

Interview Guide & Questions

Interview guide with questions and
position descriptions designed specifically
for child care hiring!

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Tips for quality hiring

Preschool owners know that the most important part of their programming is not their curriculum, their meal plan, or their facility: It's the quality of teachers they employ. That's why it's so essential that you take your time in hiring a preschool teacher, so you can ensure the success of your students and build the reputation of your preschool within the community

In order to hire the best possible teachers for your preschool, we recommend following these tips:

1. Attract Quality Candidates

One of the first steps in the process of hiring a preschool teacher is to attract high-quality job candidates in the first place. If your preschool has a solid reputation, offers fair pay, benefits and an inclusive environment, you're well on your way to attracting good quality teachers

2. Offer Professional Development Opportunities

Stating that you will offer development opportunities to successful candidates will help you attract the right type of teachers who are always looking to further their knowledge. This is a bonus for you as a preschool owner, as well as your teachers. They get to build their skills, and you get to take advantage of their increased knowledge.

3. Look for Loyal Applicants

When comparing candidates, look at those who have remained with one employer for a period of time, rather than those who have bounced around from preschool to preschool. Staying with one employer demonstrates loyalty (and means they are likely to stick with you in the long term). Additionally, it shows that they are a good teacher, as their past employer retained them for a substantial period of time.

4. Look for Education

Of course, you'll want to take a look at a candidate's education when hiring a preschool teacher. Your ideal candidates will not only have several years of experience in teaching, they will also have a degree in Early Childhood Education. Also look for candidates who have already pursued additional qualifications, demonstrating that they are eager to improve their approach to teaching.

5. Get References

The best predictor of future performance is past performance, so make sure you talk to not only to the candidate's past employers, but also families that have worked with the teacher. This way, you'll get honest feedback about the candidate from two different perspectives to help you make your decision.

6. Ask About Their Educational Philosophy

Inquire about each candidate's philosophies on learning and development. Generally, you'll want to think about hiring a preschool teacher who follows an emergent curriculum. At minimum, the candidate should offer a thorough and passionate response that clearly demonstrates their dedication to early education.

7. Observe Interaction With Children

You can truly learn a lot by observing the preschool teachers you are thinking of hiring as they deliver programming to a class. If possible, see how he or she interacts with children in a group setting, as well as one on one to get a real feel for how they connect with their students. You will want to also make sure they are able to handle a full classroom of children.

Instructions

First: Conduct A Phone or Virtual Interview

- Save time and screen the candidate first by having either a brief phone or virtual interview.
- Ask the screening questions below to decide if they have the potential for your team.
- If you are satisfied with the screening questions, set up a future face-to-face interview (or proceed straight to the experience questions, but only do this if you are not able to have a face-to-face interview).
- If the candidate is not a good fit, thank them for their time, and tell them that you have several more to interview. Tell the candidate how and when they will be informed of your decision.

Face to face interview question for teachers

Tell me about yourself.

This question is a traditional way to kick off the interview. As an employer, you can understand what the candidate consider important enough to surface in the interview.

Why did you choose to become a preschool teacher? What motivates you? What are you passionate about?

These questions are typically asked to assess your passion and commitment to being a preschool teacher.

What do you like most about being a preschool teacher?

Similarly, this is probing for more insight into your passion and commitment for your kids. You can answer this in a variety of ways, depending on what your personal preferences of the job are.

What is your least favorite thing about being a preschool teacher?

Although this one feels a little uncomfortable, it's important to respond to this question appropriately and as positively as you can.

How do you define success? How do you measure success?

These questions are normally asked to understand how the candidate thinks about their performance as an employee.

Passion isn't all it takes to become a preschool teacher. You need to make sure that candidate is also an efficient and successful employee both for the organization and for your own personal growth

What is your favorite subject to teach and why?

This question is looking to understand more about the candidate's prior experience and where you feel your strengths lie.

How do you stay organized? What do you prioritize as a teacher? How do you think about getting all of your tasks done while managing a classroom?

Organization is so important as a teacher. Be sure the candidate speaks about the specific methods for staying organized and practice articulating this before your interview begins.

How do you approach collaborating on planning with colleagues? Would you be willing to have a teacher's aid in the classroom with you?

This question is likely specific to certain organizations and classrooms, but the interviewer is looking to understand the candidate works in a team environment.

These are some examples of the variety of questions you might receive when you get into a preschool teacher interview. Below are a few additional questions to give some thought to:

- Tell me about a time you had a difficult student in your classroom. How did you work to manage them and ensure their success?
- How often do you communicate with parents or guardians? How do you view their role in the classroom?
- What tools do you use to help students who may be distracted?
- What do you think makes you the best candidate for this job?
- Give me an example of feedback you provide to your students to help them improve in an area they may be struggling in.
- How do you measure student success?
- How do you handle conflict at work?
- Describe your positive guidance strategies.
- How do you encourage children to work in groups?
- How do you manage conflict between children?
- Tell me about a successful event you have planned for children in your care in the past.
- Describe your typical daily schedule in the classroom.
- What is your teaching philosophy?
- What is your biggest success in teaching? How about your biggest regret?
- How do you deal with parent anxiety during drop-off? How about children's anxiety?
- How do you respond to behavioral issues?

Candidate's Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Interviewer: _____

Screening Questions (Use these questions for your phone or virtual interviews)

Our state requires you to be at least 18 years of age to be solely responsible in a classroom. Are you at least 18 years of age or older?

The state requires that we perform a background check on every employee before hiring. Will you consent to a background check?

What days/hours are you available? Do you prefer full-time or part-time?

Do you have any children that we would need to provide child care for while you are working? If yes, how many and what are their ages?

When are available to start?

Candidate's Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Interviewer: _____

Screening Questions Continued

What ages do you enjoy working with the most? The least? Why?

What certifications, training, or credentials do you have? Do you have current CPR/1st Aid?

If I asked your best friend to describe you in 3 words, what would he/she say?

Can you please give me some examples of your experience and training that make you a strong candidate for this job?

POST SCREENING NOTES:

Candidate's Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Interviewer: _____

Experience & Behavioral Questions (Use these questions for face to face interviews)

Do you have any talents or interests that enhance your work with young children?

Can you please explain how?

Can you please give me some example of ways you took the initiative to create strong family and teacher relationships? Do you have any ideas about additional ways to strengthen relationships?

What you would say is your greatest strength in the workplace? What is your greatest weakness?

What does an ideal classroom for infants (toddlers or preschoolers) include?

(Probe why certain items were included.)

Can you please give me an example of a situation where you took initiative to make a child care situation better? It could be a classroom, a procedure, anything that you took a leadership role?

Candidate's Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Interviewer: _____

Experience & Behavioral Questions Continued

*Have you been part of a strong teaching team?
What made it strong? What could have made it stronger?*

When you notice a co-worker being exceptionally abrupt or overly harsh with a child, how do you handle the situation? (How would you handle the situation?)

*Think about an example of how you have dealt with conflict with another person.
Please describe the situation, and the actions you took to deal with it.*

*Have you ever had experience with child biting?
How did you respond? (How would you respond?)*

*In your experience, who was your most effective supervisor?
What were the characteristics that made her/him effective?*

Candidate's Name: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____
Interviewer: _____

Experience & Behavioral Questions Continued

*Can you tell me about a time that you felt really satisfied at work?
What was it and why was it satisfying?*

What job or role do you hope to have 5 years from now?

If you could have your dream work setting and schedule, what would it be?

QUESTIONS THE CANDIDATE ASKED:

POST INTERVIEW NOTES:

LEAD TEACHER POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Description

The Lead Teacher is responsible for developing a cohesive teaching team, coordinating the curriculum, and managing the day-to-day operational activities of the classroom. Teachers must understand children's cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development in order to ensure a safe and stimulating classroom environment where children are actively engaged and encouraged to succeed. The Teacher must be skilled in communicating with both children and adults in order to meet the needs of the children, effectively guide teacher assistants, and resolve parental concerns.

Key Responsibilities & Duties

- Coordinate and implement educational curriculum by developing classroom activities based on developmentally appropriate practices and early learning standards.
- Lead by example; encourage teaching team success through modeling and coaching.
- Plan individual and group age-appropriate activities to actively engage children and encourage social, cognitive, and emotional growth.
- Maintain frequent communications with parents through informal discussions, progress reports, and parent-teacher conferences.
- Ensure all center policies and state regulations are met.
- Ensure a healthy classroom environment – including maintaining appropriate hygiene and cleanliness standards and safety and security of children.
- Supervise teachers assistants and classroom volunteers to ensure they are following planned activities, hygiene, and safety standards.
- Maintain accurate records, forms, and files.
- Maintain a personal professional development plan to ensure continuous quality improvement.
- Contribute to the operation of the center by participating in staff meetings and training.
- Maintain confidentiality for all student information.
- Maintain a professional and approachable appearance.

Additional Knowledge, Skills, and Experience Required

- Minimum age of 18.
- Minimum of 2 years of professional child care experience.
- High energy.
- Strong oral and written communication skills and effective technology skills.
- Ability to work well with others (staff, children, and parents) and to foster a team environment.
- Arrive to work consistently and promptly when scheduled.
- A strong understanding of child development.
- Excellent leadership, organizational, and interpersonal skills.
- Infant/child CPR and First Aid certification.
- Must clear full background check.
- CDA or Associate Degree in ECE

ASSISTANT TEACHER POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Description

The assistant teacher's responsibility is to assist the lead teacher and help throughout the center as needed. The assistant must be efficient at supervising children, ensuring the safety and physical well-being of the children, maintaining regular communication with parents, and contributing to the effective operation of the overall Center. The assistant teacher reports to their lead teacher and the director.

Key Responsibilities & Duties

- Assist in conducting an effective child development program that meets students' needs and is developmentally appropriate for their given classroom.
- Ensure children's routines are carried out in a prompt, hygienic, and consistent manner.
- Ensure the safety and well-being of all students in their care.
- Operate the classroom in a manner that complies with all state licensing regulations.
- Help create a pleasant and inviting classroom.
- Provide positive guidance to help children develop self-help skills.
- Provide students with a safe, secure, and fun learning environment where they can learn, explore, create, and grow.
- Contribute to the operation of the center by participating in staff meetings and training.
- Work effectively with other teachers.
- Maintain confidentiality for all student information.
- Maintain a professional and approachable appearance.
- Cover classroom to allow the lead teacher to take a break.
- Report to the lead teacher and director.
- Arrive to work consistently and promptly when scheduled.
- Other duties as assigned.

Additional Knowledge, Skills, and Experience Required

- Minimum age of 18
- Minimum or no experience.
- Strong oral and written communication skills.
- Ability to work well with others (staff, children, and parents) and to foster a team environment.
- An understanding of child development.
- A willingness to support and assist.
- Infant/child CPR and First Aid certification.
- Must clear full background check.
- High School Diploma

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Description

The assistant director's responsibility is to assist in the daily running of the program. The principal duties of the assistant director include: work as a liaison between staff and director, handling paperwork, facilitating and attending staff meetings and training. The assistant teacher reports to the director/owner.

Key Responsibilities & Duties

- Assist in all matters of day-to-day operations.
- Work as a liaison between support staff and the director.
- Handle paperwork, record keeping, and filing.
- Scheduling and organizing field trips.
- Facilitate and attend staff meetings and training.
- Assist the director in the hiring, monitoring, scheduling, evaluating, supporting, coaching, and disciplining of the staff.
- Handle inquiries and center tours.
- Substitute for director in their absence.
- Keep up-to-date training files for all employees.
- Keep up-to-date child immunization records.
- Perform classroom observations and provide teachers/caregivers with meaningful feedback.
- Supply ordering and shipping.
- Work effectively with the other teachers.
- Maintain confidentiality for all student information.
- Maintain a professional and approachable appearance.
- Arrive to work consistently and promptly when scheduled.
- Communicates effectively and thoroughly with the Director.
- Other duties as assigned.

Additional Knowledge, Skills, and Experience Required

- Minimum age of 21.
- Minimum of 2 years of professional child care experience.
- High energy.
- Strong oral and written communication skills.
- Strong computer and technology skills
- Ability to work well with others (staff, children, and parents) and to foster a team environment.
- A strong understanding of child development.
- Excellent leadership, organizational, and interpersonal skills.
- Infant/child CPR and First Aid certification.
- Must clear full background check.
- Minimum of CDA or Associate Degree in ECE

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Description

The assistant director's responsibility is to assist in the daily running of the program. The principal duties of the assistant director include: work as a liaison between staff and director, handling paperwork, facilitating and attending staff meetings and training. The assistant teacher reports to the director/owner.

Key Responsibilities & Duties

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- Substitute for director in their absence.
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- Keep up-to-date child immunization records.
- Perform classroom observations and provide teachers/caregivers with meaningful feedback.
- Supply ordering and shipping.
- Work effectively with the other teachers.
- Maintain confidentiality for all student information.
- Maintain a professional and approachable appearance.
- Arrive to work consistently and promptly when scheduled.
- Communicates effectively and thoroughly with the Director.
- Other duties as assigned.

Additional Knowledge, Skills, and Experience Required

- Minimum age of 21.
- Minimum of 2 years of professional child care experience.
- High energy.
- Strong oral and written communication skills.
- Strong computer and technology skills
- Ability to work well with others (staff, children, and parents) and to foster a team environment.
- A strong understanding of child development.
- Excellent leadership, organizational, and interpersonal skills.
- Infant/child CPR and First Aid certification.
- Must clear full background check.
- Minimum of CDA or Associate Degree in ECE

DIRECTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Description

The director oversees the daily operations of a child care center in accordance with state licensing requirements and regulations. The director administers recruiting and staffing processes provides training and professional development for staff, oversees enrollment activities, communications, and events that foster positive relations with families and the community. Additionally, the director ensures that the activities and surroundings meet the needs of the children and provide safety and security. The director reports to the owner.

Key Responsibilities & Duties

- Manage day-to-day operations.
- Prepare licensing renewal materials.
- Conform to health, safety, and licensing regulations.
- Keep records that pertain to the administration of the center.
- Choose curriculum.
- Evaluate own work as a director.
- Plan and implement a program for professional growth.
- Oversee enrichment activities and initiatives in each classroom.
- Keep abreast of research and new developments in the field of early childhood education.
- Play an active role in the program.
- Supervise the management of classroom schedules.
- Supervise the use of classroom space and equipment.
- Supervise the responsibilities of the teaching staff.

Fiscal Responsibilities

- Operate the center within the budget.
- Collect and record enrollment paperwork.
- Provide invoices/statements to enrolled families.

Staff

- Interview, hire, and onboard all new staff
- Observe staff during the initial probationary period to determine if employment will be continued.
- Maintain a current file of substitute help.
- Preside over staff meetings.
- Plan and implement annual training programs for the staff.
- Assist the staff (as needed) in preparing daily, weekly, and yearly program plans that align with the center curriculum.
- Assist the staff in developing a workable plan for using the indoor and outdoor space.
- Plan and implement procedures that lead to wholesome interpersonal relationships between staff members.
- Cultivating an enjoyable and pleasant work culture.
- Assist staff in planning individual programs for professional growth and career development.
- Update staff handbook as needed.
- Maintain personnel records.

DIRECTOR POSITION DESCRIPTION

Key Responsibilities & Duties (continued)

Enrollment

- Be a contact for prospective children and parents, arrange tours, as needed.
- Familiarize parents of newly enrolled children with the center's policies.
- Be alert to enrollment needs at all times.
- Prepare and update all registration materials on a yearly basis.

Parents

- Maintain an active system of parent and center relationships.
- Prepare and distribute, to parents, information about classroom visits and the first days of child care.
- Communicate with parents in a wide variety of ways.
- Assimilate information from teachers to create a monthly newsletter for parents.
- Conduct parent meetings when necessary.
- Plan and implement parent & teacher conferences

Health & Safety

- Keep health history records and immunization records for children, update annually or as needed.
- Maintain a referral system for children who have special needs.
- Maintain records and documentation of basic first aid and CPR certification.
- Implement a program of playground safety.
- Assist staff to plan, conduct, and document fire/tornado drills/ lock-down drills.
- Maintain a written record of accidents, injuries, emergencies, and incidents.
- Supervise medicine disbursement.
- Follow mandatory reporting laws and maintain appropriate documentation.

Marketing

- Plan and implement a marketing strategy to promote awareness of the facility and its services.

Additional Knowledge, Skills, and Experience Required

- Minimum age of 21.
- Minimum of 3 years of professional child care experience.
- Sound knowledge of local, state, and federal child care legislation.
- Excellent oral and written communication skills.
- Strong computer and technology skills.
- A strong understanding of child development.
- Strong leadership and conflict resolution skills.
- Excellent organizational and problem-solving skills.
- Infant/child CPR and First Aid certification.
- Must clear full background check.
- Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education or related field.

COOK POSITION DESCRIPTION

Position Description

The cook plans and prepares meals that meet proper nutritional requirements. They ensure that food is stored and handled properly and that the kitchen and all its equipment are cleaned thoroughly and kept sanitary. The cook is responsible for keeping logs to track cleaning duties, preparing menus, purchasing food, and keeping receipts.

Key Responsibilities & Duties

- Prepare weekly menus that reflect all state requirements.
- Work with the administration team for approval.
- Prepare breakfast, lunch, and afternoon snacks for all classrooms.
- Serve meals to each classroom on time, at the appropriate temperature.
- Know allergies and provide substitute food items for those children.
- Work with staff to collect meal numbers before food preparation of each meal.
- Prepare appropriate amounts of food for each classroom, with amounts served meeting state guidelines.
- Maintain daily production reports.
- Make weekly food orders through vendors.
- Maintain a clean and organized kitchen, including all food storage areas.
- Make sure all thermometers are working properly.
- Ensure all food items are checked for expiration dates.
- Wash and sanitize all dishes.
- Clean the entire kitchen and appliances throughout the day.
- Remove trash and recyclables daily.
- Organize and put away all groceries, food orders, and non-food items.
- Turn in all kitchen expense receipts to the administration team.
- Know and follow the mission of the center.
- Protect the privacy and confidentiality of information pertaining to families, children, team members, and administration.
- Build positive relationships and communicate in a respectful manner with families, children, team members, administration, and the communities in which we serve.

Additional Knowledge, Skills, and Experience Required

- Minimum age of 21.
- Must clear full background check.
- Complete and pass a physical and TB skin test within thirty days of hire.
- Wear a hairnet while in the kitchen.
- Have 4 hours of food and nutrition training.
- Be able to lift to forty pounds.
- Infant/child CPR and First Aid certification.
- High school diploma