



Sample Recruitment & Selection
Handbook for Childcare Providers



Introduction

Although relevant legislation is referred to on occasion throughout this document, it should not be used as a legal interpretation, but can be used as a practical guide to assist you with the recruitment and selection process. If in doubt in relation to any issue, please seek advice from a suitably qualified source.

Objective

The objective of any recruitment and selection process is to obtain the right person for the job. However, in addition to choosing the right person for the job the employer also has to balance the needs of the employer/organisation with the legal, statutory and regulatory areas of both recruitment and childcare requirements.

Note: When recruiting staff, students and volunteers pay particular attention to the requirements of Regulation 8 and Regulation 14 of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006.

Regulation 8: Management and Staffing states:

(2) A person carrying on a pre-school service shall ensure appropriate vetting of all staff, students and volunteers who have access to a child

(a) by reference to past employer references in particular the most recent employer reference, in respect of all staff, and

(b) by reference to references from reputable sources, in respect of all students and volunteers, and

(c) by acquiring Garda vetting from An Garda Síochána when An Garda Síochána have set down procedures to make vetting available, (which is now available), and

(d) in circumstances where Garda vetting is not available for staff, students and volunteers who have lived outside the jurisdiction, by ensuring that these persons provide the necessary police vetting from other police authorities.

(3) Such vetting procedures shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed or assigned or being allowed access to a child in the pre-school service.

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Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of seeking applicants for a job vacancy.

Job Description and Person Specification

In order to be able to find the candidate you want, you have to be very clear about what you are looking for. Therefore, the first step in any recruitment process is to draw up a job description and person specification.

A **job description** is a general statement of the purpose, scope, duties and responsibilities of the role. It also gives the candidate the information they need to complete the job application.

In writing a job description, the following broad principles should be borne in mind:

- ✚ The job description describes the job, not the person in it.
 - ✚ The job description must describe what the job will be and what the post holder will be required to do, now and into the future.
 - ✚ The job description aims to describe the principal tasks associated with the position.
 - ✚ The job description should clearly define specific conditions pertaining to the functions of the post.
 - ✚ The job description should allow for flexibility to take account of the evolution of the job over time. This will ensure a level of flexibility amongst staff.
 - ✚ The job description must not be discriminatory or make explicit or implicit reference to the age, gender or any other irrelevant characteristics of the position holder.
- (See **Appendix 1** for sample job description).

A **person specification** identifies the personal attributes which are essential for the job holder to possess, if he/she is to be able to perform the job competently.

In writing a person specification, the following broad principles should be borne in mind:

- ✚ Educational standards required
- ✚ Work Experience
- ✚ Personal attributes such as leadership, maturity, ability to work on own initiative etc.

(See **Appendix 2** for sample person specification).

Advertising

The objective of advertising any post is to attract applicants in sufficient quantity to enable the company to choose the most suitable candidate.

This might include advertising the vacancy internally within the workplace or externally using national press, local press, website, recruitment agencies, FAS, etc. Best practice is that you advertise internally as well as externally. You should also include persons who may do relief work, or who are currently working on a temporary basis.

When drawing up the content of the advertisement, bear in mind that the Employment Equality Acts govern job advertising, and as such require that advertisement does not appear to demonstrate an intention to discriminate, for example by stating *Female Childcare Assistant required*. In fact, many employers now include an “equal opportunities employer” statement in their advertisements, which indicates an acknowledgement of, and compliance with, equality legislation.

A **closing date** should be placed on any advertisement which gives a reasonable amount of time for candidates to submit their applications, for example 2 weeks from date of advertisement.

(See **Appendix 3** for a sample advertisement, which can be customized according to the service providers needs).

Application Forms and CV's

Many employers use application forms in an effort to ensure an equal footing for all applicants, while at the same time also ensuring that all required information is captured in relation to the position. However for smaller employers the acceptance of a candidates CV should be sufficient. Again it is essential that, if used, the application form is prepared in a style which complies with legislation. Questions which could be seen as discriminatory against potential candidates include those requesting information regarding marital status, date of birth, family status or number of children and nationality. Questions should be carefully worded to avoid any hint of discriminatory practices.

The application form when returned by a candidate should contain sufficient information to allow the employer to decide whether to call the candidate for interview and provide the basic framework for conducting the interview.

Selection

Selection is the process of choosing the successful applicant.

Short listing of Applications

Once applications have been received, the next step in the process is to short list the applicants in order to identify those most suitable for interview for the post.

Short listing is the process whereby candidates are assessed against agreed criteria, on the basis of information provided in the application documentation, in order to eliminate unsuitable candidates and identify those candidates who most closely meet the criteria for further assessment.

The objective of the short listing process is to:

- ✚ Agree on and record a final shortlist of candidates that have been assessed against the criteria outlined in Appendix 4
- ✚ Include in the shortlist those applicants about whom there is dispute if unanimity cannot be achieved
- ✚ Consider re-advertising the position if no applicants meet all the essential criteria

Once the application deadline has closed, all members of the short listing board should be given a full and complete set of the following:

- ✚ Job description
- ✚ Person specification
- ✚ Advertisement
- ✚ A list of all applicants and their accompanying completed documentation.

Who should Short list the Applications?

At least two members of the interview board should be on the short listing board. This helps bring objectivity to the process and can minimize allegations of bias.

Before short listing each Member of the Short-listing Board should:

- ✚ Agree on a set of criteria for short listing – *(See Template Assessment sheet/Sample rating system – Appendix 4,*
- ✚ Next, shortlist all applicants against the selected criteria on the assessment sheet
- ✚ Note **briefly** in the 'comments' column the reasons for not short-listing each unsuccessful applicant
- ✚ Give due regard to the requirements of *Pobal* under Freedom of Information Legislation

Conducting the short listing Process

At the commencement of the process, a meeting of the short-listing board should be arranged, and a Chairperson agreed. The Chairperson should be fully briefed and equipped

to properly fulfill this role. Ideally, all members of the interview board should then attend a short-listing meeting arranged by the Chairperson.

When short-listing, board members should never:

- ✚ Recommend for interview any applicant, whether internal or external, who does not meet the essential criteria.
- ✚ Make negative assumptions or decisions on the basis of perceived over-qualification.
- ✚ Exclude candidates from further consideration for reasons that are not related to the selection criteria such as personal bias, age, disability, gender, race or any other of the nine grounds listed in the Employment Equality Act, 1998 and 2008.

Once the short listing process has taken place board members should complete a Short Listing Report (See **Appendix 5**)

A copy of each applicant's original CV and short listing record should be kept on file for twelve months after each applicant has been notified of his or her standing in relation to the job application. (Note recruitment and selection procedures are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997-2003. This Act confers on individuals a legal right of access to their own personal information held by you and to their own employment records).

Based on the outcome of the short listing process, a short list of candidates who should be called for interview will be identifiable. Those persons chosen for interview should be contacted in writing to advise them of the time, date and place of interview. (See **Appendix 6** for 'Sample letter inviting applicant to interview').

Each applicant not shortlisted and therefore not invited for interview should be informed of same in writing. (See **Appendix 7** for 'Sample letter of regret').

Interview Process

Interview Panel

The interview panel should, where possible, consist of three people and be representative of both sexes. It should ideally consist of people who have knowledge and experience relating to the position being filled.

A Chairperson should be appointed, who ought to brief members of the interview board on good interview practice and discrimination legislation.

Prior to the actual interview, all members of the interview board (if possible) should meet to discuss and draw up the questions to be used to assess each person attending for interview.

The questions should be searching enough to assess ability, and differentiate between candidates. (See **Appendix 8** for sample questions).

An Interview Assessment Sheet should also be drawn up, prior to the actual interviews. (See **Appendix 9**)

To ensure that every interviewee receives equality of opportunity, the same criteria should be applied to each interviewee and each interviewee should be asked the same set of core questions.

An Interview Assessment report must be completed and retained on file along with other essential recruitment and selection documentation for 12 months. (See **Appendix 10**)

Records

A written record of the interview assessment sheet for each person interviewed must be kept for at least twelve months after the successful/unsuccessful applicant is notified in writing.

Legal stipulations are that all documentation relating to short listing scores, interview notes and interview scoring are to be held for **12 months**. This is due to the fact that under the Employment Equality Acts a person may lodge a claim within six months from the date of the alleged discrimination, which can be extended to 12 months in exceptional circumstances as well as the Freedom of Information Acts requirements. Many cases are lost on the grounds of a lack of transparency in the recruitment process, and a lack of evidence of fairness e.g. interview notes or Short listing criteria.

Successful Applicant

The successful applicant should be notified in writing of their success, and offered the position subject to Garda Clearance and checking references. (See **Appendix 11**).

Unsuccessful Applicant

Unsuccessful applicants should be advised of their position as soon as the successful applicant has accepted the position (**See Appendix 12**).

Post Interview

Clear and detailed reporting will assist post-interview feedback if requested, or if an appeal is lodged, or if a challenge is made by an unsuccessful candidate. Interview board members should be aware that any notes that they make about any of the candidates may be disclosed under Freedom of Information Legislation. The Chairperson should collect all documents relating to the interview process and return them to a person designated by the interview board. All records and notes relating to the interview should be returned to the Manager of the childcare service and filed on the premises securely in a locked press.

References

The successful applicant should be offered the position subject to Garda Clearance and the vetting and verification of past employer references, including the most **recent** employer reference from a reputable source, prior to any person being appointed or assigned or being allowed access to a child in the pre-school service. (References should relate to childcare or early childhood education experience). See Regulation 8 (3) of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006. All references (at least two), and verification of these should be placed on the individuals personnel file. Refer also to Regulation 14 of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006. (See **Appendix 13 & 14** for Sample Reference Request letter and sample Reference Form).

All references must be received in writing and checked by phone or personal visit and must be recorded on 'personnel file'.

Appendix 1

Sample Job Description Childcare Assistant

Job Title: Childcare Assistant

Role: To Assist the Room Leader/Manager in the day to day running of the service.

Employer: X Childcare Ltd

Reporting to: The Manager

Location:

Contract Period:

Principle Duties and Responsibilities

- To work within the overall aims and objectives of the service.
- To report regularly to the manager and attend any meetings which are relevant to your work.
- To operate in line with relevant legislation, guidelines and regulations, including but not limited to, Health and Safety legislation and the Childcare (Pre Schools services) (No 2) Regulations 2006
- To carry out all other duties as assigned by the manager.
- To assist in developing and implementing the curriculum operating in the service and become familiar and adhere to the principals of *Siolta: the National Quality Framework* and Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.
- To assist in organising a safe, stimulating and inclusive environment for the children attending the service.
- To assist in communicating with parents
- To assist in ensuring that relevant records/reports are kept and maintained
- To carry out any other duties as assigned by the manager.

General Duties

- To fully observe the principles of confidentiality
- To participate in supervision and to maintain a proactive approach to development of skills
- To attend any training events/seminars that the committee/management feel would be beneficial.
- To keep the Manager informed of any significant developments/events

This job description is not intended to be an exhaustive list of duties and responsibilities and may be reviewed from time to time to reflect the changing needs of the work and position.

Appendix 2

Sample Person Specification

The following outlines the required competencies (education, skills, knowledge) determined to be relevant to the role of Childcare Assistant.

Educational Standards

- FETAC level 5 Major Award in Childcare
- Recognised up-to-date First Aid Training Certificate

Work Experience

- Minimum 2 year's previous experience in a childcare facility

Personal Characteristics

- Excellent interpersonal skills
- Good organizational abilities
- Team player
- Dependable
- Ability to work on own initiative

Special Circumstances

- Willingness to attend training/workshops when necessary.

Appendix 3 Sample Advertisement



Children's Pre-School Ltd.

Children's Pre-School Ltd invites applications for the following position:

Pre-School Supervisor

This position is a full time position (35 hours)

The ideal candidate will possess

- A relevant third level or equivalent qualification relating to Early Childhood Care and Education
- 3 years experience working in a childcare service
- Good interpersonal, communication and IT skills
- Good working knowledge and experience of policy and related issues in the childcare sector.
- Current driving license and use of a car

Candidates will be short listed on the basis of information supplied in their C.V. to be received no later than **4.00pm Wednesday 20th, April 2013.**

Please send a copy of your C.V. together with a cover letter stating which position you are applying for: to the Manager Children's Pre-School Ltd. Gorey Co. Wexford.

Children's Pre-School Ltd. is an equal opportunities employer.



Appendix 4: Sample Short-listing Assessment Form

JOB TITLE:

Name of Applicant	SC1	SC2	SC3	SC4	SC5	Total	Interview Y/N	Comment

Rating Guidelines: 1 = Poor 2 = Adequate 3 = Excellent

SC = Short listing Criteria

Short listing criteria could include:

- Third Level Qualification.
- Higher relevant Qualification.
- Previous work experience in childcare.
- Previous work experience in a related field, such as community development.
- Issues currently being experienced by childcare services.
- Knowledge of local and national childcare policy.
- IT Skills.
- Holder of current driving license.

Appendix 5

SAMPLE SHORTLIST BOARD REPORT

Post Information

Post Title	
------------	--

Advertising Information

Dates advertised	
Locations advertised	
Closing date	
Number of applications received:	

Shortlist Board Information

Member	
Member	
Member	

The Short listing Board met on _____ to consider all applications of candidates for the position of _____. A total of _____ applications were received from the following persons:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Based on the selection criteria the following applicants have been short listed for interview:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

A signed copy of the short listing assessment sheet is attached (Appendix 4).

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Appendix 6

Sample Letter to successful applicants

Date

Candidates Name

Address

Dear Candidate

Re: Position of Childcare Assistant

Thank you for your recent application for the above position of Childcare Assistant.

I am pleased to inform you that your application for this post has been shortlisted for interview.

Your interview will take place on Tuesday 6th June at 2:30 pm at the Children's Pre-School, 444 Lemon Hill, Wexford.

Please confirm your attendance for interview on 057 982303.

I look forward to meeting you on the 6th.

Yours sincerely

Name

Role/Title

Appendix 7

Sample Letter to unsuccessful applicants

Date

Candidates Name

Address

Dear Candidate

Re: Position of Childcare Assistant

We are writing to acknowledge receipt of your application for the role of Childcare Assistant.

We are delighted with the response to the vacancy, and the quality of the applications received.

We shortlisted for interview based on a decision of the best fit of applicants with the requirements of the role.

Unfortunately you have not been shortlisted in this instance.

We would like to thank you for your interest and wish you well in your endeavour to find suitable employment.

Yours sincerely

Name

Role/Title

Appendix 8

Sample Interview Questions for a Managers Position – Choose 3-4 questions from each section or as many as relevant.

Please note: These questions are appropriate for interviewing a Manager. However, they can be easily adapted to suit most childcare positions.

C/V Related Questions

- *Can you talk us through your curriculum vitae?*
- *From your work experience to date what do you feel has prepared you most for the position of manager of a service like this?*
- *Could you explain how you feel your training and experience to date will benefit this service?*
- *What aspects of your training and experience do feel have prepared you to undertake the position of manager of a childcare service?*
- *What aspects of your personality do you feel suit a managerial position?*
- *What will you bring to the Centre?*
- *What do you feel are your strengths/weaknesses?*
- *Why should you be offered the position of manager here at this Centre?*

Specific Childcare Questions

How would you ensure all children feel included in the Centre, this includes children from different cultures and children with additional needs?

Do you think it is important to involve parents in what their children are learning in the centre? How would you do this?

What would you include in a positive behaviour management policy?

Have you experience in writing reports and keeping records? Can you tell me what records/reports you envisage you would have to keep as a manager?

What are the main guidelines and legislation that you feel a manager of a childcare service must adhere to?

A parent of a child with additional needs wishes to enrol their child in the service, what necessary information would you need to gain from the parent(s) in order to ensure you can provide the best possible service to this child?

Have you ever been involved in developing policies and procedures, how did you go about this? What do you think are the 3 most important policies every childcare service should have?

There will be a preschool service and a school aged service here. If you were to develop a programme for the school age children what would a typical afternoon include in terms of activities and structure?

If you had a group of 20 school aged children ranging in ages from 4 and half years to 12 years each afternoon what would a typical afternoon include in terms of activities and structure?

As a manager how would you deal with a situation where you observe a child is being excluded by some of the other children in the School Aged Room?

There is a 3 year old preschool child attending the centre and for the last 2 weeks he has thrown a tantrum each day, now the other children are not including him. How would you as manager deal with this situation?

What three things in your mind constitute a quality childcare/school aged service?

What kind of child protection procedures would you like to see in place in the service?

The children who will be attending the Pre School service will range in age from nearly three to school going age of 5-6 years. What type of a curriculum/programme would you put in place for this age group?

Could you tell us how you would explain and undertake a fire drill with the children?

Are you aware of ECCE Scheme can you tell us a bit about it?

One of the staff members notices a large bruise on a 4 year old child's arm when they are rolling up their sleeves for water play, the staff member says to the child that the bruise looks sore, the child quickly rolls down their sleeves and says 'it doesn't matter'. The staff member comes to you as manager what do you do?

Do you have any experience of report writing what do you feel are the key elements of report writing?

How would you go about setting up a room for the 1-2.5 year age group (the toddler room) what type of equipment would you include?

Daisy Land is going to be a brand new service; could you tell us how you would go about developing policies and procedures for the service? Where can you access information on Policies and Procedures?

Can you tell us what you know about Siolta?

Can you tell us what you know about Aistear?

Specific Managerial Questions

What steps would you take to improve the level of parental involvement in the service?

As a manager how would you deal with a situation whereby one of the parents has not paid their fees for a number of weeks?

What is your understanding of a Committee?

The service is brand new, how would you go about developing it, so that in a few years time it is running to capacity?

What structures would you put in place for support and supervision of staff?

Have you ever been involved in applying for funding?

A member of staff has come to you and informed you that the Room Leader never partakes in any duties related to cleaning; telling the childcare assistants it is their role. How would you deal with this situation?

What is your understanding/Are you aware of the National Childcare Investment Programme, Community Childcare Subvention Scheme? As part of the scheme you will have to complete quarterly returns to Pobal, do you feel you have the skills to do that?

If a member of staff comes to you and complains that a committee member is constantly interfering in the running of the service in a manner you feel is unnecessary or outside of their role, how would you go about tackling this situation?

This is a community service, what funding streams are available for community services in Ireland?

Appendix 9

SAMPLE INTERVIEW ASSESSMENT SHEET

Job Title: _____

Name of applicant	SC1	SC2	SC3	SC4	SC5	SC6	Order of Merit	Comments

SC=Selection Criteria

NB-If an interviewed candidate is found unsuitable for appointment, they should not be given a placing in the order of merit. The order of merit may be used for appointment to the post should the recommended candidate decline the offer. Comments should be made in the case of all candidates **especially** those not recommended for appointment. Comments should explain why the candidate's application was/ was not considered suitable for appointment.

Appendix 10

Sample Interview Board Report

Post Information

Post Title	
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Advertising Information

Dates Advertised	
Locations advertised	
Closing Date	
Number of Applications short-listed	

Selection Committee Information

Chairperson	
Member	
Member	

Report of Interview

An interview board was convened on _____ to interview for the position of _____

The following applicants were invited to interview:

List of applicants:

The following applicants did not attend:

List of applicants:

Following the completion of each interview the Assessment Board discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate, and reached a consensus on the scoring under each selection criteria, which were based on the job requirements. The attached Interview Assessment form outlines the scoring and final results. A signed copy of the rating system is also attached.

Following the applicant's performance at interview, his/her CV and letter of application, the Interview Board believes that the scores accurately reflect the relativities between the candidates. On that basis the Interview Board find the following candidate suitable for the position.

Name of Candidate _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Appendix 11

Sample Letter to successful applicant

Date

Candidates Name

Address

Dear Candidate

Re: Position of Childcare Assistant

We are pleased to offer you the position of Childcare Assistant, subject to Garda Clearance and the vetting of your references.

You will commence work on Monday 22nd October at 9:00 am and will report to the Manager, Ms on arrival.

Your hours of work will be 35 per week and your gross rate of pay will be €..... per hour.

Your employment is subject to a probationary period of six months.

Other conditions of employment will be outlined in your contract of employment and discussed with you, during your induction training.

We look forward to seeing you on the 22nd October.

Yours sincerely

Name

Role/Title

Appendix 12

Sample Letter to unsuccessful applicants

Date

Candidates Name

Address

Dear Candidate

Re: Position of Childcare Assistant

Many thanks for attending the recent interview for the post of Childcare Assistant.

Unfortunately, your application has been unsuccessful on this occasion.

As we explained at the interview, we had a large number of applications for the position and it took us some time to reach a decision. We were delighted with the response to the vacancy and the quality of candidates interviewed.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you well in your endeavour to find suitable employment.

Yours sincerely

Name

Role/Title

Appendix 13

Sample Reference Request Letter

Private and Confidential

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: (Name of applicant, address of applicant).

.....has applied to this company for employment as aand has given us permission to write to you for a reference.

or

.....has applied to this company to work on a voluntary basis and has given us permission to write to you for a reference.

or

.....has applied to this company to facilitate his/her work experience on student placement and has given us permission to write to you for a reference.

We should be grateful if you would assist us by kindly completing the questionnaire enclosed and return it to us by

We thank you in anticipation and enclose a pre-paid envelope for your reply, which will be treated in strict confidence.

Yours sincerely

Appendix 14:**Sample Employee Referee Form**

Name of candidate	
Address	
Position applied for	
Position held	
How long is the person known to you & in what capacity?	
Period of employment	
Reliability	
Flexibility	
Punctuality	
Sick leave record (if appropriate)	
Communication skills	
Ability to perform duties	
Professional conduct	
Ability to get on with people	
Ability to get on with children	
Professional knowledge	
Ability to work as part of a team	
Would you re employ this person?	
Qualifications: date of, and awarding body	
Do you know of any reason why this person should not work with children?	
Other comments?	

Name of Referee _____ : Signature of Referee _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Contact Telephone Number: _____

Adapted from: *Questions and Answers on Management and Staffing in Early Years / Pre-school services giving particular attention to: Employee References, Qualifications and Garda Vetting (HSE: 9/1/2013).*

Appendix 15

Sample Request / Consent Form for the release of copy of processed Garda Vetting Form to person in charge of a pre-school service

To:

Course provider/college/organisations that 'hold on file' processed Garda Vetting Forms (delete as appropriate):

Date: _____

Re: **Name of applicant/student**

Name: _____ D.O.B. DD/MM/YYYY

Address: _____

Proof of I.D. Seen? : Yes : ____ (Please tick)

Dear _____,

I am a person who manages a pre-school service. The above named has applied to : work/do voluntary hours/do student placement (delete as appropriate).

In order for me to fully comply with regulation 8 (*Management and Staffing*) of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) (No 2) Regulations 2006, I am requesting a copy of the processed Garda Vetting Form in respect of the above named. The above named has signed this letter consenting to the release of the processed Garda Vetting Form to me.

Thanking you for your assistance,

Yours Sincerely,

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Manager,

Preschool

Applicants Signature to consent to release of
Processed Garda Vetting Form to person
in charge of a pre-school service:

Signature _____

Date _____

Print Name _____

Adapted from: *Questions and Answers on Management and Staffing in Early Years / Pre-school services giving particular attention to: Employee References, Qualifications and Garda Vetting (HSE: 9/1/2013)*