



Users Guide

Child Care Sector

Performance Review Guide

Acknowledgements and Background

This User's Guide was 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 early 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 early child care sector.

The HRSSP acknowledges the use of research and tools developed by the Child Care Human Resources Sector Council and the HR Council for the Non-profit Sector.

Performance Reviews in the Child Care Sector

Across the early child care sector, Executive Directors are placing increasingly priority on retaining early child care educators and workers. Research has shown that quality of work life is a critical component of retention because wages alone do not predict job satisfaction, turnover or the quality of care provided for children. Collegial co-worker relationships, supervisor support, decision making practices, professional growth opportunities, goal consensus, communication and general working conditions all contribute to a high quality of work life. Studies find that workers with higher levels of job satisfaction are less likely to quit than those who are dissatisfied with their jobs.

Many employers in the Child Care Sector are small organizations. Research has shown that recruiting, motivating and retaining employees is one of the biggest concerns for small organizations. Effective human resource management can lead to increased productivity, high levels of employee satisfaction and reduced employee turnover.

Human resource management practices such as performance reviews can contribute to overall job satisfaction and quality of care by demonstrating the employers' commitment to professional development and on-going learning. Encouraging employees to express their goals and views about work is good business. Performance reviews can identify opportunities to provide professional development experiences that clearly link theory and practice, and involve staff in the planning and design of an action plan leading to professional growth.

Performance management is a continuous process of planning, monitoring and reviewing employee performance. The primary goal of performance management systems is to ensure that the employees' activities are aligned with the goals of the organization, while maintaining a motivated and harmonious workforce.

The HRSSP sought to develop a performance review system that would fairly assess the performance of employees on at least an annual basis, and accomplish the following:

- Assess the employee's contribution to the operational and strategic goals of the child care centre
- Encourage a **shared** commitment to performance excellence
- Identify and address areas for improvement
- Identify professional development goals and an action plan to achieve those goals
- Consider opportunities for promotions or workplace reassignments

The HRSSP Executive Directors sought to develop an approach to performance management that emphasized the shared planning and discussion between the employer and employee. Time is a valued resource and the partners sought straightforward tools that are efficient and effective in achieving desired outcomes.

The Annual Performance Review Process

The most effective and efficient way to manage performance is to provide ongoing feedback and resolve issues and concerns as they arise throughout the year. Continuous communication ensures that employees attend the meeting knowing how their supervisor feels about their performance. This allows the annual performance review to focus on the important relationship between the supervisor and the employer, and can lead to improved employee retention.

The following steps are recommended when conducting the annual performance review.

1. Start to prepare for the meeting 2-3 weeks prior to the annual performance review meeting by completing the Performance Review Guide document for each employee. Ask the employee to review their job description and to come with their review document completed as well so that you can have a shared discussion. Your planning can include any or all of the following:
 - a. classroom observation session(s) throughout the review period,
 - b. a review of the employee's Child Care Portfolio (see Employee's Guide to the Child Care Portfolio),
 - c. 360 degree feedback (see),
 - d. Personal Development Plan (see Employee's Guide to developing a Personal Development Plan),
 - e. employee attendance and sick time during the review period.
2. Make sure you allow for adequate time in a comfortable setting. This can be a challenge given the busy nature of the early child care environment, but every effort should be made to plan for sufficient time to allow you and your employee to have a meaningful discussion.
3. Be open and flexible to changing meeting dates and times if you or the employee need to do so for some reason, but don't reschedule more than once as you are likely to give the employee the impression that the meeting is not a high priority.
4. Give each employee your full attention and make sure there are no interruptions. Don't answer the phone during the meeting and ensure that key staff members are told in advance where you will be and that you are not to be interrupted.

5. Ask the employee to provide their review of their job and performance first. Identify areas of common ground and also where there are opportunities for you to provide input to support employee development.
6. Listen carefully to ensure you understand the employee's overall personal assessment. Be willing to either confirm or change your preliminary assessment that you developed while preparing for the review.
7. Be open and stay focused on the employee and review of their performance. If there are sensitive matters related to the employee and their job, focus on the work related behaviour not the person, and identify things that can be changed or improved upon.
8. Be constructive by building on strengths and providing helpful feedback that supports improvement. If issues that arose during the year reappear, deal with them briefly as they should have been dealt with in earlier conversations.
9. Encourage personal reflection and problem solving by asking the employee to analyze their own performance, identifying development needs and strengths, and agree on actions to be taken.

Supervisors may wish to use a similar approach to conducting probationary period performance reviews.

Using the Child Care Sector Performance Review Guides

The Interview Guides are available for use by the Nova Scotia child care community. They can be accessed electronically at www.nschildcareassociation.org by child care centre Executive Directors and Managers.

The cover page to the guide has three sections:

- Basic interview information (employee and supervisor names, the performance period for which the review is being done, the date of the review, the review type, and who completed each guide)
- Overview of the interview (planning for the interview, objectives and outcomes of the interview, and a step-by-step process to conducting the interview)
- Employee evaluation summary (an overview of four key areas: Duties and Responsibilities, Specialized Knowledge and Health and Safety Standards, Skills and Abilities, Personal Characteristics) and a place to record attendance at work and sick time during the review period

The body of the interview guide is based on the Child Care Sector Job Descriptions. The guide is intended to complement ongoing performance feedback that is done throughout the year. Accordingly, the guides are user friendly and efficient to use. The body of the guide contains the following:

- Duties and Responsibilities
- Specialized Knowledge and Health and Safety Standards
- Skills and Abilities
- Personal Characteristics
- Summary of Employee Strengths and Development Opportunities
- Employee Goals for the Coming Year
- Professional Development Action Plan (initiated by the employee)
- Employee Comments, Signature and Date
- Supervisor/Manager Comments, Signature and Date

The following is a section of the Performance Review Guide. The employee and supervisor will review the duties and responsibilities in the employee's job description and provide a short assessment of the employee's abilities in this area. Based on the discussion during the review, a rating will be assigned using the four point rating scale and related evaluation criteria. The rating will be recorded on the front page of the guide.

1 Duties and Responsibilities

Refer to the job description and consider how well the employee performed the duties and responsibilities of his or her job. Assess and comment on how the employee understands and applies the methods and procedures required to perform their job during the review period.

1 Below acceptable standards	2 Developing in job	3 Meets expectations	4 Exceeds expectations
Demonstrates limited knowledge of job, does not have an acceptable level of understanding of methods/procedures; improvement is required.	Demonstrates fair knowledge of job duties and the employee is developing the skills and knowledge required to meet performance expectations for the job.	Demonstrates good job knowledge and understanding of all duties and responsibilities, results may be improved on minor job requirements with further training or experience.	Demonstrates exceptional understanding of the job, consistently exceeds all major requirements and makes a significant contribution to the success of the centre.
Requires assistance frequently	Requires general instructions	Requires assistance infrequently	Rarely requires assistance in performing the job
Is content with own existing level of skills and knowledge; responds in a set way in all situations; keeps to self; improvement is required.	Responds positively to feedback and is willingly developing the skills and knowledge required to meet performance expectations.	Developed and completed a most aspects of a professional development plan during the review period; sometimes shared learning with others.	Initiated, developed and completed a professional development plan during the review period; shared learning with other employees.
Employee's Self-Assessment		Employer's Assessment	

Continue to complete the remaining three areas using the same methodology.

- 2 Specialized Knowledge and Health and Safety Standards
- 3 Skills and Abilities
- 4 Personal Characteristics

The final page allows for writing summaries of strengths, development opportunities, goals, and action plans.

Be sure that both copies of the completed performance review guide are signed and the original is filed in the employee's confidential human resource file. Employees should be given a copy of their review so they can ensure they complete their agreed upon action plan for the coming year.