



# Users Guide

## Child Care Sector

### Interview Guide

#### Acknowledgements and Background

This User's Guide is an accompaniment to the Child Care Sector Job Descriptions developed by the HR Shared Services Partnership (HRSSP). The HRSSP acknowledges funding provided by the Province of Nova Scotia's Department of Community Services under the Voluntary Sector Professional Capacity Trust. This funding was granted in 2011 and was used to develop tools and programs to develop and promote improved human resource management capacity for the Nova Scotia child care sector.

The HRSSP was comprised of four senior Executive Directors from child care facilities across Nova Scotia. The partners worked with a human resource management consultant with complementary experience to develop materials for the Nova Scotia child care sector.

The HRSSP acknowledges the use of the Task Profile Charts containing Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Administrators. These Task Profile Charts were developed by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council.

#### Child Care Sector Recruitment and Selection Process

This guide is intended for use by Executive Directors of child care centres seeking to recruit qualified candidates for vacant positions. Most Executive Directors undertake recruitment and selection using internal resources, although some pay a fee to employment agencies to identify and refer qualified candidates for employment.

Executive Directors who undertake recruitment and selection process in-house typically adhere to the following steps.

1. Post vacant position (centre website, job banks, other print or electronic media),
2. Collect and review applicant resumes relative to the desired education, experience, skills and knowledge desired for the position and develop a long list of 5-7 qualified candidates who meet those benchmarks,
3. Conduct a brief telephone interview and based on the candidates performance, book an in-person interview (usually not more than 3-5 candidates); it can be helpful to tell job applicants the salary range for the position at this point to avoid interviewing people who may later refuse a job offer on the basis of salary,
4. Conduct an in-person interview (usually a small panel of individuals who will participate in conducting the interview, making appropriate candidate assessments and recommending the preferred candidate selection); you may wish to include a Board member and/or co-worker in the selection interview if only one interview will be conducted with the candidate,

5. A second interview may be undertaken with the leading candidate(s) to select the final candidate; this interview is often more relaxed and may include peers or other team members, and may be conducted over lunch or in a less formal setting,
6. Require that the candidate to provide copies of their relevant education and related certificates including First Aid, CPR, Child Abuse Registry Check and Criminal Record Check as per the job description; these will be added to the candidates employment file upon hire,
7. Conduct reference checks with 2-3 prior employers; ideally referees provided by candidates are direct supervisors (a Child Care Sector Reference Check guide is available at [www.nschildcareassociation.org](http://www.nschildcareassociation.org)),
8. Once all prior steps have been satisfactorily taken, make a written offer of employment and present it to the candidate in person (or electronically if required).

## Child Care Sector Interview Guides

The Child Care Sector Interview Guides were developed for the following positions that are typically found in a child care centre:

Management	Teaching	Support
Executive Director	Resource Teacher	Administrative Assistant
Assistant Director	Inclusion Coordinator	Cook
	Early Child Care Educator Level II (Degree)	
	Early Child Care Educator Level I (Diploma)	
	Child Care Worker Level I	
	Child Care Worker (untrained)	

The Child Care Sector Interview Guides are based on the Occupational Standards for Early Childhood Educators and Child Care Administrators that were developed and validated by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council (CCHRSC) and published in 2010. Since early child care centres also commonly employ an Administrative Assistant and a Cook, interview guides have also been developed for these positions. Information was provided by the HRSSP partners based on their professional experience with these jobs and the consultant provided complementary research on related requirements.

The HRSSP partners have included additional information for each position to meet the ongoing needs of early child care centres in Nova Scotia. This information is based on the partners' professional experience and consultant research on related education needs and applicable legislation.

Occupational Standards (Child Care Human Resources Sector Council)	Other Job Description Data (HR Shared Services Partnership)
Child Development and Care	Title
Human Resources	General Accountability
Finance	Education, Qualifications and Professional Certification
Equipment and Facilities	Experience
Family and Community Relations	Specialized Knowledge
Governance	Skills and Abilities
Record Keeping	Personal Characteristics
Professional Relationships	Working Conditions
Personal and Professional Development	Physical Requirements

## Purpose of the Child Care Sector Interview Guides

The Child Care Sector Interview Guides are for use by Early Child Care Executive Directors, Managers and interview panels who are responsible for recruiting and conducting selection interviews for child care sector positions. They may also be used by Boards of Directors seeking to fill Executive Director roles.

Typically, by the time a job applicant has reached the selection interview, they have already passed a careful evaluation of their education and experience and are considered to possess the minimum qualifications necessary to be successful in the position.

The purpose of the interview guides is to:

- Provide a standard outline for the selection interview which will produce more reliable and valid information than an unstructured interview and is therefore less likely to run contrary to laws and regulations governing the selection process,
- Provide a structured and organized approach to asking questions and collecting information on the applicant's job-related knowledge, skills and abilities, which should be helpful in selecting the individual most likely to be successful on the job,
- Allow for the candidate to be evaluated based upon the duties of the position, suitability to the child care centres needs and the job duties, responsibilities, and performance expectations,
- Allow interviewers to document interviewee responses and evaluation,
- Uses both traditional questions and behavioural interview techniques; when effectively done behavioural interview techniques are considered to be more accurate in predicting job performance.

## Use of the Child Care Sector Interview Guides

The Interview Guides are available for use by the Nova Scotia early child care community. They can be accessed electronically at [www.nschildcareassociation.org](http://www.nschildcareassociation.org) by child care centre Executive Directors and Managers.

The cover page to the guide has three sections:

- Basic interview information (candidate and interviewee names, date, etc)
- Overview of the interview (step-by-step process to conducting the interview)
- Candidate evaluation summary (quantifies candidate's experience and answers for each job question using a four point scale) and recommended next step (do not pursue, place on hold, pursue to reference check)

The body of the interview guide begins with general questions that allow the interviewee to provide an overview of their background. Allowing the candidate and opportunity to speak in general terms about the resume and work related goals typically helps them to relax and builds rapport early in the interview.

The interview guide proceeds into gathering specific job related questions based on the job description for each position, using behavioural based interview questions. The interview panel can select from 2 or

3 proposed questions behavioural based interview questions depending on the nature of the job requirements and the qualifications and experience of the interviewee.

Each question includes the occupational standards information that you seek to gather about each candidate. However, candidates are unlikely to demonstrate all behaviours in their answer to each question, and it is the skill of the interviewer in asking supplementary questions that will provide a robust understanding of the candidates' related experience. Interviewers must be careful to not use this information to "lead" candidates to the desired answers as this will reduce the reliability and effectiveness of the interview. Leading questions give the candidate clues to the answer you are looking for.

**1. Describe a time when you needed to use behaviour guidance with a child who was displaying undesirable behaviour. What was the situation and how did you handle it?**

*(Child Development and Care: Listen for and assess developing, implementing, enhancing and evaluating programs that facilitate the development and behaviour of children; supporting the holistic development of children; meeting health welfare and safety needs of children; implementing an inclusion policy, guiding children's behaviour to support development and protecting children from physical and emotional harm)*

In an interview, the candidate should be talking 80% of the time. By using the guide and asking the questions as outlined you should be able to sit back, document notes, and listen carefully to the candidates answers and assess qualification and fit for the job. Use follow up questions to help the candidate expand on their answers.

## Conducting Behavioural Interview Questions

Behavioural interview techniques ask candidates to describe past work-related behaviour in detail. The rationale is that recently demonstrated work behaviour is a reliable indicator of how the candidate will perform in future similar situations. There has been considerable research done to show that this is more accurate than traditional interviews. Behavioural event interviews are widely used by many leading organizations.

The STAR approach to conducting a behaviour-based interview question follow:

- S – Situation Briefly describe the situation
- T – Task What were you trying to achieve?
- A – Action What did you do to achieve your results?
- R – Results What were the results?

There are no right or wrong answers to behavioural questions. The candidate is required to provide enough information so that the interviewers can assess the candidates past behaviour and accomplishments to determine if it meets the requirements of the vacant position.

Typically, candidates will provide a short answer to the question being asked (they briefly describe the question). The interviewer can then ask further probing questions that allow the candidate to more fully describe what they were trying to achieve, what steps they undertook and what outcomes were achieved.

The Child Care Sector Interview Guides link this technique to job related duties for each job description. For example:

- Tell us about a situation that demonstrates your ability to care for children and to help them develop?
- Tell us about a time when you needed to use behaviour guidance with a child who was displaying undesirable behaviour. What was the situation and how did you handle it?

## **Making the Right Hiring Decisions**

Evaluate the final candidates against each other after you have rated the criteria to identify the best candidate based on their skills, abilities, characteristics, and fit with your organization. Ideally, the same colleagues will have participated in all candidate interviews and will contribute to the discussion on the best candidate for the vacant position.

Review your notes and make sure your decision is non-discriminatory, complies with provincial and federal legislation and that your decision is based on sound judgement. Keep all your recruitment and selection materials on file for at least two years.

Seek permission from the preferred candidate to conduct reference checks. A Users Guide for Child Care Sector Reference Checks can be accessed electronically by child care centre Executive Directors and Managers at [www.nschildcareassociation.org](http://www.nschildcareassociation.org).



# Users Guide

## Interview Guide Template

Candidate Name	
Position Title	
Interview Panel Name (s)	
Interview Date	

*Each interviewer will have an interview guide for each candidate and will take notes during the interview. The panel should decide in advance who will ask each question.*

Step	Overview of the Interview
1	<b>Open the interview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome the candidate, make them feel at ease, introduce interviewers and their roles, offer something to drink</li> </ul> <b>Mention the timeframe for the interview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The interview will take approximately 1.5 hours, if you don't understand a question or need a break let us know</li> </ul> <b>Explain goals for the position and the purpose of the interview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The _____ is a position responsible to _____.</li> </ul>
2	<b>Work-related experience and employment overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will start by asking you to spend a few minutes talking about your current and prior work-related experience.</li> </ul>
3	<b>Conduct interview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will ask you about work situations where you played a key role. We would like you to focus on situations that occurred within the past year or two as it is more reflective of how you work today and it will be easier to recall that events in the distant past.</li> </ul>
4	<b>Candidate questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After we have asked questions we will give you an opportunity to your own questions or add additional information that you consider important for us to know.</li> </ul>
5	<b>Close the interview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thank the candidate for their time and interest; tell candidate when you expect to give them an answer, decisions, reference checking, etc.</li> </ul>
6	<b>Evaluate the candidate</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate the candidate's response immediately after the interview and complete the scoring summary.</li> </ul>

Candidate Evaluation Summary	0 Not Demonstrated	1 Developing Required Skill	2 Meets Required Skill	3 Exceeds Required Skill
Grade 12 or equivalent				
Minimum one (1) year demonstrated proficiency in child care or other approved equivalent				
Current First Aid and CPR Certification; Child Abuse Registry Check; Criminal Record Check				
Child Development and Care (two questions)				
Record Keeping				
Equipment and Facilities				
Family and Community Relations				
Professional Relationships				
Personal and Professional Development				
Skills, abilities and personal characteristics (two questions)				
Self-confidence, maturity, professional communication and appearance				
Total (add columns to reach a total score ___ / 33 or build weighting if preferred)				

*Each interviewer will evaluate the candidates and discuss their assessment at the end of the interview. The panel will jointly identify the relative ranking of candidates.*

Do not pursue  
  Pursue to reference checks  
  Place on hold  
  See comments on final page