



Engaging Practice Standards Celebrating Strengths and Successes

Acknowledging strengths is one of the cornerstones of engagement. Acknowledging worker strengths creates an environment that provides opportunities for learning, improves worker confidence, allows workers to identify opportunities for professional development, and increases worker retention. With the constant challenges workers face in the child welfare field, it's easy for them to feel discouraged or down. Acknowledging strengths, particularly when workers struggle to see them, is critical. Remember to acknowledge all successes no matter how big or small! Below are some creative ideas to acknowledge strengths:

- Virtual high fives! Create a virtual board or email chain where supervisors and workers can acknowledge a job well done, support they received from a colleague, or other achievements.
- Shout-outs! Take time at the beginning of unit meetings or other large meetings to give a shout out to a worker who has met a goal or went above and beyond. Remember, even small milestones should be celebrated!
- Plaques or certificates! If you're crafty, or even if you have a color printer, create a fun plaque or other certificate to give out as an award to recognize hard work. This is something your worker can proudly display at their desk.
- Throw a party! Organize a party or special lunch to say thank you and give your workers a break in their day-to-day routine. You can also include team building activities during the party or add in some other learning component.
- Thank you notes or cards! Give a worker a thank you note or card, even a post-it, to thank them for their work.
- Celebrate milestones! Celebrate life events, work anniversaries, and other milestones with a card, email, or verbal recognition in meetings. Be mindful that you are respecting your worker's culture for celebrations and ask how they prefer to be recognized.
- Worker of the week! Recognize a worker or group of workers each week for their exceptional work. Encourage workers to celebrate each other by having them choose the next worker to be recognized. Think of creative ways to pass and share the recognition like an office trophy, gold star, badge, or other token.
- Lunch and learn! Have a lunch and learn where staff can share interesting things about themselves, such as hobbies or interests. The lunch and learn can also be on topics relevant to work, where staff can share about a recent training they went to or a podcast they are listening to.
- Encourage professional development and continuing education! Ask your staff what trainings they are interested in and help them get to the training, such as helping them find the training or approving time away from work. You can also send staff to a leadership training to further their career development.
- Ask your worker how they like to be acknowledged! Some people prefer to be acknowledged publicly, while others may be embarrassed by the spotlight. Find out how your worker prefers to be recognized and seek opportunities to highlight the good work your staff is doing.