



longford county
childcare committee

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Many thanks,

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Support & Development Workers
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Introduction

This pack was developed by the following County Childcare Committee's - Cavan, Longford, Monaghan, Meath and Louth support & development workers. The members of this network felt that we had a responsibility to provide and assist services with the development of their recruitment practices.

The Pre-School Regulations 2006 state the following: childcare "services should have management, recruitment, and training policies to ensure that sufficient number of suitable and competent adults is available" With this in mind, this pack contains useful information on topics such as recruitment policies, job descriptions, interviewing, shortlisting, vetting, inductions, student guidelines, contracts of employment and employee handbook amongst others. To make this document user friendly, we have also included many of the samples on a CD which means you can easily change it to suit your service.

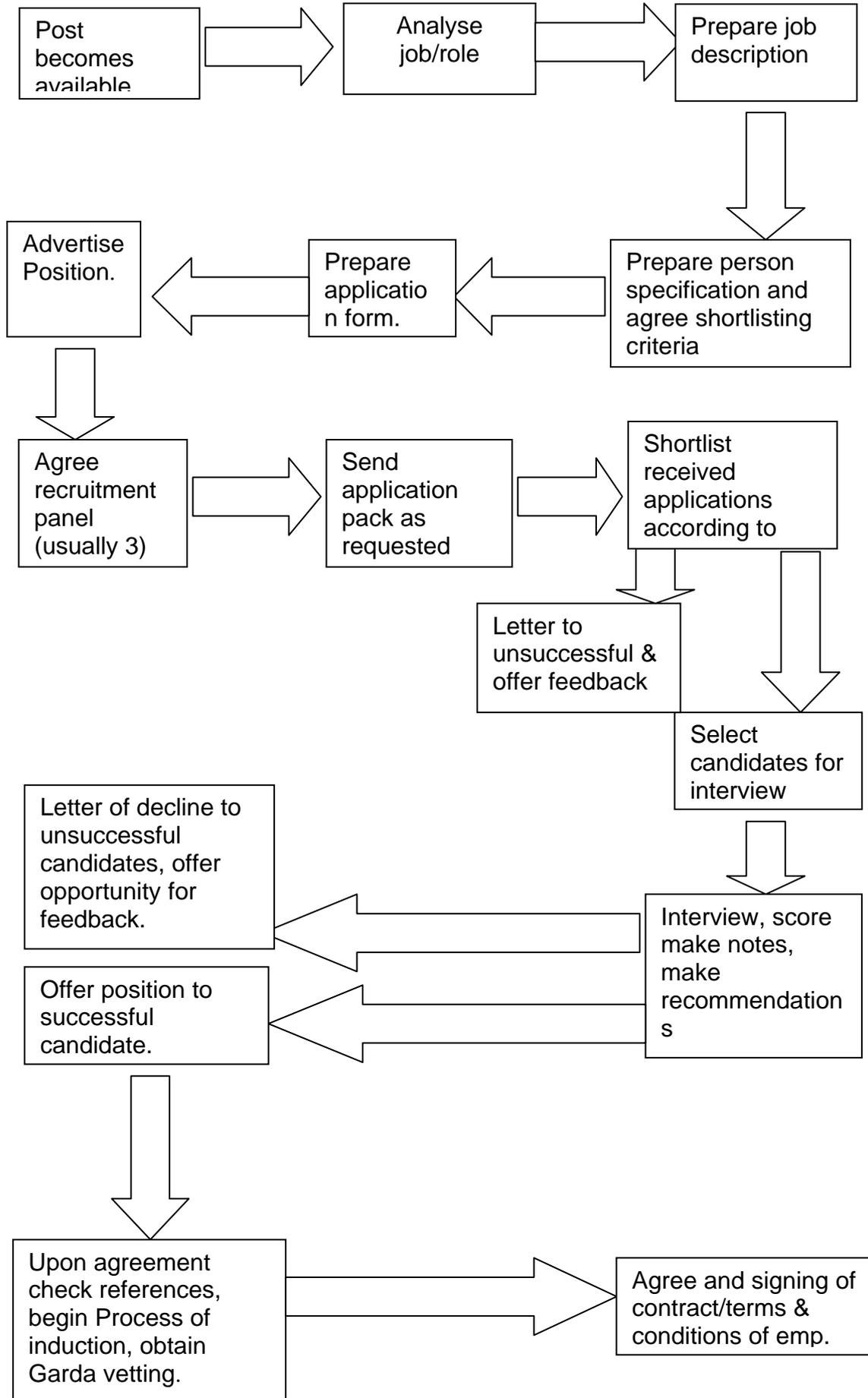
This is by no means an exhaustive compilation, as legislation changes and theories on best practice develop, the information contained herein will change slightly. It is the responsibility of each individual service to be mindful of these changes and to adapt the information to suit the individual and changing needs of your service.

The practice of open and transparent recruitment procedures is in the best interests of your service; its management, staff, children and parents.

For now, we hope that we can give you a good starting point in developing best practice in this area.

Happy reading!

Recruitment Process Flowchart.



Section 1. Recruitment & Selection.

Recruitment & Selection Policy Guidelines.

The Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 state that pre-school services should have recruitment and training policies to ensure that a sufficient number of suitable and competent adults are available.

A recruitment policy defines how the services recruits & select candidates, it provides guidelines on how a fair and consistent approach is taken in doing this.

The recruitment policy should be written in accordance with equal opportunities guidelines.

A recruitment & selection policy

- Makes it clear to everyone within the service how recruitment & selection takes place
- It provides guidelines to the people who will carry out the process
- It will ensure a consistent & fair approach.

Sample Recruitment & Selection policy

The childcare service is committed to ensuring that the procedures and practices used in recruitment and selection are fair, consistent and effective.

The childcare service is committed to ensuring that the recruitment and selection policy and procedures of the childcare service comply with equal opportunity legislation and policy.

Recruitment of staff will be selected from the widest possible field. Therefore positions will be advertised internally and externally, including local and national newspapers. Internal recruitment will only apply when the pool of candidates is sufficient for fair selection.

Applications of present staff will be treated on an equal basis with external applications.

Individuals will be selected on the basis of merit. Candidates for the positions will not be treated less favourably on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, or put at a disadvantage by unjustifiable conditions or requirements.

Advertisements and information sent to candidates about posts should state clearly that the childcare service is an equal opportunities employer.

Job sharing will be considered.

A person specification will be drawn up for each post to be filled, describing the experience skills, and other attributes required to carry out the job.

A job description will be drawn up for each post outlining the duties, tasks and responsibilities for the job.

Every effort will be made in representing both sexes on interview panel.

Interview panels will be given guidelines on good interview practice and on the prevention of discrimination.

For each vacancy advertised a file will be kept for twelve months from the date of appointment which contains the following: Candidates' Application, Person Specification, Job Description, Job Advertisement, Record of Candidates' Assessment, and Correspondence with Candidates.

Any candidate who feels that they have been discriminated against has a right of complaint, which can be made in writing to the management of the childcare service.

Source: Clarke, J. (1996) *The Staff Recruitment Process* Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency.

Job Analysis and Job Descriptions.

▪ Why do you need a job description?

The job description describes the job and not the person doing it! The job description is useful for four reasons:

It clearly sets out from an employer's point of view what the employee is required to do.

It is required by the employee. It fully defines the extent of the work to be carried out and where the parameters of the work are-who does what. This should lead to good working relationship between management and staff preventing conflict and disagreements later on about roles and responsibilities.

Reviewing performance of employee-job descriptions can be used in staff appraisals and support and supervision sessions.

If a situation arises where a member of staff is carrying out duties or not carrying out duties contained within the job description, as the job description will be included in the contract of employment there is legal basis to ensure that working within the job description is mandatory.

▪ How do you develop a job description?

Job Analysis: When a position becomes vacant or a new position arises the job in hand should be analysed to ascertain the following information:

What are the main duties and responsibilities?

How does the work relate to others in the service?

Are there any specific duties?

It is the responsibility of the management to develop the job description for the job that is available.

If the job that is available is filling a current position it will be necessary to reassess the job description to allow for changes in your organisation or to reflect changes in legislation. If there are a number of new positions, changes and developments in your

organisation what knock on effect has this on all staff members and their roles and responsibilities and how will staff link with each other. For example, if there are two playgroup assistants, are both members of staff doing the same work, how will they work together, are there some areas of work that one will not have to do, do they report to different people etc. Changes in legislation such as reference to the Pre-School Regulations 2006 instead of 1996 need to be accurately reflected and any other legislation such as Health & Safety, equality etc.

If there are changes to the job description does the previous job title still fit?

If the position is completely new the job description will have to be devised by management but it should be done so in consultation with existing staff-what is the job to be done and how should it be done. Again accurate reference to appropriate legislation is essential.

- **What needs to be included in a job description?**

A job description should always include certain information such as:

- Name and address of employer.
- Job title
- Location of work
- Report to:
- Overall purpose of job.
- Key areas of work.
- Responsible for what?
- Detailed Description of duties and responsibilities.
- A job description should always include reference to equal opportunities such as the Equal Status Act 2000 and the Employment Equality Act 1998 and 2004. It should also make reference to promoting the welfare and protection of children under the Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 1999.

- It is advisable to include a clause at the bottom to say that in addition to the responsibilities listed, the employee should expect to undertake other related duties as requested by management.

Terms and conditions of employment will also be included in the job description.

This should include:

- hours and days of work
- salary range and method and frequency of pay
- Whether job is temporary/permanent, job share etc.
- Whether job is funded.
- Annual leave
- Length of service or probation period.
- Is travel required for job-is it necessary to have full license and own a car?
- Travel and subsistence.
- Pension scheme.

A Job description should always be available on request.

The job description should clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of the employee-management must be very clear about what they are responsible for and there should be very obvious, clear and concise boundaries.

▪ Presentation of Job Descriptions.

The terms and conditions (as above) can be provided on a separate sheet to the job description if you wish along with other information about your service. The information you should include about your service could be:

- Brief outline of history,
- How long you're established,
- Type of service: e.g. Montessori or High Scope-if so explain these concepts.
- How many children attend, how many staff etc?

"A job description forms part of the employee's conditions of employment and once accepted cannot be changed without agreement" (Clarke, 1996). It should be signed and dated when read and agreed by the employee.

Please see Appendix 2 for sample job description for a playgroup assistant and leader. Please note that this is only a sample and must be adapted to suit your organisation

Sample Job Description

Playgroup Assistant

Name of Employer:

Address of Employer:

Job Title: Playgroup assistant

Job Purpose: To assist in the day-to-day running of the playgroup.

Accountable to: The senior play leader and management.

Key Areas of work:

- To assist the leader in providing a pre-school service to xxx children.
- To implement the curriculum of the pre-school alongside the leader.
- Assist the leader in planning the daily/weekly routines and activities.
- To provide a safe environment where children can access play opportunities.
- To play an active role in the day to day running of the playgroup and become involved in programme planning.
- To assist the play leader in encouraging parental involvement, networking and help in all record keeping on a daily and weekly basis.
- To set up and assist in clearing away and deciding upon play activities for the day and becoming part responsible for the care and maintenance of all equipment ensuring it meets Health and Safety Standards.
- To provide opportunities for the children that will aid a child's physical, emotional, linguistic and intellectual development.
- Observe children and record observations.

- To undertake in any training as considered necessary by management.
- To attend and participate in team meetings every two weeks.
- Participate in relevant training as requested by leader and/or management and also from your own initiative.
- Participate in quality improvement initiatives such as Siolta National Quality Framework alongside the leader and other staff.
- Familiarise yourself with and follow the policies and procedures and written records of the service.
- Familiarise yourself with the Pre-School Inspection Guidelines 2006.
- Be aware of the Behaviour Policy of the service and follow this.
- Participate in support and supervision with leader/ every two months.
- Respect the principle of confidentiality at all times regarding the children, their families and other staff.
- Familiarise yourself with and follow the procedures outlined in the Children First Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 1999 in relation to child protection concerns.
- Report any child protection concerns to leader/designated child protection officer.
- Identify and bring to the attention of the leader any health and safety concerns you have.
- Any other duties that may be assigned by management.

Terms and conditions:

Hours and days of work:

Permanent/Temporary/ Full-time /part-time:

Annual leave:

Probation Period:

Salary/Salary scale:

Any other particulars:

(Name of service).....is an equal opportunities employer and acts within the scope of the Employment Equality Act 1998 and 2004 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

Sample Job Description

Playgroup Leader.

Name and Address of Employer:

Job title: Playgroup Leader.

Location of work: XXX

Reports to: Manager/management
Committee

Overall Purpose of Job: The playgroup leader will be responsible for the efficient running of the playgroup on a day to day basis. He/She will provide a safe, stimulating and child centred environment to ensure that all children's developmental needs are being met. The leader will be part of a team and your working relationships will be with two playgroup assistants. Partnership with parents is expected. The leader will be accountable to the management.

Key areas of work: Playgroup leader is responsible for:

Welfare & Development of the Child.

- The leader is responsible for the overall safety and welfare of the children.
- Work directly with children accessing the service.
- Ensure that the Children First Guidelines are being followed in relation to child protection concerns.
- Understand the role and function of the child protection Designated Officer.
- The leader in conjunction with staff should formulate a daily routine for the children which offer a wide variety of play activities. This will allow for the creative, physical, imaginative, social, sensory, emotional, intellectual and linguistic development of the child.

- The leader should ensure that the room(s) is set up before each session and tidied up at the end in accordance with daily routine plans and activities.
- Ensure a file is kept on each child including details such as contact details for parents/guardians, medical issues, allergies, dietary requirements and any other relevant information. A separate file should be kept on child observations regarding child's development, behaviour and progress.
- Ensure that regular observations are carried out on each child and that appropriate notes are kept.
- Ensure that the appropriate curriculum is being implemented e.g. Montessori, High Scope etc.
- Ensure that infringements outlined in the Pre-School Inspection report are followed up and rectified (liaise with management committee/manager).
- Ensure that the principle of confidentiality is fully observed by all staff members in relation to any personal details regarding the children.
- Participate in Siolta National Quality Framework to continuously aim to improve the quality of the service. This will be done with other staff members with support from the management.

Financial/Administrative:

- The selection and ordering of suitable and appropriate materials/equipment within assigned budget.
- Collection of weekly fees from parents.
- Keeping of receipts book.
- Administration of petty cash budget.

Health & Safety:

- Ensure that the service is operating to the standard and above of the Pre-School Regulations 2006.
- Ensure that the first aid box is always stocked up.
- Ensuring that fire drills are organised on a monthly basis.

- Be aware of the Health and Safety at Work Act 2005 and its contents.
- Ensure that the environment is safe and free from hazardous conditions for both the children and other staff members.
- Record any incidents/accidents that happen in the setting.
- Ensure that management is informed of possible health and safety concerns for them to rectify.
- Know who the Safety officer is.
- Ensure that the services safety statement is on display at all times.

Communication:

- Ensure parents are updated regarding child's progress.
- Involve parents as much as possible in activities/outings/events within playschool
- Ensure parents are fully informed of services policies and any developments.
- Hold staff meetings every two weeks
- The leader should meet with either the full management committee or staff liaison officer from the committee once a month.(if community based - or manager if private)
- The leader should understand that the committee/manager is his/her employer and that they can dictate basic policies, rules, fees etc.
- The leader should be aware of and understand the relationship between management; he/she should know who is responsible for what.
- The leader will work as part of a team.
- The leader will refer to/liaise with the local County Childcare Committee for additional support and to access training for him/her and staff members.

Leadership & Management:

- Ensure that all staff members follow all policies and procedures.
- Supervision of volunteers and students on placement.
- Review, update and further develop policies and procedures in conjunction with management and the staff annually and more often if required.
- Conduct support and supervision for staff. (This may not be the case for all services as the management may be doing it).
- Organise staff rota.
- Operate an annual leave and training request system for staff.

Training & Personal Development:

- Renew/update first aid and child protection training when certificate has expired.
- The leader must demonstrate a commitment to ongoing professional development -attending training, events, seminars etc at the request of management and also by your own initiative. This training may take place out of hours and an allowance may be available from the management depending on available funding. You may at times however have to fund training yourself.

Other duties:

Any other duties that may be assigned by the management.

The following records should be kept:

- Daily record of attendance.
- Emergency contact details for each child.
- Accident/incident book.
- Waiting list.
- Fire drills.
- Daily/Weekly plan of activities.
- Petty cash book.
- Receipts book.
- Notes of child development and observations.
- Fees.
- Staff rota.
- Insurance details.
- Minutes from staff meetings.
- Minutes and notes from support & supervision sessions.

Playgroup leader is responsible to inform/report to the management about:

- Any complaints received from parents regarding staff members or service.
- Any concerns regarding safety of premises or equipment etc.
- Difficulties/conflicts between staff that have been unresolved.
- Repairs/replacements of equipment.
- Submit a monthly report to the management.
- Submit report for the AGM.
- Liaise with staff liaison officer once monthly.
- Participate in support and supervision with a committee member every two months or with the manager.

Terms and Conditions.

Days/Hours of work:

Salary/Salary Scale:

Temporary/permanent/full time/part time/job share:

Funded by:

Annual leave:

Probation Period:

Any other particulars:

(Name of service)...is an equal opportunities employer and acts within the scope of the Employment Equality Act 1998 and 2004 and the Equal Status Act 2000.

Person Specification.

Once the job description has been drawn up and agreed the person specification can be developed.

What is a person specification?

A person specification describes the person most suitable for the job.

This is probably one of the most important stages within the recruitment process. A person specification is a list of skills, abilities, knowledge, experience, qualifications and other attributes necessary to carry out the role described in your job description. The clearer the person specification the easier selection will be.

The person specification contains the criteria against which the applicant will be assessed.

Why have person specifications?

The more accurate the criteria the more likely and easier it will be to select the right person for the job. They provide a consistent and objective set of standards and selection for all applicants which can be easily observed and measured.

It is necessary for the employer as you are clear about what kind of person is needed for the job. If someone applies that does not meet the criteria set out, then this person is automatically eliminated from the recruitment process.

It is necessary for the employee as they can clearly see from the start what you are looking for. They will know if they meet any of the criteria and it will deter people that are not suitable from applying and wasting your time.

How do you devise a person specification?

Person specification criteria should be broken down into what is essential and what is desirable. The criteria listed on the left

side of the page should be roles and responsibilities/skills taken directly from the job description.

Essential criteria: this is what you consider to be absolutely necessary to carry out the job. All applicants must satisfy these criteria to be selected for an interview. If they do not, they can be eliminated from the recruitment process. It is your decision to decide what is essential. Refer to the job description.

For example is it essential that someone drives and owns a car? If so then someone who doesn't drive should not apply.

Desirable Criteria: This is what you consider to be desirable or an additional. It is important to realize that there are many skills and knowledge that can be learned once employed. You should be realistic about what people know.

For example is it desirable that someone have a qualification in childcare or a bonus?-this will depend on the job to be carried out and the roles and responsibilities outlined in the job description.

You will need to list criteria under the following headings on the left. Please see example on next page.

	Essential	Desirable
Education		
Training		
Relevant Experience		
Knowledge		
Abilities/Skills		
Personal qualities		

Here is a sample list of criteria for a Montessori Pre-School Leader.

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Education		
Degree		✓
Fetac L6		✓
Fetac L5		✓
Montessori	✓	
Training		
First Aid		✓
Child Protection		✓
Manual Handling		✓
Health & Safety		✓
Relevant Experience.		
Min 2 years working with 3-5 yr olds	✓	
Record keeping	✓	
knowledge of quality programmes		✓
Knowledge		
Pre-School Regs 2006		✓
Children First Guidelines		✓
Child development	✓	
Abilities/Skills		
Communicating with parents	✓	
Team work	✓	
IT skills	✓	
Direct a team/be a leader	✓	

Personal Qualities		
Motivation	✓	
Commitment	✓	
Initiative	✓	
Other		

This is only a sample list and not to be taken as a set of criteria for the above position, you will need to develop your own from what you feel is important.

As you can see above, it is essential that the person has a Montessori qualification, minimum 2 years experience, has IT skills, has knowledge of child development and demonstrates an array of personal qualities.

You may decide that it is not essential to have training in first aid, child protection etc as these can be learned or attained while on the job. It is important not to put too much emphasis on skills that can be learned on the job. However attributes such as motivation and initiative cannot really be learned and these qualities should be addressed and tested when interviewing the candidate. These are listed above as essential as I believed that these were essential aspects to the job.

How do you use it once it's done?

Advertising: When advertising for a position, if you have essential criteria then this should be on your advert. This will deter unsuitable people from applying and attract those that do meet the criteria.

Application Pack: The person specification should always be included with the job description and application form when requested.

Short listing: The short listing stage will happen later on when application forms are received. Applicants will be short listed according to whether they met the criteria as set out in your person specification. The list of essential criterion and desirable criteria are listed across the top and the names of applicants are listed down the side. Anyone who doesn't meet the essential criteria is not invited to attend interview.

Please see Appendix 3 for a sample Person Specification for a Childcare Manager. Please adapt to suit your service and the position that is available.

Sample Person specification for Childcare manager

Childcare Manager	Essential	Desirable
Education and Qualifications		
FETAC level 5 in childcare or equivalent	✓	
FETAC Level 6 Supervision in Childcare		✓
Diploma in Nursery or similar		✓
First aid (either paediatric or occupational)		✓
Children first-Child protection training		✓
Manual handling		✓
Relevant experience		
One year experience in a similar role	✓	
Knowledge of Pre-school regulations 1996	✓	
Knowledge of child protection issues		✓
Experience in the recruitment process		✓
Experience working with outside agencies such as the pre-school inspection team, NCNA,IPPA etc.	✓	
Experience of working in partnership with parents		✓
Experience in relevant record keeping	✓	
Knowledge of pre-school curricula supporting children's development and their implementation.		✓
Experience of a quality programme		✓

Application Form.

A service should decide early in the recruitment process what method of application they want applicants to use. It is widely accepted that application forms are a more effective way of finding out about a person and their skills, education and experience than a C.V-they generally only tell you what they want to say. In the same way that the job description and person specification needs to be reviewed when a post or new post becomes available so too does the application form. The questions you should be asking on an application form should try to find out if this person meets the criteria as set out in the person specification and whether they have the capacity to carry out the roles and responsibilities as described in the job description. The questions should only relate to the requirements of the job.

Under the Employment Equality Act 1998 and 2004, some questions should not be asked, such as marital status, date of birth, medical history, religion and any other question that relate to any of the nine grounds listed under these Acts.

Benefits of using an application form.

- Easier to read through than C.V's
- You can ask the relevant questions.(C.V's don't always tell you what you're looking for)
- Easier to compare the applicants-all applicants are judged on same questions.
- Gives indications of interview questions

An application form should always look for the following information:

- Name and address.
- Telephone numbers.
- Present and previous employment.-ask for job title, year started, year finished and brief description of duties.-list in order of most recent/present going backwards.
- Education and Qualifications. Ask for name of course and either full award or modules/certificate components,

college, year started and finished results, duration of course.

- Other training and relevant experience/voluntary work.
- General statement-why they want the job, what can they offer, how they meet the essential and desirable criteria as set out in person specification.
- Ask specific questions relating to job requirements.
- Allow applicants to use additional paper for answers if required.
- Skills/abilities/Interests: Computer skills, languages, arts and crafts etc.
- Names, address and contact details of at least two referees-one who is present or most recent employer.
- Question whether current employer can be contacted for reference.
- Period of notice required if they are successful/when are they available?
- Closing date. (Please note the closing note should allow sufficient time for applicants to see the advert, receive application pack, complete and return it. Generally it is three weeks from date of advertisement.
- Address to be returned to.
- If relevant-Do you own a car and have full clean driving license?
- Where did they see the job advertisement?

N.B Always remember when you are sending out an application form that the job description and person specification is included.

Please see Appendix 4 for sample application form.

Job advertisement

Why:

What do you want to achieve from advertising this post - you want to attract the right person for the job-advertising is as much about deterring unsuitable people from applying than it is about attracting the right person. The advertisement should be clear and concise giving all relevant details regarding the post.

The job description and person specification should be referred to while drafting your advertisement.

What:

The following information should always be contained on a job advert>

- Organisation name.
- Organisation logo.
- Brief description of organisation function.
- Other logos-funding requirements: EU logo, NDP, NCIP and Pobal.
- Job title and level of position.
- Hours/days of work.
- Part time/full time, temporary, permanent.
- Location.
- Overall purpose of job.
- Brief description of duties and responsibilities.
- Reports to whom?
- Brief description of job spec-any essential requirements, minimum qualifications/experience.
- Job description available on request.
- Apply by whatever method you have chosen-preferably application form.
- Closing date.
- Contact details.
- Interview date if known.
- Equal opportunities employer-employment equality act 98
- Salary range.

Where:

- National and/or local newspapers,
- radio,
- internet,
- internally within organisation,
- community centres,
- job centres,
- post offices,
- local church bulletins,
- FAS,
- Childcare training colleges.

How:

Consider the layout and design of the ad, remember who your targeting-will it stand out amongst other advertisements. Colour, border/no border, size, logos.

Please see Appendix 5 for a sample Advert with logos. If you have received funding under NCIP, please contact our office for the appropriate logos if you do not have them.

Shortlisting Process

Shortlisting criteria and a scoring system should be agreed and drawn up prior to advertising any positions.

Shortlisting of candidates is the first stage of the selection process.

The recruitment panel meet as soon as possible after the closing date in order to select candidates to attend interview. Shortlisting of candidates must be carried out where possible by three people, but in any case not less than two people of the interviewing panel. On meeting it's helpful to appoint a chairperson who will structure and facilitate the process and will keep account of time. The purpose of shortlisting is to select candidates who according to their application form meet the job description and person specification in both or either the essential and desirable criteria. You should aim to interview six to eight people. If there are more than eight people who meet the essential criteria then the recruitment panel should use the desirable criteria from the person specification to shorten the list.

All applications received by the closing date are brought to the shortlisting process. It is advised that this is the first time the applications are viewed by anyone.

If candidates don't meet the essential criteria, then don't appoint, review the recruitment process and begin again.

Consider the following:

Did enough people see the advert?

Was there enough time for the applicants to reply?

Was the advert clear in terms of what you were looking for?

Each candidate application is ONLY scored against the agree shortlist criteria. A record of this Shortlisting form is kept. It

is signed by each person present at the short listing process. For candidates who have not been shortlisted for an interview, a brief comment must be included as to why on the shortlisting form.

Points to remember during the shortlisting process:

The applications of current staff have to be treated on an equal basis with external applications

Negative assumptions or decisions should not be made on the basis of perceived over-qualifications

Candidates should not be excluded 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 2004.

Be aware of your own preferences and biases relating to how people express themselves in writing and do not let these interfere with your decision.

Candidates who have been unsuccessful at the shortlisting stage must be contacted by letter as soon as possible. Unsuccessful candidates should be advised that written feedback on the shortlisting process is available by written request. Giving feedback to unsuccessful candidates can be difficult. A good response is often to simply explain that they did not match the criteria for the role as closely as other candidates.

There should be no less than three successful candidates invited to the interview. They should be contacted as soon as possible after the shortlisting process and given directions to where and when to attend for interview.

Please see [Appendix 6](#) for Sample Short Listing Forms.

Please see in the back of this pack, a diagram of the National Framework of Qualifications and a Cross Border Qualification Comparison. In situations where you get applications from Northern Ireland, England, Wales or Scotland, this will give you a guide as to where these qualifications fit into the Irish Framework of Qualifications.

(The diagrams were retrieved from The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, 2008.)

The above information has been taken from the following:

Byrne, M. (2002) *Personal practice in early years services - a guide* Barnardos.

Clarke, J. (2002) *A guide to good employment practice in the community & Voluntary Combat Poverty Agency*

Clarke, J. (1997) *Staff selection and interviewing* Combat Poverty Agency

French, G. (2003) *Supporting Quality - guidelines for best practice in early childhood services 2nd Ed.* Barnardos.

Pobal, (2006) *Recruitment & Selection - A Guidelines Document for Beneficiaries*

Triskele Community training and development (2003) *Recruitment & Selection Training*

Suffolk Government (2004) *Childcare Means Business, A Best Practice Guide for Childcare Providers*
www.suffolk.gov.uk

Interview Process

A face to face interview explores each candidate's suitability to work with children as well as suitability for the post.

In Ireland interviewing has been one of the most common forms of selecting candidates for a position. It is recommended that interviewing can be used alongside other methods of selection for example when interviewing a cook, an interview can take place along with a presentation or demonstration or in a case of an administrator position, an interview can take place along with demonstrating how they would go about filling the material given or completing a bank reconciliation form.

Here we have decided to focus on interviewing.

Points to note:

It is recommended you should have three people conducting the interviews.

A place, date & time should be agreed on along with the same timeframe for interviewing each candidate. Estimate the length of time you are giving to each candidate to be interviewed and then allow time for the panel to go through the candidate's answers and to allocate scoring. In total for a childcare service it is recommended this should take between 30 to 45 minutes.

It is best practice that the 'Total scoring' for each candidate should not be added up until all candidates have been interviewed.

It is recommended that not more than six/eight Candidates be interviewed in one day.

The interview panel should refrain from taking unnecessary notes during the interview as these notes can be accessed under the Freedom of Information request.

Planning questions

Questions should be developed from the job description and job specification.

Remember the level of questioning should reflect the level at which the Job is advertised at. i.e. Manager level, assistant level, Leader level etc.

For a childcare setting, questions around the following headings should be asked:

- Experience and Qualifications to date
- Policy & Procedures
- Record keeping, planning & observation
- Challenging Behaviour
- Child development/ play skills
- Working Relationships i.e. with team, parents,
- Personal skills i.e. initiative, motivation, flexibility, communication,
- Ability to take direction.
- Social inclusion & diversity i.e. Special needs, non- Irish nationals
- Legislation & policy i.e. Preschool regulations, health & safety,
- Children First guidelines.

Scoring questions

This is a very important stage of recruitment and it is where you need to be very clear and have an objective way of selecting candidates. Interviews can be open to judgment and bias and that is why you need to have a clear set of criteria outlined with a scoring system before hand.

In order to allow candidates to be marked as objectively and as fair as possible, there should be a scale or ranking system. This should be done according to your essential and desirable criteria as set out in the person specification.

For example if it is desirable that someone has a knowledge of the Pre-School Regulations 2006-if everybody knows something, how do you measure who knows more?

If it is essential that someone has two years experience, how do you rate someone who has ten years experience? If an essential requirement qualification is FETAC Level 5 then how do you rate a BA in Early Childhood Studies?

There are a number of ways of doing this for example

Marks out of 10 which are totalled for each candidate at the end

- By marks from 5 for outstanding, 4 for good, 3 for acceptable, 2 for Marginal and 1 for poor, which are totalled at the end,
- As not met, partly met or fully met
- As poor, fair, excellent (however this is open to judgement as how do you decide what excellent, poor etc is? You must clear beforehand.)
- By a weighted scoring system according to the importance of each factor in the person specification.
- If you are using any of the above you still need to be very clear on what is excellent, what is partly met etc? You need to decide for example that anything over 5 years experience is excellent etc.

Each interview question you have should be directly linked to your score sheet.

Please see an explanation to 3 different types of scoring systems at the end of this section and three sample scoring sheets. Please remember that these are only samples and should be adapted to suit the job requirements for your organisation.

The interview panel should

1. Have a scoring system in place for interviewing along with a scoring sheet.

2. Meet prior to the interview and agree

Who will ask what question? The same members of the panel must ask all candidates the same questions.

Be familiar with the candidates application form &/or CV.

Note with the panel any queries you may have on the application form and who will address these.

Be familiar with the interview questions

Appoint a chairperson for the interview

The appointed chairperson will introduce the candidate and outline the process of the interview and then close the interview and thank the candidate for coming.

The interview should cover

- Introducing the panel
- Telling the candidate how the interview will progress
- Telling them a little about the job
- Clarifying information on the application form
- Asking the questions outlined for the interview
- Provide an opportunity for the candidate to ask questions and go over anything again
- Check formal qualifications
- Informing them if what happens next.

During the interview it is acceptable to

Ask follow-up questions,

To clarify what has been said,

To probe more deeply

And to seek examples.

The interview room

Try to use a room you think the candidates will feel comfortable in.

Consider the following issues:

Privacy- use a separate room where you will not be overheard

Noise- make sure the quietest location is chosen

Size and space-consider personal body space for candidate and panel members

Seating- a round table is ideal for interviewing and leads to an informal atmosphere.

Time of day- consider travel time for candidates to get there

Avoid interruptions- remove phones and mobile phones and tell staff emergency interruptions only.

During the interview

An interview is a conversation with a purpose. The candidate should be put at ease on arriving; this will allow the candidate to answer questions to the best of their ability. It is important to use

- Active listening
- Eye contact
- Be clear in asking questions
- Try to understand what's being said
- Observing non-verbal communication e.g. body Language
- Summarise
- Reflect e.g. so you're saying.....
- Be respectful

Clarke, J. (1997) *Staff selection and interviewing* Combat Poverty Agency

At the end of each interview the individual candidate should be assessed against the criteria set out under your scoring system. One scoring sheet should be used for each candidate and the interview panel should sign the end of the sheet.

In situations where interviewers cannot decide on their choice of candidate, second interviews may be held at a later stage. If a suitable candidate cannot be identified, you may make the decision to re-advertise the post.

Records

It is important to remember that written records of interview assessments are kept for each candidate. For the unsuccessful candidate the record should be kept for at least one year after the interview. A person has six months to bring a claim under the Employment Equality Act, 1998.

Under the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, one copy of all documents related to the interview process should be kept for 1½ year. POBAL also comes under the freedom of information Act.

Therefore it is recommended that all documents relating to the interview **should be kept for at least 1 ½ year.**

These records as follow should be kept:

- Job description
- Person specification
- Job advertisement
- Applications forms
- Completed application forms
- Shortlisting procedure & criteria
- Signed shortlist assessment form
- Interview questions along with other question that may of arose during interview
- Signed Interview scoring sheets
- Any correspondence with Candidate
- Final decision and reason for making it

The chairperson of the interview panel should return all documents held by the panel to the board member/manager who is responsible for the recruitment process.

The above information has been taken from the following:

Byrne, M. (2002) *Personal practice in early years services - a guide* Barnardos.

Clarke, J. (2002) *A guide to good employment practice in the community & Voluntary* Combat Poverty Agency

Clarke, J. (1997) *Staff selection and interviewing* Combat Poverty Agency

French, G. (2003) *Supporting Quality - guidelines for best practice in early childhood services 2nd Ed.* Barnardos.

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www.suffolk.gov.uk

Sample Interview Scoring Sheets.

Three sample scoring sheets are given in Appendix 7. Whichever one you decide to use, you will still need to adapt it to suit your essential and desirable criteria and also to suit your interview questions.

Sample No 1.

- The number of the interview question is listed down the left side of the page.
- The criteria are listed next. This is where you will need to enter your own criteria according to the job description/person specification.
- The next column is essential-wherever there is a shaded area this means it is not relevant. It is marked out of 5 so you can mark whether the person has fully met or exceeded the minimum requirement. If a person has ten years experience and the minimum requirement for the job is 2, then this person should score 5. Just place a tick in the box.
- Again under the desirable, this is out of 3. Again where there is a shaded area this means it is not relevant. For example a question on the Pre-School Regulations. If someone has a good understanding and knowledge of the regulations they should score 3, or if they have very little knowledge they should score 1.
- If someone does not meet the criteria at all, whether it be essential or desirable then they score 0 under the 'not met' category.
- At the bottom you can add up all the scores. For example if there are 4 ticks under 5 then this is 20 marks, if there are 8 ticks under 2 then this is 16. Just add the total at the bottom of the essential and desirable columns.
- You can also take notes here and record key words from the candidate's answers. This will act as a guide when scoring and also allow you to feedback to the applicant, if they request it, the reasoning behind your scoring.

- In cases where there is a marginal difference between different candidates, you should be clear and consistent in what constitutes a 3 mark, 4 mark etc.
- One score sheet is required per person interviewed.
- All interview board members sign it after agreeing on the recommendation.

Sample No 2.

- On the left of the page the criteria is outlined.
- A maximum score is given per area.
- You should relate the areas on the scoring sheet directly to questions that you are asking otherwise you may be asking a question that you cannot score.
- This score is broken down. There are a certain amount of points awarded if you meet the essential or minimum requirement.
- The candidate must score the minimum requirement in each area to be considered for the position.
- The additional points are then broken down. The additional points would be allocated to what you have described as desirable criteria.
- In the qualifications and experience sections the essential requirement is not stated-you will need to put this in.
- I have not stated either in the areas of skills/abilities, knowledge, personal qualities that there is an essential requirement-you can do this if you have stated in your person specification that any of these are essential criteria. You should have a minimum points attached to meeting the essential criteria.
- The scale rating system at the bottom is a guide to a candidate's performance in the interview.
- One score sheet is required per person interviewed.
- All interview board members sign it after agreeing on the recommendation.

Sample No.3

- In this system, the scoring for experience, training and qualifications should be relatively straightforward. Firstly the candidate either meets the essential criteria or not. In this case they should receive 1 point.
- Secondly if they have more than or above what is essential you should allocate marks. For example 1 additional point for one extra qualification attained and 1 extra point for each additional year of experience above the minimum requirements. For example if the requirement for the job is minimum of 2 years experience in a childcare setting and the candidate has 5 years - then they should score 1 point for meeting the criteria of 2 years and the 3 additional points for the 3 years extra experience they have.
- It is more difficult to score skills, abilities, personal qualities and knowledge. Again you should go on the basis that one point is allocated for meeting the essential criteria and additional points for additional qualities.
- In some of the areas you will not have essential criteria and it will all be desirable criteria, in this instance you should outline before hand what you are giving points for. For example key words-if you have key words or key answers that you are expecting people to give, so if you have a question on the Pre-School Regs and someone is able to tell you the ratios of adults to children, a point should be allocated, if they can give further information regarding the health, safety and welfare of the child, additional points should be given for each additional piece of information.
- In the sample given very basic information on the area is given. You will need to make these more specific and relate them directly to your interview questions so that you can allocate marks for each question.
- One score sheet is required per person interviewed
- All interview board members sign it after agreeing on the recommendation.

Please see Appendix 7 for sample scoring sheets.

Following the Interview

Letter of offer

Usually the successful candidate is informed verbally. This should be followed up with a letter, offering the person the position. On this letter the job title should be on it along with date of commencement time and place.

Letter of decline

The unsuccessful candidate should be informed in writing; it is good practice to tell the candidate if they want further information in relation to their interview to contact them. Feedback can only be given directly to the candidate.

Please see Appendix 8 for Sample letters of offer and decline.

Garda Vetting.

The Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations 2006 state that all those working with children should be garda vetted.

Regulation 8 Management & Staffing.

(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 such vetting 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.

Vetting

The person will also have been appropriately vetted e.g. Garda* and/or police vetting will have been obtained and at least two references will have been obtained and validated. If the person has previous work experience, references must be obtained from previous employers (including the most recent employer/ work placement, as appropriate), otherwise references must be from independent and reputable referees. When procedures are in place to make vetting information available for staff, students and volunteers of pre-school services, Garda vetting requests should be submitted to the Garda Central Vetting Unit

through agreed communication channels by authorised signatories, who are registered by the Garda Central Vetting Unit and who act on behalf of employers. Vetting requests should not be made by individual employees. (Pre-School Regulations 2006, P42)

Under the new arrangements, three childcare organisations, IPPA (the Early Childhood Organisation), NCNA (the National Children's Nurseries Association), and Barnardos, have been designated as appropriate bodies through which pre-school services can apply for Garda vetting for staff. Service providers who are members of IPPA/NCNA should address their requests to those organisations, as appropriate, and all other providers should address their requests to Barnardos. The contact at Barnardos is: Barbara Dempsey, HR Manager, Barnardos Christchurch Square D 8. Tel 4530355.
e-mail barbara.dempsey@barnardos.ie

Self Declaration Forms

In the interim of obtaining Garda clearance you can request that the person recruited signs a self declaration form. The employee or volunteer can sign to say that they have not committed a crime or to give details of any crimes committed. It should be signed and dated with a member of management present. This should also be kept on file. It should remain confidential and only used for purposes relating to their recruitment. This form can be used with employees, students and volunteers.

Please see Appendix 9 for Sample Self Declaration Form.

Reference Request Forms.

As stated in the regulations mentioned above references for those being recruited must be sought. A reference request form is a form that you can send to a previous employer or referee given to you by a candidate. It is important to note that the person should not be appointed until all references are checked. This form can be used for potential employees, volunteers and students.

A reference form that you get back from a previous employer should be kept on file for a minimum of 1.5 years. This should remain confidential and should only be referred to for the purposes of recruitment. It only needs to be seen by those responsible for recruitment not everybody on the committee, if there is one.

Please see Appendix 9 for Sample Reference Request form. Please amend this form if you wish to include any other specific questions that you would like answered.

Volunteer Recruitment Policy and Procedure

The manager/ committee is committed to ensuring that the recruitment of parents and other volunteers is open and transparent and at all times gives precedence to the safety and welfare of the children attending the service.

Procedures

Role Description

A detailed description of the role of the volunteer is prepared in advance. This includes:

- Overall role of the volunteer
- Location of the position
- Who the volunteer will report to
- Key area of work
- Duties and responsibilities

Application Form

Each volunteer is required to complete an application form.

This form includes:

- Name, Address and telephone number of applicant
- Previous experience
- Reason for volunteering
- Name, address and telephone number of two referees

Interview/Informal Chat

Each volunteer will have an interview or informal chat with representatives of the staff and management as part of the recruitment process.

Declaration/Garda Clearance

Where possible, Garda Clearance is sought for all volunteers. If Garda Clearance is not possible, the volunteer is required to sign a declaration stating that he or she does not have a record of a crime or crimes, which could be deemed to pose a risk to children. All new volunteers must provide documentation

confirming their identity and original certificates of qualification.

Induction

An induction period is provided for all new volunteers. Volunteers are provided with:

- Information about the role of the childcare service
- Further information on the volunteer's role
- Information on the role of other volunteers and employees
- Details of codes of behaviour
- Full details of the Policies and Procedures

Volunteers are obliged to familiarise themselves with the Policies and Procedures of the service and to sign up to codes of behaviour as set out by the service.

This policy has been adopted by the childcare service management committee/individual at the meeting
Meeting held on

And witnessed by

Position on committee

This policy was reviewed on

Signed on behalf of manager/management committee

Recruitment Checklist.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Have you a recruitment policy (to satisfy requirements under Pre-School Regulations 2006)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you drawn up a job description?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you drawn up a person specification?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you a list of the essential and desirable criteria?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you decided what the method of application is? C.V OR Application Form?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you included all relevant logs on advertisement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you included closing date on advertisement? (Usually allowing 3 /4 weeks for whole process)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you a recruitment panel set up?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have an application pack ready? (Incl. job desc. person spec, app form and info on service)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you written a letter of invitation for interview?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you a scoring/grading system ready for interviews?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Has the panel agreed on interview questions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you written to successful applicant offering position?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you written to unsuccessful applicant offering opportunity for feedback?

Have you kept all notes from interviews?

Have you checked two references for potential employee?

Have you applied for Garda vetting for potential employee?

Have you drawn up a contract of employment including the employee's job description and terms and conditions?

Has the contract been checked by a solicitor?

Has contract been signed by employee and management?

Have you kept appropriate records of person you recruited?

Application form/C.V + cover letter.

Copy of signed contract

Copy of references and/or reference request forms.

Copy of Garda vetting

Copy of qualifications and certificates.

Have you begun process of induction?

Please see Appendix 10 for this Recruitment Checklist.

Section 2

Staff Induction Pack for Childcare Providers

Contents:

A new staff members view of your service is strongly influenced by the impressions formed during the first week on the job, and in particular by those of the first day. A well thought out induction can help ensure that these impressions are positive and that the staff member is able to settle comfortably and quickly into his or her new job. It is important to take this opportunity to make the new staff member feel welcome and show the valued role he or she is to play within your service.

Generally it is useful to pace the induction activities so that the staff member is not overwhelmed on the first day. By the end of the first month the staff member will need to have received most of the necessary information and support.

First Day

It is probably wise not to 'bombard' new staff with too much new information on the first day. Provide sufficient information so the staff member has something to work with and knows where to go with questions.

Depending on the size of your service a number of staff members may be involved in providing the induction programme and will have varying degrees of contact with the staff member on the first day.

Some suggestions for the first day include:

Be punctual when greeting the new staff member.

Be enthusiastic and sincere.

Explain your role within the school and when introducing each staff member explain their role also.

First week

Make yourself available and accessible to the new staff member as much as possible during the first week, or ensure that someone else (experienced member of staff) can fill this role when questions arise or assistance is required. Check the new staff member's reactions to the first few days. Ask if there is anything else you can do to assist the staff member's adjustment.

First month

You might consider arranging regular individual and staff meetings during the first month so that you can answer any questions the staff member may have and provide some general feedback. Also, frequent informal meetings, such as tea break, will reduce the likelihood of the new staff member feeling isolated after the high contact initial week.

After three months

Now is an ideal time for the supervisor to discuss the staff member's progress. Good work should be recognised and any remaining transition issues should be resolved. You might also like to discuss staff development resources and opportunities in more detail.

Colleagues:

It is recommended that as part of the induction process of your service, that the new staff member is matched with a peer support person.

The peer support person may be someone who has worked at your childcare service for some time and who might for example:

Assist the new staff member in settling into the service

Provide information about the range of facilities at XXXXX

Staff Induction Session

Please see Appendix 11 for Sample Staff Induction checklist.
Please see Appendix 12 for Sample Staffing & Management Checklist.

Welcome to Childcare Service. During your first week we will cover the following topics. You will be asked to keep a record of your induction.

General Induction to the service.

Tour of the building and immediate outside area.
Provision of locker space.
Introduction to other staff members, children and parents.
Explanation of rota including shifts and meetings.

Policies and Procedures.

Read through the policies-Question session, sign and date individually.
Explaining all records kept in relation to an individual child.
Observations of all children to help plan activities.

Record Keeping

Staff records-register, time sheets, T.O.I.L etc
Child Records-register, daily records, accident forms etc
Service Records- cleaning schedules, Health and Safety issues, audit issues.
Duties on staff to report issues on health and safety.

Personal Information

- P45 from previous job.
- PPS Number
- Address and contact Numbers
- Next of Kin.

- Job Description
- Contract of employment
- Staff Handbook
- Garda Clearance
- Personnel Objectives -Appraisals.

Good Practice

Dress/Uniform

Confidentiality

Attitude

The role of the role model

Good Communication

Telephone Manner

Line Manager

Structure of Creche, Pre-School School aged childcare service.

Staff structure

Services provided

Working with colleagues and parents.

Professionalism

Respect

Support and Supervision

Communication: General, Concerns, Difficulties and complaints

Each staff member's role

Designated person in charge, next in line.

Welcoming parents/daily feedback to parents

Role of the Pre-school Inspection Team.

Staff training courses

Working with children

Positive thinking

Dealing with challenging behaviour

Individual observations and plans.

Daily record keeping and routine.

Child Protection

Introduction to named child protection officer.

Child Protection policy and procedure.

Familiarise all staff with Children First Guidelines.

Reporting procedure and documents.

Health and Safety

Personal and child hygiene.

Vaccinations (importance to adult and child)

Cleaning and maintenance.

First aid supplies and first aid contact.

Evacuation routine Fire Drill/Display fire drill book to record.

Security routine.

Domestic routine and duties/ Food Safety, Safe Handling.

Sick Leave.

Equipment

Safe use, care and storage of equipment.

Procedures for use of equipment

Safe food storage

Inventory

Sample of Policies and Procedures that you could cover as part of your staff induction:

Observations and Assessments

XXXXXXX Childcare Centre recommends when undertaking observations and assessments the following should be considered:

Staff members should be aware of their own values and beliefs and ensure they are observing and assessing impartially. When we look at children and interact, with them, we interpret and make meaning of what we see, even if we are not aware of what we are doing. The assessment we make will be affected by interpretations we make of our observations. Our values and beliefs affect interpretations. We need to be aware of these values and talk about and explain them.

There is an emotional dimension to assessment for everyone involved - parents, children and educators.

Observations skills must be developed and reviewed as part of the daily routine.

Basic principles to guide and inform practice must be established.

Assessment should be used to help review provision as a whole.

An effective written format for record keeping and transferring that material to others must be created and updated.

Planning for observations:

Good early year's assessment should be based on observation of children in action and conversations with children while they are reflecting on their actions. This allows early year's staff to match their provision to the individual needs of children. It is important that early years staff members gather evidence on which to make an informed assessment.

Principles of Assessment:

Drummond, M.J. and Rouse, D. (1992) present the following statements about assessment that have been taken from documents produced in a variety of early year's services. These embody the principles of assessment.

- Parents are providers as well as receivers of information and should be involved in the assessment process.
- All the adult staff should who work with the children should be involved in the assessment process.
- Where possible children should be involved in the assessment of their own progress and development.
- All aspects of development and learning should be considered when assessing children.
- Assessment must be based on detailed observations of what children do and say.
- Written records should contain factual information.
- When appropriate, assessments of bilingual children should be made in the child's first language by a person who knows about the child's cultural heritage.
- Assessment must take account of the possible effects of the context on the child (for example, the language used, the child's previous experience, the child's emotional state and the setting).
- Assessments of individual children should be used in planning activities for those children.

- Parents need time to talk about what they feel, as well as about what they know before making decisions about what to do next for the benefit of their child.
- All assessments must be of benefit to the child.
- Due regard must be given to the Freedom of Information Act.

Effective Record Keeping:

XXXXX Childcare centre keeps records to contribute to the quality of children's experiences, supports their development and helps to keep them safe.

XXXX Childcare Centre in the development of effective record keeping uses the following criteria:

- Quick to complete. Records are more likely to be kept up to date if a regular short amount of time can be allocated to complete them.
- Easy to understand. This is especially important when the records may be passed on to parents.
- Useful. Records serve as the starting points for educators both in the child's present setting, and in the next.
- Objective. Records need to be factual, focusing on what children do and say, avoiding assumptions.
- Records should be reasonably easily accessible for agreed staff and volunteers so information can be shared readily with families.
- Records must be kept securely and not left in vulnerable places so that confidentiality is a risk.
- Records must be protected from possible fire, flood or burglary.

Section 3. Terms & Conditions/Contract of Employment.

General Guidelines for Drawing up Staff Contracts.

There is no legal obligation to provide an employee with a contract of employment - however under the Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994 and 2001, you do have an obligation to provide employees with terms and conditions of employment.

The difference between the two is:

Contract of employment: anything which is in that contract cannot be changed without full agreement between employer and employee.

Terms of employment: it is at the discretion of the employer to make changes to the terms; however the employee must be notified.

The information contained in the next two sections is not a legal interpretation, anyone seeking further information, support or clarification should seek legal advice.

The Terms of Employment (Information) Acts 1994 and 2001 provide that an employer is obliged to provide an employee with a written statement of terms of employment within the first two months of the commencement of employment.

The statement of terms must include the following information:

- The full name of employer and employee
- The address of the employer
- The place of work

- The title of job or nature of work
- The date the employment started
- If the contract is temporary, the expected duration of the contract
- If the contract of employment is for a fixed term, the details
- The rate of pay or method of calculation of pay
- The pay reference period for the purposes of the National Minimum Wage Act, 2000
- Pay intervals
- Hours of work
- Details of paid leave
- Sick pay and pension (if any)
- Period of notice to be given by employer or employee
- Details of any collective agreements that may affect the employee's terms of employment
(www.citizensinformation.ie)

What must be included in a contract?

A contract must include:

- What type of contract it is - is it for a particular period of time? Is it depending on the continuation of funding?
- Is there a probationary period? How long? This is your decision as the employer.
- What the salary is? What is the rate of pay?
- How often will they be paid?
- Are you able to offer increments? If so this should be stated. Also what the percentage increase is and how often it's paid.
- What the procedure for Garda clearance and vetting is?

Usually when a contract is issued it will also include terms and conditions of employment (as mentioned above).

Please note the following:

- All employees are entitled to receive a pay slip which is a written statement of their wages under the Payment of Wages Act 1991.
- By law, the only deductions that an employer is permitted to deduct from wages is PAYE and PRSI.
- All other deductions such as pension, trade union subscription, sick pay etc are at the discretion of the employer and this should be clearly stated in the contract.
- As an employer, you are not legally obliged to contribute to a pension scheme; however you are legally obliged to inform the employee of pension schemes should they wish to contribute themselves. You are also obliged to facilitate this payment through the wages etc.
- As an employer you are not obliged to pay sick leave however, it may be good practice to allow for a number of certified days.
- If the employee may have to work overtime - evenings, weekends etc this requirement must be clearly stated.
- If an employer fails to give written details of the terms of employment/contract, an employee can bring a complaint to a Rights Commissioner using the Rights Commissioner complaint form. The employee must make the complaint while in employment or within 6 months of leaving employment.

Explanation of Sample Staff Contract.

Please refer to the sample contract of employment Appendix 13 for reference: the points listed below refer directly to the sample contract:

1. Type of contract - maybe pending funding.
2. 3 months is usually the norm for probationary periods. An extension of a further three months is acceptable after that. *The Unfair Dismissals Acts will not apply to the dismissal of an employee during a period at the beginning of employment when he/she is on probation or undergoing training provided that:*
 - a. *the contract of employment is in writing*
 - b. *the duration of probation or training is one year or less and is specified in the contract*

(www.citizensinformation.ie)
3. Salary - rate of pay, method of payment. Etc Remember all employees are entitled to receive a pay slip.
4. Duties
5. a. Hours of work - daily and weekly working hours. Breaks and rest periods should also be outlined here. Please note: Under the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997
For many employees the maximum average working week cannot exceed 48 hours. This does not mean that a working week can never exceed 48 hours; it is the average that is important. The calculation of 48 hours does not include breaks, annual leave, sick leave or maternity/adoptive/parental leave. The legislation also lays down minimum breaks and rest periods, as well as special provisions in relation to Sunday working.
(www.citizensinformation.ie)
- b. Time off in lieu: There is no legal requirement to pay overtime, however you may want to have certain provisions such as Time off in Lieu, or you may decide to pay them - this is at your discretion. If an employee occasionally

must work evenings or weekends, this should be stated in the contract. A separate policy for travel allowance, budget for training, TOIL etc should be included in the staff handbook, it doesn't necessarily need to be included in the contract.

6. Location.

7. Annual Leave: If there is a requirement that annual leave be taken when the service is closed, this should be stated in the contract.

The entitlement for public holidays is set out in the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997. In Ireland there are 9 public holidays. These are:

- New Year's Day (1 January)
- St. Patrick's Day (17 March)
- Easter Monday
- First Monday in May, June, August
- Last Monday in October
- Christmas Day (25 December)
- St. Stephen's Day (26 December)

Good Friday is not a public holiday. While some schools and businesses close on that day, you have no automatic entitlement to time off work on that day. It is at your discretion whether you include this as a day off. However you must state this. (www.citizensinformation.ie)

8. Sick Leave - No legal obligation to pay sick leave. *In general an employee has no right under employment law in Ireland to be paid while on sick leave. Consequently, it is at the discretion of the employer to decide his/her own policy on sick pay and sick leave, subject to the employee's contract or terms of employment. However there is a legal obligation to make reference to your policy/terms and conditions in the terms of employment/contract issued. If the employee has no entitlement in your terms and conditions of employment*

to be paid during sick leave, they may apply for Illness Benefit if they have enough social insurance contributions. If they do not have enough social insurance contributions, they should contact the Community Welfare Officer of your Local Health Office who will assess the situation.

If the employee is entitled to sick pay, the employer will probably require them to sign over any Illness Benefit payment from the Department of Social and Family Affairs to the employer for as long as the sick pay continues.

*Often, a contract of employment will place a **maximum period** of sick pay entitlement in a stated period, for example, one month's sick pay in any 12-month period. Clear rules should be put in place by the employer where an employee is sick and is unavailable for work. For example, it should be clear that if you are sick and unavailable for work, you must contact a specified person by a certain time. If you are out sick for more than three consecutive dates you are usually required to provide your employer with a medical certificate (from your GP or family doctor). The medical certificate should state the nature of your illness and the date you are likely to return to work. If you are likely to be out sick for a longer period, your employer may require you provide weekly medical certificates.*

(www.citizensinformation.ie)

9. Confidentiality.

10. Grievance Procedures. *The Labour Relations Commission has published the Code of Practice: Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures which states that employers should have written grievance and disciplinary procedures and they should give employees copies of these at the start of their employment. Under the Unfair Dismissals Acts 1977-2001 employers are required to give the employee in written notice of the procedures to be followed before an employee is dismissed. This must be*

done within 28 days of entering the contract of employment. (www.citizensinformation.ie)

- 11.** Termination Provisions. Refer to above code of practice.
- 12.** Dismissal Procedures. *When dismissal is being considered your employer is expected to have disciplinary procedures in place and to follow them. Disciplinary procedures set out the stages and process the employer will follow in relation to alleged shortcomings of an employee. Generally, the procedure allows for informal warnings leading to written warnings and ultimately to dismissal. The Labour Relations Commission has published a Code of Practice on grievance and disciplinary procedures. (www.citizensinformation.ie)*
- 13.** Voluntary Notice - There is a legal statutory requirement of one week's notice of an employee wishing to leave the job. However, it could be longer than that. You should consider realistically how long it would take to fill a position when deciding how much notice is required. The principal legislation governing this area employment law in Ireland is the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973.
- 14.** Safety Statement.
- 15.** Variation. - This refers to any changes that may be made to the contract and how these changes will be made.

Section 4. *Staff Handbook*

Please be aware that this handbook is a guideline only. It should be adapted to suit your service.

The following information should be included in a staff handbook.

Contents

- Overview
- Mission & Vision Statement
- Staff Policy
- Employment Policy
- Recruitment & Selection Policy
- Contract of Employment
- Job Description
- Induction
- Probation
- Temporary Employment
- Resignations
- Terminations
- Pay Policy
- Place of Work
- Hours of Work
- Annual Leave
- Sick Leave
- Maternity Leave
- Force Majeure Leave
- Adoptive Leave
- Special Leave
- Training and Development
- Support & Supervision
- Employment Allowances
- Telephone
- Internet and Email
- Dress Code

- Confidentiality
- Discipline and Appeals Procedure
- Grievance Procedure
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Sexual Harassment
- Complaints Procedure
- Health and Safety Policy
- Staff Absence Policy

Mission Statement

You should develop a mission statement that sets out what your service aims to do; this is your overall mission.

Staff Policy

The **Name of Service/management committee** most valuable and important asset is the staff.

Line managers play a very important role in meeting the needs of staff and contributing to employee commitment.

Manager / Committee at all levels in the organisation are expected to: (in the absence of a manager a named person must be appointed).

- Treat every staff member with respect and courtesy
- Promote an atmosphere of trust and openness for all employees
- Encourage staff to accept personal responsibility for their health, safety and welfare
- Observe confidentiality and promote professionalism in all matters
- Ensure that all members are clear about their role and responsibility and understand what is expected of them.

All employees of **Name of Service/Committee** are expected to;

Be loyal to the organisation at all times by supporting any **Board decisions**, regardless of whether or not they agree with them personally.

Use every opportunity to highlight the organisation positively and under no circumstances reveal any negative factors, whether factual or not, which may harm the organisation's image or its relationship with the general public.

Respect themselves and others within the organisation

Treat each other in a professional manner at all times

Share knowledge and work experiences, assist each other when there is a deadline to be met

Take turns at cleaning, emptying bins etc.

All organisational information, which comes to your knowledge through the course of your duties, must not be disclosed to anyone outside the office.

Employment Policy

The **Name of Service/ Committee** intends that all staff and potential staff have equality of opportunity regardless of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the travelling community, subject the Employment Equality Act (2004).

Name of Service/ Committee promotes and rigorously observes the objectives and principles of equal opportunities and is committed to implementing policies to promote these objectives. , Staff and **Board members** are encouraged to examine critically their understanding of the different needs of people and to ensure that no trace of discrimination is allowed to affect their judgement.

Recruitment & Selection Policy

It is now a requirement under the Pre-School Regs 2006 to have a clear recruitment and selection policy.

Name of Service/ Committee policy is to attract and retain staff with the qualifications and experience necessary to provide an excellent service. Individuals must be selected for employment on the basis of being the most suitable candidate. Job applicants must not be treated less favourably on the grounds of gender, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, race, colour, religion, ethnic or national origin etc. All vacancies must be advertised, stating **Name of Service/ Committee** is an equal opportunities employer. All employees are encouraged to compete for any vacancies/promotions within the organisation for which they have experience, qualifications, ability and potential. The application of current staff will be treated on an equal basis with external applicants. Shortlisting and interviews should be conducted by a minimum of three people and where possible have equal genders represented on the panel. If a situation arises that a second interview is held, the same panel must be involved in the decision making at the second stage.

Decisions should be based on the criteria in the person specification and job description. A written record must be kept of the assessments made for each applicant for at least one year after a letter is sent to unsuccessful candidates. One set of records and CV's of all applicants should be kept and all other documents destroyed.

Name of Service/ Committee does not entertain canvassing on behalf of job applicants and such canvassing will disqualify candidates.

Terms & Conditions of Employment/Contract of Employment

Each new member of staff will receive a contract of employment. The contract sets out the conditions of employment and should be signed by both parties before employment commences or where this is not possible, within a two month period. The terms and conditions set out in the contract shall comply with the Organisation of Working Time Act and the Payment of Wages Act. Staff may not engage in private practice or be connected with any outside business, which might interfere with the performance of official duties.

Job Description

For community services in receipt of subvention under the Community Childcare Subvention Scheme 2008-2010, you will be required to furnish Pobal with a copy of clear recruitment guidelines with job descriptions drawn up for each position within the setting.

A job description will be drawn up for each post to be filled, detailing core responsibilities and tasks relating to the job. The person appointed shall perform the duties determined by the organisation as set out in the job description given to be reviewed and updated regularly on the agreement of both employee and employer. And to make sure he/she has all the necessary information needed in order to perform the job duties effectively. All new employees will be furnished with a copy of the organisations health and safety statement as well as background material relating to the organisation and will be expected to familiarise themselves with the material.

Induction

All new employees will have an induction programme at the commencement of their employment. The purpose of induction

is to help the new employee settle into the position as quickly as possible

Probation

Confirmation of all appointments will be subject to a probation period of _____ months, which will be reviewed after three months.

- During the period of probation the contract may be terminated by either party in accordance with the provisions on the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973-1991.
- During the probation period management will ensure that each employee is fully assisted in understanding and becoming familiar with his/her job and that there is full discussion with the employee about any problems or difficulty.
- The period of probation may be extended for a specific period (generally three to six months) if it is not fully satisfied that the employee is suitable for the position. The employee will be informed through supervision and in writing about the reason/s for this decision.
- Will notify each employee in writing of the satisfactory completion of the probation period.
- A system of regular assessment will operate during the probation period, including discussions between the employee and his/her manager/management in relation to the employee's work performance, conduct, health/sick leave record, punctuality etc.

Temporary Employment

It is the policy of **Name of Service/ Committee** to fill all vacancies with permanent appointments as soon as possible. However, it can become necessary to employ persons in a temporary capacity pending the filling of a post or to cover

annual, sick, maternity or other leave. Temporary employment is generally intended to cover specifically the purpose mentioned above. This does not give anyone employed in a temporary capacity any entitlement to a permanent position or any entitlement to employment beyond the date/s specified in the employment contract or cessation of the purpose for which the employee was recruited.

Resignations

All staff is expected to give notice of their intention to resign from **Name of Service/Committee** as required under the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973-1991. The statutory requirement is at least one week from an employee who has been employed for 13 weeks or more. If a longer notice period was outlined in the contract, the longer applies.

Termination

The Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Acts 1973-1991 state that employees who have 13 weeks continuous service are entitled to notice as follows:

Length of Service	Min Notice
Over 13 weeks and Up to 2 years	1 week
Over 2 years and Up to 5 years	2 weeks
Over 5 years and Up to 10 years	4 weeks
Over 10 years and Up to 15 years	6 weeks
15 years and over	8 weeks

In the case of gross misconduct where dismissal results after due investigation the entitlement will be based on the legal minimum as specified under the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act 1973-1991. In the case of gross misconduct summary dismissal applies.

Salary may be paid in lieu of notice except in the case of gross misconduct. Employees may evoke the grievance procedure (if they dispute the notice of termination of employment).

Pay Policy

Name of Service/Committee will set the salary for each post subject to funding being made available to Name of Service/Committee_. (For private services this will not be the case)

- **Salary Payment**

Salary shall be paid

- **Over payments**

Name of Service/Committee reserves the right to deduct overpayments in wages, sick pay and holiday pay directly from salary where appropriate.

- **Salary on Appointment**

Generally new members of staff are appointed to the appropriate point of the salary scale for their post dependent on relevant qualifications, experience and responsibilities of the post determined by the management. (Although there are no childcare pay scales, you could still adopt your own internal pay scales within your organisation which may help to guide you when calculating yearly increases etc)

- **Increments**

Increments will be awarded annually, subject to satisfactory performance, on the anniversary of the date on which the employee commenced employment within the organisation until he/she reaches top of the scale. (There are no childcare pay scales so you can decide how much the salary increase from year to year will be. This will always be dependent on finances and funding.)

- **Pensions (It is at the employer's discretion whether pension is paid or not-there is no legal obligation)**

Place of Work

Employees will normally be based

at _____

_____. This may change with notice and consultation.

Hours of Work.

Name of Service/Committee will fully observe the rights of its employees under the Organisation of Working Time Act 1977 and will seek as far as possible to improve on the basic minimum entitlements.

The offices of **Name of Service/Committee** will operate Monday to Friday. If staff operate different hours within that time, it is important that the Weekly Time Sheets are completed and signed off by the Manager. Hours of work must reach the amount stated in the contract of employment. Time in Lieu must be recorded, annual leave and sick time shall be recorded.

Full Time Staff

Full Time Staff are required to work a ___ hour week. This does not include time taken for lunch.

Part-Time Staff

Staff engaged on a part-time contract will have hours specified in their contracts

Normal Working Hours

The normal working hours are ____am ____pm, or so agreed by management according to the requirements of the work.

Unsocial Hours

Time Off In Lieu (optional- Employers Discretion - there is no legal obligation to provide TOIL.)

TOIL is granted for all hours worked in excess of the normal working week and should be approved in advance by the Line Manager. To claim TOIL staff must inform within a week of working TOIL and take accumulated time off within one months of time being sought. Where at all possible, prior approval should be sought in advance of extra hours worked.

Annual Leave

The Annual Leave entitlement for each employee is set out in the contract of employment, in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997. Management will encourage all employees to take their full leave entitlement. (Some childcare services can only allow the employees to take annual leave when the service is closed - if this is the case, this should be stated in both the contract and employee handbook).

Notice

Before making any leave arrangements, staff are required to get approval from their line manager and give the following notice

1 - 3 days leave	1 week's notice
4 - 7 days leave	2 week's notice
7 days+ leave	4 week's notice

(This is just recommended and not based on any legislation or legal requirement).

Certified Sick Leave

If, during annual leave, an employee falls ill and produces a medical certificate to that effect, the period of sickness will be recorded as sick leave and not annual leave.

Leave Year

The leave year runs from January 1 to December 31. The entitlement for any one year must be taken before December 31.

Part Time Employees

The annual leave entitlement for a part time employee is set out in their contract of employment, in accordance with the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997. All part time employees are entitled to all public holidays in accordance with the organisation of Working Time Act 1977.

Entitlements of New Staff

Employees joining the organisation after the beginning of the leave year are granted leave on a pro rata basis for the first year of the employment.

Public Holidays

There are nine public holidays to which all employees are entitled. A public holiday falling within a period of annual leave will not be counted as part of that leave.

New Years Day	August BH
St Patrick's Day	October BH
Easter Monday	Christmas Day
May Day	St Stephens Day
June BH	

(Good Friday is not a public holiday and is at your discretion whether your service will operate on that day.)

Sick Leave: (Optional- Employers Discretion)

Regardless of grade or status, the procedures to be adhered to when availing of sick leave are set out below.

Informing the Employer - Employees who are unable to report for work (or someone on their behalf) should contact their line manager or ring main office and leave a message prior to shift starting on the first day of illness and give probable date of return to work.

Uncertified Sick Leave

Employees may take up to consecutive day's sick leave for which the leave will be paid. Again, this is considered best practice; each service can adapt the policy to suit their own organisation.)

Certified Sick Leave

All periods of sickness exceeding 3 days must be certified by the employee's medical practitioner or dentist. The certificate should state the general nature of the employee's ailment, the precise period for which the employee will be unfit for work or the probable date of resumption of duty. Subsequent certificates must be submitted if the absence continues beyond the period originally stated in the initial certificate. The appropriate claim for sickness benefit must be submitted to the Department of Social & Family Affairs on the third day of illness.

Medical Examiner

In all periods of illness, the organisation reserves the right to have the employee undergo an independent medical examination and report on the fitness of the employee

Staff Absence Policy

In the event of a staff being absent, the staff member in charge will have to implement the Staff Absence Policy.

Maternity Benefit-

Under the Maternity Protection & Amendment Act 2004, from 1st March 2007, employees will be entitled to 26 weeks statutory leave plus 16 weeks additional unpaid leave. The employee should notify the employer of her intention to take unpaid leave 4 weeks before the end of the maternity leave. It is at the discretion of the employer whether this is paid leave or not.

Pay

During maternity leave the employee will be entitled to full pay less any social welfare benefits payable on foot of social insurance. (Remember this is optional, however the employee can apply for maternity benefit from the Dept of Social and Family Affairs.)

Maternity Benefit

An employee who is (or was) fully insured under the Social Welfare Act, and has fulfilled certain contribution conditions, is entitled to maternity benefit from the Department of Social and Family Affairs.

Notice

The employee must give a minimum of four week notice of her taking leave and must also give 4 weeks notice of the date of her return. She must also produce a medical certificate confirming pregnancy date and estimated week of confinement.

Sick Leave

Maternity leave is granted irrespective of a person's sick leave record and does not count as sick leave.

Timing of Leave

A minimum period of maternity leave must be taken beginning not later than 2 weeks in advance of the expected week of confinement and ending not earlier than 4 weeks after the end of the expected week of confinement, with the remaining weeks being taken either before or after the birth, as decided by the employee.

Premature Birth

Where a baby is born prematurely but the mother is not yet on maternity leave she will be allowed 22 weeks paid maternity leave from the date of confinement provided she notifies in writing of the situation within 14 days of the confinement.

Promotion

If the employee is promoted during maternity leave she will be promoted from the relevant date.

Medical Appointments

The employee will be given paid time off for all ante-natal and post-natal appointments which occur during working hours. The employee is required to give two weeks written notice of each visit, where possible, except for the initial visit in which case the employee must give evidence of the appointment within 1 week of having attended same.

Breast Feeding

Employees who have recently given birth will be allowed an adjustment to their working hours or alternatively will be

provided with suitable facilities in the workplace to facilitate breast-feeding for a period of 26 weeks after the birth.

Paternity Leave (This is optional)

A male employee will be entitled when appropriate to paid paternity leave of _____ working days. The leave should be taken one month of the birth and should be agreed in writing in advance with the line manager. It is expected that special leave will be used to take care of the personal responsibilities which **Name of Service/Committee** recognise are important at that time. **Name of Service/Committee** reserve the right to cease leave if not being used for intended purpose

Parental Leave

Under the Parental Leave Act 2006, an employee who is a parent (whether natural or adoptive) of a child will be entitled to unpaid leave of a period of 14 weeks. This entitlement will be exclusive of holidays or time spent on maternity, adoptive or sick leave. In the case of multiple births, the entitlement is 14 weeks in respect of each child. The leave must be taken before the child is 8 years old or 16 years old if the Child has a disability. The leave must be taken in order to take care of the child, and any abuse of this can lead to the leave being terminated. The 14 weeks may be taken as a continuous bloc each or by agreement in separate blocs of a minimum of 6 weeks or by reduced working hours.

Force Majeure Leave

In the context of the Parental Leave Acts, 1998 and 2006, Force Majeure Leave refers to a sudden injury or illness affecting a member of the employee's immediate family or co dependant, making the employee's presence to assist that family member indispensable. In these circumstances, the employee is entitled to 3 days paid leave in any one 12 month period, notwithstanding their obligations otherwise under their

contract of employment, subject to a maximum of five days in a period of 36 consecutive months.

Adoptive Leave

Adoptive leave, in accordance with the Adoptive Leave Acts, 1995 and 2005 will consist of 20 weeks paid leave, plus up to eight weeks additional unpaid leave. From 1st March 2007 employees will be entitled to 26 weeks paid leave plus additional 16 weeks unpaid leave.

Eligibility

Adoptive leave will be available to all adoptive mothers or sole adoptive fathers. Adoptive leave will commence at the time the child is placed with the employee for adoption. In the case of foreign adoption, some or all of the additional weeks may be taken before the placement date.

Notification

The employee must give notice in writing of his or her intention to take adoptive leave at least 4 weeks before the expected placement date. The employee must inform the management in writing of the expected date of placement of the child as soon as it is reasonably practical. If the employee wishes to take the additional leave, he or she must inform the management in writing at least 4 weeks beforehand.

Evidence of Placement must be provided to the employer in writing.

Irish Adoption

When an employee has commenced adoptive leave, he or she must provide the management with a certificate of placement as soon as possible, but no later than 4 weeks after the date of placement.

Foreign Adoption

The employee must give a copy of the declaration of suitability before the commencement of adoptive leave or additional adoptive leave.

Special Leave.

Compassionate Leave

Management will grant leave to an employee in the case of any hardship or difficulty which might arise from urgent domestic distress or upheaval or urgent exceptional personal circumstances and necessitate a request for absence from work. Such difficulties might include bereavement. In the event of bereavement, details of the amount of leave should be available from the Manager.

Jury Service

Employees are entitled to take time off work for Jury Service. An employee will be granted paid leave to attend for Jury Service.

Training & Development

Management recognises the value of training and development opportunities for staff which are intended to enhance job performance, or significantly contribute to relevant personal/professional development. Management may request an employee to undertake training that is necessary/essential for the job e.g. Child Protection, First Aid.

Support and Supervision

Management recognises its responsibility to ensure that all employees have access to regular supervision and support for their work. All staff shall engage in supervision and support on a _____ basis. Appraisals will take place every 12 months. This is a two-way process involving the employee and management. The purpose of the annual appraisal is to:

- Ensure that the requirements of the position are being fulfilled
- Give the employee feedback on his/her performance
- Identify any additional training needs
- Review his/her work over the past year
- Plan objectives for the year ahead

It is also a regular part of the performance to review the employee's job description and to decide by agreement of both parties how it is to be updated if necessary. Employees have the right to be fully informed of the outcomes of the performance.

Trade Unions

Management recognises the right of employees to join a trade union.

Any employee may if he/she wishes:

- (a) belong to an independent trade union of his/her choice and take part in its activities
- (b) seek to hold office as an official of an independent trade union
- (c) Have subscriptions to professional associations and/or trade unions deducted from his/her salary on written request to /administrator.

An employee equally has the right not to join a trade union.

Employment Allowances

Travelling Expenses

Travelling and subsistence allowances are (payable or not payable - this is at your discretion) only in respect of necessary absences from headquarters. Travelling expenses necessarily incurred by staff in performance of their work duties will be reimbursed by management. The cost of a

journey between home and the normal place of work or visa versa is not claimable.

Mileage Rates and Allowances

(You need to consider, can you afford to pay mileage and if so and what rate. Usually the rate is consistent with the horsepower engine of the vehicle). Agreed rates for mileage will be made available to employees. An officer who is authorised to use his/her own transport while travelling on official business will be paid within the appropriate motor mileage rates.

Insurance

Before any journey is made on business for this organisation, privately owned motor vehicles must be insured against the contingencies given in the standard form. This form should be completed and returned to the administrator. Management will reimburse the employee if this entails an extra cost. If you are carrying children in your vehicle, you will need to indemnify the organisation on the persons insurance. However, you need to check with your insurance company regarding this.

Telephone calls

All telephone calls should be brief and to the point.

Personal mobiles, if you have one, should be used in preference to the company's phone and all calls should be brief and only when necessary. All staff must be pleasant and professional to all callers.

Internet and Email

Name of Service/Committee provides access to the Internet as a facility to staff who requires it as part of their work and must not be abused. As with e-mail, it must be used for official

purposes only. All e-mails should be printed out and filed in the incoming correspondence file. (This is only relevant if you have access to email/internet).

Dress Code

All staff is expected to maintain acceptable standards of neat and appropriate dress and footwear.

Confidentiality

Employees are required at all time to maintain absolute confidentiality in respect of matters which come to their knowledge in the course of their work. This does not apply to communications properly made by them in the normal conduct of work for the organisation or when specific consent to disclose information has been given by management. Employees are also required and expected to maintain this standard of confidentiality when they leave employment with the organisation.

Personal Files

There is a file for each employee recording salary, increments, annual leave, sick leave details, medical certificates, correspondence, records of performance, disciplinary or grievance procedures, interview notes, before recruitment etc. Also contained on each file are signed copies of Insurance Declaration pertaining to the use of own transport on official business. Employees are entitled to inspect their own personal files. However, they are not entitled to inspect other personal files.

Disciplinary Policy

Management is responsible for the promotion of consistent and agreed codes of conduct and standards of behaviour within the organisation. The following disciplinary procedures set out

the action to be taken by management with a member of staff who may be guilty of misconduct or gross misconduct. It is the policy of the organisation that disciplinary procedures should be fair and uniform throughout.

The procedure has been written in the light of the requirements of the Unfair Dismissals Acts, 1977, 1993 and SI 146 of 2000. The procedure applies to all staff, whether full or part time, except staff who are in their probation period to which the disciplinary Procedure for Probationary Employees shall apply.

The Disciplinary Procedure is designed to assist any member of staff whose conduct is in question, and its initiation should be given an opportunity to improve rather than as a first step in the process of sanctioning a dismissal.

It is the responsibility of management to clarify the role and responsibilities of the employee within the agreed job description and within the context of supervision.

It is the responsibility of management:

- (a) To resolve matters with the potential disciplinary implications at the informal level, if possible.
- (b) To ensure that employees at all stages in the disciplinary procedure are given a fair hearing.
- (c) To find out, if possible, any underlying reason for the disciplinary procedure.

Employees' personal problems will, where appropriate, be taken into account. Management consider that members of management and employees who have responsibility for implementing disciplinary procedures should have a through knowledge of them and know how to properly conduct disciplinary interviews and hearings. will ensure that they receive adequate training for this important responsibility.

Misconduct

It is not possible to list every possible act of omission that will constitute misconduct. In any event, every employee is required to behave in a manner which will not endanger or inconvenience fellow employees or visitors or bring discredit to the organisation. Examples of misconduct that could lead to formal disciplinary action (if not resolved through informal proceeding) are as follows:

Misconduct

- Negligence in the performance of duties
- Breach of confidence not amounting to gross misconduct
- Being absent without reasonable permission or reasonable excuse, consistently poor timekeeping.
- Reporting for work under the influence of alcohol or non prescribed drugs

Gross Misconduct

- Violent or threatening behaviour
- Deliberate breach of safety rules
- Deliberately withholding information which obstructs the work of the organisation
- Deliberately bringing the organisation into disrepute
- Consistent non-cooperation with staff or
- Repeated breach of the organisation's policies

Responsibility for Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action is the responsibility of management and /or appropriate body to which disciplinary power has been delegated.

Disciplinary and Grievance Panel

The Disciplinary and Grievance Panel may be composed of three members of management selected after the AGM. Management delegates power to the panel to make disciplinary decisions, including termination of employment.

Appeals Panel

The appeals panel is the management excluding those members of the Disciplinary and Grievance Panel who made the decision which is the subject of the appeal) and the chairperson where the chairperson has been involved at an earlier stage of the Disciplinary Procedure.

General Principles Applying to the Disciplinary Procedure

Employees may, at various stages in the procedure, be advised or accompanied by a representative(s) of their choice or a trade union representative(s). If the employee is a union member, management will notify the shop steward of all meetings at the same time as the employee is informed, unless the employee requests otherwise. Management will keep a written record of each meeting, which will include details of the employee's case, the response of management and the outcome of the meeting. The employee will be asked to agree and sign the record of the meeting, after consultation with his/her representative(s). Copies of the record will be given to all attending the meeting as soon as possible. Time limits may be changed at every stage by mutual consent. At all stages, disciplinary proceedings will be completed as quickly as is compatible with the need to ensure that justice is done and seen to be done.

Management will ensure that a proper investigation of the facts is carried out. This may involve interviewing all parties concerned. Any disciplinary action will be appropriate to the insubordination, incompetence, inefficiency or misconduct established. Any mitigating circumstances will be taken into account. Disciplinary action will be treated confidentially as far as possible.

Disciplinary Procedure

Where an employee's conduct, attendance or performance warrants disciplinary action, the following procedures will apply, except in the case of gross misconduct where immediate suspension pending investigation may take place. There may be occasions when, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct involved, it will be appropriate to enter the procedure at a later stage, for example stage 3 (written warning) or stage 4 (final written warning).

Stage 1 - First Verbal Warning

The line manager will conduct a disciplinary interview and may decide to issue a formal verbal warning. In this case, the line manager will agree with the employee and/or his/her representative(s):

1. what action or improvement is to be taken to prevent further disciplinary action
2. the time limit by which action should be taken or improvement made
3. A plan for assessment and review.

Stage 2 - Second Verbal Warning

If the line manager considers after the review that the progress is unsatisfactory, the line manager will conduct a disciplinary meeting and may issue a second formal verbal warning. Details of how the employee's progress has been unsatisfactory will be clearly outlined. In the case, the immediate manager/management will agree with the employee and/or their representative(s):

1. what action or improvement is to be taken to prevent further disciplinary action
2. the time limit by which action should be taken
3. a plan for assessment and review

Stage 3 - Written Warning

If the line manager considers after the second stage review that progress is unsatisfactory, then a hearing of the Disciplinary and Grievance Panel will be held as soon as possible (not later than 20 working days of a review). The Disciplinary and Grievance Panel may decide to issue a written warning. The first written warning will set out

1. the precise nature of the problem
2. the improvement required
3. the likely consequences if there is a subsequent lack of improvement

Stage 4 - Final Written Warning

If the line manager considers after the stage 3 review that progress has not been achieved then a hearing of the Disciplinary and Grievance Panel will be held as soon as possible (not later than 20 working days of the review). The Disciplinary and Grievance Panel may decide to issue a second and final written warning. This written warning will state that any subsequent lack of progress or recurrence of the offence will lead to dismissal.

Stage 5 - Dismissal

In the case of the employee's progress is still deemed to be unsatisfactory, the Disciplinary and Grievance Panel, after a hearing may decide to dismiss the employee. Dismissal will be confirmed in writing by letter, stating the grounds for the action taken.

Conduct of Disciplinary Interviews/Hearings

At stages 1 and 2 of the Disciplinary Procedure

The immediate manager/management will state the complaint(s) made against the employee, will state the investigation he/she has carried out referring when necessary

to appropriate documentation, and may call witnesses at any stage as part of his/her presentation of the complaint.

Witnesses will be called in turn, and for each witness the procedure will be:

(A). the immediate manager/management will question the witness

(b). the employee and/or (trade union) representative(s) will question the witness.

The employee and/or (trade union) representative(s) will question the immediate manager/management at the conclusion of the presentation of his or her case. The employee and/or their representative(s) will present the employee's case, referring when necessary to appropriate documentation and may call witnesses at any stage as part of the presentation of the case. Witnesses will be called in turn and the procedure will be as follows:

(A). the employee and/or their representative(s) will question the witness

(b). the immediate manager/management will question the witness.

The line manager will question the employee and/or their representative(s) at the conclusion of the employee's case. Both cases of the employee and employer will be summed up without introducing new evidence.

The line manager will withdraw to consider the case in consultation with other members of management. The decision will be notified to the employee verbally at the end of the hearing and will be confirmed in writing.

At stages 3, 4 and 5 of the Disciplinary Procedure

The line manager will state the complaint(s) made against the employee, will state the investigation carried out referring when necessary to appropriate documentation, and may call witnesses at any stage as part of the presentation of the

complaint. Witnesses will be called in turn, and for each witness the procedure will be:

- (a). the line manager will question the witness
- (b) The employee and/or their representative(s) will question the witness

The Disciplinary and Grievance Panel will question the witness.

The Disciplinary and Grievance Panel will ask questions of the line manager

The employee and/or their representative(s) will ask questions of the line manager about the employee's case, referring when necessary to appropriate documentation, and may call witnesses at any stage as part of the presentation of the case. Witnesses will be called in turn, and for each witness the procedure will be:

- (a) the employee and/or their representative(s) will question the witness
- (b) the line manager will question the witness
- (c) the Disciplinary and Grievance Panel will question the witness
- (d) the line manager will question the employee and/or their representative(s)

The Disciplinary and Grievance Panel will ask questions of the employee and/or their representative(s).

The immediate manager/management and the employee and/or their representative(s) will sum up their respective case, without introducing new evidence and then together with all the witnesses will withdraw.

The Disciplinary and Grievance Panel will then consider the case. The employee and the line manager will be notified verbally of the panel's decision at the end of the hearing. The decision will be confirmed in writing. The disciplinary action will remain on the employee's record for a period of 6 months it will then be removed from the employee's record subject to satisfactory conduct during this period.

The employee has the right to appeal at the end of every stage of the disciplinary hearing.

Appeals Procedure

The employee will be informed of his/her right to appeal and how to exercise that appeal, at all stages of the procedure. Appeals will be heard by an Appeals Panel. The Appeals Panel is comprised of the management committee/manager (excluding members of the Disciplinary and Grievance Panel) and the Chairperson (where the Chairperson has been involved at an earlier stage of the process). The employee may be accompanied by a representative of his/her choice at any appeal hearing.

An appeal should be made within 7 working days of the decision by notifying the chair of the Appeals Panel in writing. The appeal will be heard as soon as possible (not later than 20 working days from the receipt of the notification from the employee). The date(s) and time(s) of the appeal hearing will be agreed between the employee, their representative(s), the representative of the employer and the Panel members.

The appeal process provides the opportunity for the Appeals Panel to consider any new evidence not previously presented and to consider whether the decision of the disciplinary hearings was reasonable in the circumstances.

Conduct of Appeals Hearings

An Appeal Hearing will be conducted as follows:

The employee and/or their representative(s) will present the case in the presence of the line manager (or Disciplinary and Grievance Panel representative) outlining the grounds for the appeal and the reason(s) why he/she feels the original decision was incorrect. The employee and/or their representative(s) may call witnesses and/or may refer to any documentation as necessary. Witnesses will be called in turn and for each witness the procedure will be as follows:

(a) the employee and/or their representative(s) will question the witness

(b) the line manager will question the witness

(c) the Appeals Panel will question the witness

The line manager will ask questions of the employee and/or their representative(s). The line manager will present the case for disciplinary action in the presence of the employee and/or their representative(s) calling witnesses and referring to documentation when necessary. Witnesses shall be called on turn and the procedure is as follows

(a) the line manager will question the witness

(b) the employee and/or their representative will question the witness

(c) the Appeals Panel will question the witness

The employee and/or their representative(s) will ask questions of the line manager. The Appeals Panel will ask questions of the line manager. The line manager and the employee or representative will sum up their respective cases and then together with all the witnesses, withdraw.

The Appeals panel will consider the case on private. The decision will be verbally notified to the employee at the end of the hearing, if possible in the presence of the line manager. The decision will be confirmed in writing.

Disciplinary Procedure for Probationary Employees

The above procedure does not apply to employees within their probationary period. Such employees shall be subject to the procedures set out below:

Where the line manager considers that a probationary employee is incapable of performing, or has materially failed to perform the duties of his/her post to the required standard, the matter shall be dealt with through the system of probationary assessment.

In the case of misconduct, a probationary employee shall not be dismissed without having received on a previous occasion

two recorded warning outlining the consequences of further misconduct.

Disciplinary hearings shall not take place until the alleged misconduct has been investigated and the probationary employee is informed, in writing, of the case against him/her and given the opportunity to state their case.

Through the process, employee shall have the right to a (trade union) representative(s) or person of their choice.

The employee and representative will be allowed reasonable time in order to prepare the employee's case.

The date and time of (any) disciplinary hearing(s) shall be agreed

Sexual Harassment Policy

Staff experiencing sexual harassment should follow the procedure as outlined below;

Complaints of sexual harassment will be dealt with as quickly as possible and treated with sensitivity. Complaints will also be treated confidentially as far as possible.

Any victimisation is in itself a breach of equality legislation and will be dealt with under the disciplinary or grievance procedure as appropriate.

Management will carefully monitor the workplace following a complaint which is felt to be well founded, with particular reference to the offender's behaviour and the prevention of victimisation of the complaint. If further harassment is noted, action will be taken by management to bring it to an end.

Where a complaint is not upheld by the formal investigation, this does not necessarily indicate that the complaint was malicious. While a malicious complaint will generally be treated as misconduct under the disciplinary procedure, the application

of this provision should not in any way deter the employees from bringing forward legitimate complaints.

Health, Safety and Welfare Policy. (In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 2005)

The health safety and welfare policy of our organisation is to take all practical steps to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of all employees and of all clients and visitors to our premises, provide adequate working conditions for our employees with proper facilities to safeguard their health and safety and to ensure that any work which is undertaken produces no risks to health and safety, to encourage employees to co-operate with the organisation in all safety matters and to draw up specific health, safety and welfare policies as necessary.

As an employer under the Health Safety at Work Act 2005, you have a legal obligation to draw up a Safety Statement and display it in your service for all employees and visitors. You are also obliged to notify a Safety Officer where health and safety concerns are reported to. A risk assessment must be carried out on your premises before a sufficient Safety Statement can be drawn up. You will need to get more information from the Health and Safety Authority - www.hsa.ie

Staff Absence Policy

Regardless of grade or status, the procedures to be adhered to when availing of sick leave/annual leave or any other leave are set out below:

In the event of sick leave- informing the employer-

Employees who are unable to report for work (or someone on their behalf) should contact their line manager or ring the main office and leave a message prior to their shift starting on the first of the illness and give probable date of return to work.

Person in receipt of call must document the call and relay the message to manager/.staff member in charge.

In order to comply with the childcare regulations 2006, staff ratio must be adhered to at all times, therefore if an additional staff is required the following procedure must take place.

- (1) Contact Staff on Relief panel
- (2) Ensure all staff on panel are Garda vetted and reference checked
- (3) If at all possible contact existing staff team who may be available to cover.

Sample Dress Code /Hygiene Policy - this must be in line with Health & Safety At Work Act 2005.

- Hair must be washed regularly and long hair must be tied up, hair must be covered for food preparation.
- Limited jewellery worn while at work, i.e. wedding ring, watch and small stud earrings.
- Appropriate comfortable black trousers must be worn and maintained to a high standard of hygiene - $\frac{3}{4}$ length black trousers are appropriate in summer. Shoes must be black and low heeled, black leather trainers are also acceptable. Uniform and shoes must be maintained to a high standard of hygiene.
- Finger nails must be clean, unpolished and at an appropriate length.
- Strict hand washing must be carried according to our hand washing procedure.
- Gloves should be used as necessary.
- Make up if worn should be kept to a minimum.
- Any cuts, should be covered with a waterproof dressing.

Remember, personal hygiene affects all of us. All Staff,

Students and Volunteers should be careful of personal hygiene so as no offence is caused to others.

This is a list of other policies that should be included in a staff handbook.

- *Equal Opportunities Policy*
- *People Friendly Policy*
- *Language*
- *Harassment/Bullying - Equal Status Act 2000.*

Section 5 Guidelines for Students on Placement.

Introduction to Guidelines for Childcare Providers on Student Placements

We recognise the value of students coming to our service for work placements. Work placements provides the student with an opportunity to participate in working as part of a team, share experiences with the staff team, and develop skills, confidence and competency in caring for children and to ask questions and use the resources available to reinforce the theory learned as part of their course.

Student placement will also be benefit the service as it keeps the staff up to date with new developments in childcare training and allows the service to showcase the quality of the service they provide.

While a number of Colleges and Training Agencies have already introduced handbooks and journals for students, these guidelines have been developed to support service providers to ensure student work placements are managed in the best interest of the service and students and can be used in addition to the guidelines from the training agencies.

In order for the student & the service to get the most out of the work place, a number of steps need to be gone through. Securing a work placement should not be rushed as the time taken to prepare for the placement should ensure the student and the service get the most out of the experience.

Students should apply in writing to the service manager/ committee.

Applicants will be responded to in writing and allocated on a first come first served basis. Criteria may be applied as the service needs to ensure they can meet the training needs of the student e.g. a student may need experience with young babies therefore a placement in a preschool will be unsuitable. The service will also need to ensure they have not already gave a commitment to another student (some services may have a policy to accept only one student at any given time) the service will also wish to ensure the student will have the support of one member of staff to support/shadow/supervise them

We recommend the service Manager / Leader forward a copy of a Pre-Placement questionnaire to the student in advance of the placement and following receipt of completed questionnaire the Manager / Leader arranges a meeting with the student to discuss what the service expects from the student and what the student wishes to achieve from the time on work placement.

See next page and Appendix 14 **(Sample Pre-Placement questionnaire)**

Sample Pre-Placement questionnaire

Student's name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone number _____

Do you have any specific needs we need to be aware of to enable you to get the most out of this placement?

Course Details

Have you completed any other Childcare related courses?

Course Tutors Name

Address

Contact telephone number

Copy of Insurance Provided - Prior to commencement of placement, the college must provide a copy of the students Garda Vetting.

Yes

No

Give details of any previous childcare experience you have had with children

**What would you like to achieve from this placement,
For example:**

Is there a particular age group you wish to gain experience with

Will you need to carry out child observations?

Experience of planning and evaluating play opportunities

**What length of time will you spend with us on placement?
(If specific days of the week please specify days and times)**

Responsibilities of the Student

- Be professional in your contacts with service staff, parents, children and service users
- Keep confidential all information obtained regarding children staff and families
- Obtained permission from service Manager & Parent for any observations, information used in assignments course work carried out.
- Take responsibility for your own learning
- Participate in all tasks / activities associated with the role of childcare worker.
- Read and become familiar with Child Care Services Pre-school Regulations
- Arrive punctually
- Take direction from senior childcare staff
- Contact the childcare manager/leader if they will be unavailable to attend their placement.

Responsibility of the Childcare

Leader/manager/management to the student

- Ensure that the student has an induction period to familiarise themselves with policies, procedures, planning routine etc. The period must be identified and the student provided with access to information covering the following;

- Pre-school regulations
- Child Protection policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Layout of building
- Health and Safety issues
- Student/volunteer policy
- Dress code/hygiene policy (see appendix)
- Line

- Provide overview of service - structure, services provided, tour of the premises- named designated first aid & child protection officer

- Complete induction with the student (see appendix 2)

- Ensure the student signs off on agreement with the Policies & Procedures of the service.

- Clarify starting & finishing time expected from the student.

- Introduce student to all staff children and families,

- Share appropriate information and experiences with the student

- The service will also ensure the student will have the support of one member of staff who will be introduced to them; this staff member will agree to support and supervise the student and provide feedback on the student's progress while in the service.

- Complete and sign off on written record of the students / skills record required by the college.

- Ensure the student is clear on whom to speak to in the event of concerns or difficulties while on placement.
- Ensure the student has signed confidentiality agreement
- Sign off on agreement with the Policies & Procedures of the service
- Dress code- dress appropriately seek clarification on what dress code is appropriate students are required to ensure high standards of personal hygiene are maintained at all times.
- Keep a record of students attendance
- Support the student to all aspects of their course schedule is covered.
- Arrange regular supervision with the student.
- Ensure that the student is not left alone/unsupervised with children
- Ensure student is not required to administer medicine
- Ensure student is not required to attend to injured children
- Ensure students are not required to deal directly with parents unless supervised.