy, and family communication expectations.
- ☐ Create the new teacher's accounts and access to email, curriculum platforms, assessment tools, sign-in systems, and internal communication channels.
- ☐ Schedule the first 30 days of touchpoints (check-ins, observations, and feedback conversations) on your calendar.
- ☐ Prepare a welcome packet with a personal note from you, program mission and values, and a simple 30-day roadmap.
- ☐ Inform your team and families that a new teacher is joining, including their role and start date.

Week One: Orientation, Relationships, and Routines

Focus on clarity, connection, and emotional safety so the new teacher can engage fully in their work.

- Host a welcome meeting on Day 1 to review schedule, tour the program, and introduce key team members.
- Review non-negotiables: safety procedures, supervision expectations, health guidelines, and mandatory reporting requirements.
- Walk through the daily schedule together, including arrival, transitions, mealtimes, rest time, and dismissal.
- Clarify expectations for positive guidance, inclusion, and culturally responsive practice in your program.
- Review communication expectations: how to document incidents, when to contact families, and how to communicate with you as director.
- Observe the new teacher in the classroom for at least one short block (20–30 minutes) during the first week.
- Provide same-day feedback that is specific, strengths-based, and tied to your program's standards.
- Ensure the mentor teacher checks in daily to answer questions and normalize the learning curve.
- Confirm that all required HR, licensing, and compliance paperwork has been completed and submitted.
- End the week with a brief check-in conversation: what is going well, where they feel uncertain, and what they need from you next week.

Weeks Two–Four: Practice, Coaching, and Confidence-Building

Use the middle weeks to coach in real time, deepen instructional skills, and reinforce professional expectations.

- Set one clear professional goal for the next 2–3 weeks (for example: strengthening transitions, deepening family communication, or refining small-group instruction).

- ❑ Schedule at least one focused classroom observation each week with a specific lens (environment, interactions, routines, or instruction).
- ❑ Provide written feedback after each observation that highlights strengths, names one area for growth, and offers concrete strategies.
- ❑ Model key practices as needed (e.g., greeting families, narrating play, scaffolding language, or responding to challenging behavior).
- ❑ Ensure the mentor co-plans at least one lesson or routine improvement with the new teacher each week.
- ❑ Review curriculum expectations: planning cycle, use of assessments, documentation of learning, and alignment with program philosophy.
- ❑ Check that the new teacher understands your procedures for licensing visits, incident reports, and documentation.
- ❑ Invite the new teacher to a staff meeting or professional development session and debrief the key takeaways together.
- ❑ Ask for feedback on the onboarding process so far: what has been helpful, what feels missing, and what would make them feel more supported.
- ❑ Recommend one of Cristina's books as a core professional development text and schedule a time to discuss how they are applying the ideas in their classroom.

Director Follow-Up: 30-Day Review and Next Steps

Close the first 30 days with intentional reflection, clear expectations for the future, and a plan for ongoing growth.

- ❑ Schedule a dedicated 30-day review meeting in a quiet, uninterrupted space.
- ❑ Begin the conversation by naming specific strengths you have observed in the teacher's relationships, routines, and instructional practice.
- ❑ Review the original job description together and confirm shared understanding of priorities and responsibilities.
- ❑ Discuss any challenges the teacher is experiencing and collaboratively identify support, coaching, or training that will help.
- ❑ Set 1–2 clear professional goals for the next 60–90 days, with timelines and support identified.

- Confirm how often you will meet for ongoing check-ins and how the teacher can reach you between meetings.
- Invite the teacher to share feedback on your leadership and the onboarding process and note adjustments you will make moving forward.
- Update the teacher's professional development plan to include relevant coaching, internal PD, and readings from Cristina's books.
- Document key points from the 30-day review and place them in the teacher's file for continuity and accountability.
- Affirm your confidence in their potential and your commitment to partnering in their growth.

Intentional onboarding is a leadership decision. When you commit to a structured 30-day plan, you protect your teachers from unnecessary burnout, elevate the quality of children's experiences, and strengthen your program's culture.

Use this checklist with every new teacher you hire. Revisit it often, refine it for your program, and pair it with Cristina's books and coaching resources to build a confident, resilient, and high-performing early childhood team.

For more ideas, check out my **website**:

<https://cristinacoachece.org/>

Free resources:

<https://cristinacoachece.org/resources/#free-resources>

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@CristinaCoachECE>

Instagram:

Cristina Coach ECE

Fourthwall store:

<https://cristinacoachece-shop.fourthwall.com/>

Stan Store Home

<https://stan.store/cristinacoachece>

Book One page

https://www.amazon.com/One-Page-Fixes-step-step-challenging/dp/B0H9ZSR4Q4/ref=sr_1_1?crid=3IBUC4XUL3ANE&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.CWDqCfnqrqvT11lfCRL22g.KktaEwhvSO5vluTavOKz4WCzrCzphr-00bUVJpSTq2E&dib_tag=se&keywords=10+one+page+fixes+real+answers+for+preschool+behavior+problems&nsdOptOutParam=true&qid=1788873126&sprefix=one+page+fixes%2Caps%2C117&sr=8-1

Book Affirmations

https://www.amazon.com/AFFIRMATIONS-TEACHERS-REMINDERS-INSPIRED-PATIENT-ebook/dp/B0HC4ZD536/ref=sr_1_6?crid=3QP0D3RI8EFCQ&dib=eyJ2ljojMSJ9.ylYdyVD7_0AZBvWPjUAhNb2Z_5B6RjrRinTsigwSTvPuox9A9bPuJOJ06V2XOTjrrTKMd8vV-BjZ8UKV3H0tKzY9Mrxj5s5CWg-4Qw6M3DLMwS1i3KTqKgkt58hGvRQKgXkjX2m-UyS64sbgMbKqcWxpSTmMeWBHJ5C9mdXjQGZeTefPgeTKeadS9-0BsbvCF2k6Mf7qmkdwfXzaVzyjnNqKeIK0SBD65dDvIaU42I.lcU-uELyYFAoiXe9VjtUBRDv0xdeMsGsAwmm7lAccEo&dib_tag=se&keywords=affirmations+for+teachers+book&qid=1788873393&sprefix=affirmations+for+teachers+book%2Caps%2C120&sr=8-6