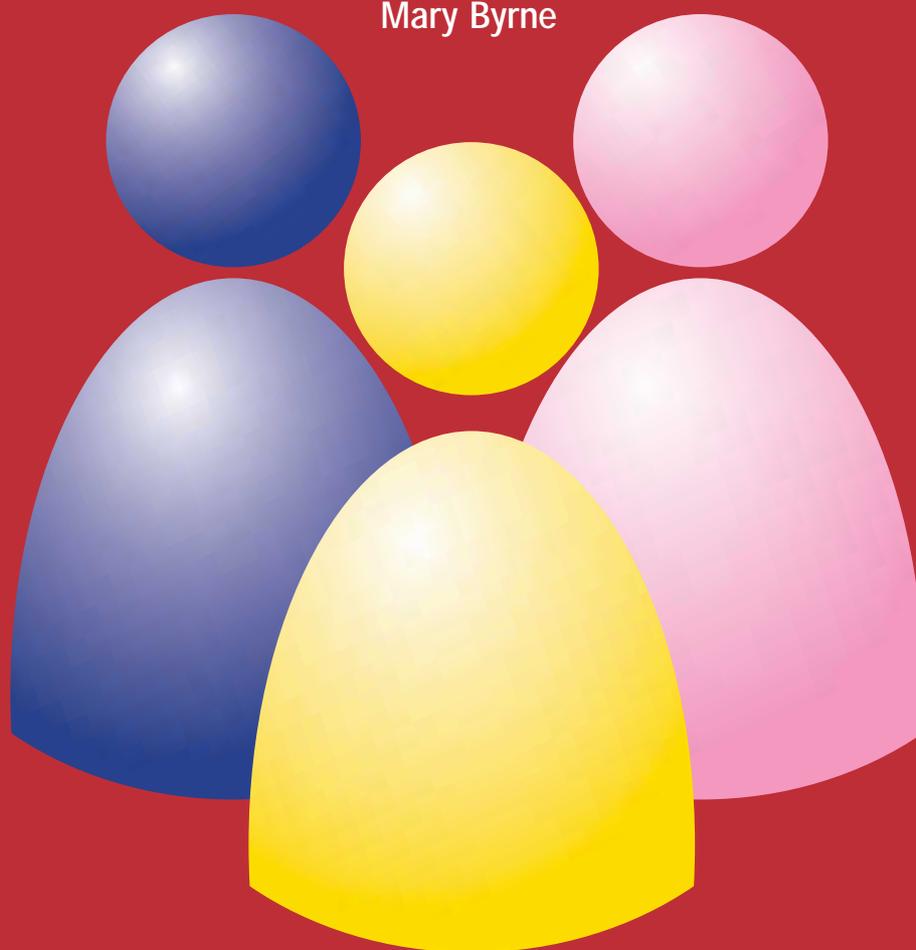# A Guide to Developing and Managing Personnel Practice in the Childcare Sector

Mary Byrne

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Researched and written by Mary Byrne

Contents

Hello, thank you for taking the time to use this *Guide to Developing and Managing Personnel Practice in the Childcare Sector*.

Being an employer is not an easy task; apart from managing and developing your service, you are responsible for the children in your care on a day-to-day basis, working with their parents, and last but not least your staff.

Most employers within the childcare sector would fall into the category of a small employer. The growth and economic boom, until recently in the working environment – and skills shortages – makes it a particular challenge then, that employers set and maintain standards of quality and best practice. These standards must also extend to the quality of staff employed and their working environments, facilitated and developed by you, their employer.

There are a number of ways that employers can ensure best practice and quality standards within personnel, and this Guide should assist you in taking the first steps. Other means of ensuring quality might include benchmarking, quality marks, ISO 9000 and Excellence Through People Awards. Services should always strive to ensure quality standards and best practice – they do need time and resources to implement, but this should not inhibit employers from striving to achieve better standards.

Managing staff, and the related employment legislation, is a complex area of work. Childcare services differ in terms of structure and delivery of services. However, the treatment of employees should not differ from service to service. Employees should be treated with respect, fairness, equality and concern for their well being.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The Guide takes you through 4 sections. The first 3 end with a checklist, so why not use them as a reference tool which you can photocopy and pin to your noticeboard.

- **Section 1** takes you through developing policies and procedures to an overview of relevant employment and childcare legislation.

- **Section 2** takes you through the recruitment and selection process.

- **Section 3** outlines structures that can be used to assist in the motivation, development, maintenance and retention of staff.

- **Section 4** poses a range of related typical questions that are often asked. Don't worry, it's not a test – we give you the answers.

The Appendices are samples only and should be used as a starting point for developing your own best practice personnel procedures. A list of sources of useful information and a bibliography are provided for further reading. Updating and training yourself in all areas of employment and childcare legislation is an essential requisite for employers, so make sure you keep yourself updated and abreast of changes or additions to these areas.

This Guide is not a comprehensive document on all areas of personnel practice. It is more an information document to assist and guide in the broad range of issues pertaining to the employment and retention of staff.

Note: The term *manager* as used throughout the booklet refers to anyone in a supervisory role. The term *service* is used rather than *organisation*.

Staff are a key requisite for any employer in the delivery of their service. Perhaps even more so in the childcare sector where staff need to respond effectively to the needs of children and their parents. Lane (1999) suggests that "best practice" in this area would recommend that investment in good employment policies and procedures are necessary to ensure that:

• The most suitable staff are recruited and selected
• The foundations and systems are in place to facilitate staff to work effectively

With the current and continuing development of EU employment legislation employees will continue to have more entitlements. It is imperative therefore that employers keep themselves briefed and ensure they develop policies and procedures in line with these entitlements for their employees.

Employers need to meet legislative requirements both in terms of the delivery of a childcare service and also in terms of employees' entitlements. So not only should there be a concern for the children but also for the people working within the service.

Concern for people suggests taking an ethical approach to their management. Winstanley and Stuart-Smith (1996) suggest the following ethical principles:

• Respect for the individual – giving people a voice
• Mutual respect – establishing communities of interest in organisations and reconciling conflicts arising from poor communications
• Procedural fairness – covering all aspects of the ways in which people are treated
• Transparency – opening up and explaining management's proposals, decisions and procedures

This type of approach is reflected in the information outlined in the various sections of this booklet.

This section looks at:

• Developing policies and procedures for your service
• Key policies and procedures to develop
• Keeping written records
• Overview of relevant employment legislation
• Relevant related childcare legislation

1.1 POLICIES & PROCEDURES

1.1.1 Policies

Policies are a course of action adopted or proposed by a service or individual on various issues. They help to ensure that a consistent approach in line with corporate values is adopted throughout the service. They provide frameworks within which consistent decisions are made.

1.1.2 Procedures

A procedure spells out precisely what action is to be taken in line with policy, and outlines the steps or the way of performing a task. A procedure can be seen as a series of actions conducted in a certain order or manner – the way of performing a task, steps to be taken and the manner in which they should be followed.

Procedures can reduce the need for waiting for decisions, provide consistency and autonomy, and improve management control.

1.1.3 Putting Policies Together

The development of policies and input into the how, why and what should involve all staff. The manager can lead this process or an external consultant can be used. Ensuring that policies are developed for all areas of work is important. The following areas are some suggestions:
- Childcare
- Personnel
- Management and Administration
- Health and Safety
- Publicly funded labour market schemes i.e. Community Employment, jobs initiative schemes, if appropriate

The policies and procedures should be written to suit the individual work place. They should be clearly written, well presented and easily understandable by all staff and parents. Where staff have been involved in the development and construction of policies and procedures there is a sense of ownership and commitment to the documents.

As an employer within the childcare sector you have a relationship with the children and parents of your service and also your staff. It is your responsibility as an employer to develop policies and procedures that will ensure the delivery of an open, efficient, clear and quality service.

Not having policies and procedures can give rise to problems and sometimes mis-management. Having clear, coherent, well-communicated policies and procedures will assist in establishing the credibility of your service and ensuring your staff know:
- In relation to the service – what, why, where, how and when to do things
- In relation to employees – their legislative entitlements, their terms and conditions of employment and other entitlements within the service they are employed in

The development of policies and procedures can be a time-consuming project – but once completed will prove to be an invaluable tool to your service.

1.2   KEY AREAS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES & PROCEDURES

1.2.1   Grievance

A grievance procedure provides the employee with an opportunity to resolve a genuine grievance about any aspect of their employment. The procedure should be clear, simple, fair and reasonable. An employee has a right to a hearing by their immediate supervisor or other management personnel if appropriate, and this should be conducted as speedily as possible. If an employee is unhappy with the outcome of the hearing then they should have the right to appeal to a more senior manager.

An employee has a right to be accompanied by a colleague or appropriate representative at the hearing.

In the event of a matter not being resolved at the internal stage then the matter should be referred through the usual industrial relations process. A **Sample Grievance Procedure** is outlined in *Appendix 1.*

1.2.2   Discipline

Breach of the service's procedures, poor work performance, or breaking terms of a contract may lead – depending on the seriousness of the matter – to a disciplinary procedure being invoked. This could be an informal or formal warning, suspension from work with or without pay, or transfer to other duties. Continued breaches may lead – following continued warnings – to dismissal. Serious breaches may lead – following consideration by the service – to summary dismissal or to suspension pending an investigation.

At all stages of the disciplinary process a full investigation should be carried out. The employee should have an opportunity to put their case forward and a colleague or appropriate representative should accompany them. The employee should be allowed the right to appeal against any decision made against them.

Warnings should:
•   be given in writing
•   state the reason for the warning
•   state what the appropriate behaviour, procedure or performance required is
•   state the duration of the warning
•   confirm that the warning will be placed on the employee's personnel file
•   two copies should be given to the employee, one to keep themselves and one to sign and return for placement on their personnel file

In some situations the employee may require additional training and/or support to achieve the acquired behaviour, procedure or performance. In these circumstances the situation should be monitored to ensure the employee is reaching the required standard.

Should an employee be dismissed they may take the matter through the usual industrial relations process. A **Sample Discipline Procedure** is outlined in *Appendix 2.*

1.2.3   Bullying/Harassment and Sexual Harassment

Bullying or harassment can damage the health and well being of individuals and groups of staff. It can create an environment in the workplace which damages morale and hinders effective work performance. Such behaviour is not acceptable, and may be unlawful.

Policies should:
• Include a description of bullying/harassment and sexual harassment
• Include examples of bullying/harassment and sexual harassment
• Refer to the Employment Equality legislation and the nine points under which the employer is obliged to ensure there is no discrimination or harassment (*See p.24*)
• Outline what to do if you are being bullied/harassed
• Outline complaints – informal and formal – procedure
• Include preventative measures
• State how to make a formal complaint in writing
• State how the disciplinary procedure may be used following investigations

As a result of the recommendations of the Task Force on the Prevention of Workplace Bullying, a Dignity in the Workplace Charter was published by the Dept. of Enterprise Trade and Employment. The Charter is available from the Bullying Response Unit in the Health and Safety Authority. (*See Sources of Information*)

1.2.4   Probationary Period

All new employees should be subject to probationary periods. This may vary in length from three to six to twelve months. However, good practice would suggest that probationary periods be kept to under the one-year period. As a dismissal under the Unfair Dismissals Act, 1977-1993 cannot be taken by an employee if the period is less than a year, it is not covered under the terms of the Act. An employee may also have their probationary period extended at the discretion of their manager. This usually happens when an employee has not quite achieved a satisfactory period of probation. Perhaps they have been on sick leave, or they have to undertake further training.

1.2.5   Recruitment & Selection

A policy in this area will ensure the adoption of equal opportunities practice in recruitment and selection and is simply good employment practice. *Section 2* is devoted to aspects of recruitment and selection and should assist in the development of a policy in this area.

1.2.6   Health & Safety

Employers have a number of legal responsibilities under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989. The key responsibilities are:

• provision of general duties of the employer and the employee
• provision of a safety statement
• making arrangements for safety consultation
• accident reporting requirements

In relation to childcare providers, other areas that should be given consideration are:

• Child protection policy (*see below*)
• Safe working procedures for children and staff
• First aid training
• Food hygiene and nutrition
• Fire safety
• Premises indoors/outdoors
• General hygiene
• Prevention of illness

The Health & Safety Authority provides useful information leaflets (*See Sources of Useful Information*).

1.2.7   Family Friendly Policies

Family friendly policies or work life balance policies are being advocated as good practice within the day-to-day working life of people. Examples of these initiatives include part-time work, flexible/personalised hours, job sharing, compressed working week and annual hours. As an employer, you can promote such initiatives so that they can be seen and used as provision of best practice. All of the social partners promote the initiation of family friendly initiatives (*See Sources of Useful Information*).

1.2.8   Child Protection

The Department of Health 1999 guidelines *Children First: National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* should refer in this area. The guidelines are to assist people in the identification of child abuse and the relevant reporting procedures. The guidelines should be developed into policies for individual services and services should link with relevant local health boards.

Childcare providers should remember when developing policies that consideration is given to the procedures should a member of staff be subject to an allegation of abuse. The procedure to adopt in relation to an allegation of abuse against a member of staff should be separate to the procedure in relation to the mandatory reporting, and the principles of natural justice should apply to the employee. This is an area where appropriate advice should be sought if such circumstances arise. French (2000) outlines a comprehensive section on Child Protection, which considers the following areas:

- Principles for best practice
- Legal context
- Co-operation with parents
- Confidentiality
- Follow up with health board
- Inter-agency and inter-professional co-operation
- Duty to care
- Definitions of child abuse
- Recognising child abuse
- Response to a child disclosing child abuse
- Response to suspicion of child abuse
- Response to allegations
- Standard reporting procedures
- Working with families
- Developing a child protection policy and procedure

1.2.9   Other Areas

Services might wish to consider the development of polices and procedures around the following suggested areas, if appropriate:

Dress Code	Timekeeping	Sick Leave	Jury Service	Trade Union Membership
Lieu Time or Overtime	Annual Leave	Unpaid Leave	Public Holidays	No Smoking
Travel Allowances	Expenses	Compassionate Leave	Email & Internet Use	Staff Training & Development
Staff Performance Appraisals	Payment of Wages	Working Week Hours	Mobile Phones	Career Breaks

1.2.10   Custom and Practice

Custom and practice may have evolved in the childcare service around certain issues and procedures. This area should not be ignored in the writing up of policies and procedures but rather documented appropriately, and if necessary negotiate changes required.

1.2.11   Recording/Written Records

Employees' files should be kept in locked filing cabinets and should be confidential. This practice should also apply to children's files. Best practice would advocate that staff have access to their own personnel files.

Employment legislation requires that records be kept with regard to annual leave, statutory sick pay, maternity pay, parental leave and force majeure leave, as well as records of tax and PRSI returns. This information needs to be kept for a number of years.

Keeping simple and clear records is imperative with regard to any area of employment legislation – particularly grievance and discipline procedures. A good practice to get into is to write up notes of meetings, matters discussed, and support and supervision sessions (*See Section 3*). Date and sign the written record and give a copy to the employee. A copy should also be placed on the employee's personnel file or on their support and supervision file, as appropriate.

Remember, records should be factual, giving attention to what was done and said, and avoid making assumptions.

1.3   LEGISLATION

The following information is a broad, general outline only of some of the more regular legislation which applies to employees and of which employers should be aware. Detailed information on all legislation may be obtained by contacting the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (*See Sources of Useful Information*).

The following legislative information is based on information booklets from the Department of Trade, Enterprise and Employment and information leaflets from the Irish Business Employers Confederation (IBEC).

1.3.1   The Minimum Notice And Terms Of Employment Act, 1973-1991

The Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act, 1973 as amended by the Worker Protection (Regular Part-Time Employees) Act, 1991 covers employers and employees who normally work a minimum of 8 hours per week and have 13 weeks or more continuous service. There are certain categories that this Act does not apply to.

An employee's notice depends on the length of their continuous service and outlines the required minimum notice for terminating their employment, and also the rights of the employees and employers regarding periods of notice.

Length of Service	Minimum Period of Notice
13 weeks-2 years	1 week
2-5 years	2 weeks
5-10 years	4 weeks
10-15 years	6 weeks
15 years and over	8 weeks

Continuous service is usually calculated from the date of commencement of employment to date of termination. There are situations where continuity of service will/will not be broken. Length of service is calculated where an employee is expected to work 8 hours or more.

An employer or employee may waive the right to notice and an employee may accept payment in lieu of notice. If an employee accepts payment in lieu of notice the date of termination will be the date on which the notice would have expired. This option should be cited in contracts of employment.

1.3.2   Unfair Dismissals Act, 1977-1993

This Act covers employees working at least 8 hours a week and having more than 1 year's continuous service and who are aged 16-66. The dismissal is deemed to be unfair until the employer proves otherwise. There are three forms of redress that the Unfair Dismissals Tribunal may apply to employees where dismissal is proven unfair.
*   Re-instatement in the job with no loss of pay
*   Re-engagement in the employment on terms determined by the Tribunal
*   Compensation (by the employer) of an amount of up to 2 years' remuneration

The Act requires that the employee must make a written claim within 6 months of the dismissal or, in exceptional circumstances, 12 months. This Act is relevant when dealing with contracts of employment, which are fixed term and specific purpose contracts. According to the Act:
*   A probationary period cannot be extended beyond 12 months.
*   An employer must give written notice of any agreed or established dismissal procedure to every employee within 28 days of starting work. Any alteration of the procedure must also be notified in writing within a 28-day period.

1.3.3   Terms Of Employment (Information) Act, 1994

The Act applies to employees working more that 8 hours per week for the same employer, having service of 1 month or more and employed:
*   Under a contract of service or apprenticeship
*   Under a contract with an employment agency to work for a third party
*   In services of the State, Garda Síochána, Defence or Civil Service
*   In services of Local Authority, Health Board or VEC

The purpose of the Act is to give the minimum information requirements that an employer must provide to an employee in a written statement.

Contracts that are issued on or after 16 May 1994 must be given, not later than 2 months following the commencement date by the employer, in writing. The details that should be covered in a contract of employment are outlined in *Section 2*.

If an employee has been in employment prior to 16 May 1994 and requests a written statement of the terms/conditions of employment this must be provided within 2 months of the request.

Some employers provide terms and conditions of employment and policies and procedures of the service in a Company Handbook.

Any changes in the employee's terms/conditions should also be confirmed in writing. Obviously it is good practice to do this before the changes happen but it should happen not later than 1 month after the changes have been implemented. Records should be kept for the duration of the employee's employment and for a further 1 year after leaving.

1.3.4   Payment Of Wages Act, 1991

A change in the method of payment of wages can only be made with the prior consent of the employee.

An employer may not make a deduction from an employee unless the deduction is required or authorised (i.e. tax/PRSI under statute or legislation) under the employee's contract or is made with the prior consent of the employee. This also applies to receipt of any payment from an employee.

Reminder: The Euro will become legal tender with effect from 1 January 2002. There will be a dual transition period from 1 January 2002 to 9 February 2002. Have you made the necessary changes?

1.3.5   The National Minimum Wage Act, 2000

This Act provides a set minimum rate of pay for employees. The current rate is £4.70 per hour (effective 1 July 2001) and will increase to £5.00 per hour (effective from 2 October 2002). This rate applies to experienced adult workers.

The Act provides for three sub-minimum rates in the following circumstances:
1. Under 18: 70% of the minimum hourly rate
2. Job entrant rate: over 18 years entering employment for the first time. The employee is entitled to 80% of the minimum hourly rate in the first year and not less than 90% in the second year of employment
3. Trainee rate: an employee who is 18 years and is undertaking a course of study within the workforce or outside during normal working hours:
   • For the first $1/3$ period (but not exceeding twelve months) of the total study or training period - 75%
   • In respect of the second $1/3$ period (but not exceeding twelve months) of the total study or training period - 80%
   • In respect of the third $1/3$ period (but not exceeding twelve months) of the total study or training period - 90%

In relation to Point 3, further information on the types of course that qualify should be accessed under the National Minimum Wage (Prescribed Courses of Study or Training) Regulations, 2000.

Employers are obliged to keep records for a three-year period to ensure that they are meeting the requirements of the Act.

1.3.6 Organisation Of Working Time Act, 1997 Section III - (Holidays/Annual Leave And Public Holidays)

Statutory leave entitlement is 20 days since 1 April 1999.

A new employee has no legal entitlement to annual leave until they have built up entitlement by having worked the necessary hours. However, an employer may grant annual leave to new employees if they so wish. The employer may chose only to grant the days to which an employee has built up entitlement. Alternatively, the employer may grant leave on the understanding that should the employee leave before they have worked up the entitlement then a deduction can be made from salary for the holidays taken though not worked up. This should be given in writing and is usually covered in a contract of employment (*See Section 2 and Appendix 11*).

Some childcare services provide a greater annual leave entitlement than the statutory minimum, e.g. 23 or 25 days annual leave.

1.3.7 Statutory Calculation of Annual Leave Entitlements

• Where staff are working more that 1,365 hours in a leave year they are entitled to 4 working weeks (i.e. 20 days) annual leave.

• If the number of hours worked by an employee is less than 1,365 hours annual leave must be calculated on a monthly basis as follows:

Where staff work at least 117 hours in a month they are entitled to $1/3$ of a working week for that month.

Where staff work less than 117 hours they are entitled to 8% of the hours worked in the leave year, subject to a maximum of 20 days (4 working weeks) per annum.

Note: Some employees will fall within each of the last 2 entitlements. Whichever calculation provides the employee with the greater entitlement should be applied (subject to the 4 working weeks maximum).

1.3.8 Pro Rata Entitlement
Some services use a straight pro rata entitlement to calculate part-time staff holiday entitlement. This can be calculated in the following way:
An employee works 4 days a week.
Full entitlement is 20 days.
20 ÷ 5 x 4 = 16 days.

1.3.9   Public Holidays

There are nine official holidays as follows:
- 1 January
- St Patrick's Day
- Easter Monday
- First Monday in May
- First Monday in June
- First Monday in August
- Last Monday in October
- Christmas Day
- St Stephen's Day

Note: Under the 1997 Act there is no longer an automatic provision to give the following Monday when the public holiday falls on a Sunday (New Year's Day, St Patrick's Day, Christmas Day, St Stephen's Day). It will be given at the discretion of the employer who may continue to give the Monday or one of the following.

- A paid day off on the public holiday

Or

- A paid day off within a month

Or

- An extra day's annual leave

Or

- An extra day's pay

Under the 1997 legislation, the employee may request, not later than 21 days before the public holiday, confirmation of which option the employer will apply. If the employer fails to respond within 14 days of the public holiday, the employee will automatically be entitled to a paid day off on the public holiday.

1.3.10   Payment for Public Holidays

Employees who work or who are normally required to work on a public holiday will be entitled to a day's pay for the public holiday.

Employees who are not normally required to work on a public holiday will be entitled to one fifth of the normal weekly rate of remuneration for the public holiday.

If the employee ceases to be employed during the week ending on the day before a public holiday, having worked during the 4 weeks preceding that week, they will be entitled to receive pay for the public holiday.

1.3.11   Absences from Work

Annual Leave – absences from work may reduce the employee's entitlement to annual leave. Please refer to amount of hours worked in year for entitlement to annual leave.

Public Holidays – there are situations when an employee may lose their entitlement to public holidays.

Note: Employees on maternity or adoptive leave maintain their entitlement to public holidays for the duration of their absence.

1.3.12   Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 (Rest Periods)

Employees are entitled to:
*   A break of 15 minutes for every $4^1/_2$ hours worked

And
*   A break of 30 minutes for every 6 hours worked

Not both.

Employers should be aware if they have a part time employee who is working elsewhere that their accumulative hours do not exceed 48 hours.

Where employees may be working in 2 employments they are entitled to be paid under public holiday entitlement by both employers should they meet the criteria.

1.3.13   Maternity Leave Act, 1994 (amended from 8 February 2001)

This Act covers statutory maternity leave and has recently been amended. The statutory entitlement is 18 weeks, together with entitlement to a further 8 weeks unpaid leave.

Under this Act employees are required to give the employer at least 4 weeks written notice of their intention to take maternity leave together with confirmation from their GP or hospital. An employee must advise the employer of their return to work in writing 4 weeks before they are expected to return to work.

1.3.14   Adoptive Leave Act, 1995 (amended from 8 February 2001)

This Act has also recently been amended with increased entitlements. The Act applies to: adopting mothers under a contract of employment; all sole male adopters under a contract of employment; all adopting fathers under a contract of employment where the adopting mother has died before or during the period of adoptive leave or additional adoptive leave.

1.3.15 Safety, Health & Welfare At Work Act, 1989 & Safety, Health & Welfare At Work (General Application) Regulations, 1993

Under this Act there are statutory duties imposed on employers and employees. Section 12(1) of the Act requires each and every employer to prepare a written safety statement. A safety statement is the employer's statement, in writing, as to how, by what resources and who is responsible to ensure the safety, health and welfare of its employees. It is based on the systematic identification of hazards that exist in the workplace and the assessment of the risks associated with them. It outlines the necessary practices and resources to meet the requirements of the statement and employees are required to co-operate fully with the statement.

1.3.16 Health & Safety Benefit

A pregnant employee or an employee who has recently given birth or an employee who is breastfeeding may be eligible to apply for this benefit if they are exposed to risk to their health and safety as defined in the European Communities (Social Welfare) Regulations, 1994 (No. 312 of 1994). These Regulations specify the agents, processes and working conditions which may constitute a risk or employees who are required to perform night work and their doctor has certified that it is necessary for their health and safety that they don't perform such work and it is not technically or objectively feasible for the employer to remove the risk or adapt the working conditions/hours or move the employee to suitable alternative work.

1.3.17 Parental Leave Act, 1998

This Act entitles an employee who is the natural or adoptive parent of a child to take unpaid leave from their employment for a period of 14 working weeks to take care of their child. The entitlement to parental leave will apply to a child born on or after June 3 1996*. There are also various criteria, which the employee must meet to be eligible for parental leave.

An employee may request to take parental leave in a number of ways: a continuous period of 14 weeks or, with the agreement of the employer, one or more days at a time or a combination of hours. An employee who is entitled to parental leave with regard to more than one child (except in the case of multiple births) will only be entitled to 14 weeks leave in a 12-month period, unless the employer agrees otherwise.

Multiple births – the entitlement is 14 weeks per child.

Part-time employees may take parental leave, however, they must have 1 year's continuous service in order to qualify for leave. The leave is calculated based on the number of hours worked in the previous 14-week period.

Annual leave entitlement is retained for employees on parental leave.

*Parents of children born between December 3 1993 and June 2 1996 will now be entitled to parental leave under this arrangement. Prior to this amendment, parental leave only applied to parents of children born on or after June 3 1996, provided that the leave is used up by the time

the child reaches their fifth birthday. Parents of adopted children will also be entitled to parental leave in cases where an adoptive order was made between December 3 1993 and June 2 1996 for children born and adopted between December 3 1993 and June 2 1996. A date of 31 December 2001 has been set as the date by which parents who lost out on parental leave must use up that entitlement notwithstanding that some of the children concerned will be over the age of 5 years by that date.

Note: There are various criteria regarding the administration of the request for parental leave, which must be followed. A sample of forms may be obtained from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

1.3.18   Force Majeure Leave – Section 13 of the Parental Leave Act, 1998 and Parental Leave (Notice Of Force Majeure Leave) Regulations

An employee is entitled to leave with pay for urgent family reasons, owing to an injury or illness to one of the following persons:
- Person to whom the employee is a parent or adoptive parent
- Spouse of an employee or common law person
- Person to whom the employee is loco parentis
- Brother or sister
- Parent or grandparent
- Other where relevant

The interpretation appears to be that in this situation the employee's presence is imperative. As soon as is reasonably practicable, notice of force majeure leave should be given to the employer. This notice should contain details of why the employee needed to take the force majeure leave.

Employees will be entitled to up to 3 days paid force majeure leave in a 12-month period or up to 5 days in a 36-month period. An employee who takes part of a working day will be seen to have taken 1 day's entitlement.

Note: There are various criteria regarding the administration of the request for force majeure leave, which must be followed. A sample of the form may be obtained from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

1.3.19   The Employment Equality Act, 1998

The Employment Equality Act, 1998 describes discrimination as the treatment of one person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated. This can be either through direct or indirect discrimination.

Equal opportunity is about making sure that the workplace is free from all forms of discrimination or harassment on the grounds of:
- Gender
- Marital status

- Family status
- Sexual orientation
- Religious belief
- Age
- Disability
- Race
- Membership of the Traveller community

Equal opportunities can be defined as the removal of barriers – obvious or hidden – which prevent individuals from using their skills and experience or from developing their potential. It also means the development in the workplace of a culture that values differences, respects all of its members and maintains a culture in which everyone is treated with dignity. A detailed summary of the Employment Equality Act, 1998 is available from the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform *(See Sources of Useful Information)*.

1.3.20   Juries Act, 1976

Section 29 of this Act applies whereby employees are provided with paid leave during their period of absence from the work place to attend jury duty. There are some circumstances whereby an employer may be able to request that an employee is not released from work to undertake jury duty.

1.3.21   Other Relevant Employment Legislation

Anti-Discrimination (Pay) Act, 1974
Conditions of Employment Acts, 1939 and 1944
Freedom of Information Act, 1997
Industrial Relations Act, 1990
Pensions Act, 1990
Protection of Employees (Employer's Insolvency) Acts, 1984-1991
Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act, 1977
Redundancy Payments Acts, 1967-1991
Worker Participation (State Enterprises) Acts, 1977-1993

Note: Employment legislation is continually being revised and developed. European Union Directives on employment rights will continue to be issued – all of which, in time, the Irish Government must implement, usually by a specific date as outlined under the Directive. Detailed information on all aspects of employment legislation may be obtained from The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment Information Section (*See Sources of Useful Information*).

1.4   NEW LEGISLATION

1.4.1   Carers Act, 2001
This recently enacted legislation will allow employees to take time off to care for people deemed relevant by the Department of Social Community and Family Affairs. There is an allowance of a total of 65 weeks that may be taken. However, any time taken after 13 weeks will not be allowed as reckonable service for annual leave entitlement.

1.4.2   Protection of Employees (Part-Time Work) Act, 2001
This Act, which provides for the removal of discrimination against part-time workers, was enacted in December 2001. It aims to improve the quality of part-time work, to facilitate the development of part-time work on a voluntary basis, and to contribute to the flexible organisation of working time in a manner which takes into account the needs of employers and employees.

1.5   RELEVANT LEGISLATION IN THE CHILDCARE SECTOR

The following information is relevant to those who are childcare providers:
*   The Child Care Act, 1991
*   The Child Care (Pre-school Services) Regulations, 1996
    *   The following Regulations are also relevant:
        *   Articles 9, 11, 10.2, 31.1
    *   The following Sections are also relevant:
        *   Section 49, 51, 53, 58.

*   Insurance - Section 30 of the Child Care (Pre-school Services) Regulations
    *   Areas covered include employer's liability, public liability, motor insurance, fire and theft.

*   The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989

*   The Local Government (Planning & Development) Acts, 1963-1999

Source: French, G (2000) *Supporting Quality: Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Services.* Dublin: Barnardos' NCRC

See *Sources of Useful Information* for further information.

1. Do you remember the ethical approach to managing people?

2. Have you started to think about, engage your team, and develop policies and procedure documents?

3. Have you developed a child protection policy?
   Remember, there are two procedures that should be followed if an allegation is made against a staff member:
   a) mandatory reporting – report the incident of alleged child abuse and
   b) if the allegation is made against an employee follow the appropriate procedure which should encompass the rules of natural justice and have due regard to employment legislation.
   Get Help!

4. Are you familiar with the relevant employment legislation?

5. Are you familiar with the relevant childcare legislation?

6. If you have to deal with a grievance or discipline procedure don't forget, the rules of natural justice must be applied.

7. Have you remembered to record things in writing, date them, give your employee a copy and keep a copy on file?

8. Are you keeping records of your staff's annual leave, statutory sick pay, parental leave, force majeure leave, record of minimum wage, tax and PRSI returns?

9. Have you thought about how you will review and update your policies and procedures in the light of any updated or new legislation?

10. Do you have a health and safety statement?

Perhaps the most important of all the personnel functions is the recruitment and selection of staff – without staff you cannot operate your service. If employees are seen as the most vital resource of a service, then securing that resource is a crucial step in contributing to the success of the service.

Effective recruitment is the key to the successful functioning of any service. Finding the people with the necessary skills, expertise and qualifications to meet the service's aims and objectives is dependent on successful recruitment. It is the manager's responsibility to recruit and select the best candidate for the job.

Other key points regarding recruitment and selection within a childcare service are:
• Having written policies and procedures which are communicated to all staff and parents
• Recruitment and selection systems which are fair, consistent and valid
• Acknowledging all applications, where possible, ensuring they are treated confidentially with access only to those who are involved in the recruitment process

The Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) recognises that children and young people are a vulnerable section of the population and that employers need to exercise vigilance and rigour in their recruitment of staff. The CIPD (1999) comment that "there is no substitute for comprehensive, consistent and rigorous recruitment and selection checks and procedures. Employers must tighten up their selection and recruitment procedures to ensure maximum care is taken when seeking staff to work with children".

The key message then for those with responsibility for recruiting people working with children is that consistency, rigour and thoroughness in applying the checks and procedures, each and every time, is paramount. Employers must not shirk their task of asking demanding, probing and difficult questions of applicants. Lack of time, resources or money must not tempt employers into circumventing best practice in recruitment and selection.

This Section takes you through the following stages in the recruitment and selection process:
• Preparing for the Recruitment and Selection Process
• Job Description
• Person Specification
• Qualifications
• Advertising the Job
• Processing Applications
• Planning the Interview Programme
• Planning the Interview Process
• References
• Medical/Garda Checks
• Appointment – Contract of Employment
• Introducing DAISE
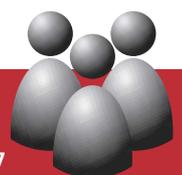
2.1   PREPARING FOR THE RECRUITMENT & SELECTION PROCESS

Recruitment is the process of seeking applicants for a job vacancy. Selection is the process of choosing the successful applicant. Therefore the task for the employer is to recruit and select the best candidate for the position. Planning, care, time and attention are essential for all childcare services in their recruitment process.

Before you start the process, take a sheet of paper and define your requirements. Answer the questions set out below and add any others you might feel are appropriate.

- Why are you taking on an employee?
- What will the rate of pay for your staff be? Have you included employer's PRSI and other relevant costs? Will pay be subject to an incremental scale and/or any national wage agreements? Don't forget about the minimum wage.
- What will the cost of the recruitment and selection process be?
- What obligations must you meet as an employer?
- What kind of an employer do you want to be?
- How many staff does the service need?
- Will the job be full-time or part-time, permanent, fixed term, specified purpose or temporary?
- Have you thought through what exactly the role will be of your new employee? What skills and abilities will they need to perform their job effectively?
- What are the terms and conditions of employment for the job?

Considering this list of the key areas will be of assistance to you in compiling a job description and person specification. *Appendix 3* contains a **Job Analysis Guide**.

This might be a good time to take the step of developing a recruitment and selection policy. If you are embarking on this process don't forget to write your policy in compliance with equal opportunities guidelines. Why not use the **Sample Recruitment & Selection Policy** outlined in *Appendix 4* as a starting point and develop, amend and adapt as appropriate to your service?

2.2   JOB DESCRIPTION

The job description outlines the basic details of the job. It usually includes the job title, reporting relationships, location, the main activities or tasks of the job and any other particular requirements. A job description should be a description of the job and just that, not the person you want to do it.

The usual format of a job description is:
- Name and address of employer
- Job title
- Location
- Who s/he will be responsible for

- Who s/he will be responsible to
- Job purpose
- Key activities or tasks

Key terms and conditions for the job can be included either before the key activities or tasks or at the end. Areas that should be included so the candidate has as much information as possible are:
- Hours and days of work
- Salary range
- Whether job is permanent/temporary/full-time/part-time or publicly funded labour market scheme, e.g. Community Employment or jobs initiative
- Annual leave

Some services provide this information on a separate sheet together with a short background history to the service. Having a well-defined job description, person specification and information note about your service means the more attractive you will appear as a good employer to your prospective candidates. It also gives the potential applicants specific information on the nature of the job and the role within the service.

When an employee leaves the service, don't forget to revisit your job description for the position and do a re-assessment. Are the duties still relevant? Do you need to make any changes? If the post was full-time does it still require a full-time position? Could it be advertised as a job sharing position? Would one or two part-time positions be more appropriate?

Appendix 5 contains a **Sample Job Description**.

2.3   PERSON SPECIFICATION

A person specification should be drawn up for each particular job description. A person specification specifies the range of requirements and abilities to undertake the job in question. It may be useful to begin by compiling a list of essential and desirable requirements. Decide what is essential and what is desirable for the job. For example, don't state under qualifications that a B.A. in Childcare is essential, when a Diploma in Childcare may be the essential qualification with a higher-level qualification as desirable. Make sure that whatever you put as an essential requirement is indeed such. Ensure that you don't set unjustifiably high standards as you may be asked to verify your decision.

A person specification involves preparing a description of:
- Education
- Training
- Qualifications
- Skills
- Knowledge

- Experience and competence/competencies
- Personal qualities

Appendix 6 contains a **Sample Person Specification**.

2.4   QUALIFICATIONS

Childcare qualifications will vary in each childcare service. The important thing to remember is that if you specify a certain level of qualification it must be justifiable. At present in Ireland there are no specific requirements under legislation for childcare training.

Article 7 of the Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations, 1996 states that "A person carrying on a child care service shall ensure that a sufficient number of competent adults are supervising the pre-school children in the service at all times". A competent adult is described in the explanatory guide accompanying the Regulations, as "a person who has an appropriate qualification in child care and is a suitable person to care for children".

Since 1999, a number of new childcare structures have been established through the Expert Working Group on Childcare. These have been established to endeavour to bring a more formal structure to the whole childcare area. One of these structures is entitled the Certifying Bodies Sub Group. The function of this group is to develop an agreed framework encompassing all levels of childcare training. The group is looking at all levels of childcare training and will incorporate Accredited Prior Learning (APL) into the framework.

All of these new childcare structures have been endorsed by the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) and the National Development Plan (NDP). The PPF is the National Agreement for the period 2000-2003 agreed by the Government and various social partners. The NDP covers the period 2000-2006 and is a plan for the investment of £40 billion in infrastructure, human resources, industry, regional development and peace and reconciliation within Ireland. The European Union Structural and Cohesion Funds will provide 7% of the funding for this plan with the remainder coming from the Irish Exchequer.

The development of the structures – particularly the Certifying Bodies Sub-Group – is seen as a very positive step by those involved in childcare. Research cites that young children who are cared for by adults with specialised training do better on measures of social and cognitive development and that staff provided more sensitive and appropriate caregiving. (Centre for Social and Educational Research, DIT 1998.)

Appendix 7 contains a list of **possible qualifications for childcare staff**.

2.5   ADVERTISING THE JOB

If you reached this point you should have your Job Description, Person Specification and perhaps an Information Note, if appropriate. So where do you go from here? You need to decide what are the most appropriate means of advertising your job.

Of course you can always decide to use a recruitment agency, a childcare consultant or a personnel consultant to look after the advertising and shortlisting of candidates for you. But this will be an additional cost – do you have the resources to cover the cost?

You can advertise internally within the service and externally. The objectives of advertising the position should be to attract attention, create interest and stimulate action by the potential candidate.

Some suggestions for advertising include:
• National newspapers
• Local newspapers
• FÁS
• Local Social Welfare Offices
• Post Office
• Job Centres
• Community Centres
• Local Area Partnerships
• Childcare training colleges
• Specialist journals
• Internet

The next step is to draft your advertisement for the position. State your requirements for the job as factually as possible. Create an interest but don't oversell the job. The following list is a recommendation of points for inclusion in your advertisement:

• Employer's name
• Brief description of the service
• Job title of the position being advertised
• Full-time/Part-time/Fixed Term/Temporary
• Hours
• Location of job
• Outline of responsibilities and duties
• Minimum experience, qualifications and any other details that you require
• Personal qualities
• Salary range
• How applicants should apply
• Closing date

If you have an Equal Opportunities Policy, then you should state this on the advertisement. Under the Employment Equality Act, 1998 *(See Section 1)* both the recruitment and selection process
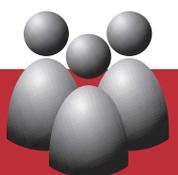
must not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, on the nine grounds listed, e.g. advertisements cannot define or describe a position on the basis of gender.

An interesting point to note and consider in the recruitment area is highlighted in the National Childcare Strategy (1999):

"The Expert Working Group considers it desirable that children should have contact with both men and women in childcare services and that the child care sector should aim to achieve the following target: 'Twenty percent of staff employed in childcare in collective services should be men' (Target 29 of the European Commission's Network on Childcare Action Programme. Quality Targets in Services for Young Children, 1996)."

Some services will use an application form, and their advertisement will request that potential candidates either phone or Email for an application form and relevant information, which is then posted to the applicants. Other services will require potential candidates to submit a Curriculum Vitae (C.V.) with a covering letter – this can be by post or Email. In either situation the potential candidates should receive the relevant information in relation to the position they are applying for.

By using an application form you are ensuring that all potential candidates are being considered on the same basis. It can be difficult to sift through a number of C.V.s to ascertain the information you require – in an application form it is all set out in the same manner. *Appendix 8* shows a **Sample Application Form**.

2.6   PROCESSING APPLICATIONS

Using your person specification you should match your candidates against your essential and desirable criteria. Whichever method of application you choose to use, this is the process you should follow to shortlist your candidates for interview. A C.V. may mean you have to look more carefully to find the information to complete the exercise. There is often a big difference as to how C.V.s are laid out and the information that is given therein. An application form however, will assist you as all of the information will be set out in the same format.

It is recommended that shortlisting of candidates be carried out by at least two people. In order to undertake this exercise those responsible should:
   a) Ensure that decisions taken are based upon the criteria agreed in drawing up the person specification and job description.
   b) Set aside time, without interruptions, to go through all of the applications.

At this point you should have a list of candidates that you would like to interview and a list of candidates that may not have met all your criteria.

2.7   PLANNING THE INTERVIEW PROGRAMME

Now you are ready to set an interview date and to invite the shortlisted candidates to attend interview. It is always good practice to have more than one person conducting the interview. Most interview panels should have three people but not less than two, and where possible there should be a gender balance. Having agreed your interview panel, the date, place and timeframe for your interviews, you can start to invite your candidates.

You can either phone or write to the candidates shortlisted for interview. If they are unfamiliar with the area, sending them a map with directions can be helpful. Phoning people is usually the best approach so that if you need to adjust times it can be done more easily.

There is a limit to how many interviews can be conducted in a day – the usual recommendation is six to eight depending on the type of position you may be interviewing for.

At this point, services may decide to write to the candidates who were not shortlisted; other services may not complete this part of the process until the selection is completed. In either situation the candidate should be responded to in writing thanking them for their application and informing them that they have not been shortlisted for interview. Even those who are not selected for interview will appreciate a letter from you. It gives an impression to the candidate of the kind of employer you are or are aiming to be.

Now you need to commence planning the interviewing process.

2.8   PLANNING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Your interview panel should receive a copy of the application forms or C.V.s together with the job description, person specification and any other information the candidates received.

It is important to draw up a list of questions that will be asked of each candidate. The interview panel should meet prior to the interview and agree who will ask what questions. The interview panel should appoint a chairperson who will introduce the candidate and outline the process of the interview and then close the interview and thank the candidate for attending. It is important for the interview panel to be aware that there should be no form of prejudiced judgements or behaviour and no racist or sexist remarks.

Requesting candidates to make a presentation (related to the job advertised) or undertake some form of practical exercise to assess their suitability may also be of assistance. For example, if the childcare service is keen to develop arts and crafts, each candidate could be asked to devise five things to do with scrap materials. The practical exercise or presentation should take place in conjunction with their interview (i.e. on the same day). Other suggestions might include asking the candidates to spend some time in the childcare service to see how they interact with children. Or asking candidates to complete a written paper on "what would they do" in a number of

hypothetical situations. If you decide to use an additional procedure to assist in your selection process make sure you build in the time and/or have additional person/s who can be available if required, e.g. to monitor the time for completing a written paper.

Remember – whatever options you decide to use in your selection process do ensure that all candidates are required to do the same thing, e.g. written questionnaire, spend time in the service with children and interview.

Best practice recommends consideration of the following points in the interview process:

1. A suitable venue should be organised which is free from interruptions and has a comfortable waiting area for candidates. A toilet should also be available.
2. If the candidates are coming into a reception area make sure the receptionist is aware there are going to be interviews and that they have a list of candidates.
3. The furniture in the interview room should be arranged appropriately, and in a manner which reflects the style of the interview, i.e. formal/semi-formal.
4. Every effort should be made to represent both sexes on the interview panel.
5. The interview panel should formulate an interview strategy.
6. A fair approach would recommend a standard rating or points system to rate each candidate's qualifications, experience, personal attributes and performance during the interview.
7. Leave some time between each interview, say 10/15 minutes to allow you to write up your score sheet and agree comments.

A score sheet can be drawn up using the person specification and the job description, where you outlined your requirements for the position under the headings of education, training, qualifications, skills, knowledge, experience and competence/competencies and personal qualities. If necessary, certain points can be weighted in favour of others, if using a weighting process this must be justifiable. A **Sample Score Sheet** may be found at *Appendix 9.*

Here are some basic rules about setting up the room for interview:
• Everything that encourages the applicant's concentration is GOOD
• Everything that distracts the applicant is BAD
  Do a check of your room:
    • Is there a glare from the windows
    • Noise
    • Telephones
    • Room too hot/cold
    • Activity outside the window
    • Anything else in the room that may be distracting, e.g. pictures

The seating arrangement is also important – it shows the applicant that:
• You are approachable
• You have time to listen to them
• You are interested in what they have to tell you

What the set-up of the room should not say is:
- We are important
- We like to assert our authority/power
- We have better things to do with our time

The use of desks is a matter of preference – some prefer to maintain the formality of a desk, others prefer to conduct interviews in a more informal and open way. If you are using a desk a round table is usually better. The chairs should all be the same, of equal height and placed evenly around the table, rather than two to one side and one directly opposite.

2.9   THE INTERVIEW

An interview can be seen as a conversation with a purpose. The interviewee should do most of the talking and the interview panel should do the listening. The interview panel should have the ability to establish rapport with the candidate, listen and ensure continuity during the interview. If the interview panel wish to make notes then it is courteous to inform the candidate, but don't forget the guidelines on recording mentioned earlier in Section 1.

Every effort should be made to ask questions of an open nature, so that the candidate can detail their knowledge and experience and is not confined to giving a "yes" or "no" answer, e.g. "Can you describe a situation when...?"

Armstrong (1999) suggests using the following ten useful questions as a framework for your interview questions:
- What are the most important aspects of your present job?
- What do you think have been your most notable achievements in your career to date?
- What sort of problems have you recently successfully solved in your job?
- What has been your experience of/in...?
- What do you know about...?
- What is your approach to handling...?
- What particularly interests you in this job and why?
- Now that you have had an opportunity to read the job description and heard about the job, would you tell me which aspects of your experience are most relevant?
- Is there anything else about your career that hasn't come to light in the interview that you think is relevant?
- What have you learned from your present job?

The following types of questions should be avoided. You'd be surprised how often these questions are still asked at interviews:
- Who is going to look after your children?
- Are you planning to have any more children?
- How do you think you might fit in being the only man?
- You live 40 miles from the service – how will you get to work on time?

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

At the end of the day when you have completed your interviews you should have a situation where you can compare your assessment of each candidate. You can then conclude, based on the assessment, which candidate merits the offer of the position.

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

It is important to ensure that written records of the interview assessments are kept for each candidate. For an unsuccessful candidate the record should be kept for at least one year after the interview. This is particularly important should a dispute arise over the selection of a candidate, or should a candidate allege that an interview panel illegally discriminated against him or her. A person has 6 months within which to bring such a claim under the Employment Equality Act, 1998.

As mentioned in Section 1, taking an ethical approach to management is important, so start here! Treat all your candidates with consideration and respect; let them know when they might expect to hear the outcome of the selection process. If you haven't responded to your candidates who were not shortlisted, write to thank them now.

2.10 REFERENCES

Good employment practices recommend the importance of obtaining and checking references. Each candidate should be requested to supply with their initial application the names, addresses and contact numbers of at least two referees who are not family members. At least one of the referees should have direct knowledge of the candidate's ability and suitability to work with children.

It is important to be conscientious in checking references. Reference checks must always be taken up to check the candidate's employment history, qualifications and experience. Telephone references should be followed up by written references or vice versa. Employers should verify the applicant's identity, experience and qualifications claimed. Interestingly the CIPD states, "it has been shown that up to eight in ten applicants embellish information in some way about their qualifications and experience".

References are usually viewed as confidential and are therefore not generally accessible to candidates. However, some services may fall within the remit of the Freedom of Information Act, 1997 and are advised to check with their legal advisors regarding the implications in relation to this issue.

Appendix 10 outlines a **Sample Reference Check Questionnaire**.

2.11 SAFETY/GARDA CHECK

In relation to the issue of the safety of applicants to undertake work with children, a childcare service employer may decide to include in the recruitment process a standard procedure by which a Garda reference is sought. This can only be done with the written consent of the candidate. The employer is then authorised to check with the Gardaí whether or not the applicant has had any convictions recorded against them in relation to children (i.e. which could render them a child protection risk and thus unsuitable to work with children).

This Garda reference procedure is currently quite limited but will be enhanced within the next year. In June 1999 the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform announced that the Garda Commissioner was undertaking a comprehensive review of Garda clearance arrangements in the child care area generally. As a result of this review it has been decided that a Central Vetting Unit will be set up to deal with the existing known demand for clearances. It is anticipated that the extension of the system will be operational in 2002.

2.12 MEDICAL CHECKS

It is important that the candidate is in good health as work with young children can be physically demanding. Additionally, childcare staff can be exposed to a range of childhood illnesses in the course of their work.

Some services have appointed company doctors to support and advise the service in relevant areas. In this situation, the successful candidates may be required to complete a medical examination with the service's company doctor. Other services may request the candidate to complete a medical questionnaire form, which is then forwarded directly to the company doctor. In either situation, the company doctor should be given a copy of the job description and person specification so that s/he is clear about the role the candidate is undertaking. However, under an equal opportunity policy neither a disability nor a history of poor health should bar an individual from being seriously considered for appointment to a post.

2.13 APPOINTMENT – CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

Now that you have made the decision to employ the successful candidate, a written offer of employment should be sent to him/her. The letter usually contains the job title, date of commencement and salary of the prospective employee together with terms and conditions of employment and relevant policy documents. If the person accepts the offer, the contract of employment has legally come into being, i.e. an offer of employment has been made and accepted. *Appendix 11* contains a **Sample Written Statement of Terms of Employment**.
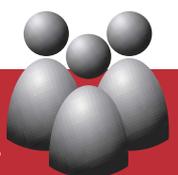
2.14 INDUCTION *(See also Section 3.4, Staff Training & Development)*

The purpose of having an induction programme is to ensure the effective integration of staff into and/or across a service for the benefit of both the employee and employer, and to provide information on the service to all new employees. Induction usually involves the new employee meeting other employees and hearing about aspects of the service. It also involves taking time to read written information about the service and the new job. All services should have an agreed process of induction for new employees which states clearly who will be responsible for ensuring the process takes place.

2.15 PERSONNEL FILES

Employers should have a personnel file for each employee. Legislation requires that certain records be kept as outlined in Section 1. Services also need a record of the candidate's employment history during the period of the employment with the service. This is provided through information held on the employee's personnel file. Personnel files should contain the following:

- Application form or C.V.
- Letter of application
- Scoring/Rating interview assessment
- Contract of employment
- Any letters changing terms and conditions of employment
- Absences
- Accidents
- Disciplinary/grievance procedures
- Training
- Salary scale, point on the scale and incremental date, if applicable

The individual service should decide what information it needs to keep in the personnel files. It is also a good idea to seek an employee's permission to place the name and contact address/telephone number of his/her next of kin on the file in case of accident or emergency during work.

It is the employer's responsibility to keep all employment-related records and personnel files securely and confidentially. Services may choose to use a computerised personnel system. If choosing this option, consideration needs to be given to the Data Protection Act, 1988.

2.16 Finally – Introducing DAISE

Before you move to Section 3 I'd like to introduce DAISE – you'll note she spells her name with an 'e' not a 'y'. She's a very helpful friend and you'll find her useful in this minefield of information in assisting you to remember the process for recruitment and selection.
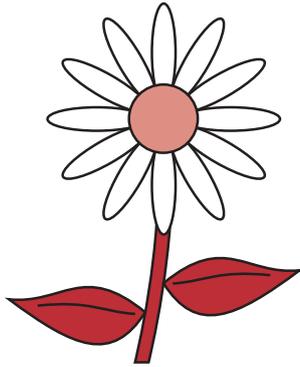
D raw up your job description and person specification

A dvertise the job, shortlist your candidates

I nterview, prepare for and interview your candidates

S elect your candidate, do those checks and procedures

E mploy and retain your chosen candidate/s

© Mary Byrne

1. Have you thought through the recruitment and selection process?

2. Have you written up a recruitment and selection policy and procedure?

3. Have you drawn up a job description and person specification?

4. Have you decided where best to advertise your position? Remember, you can choose more than one way of advertising.

5. Have you read the candidates' application forms or C.V.s thoroughly?

6. Have you matched them against your essential and desirable criteria on your person specification?

7. Have you convened your interview panel and given them a copy of the candidates' applications, job description and person specification?

8. Have you decided on the main questions you will ask and the order in which you will ask them?
   - Are most of your questions **OPEN QUESTIONS**, preferably beginning with one of the five 'W's' (Why, What, When, Where, Who) or How?
   - Does the waiting room look comfortable and relaxing?
   - Have you arranged the table and chairs in the room in such a way that it is relaxing and will put the candidates at ease?
   - Is the room free from distractions?
   - Have you made sure that you will not be interrupted during the interview?
   - Have you made sure you know how to pronounce the candidate's name or do they use a shortened version of their Christian name, e.g. Elizabeth – Liz?

9. Have you compiled a rating/scoring system?

10. Have you done those checks – reference, Garda and medical?

11. Did you remember to use **DAISE** as a guide to assist you?

12. Have you kept the application forms or C.V.s and score sheets of the other candidates you interviewed?

13. Have you put your successful candidate's information into a personnel file?

This section outlines areas that should be given consideration when you have your staff employed. Good communication, motivation and support systems will go some way to enhancing your team and, possibly more importantly, retaining them.

Recent research has raised some interesting points. Hodgins (2001) undertook research in Dublin which suggests that staff leave organisations because of:
• Lack of career progression
• The need to experience new skills
• A more balanced life
• Values of the organisation
• Greater earning power elsewhere

Research undertaken by the IMI and the University of Limerick (2000) found that there is no simple answer to retaining and attracting staff. However, if employers wish to retain employees they should ensure employees have well designed job roles and responsibilities, and provide employees with developmental opportunities and opportunities to be innovative and 'think outside the box'.

Successful organisations appear to be those which have developed a constructive ongoing relationship with their staff and have adopted approaches which enable them to develop the full potential of their entire workforce.

Most people would probably agree that employees should have a say in what happens in the workplace. By offering appropriate channels, employees can contribute their experience and knowledge which enables better decisions to be made and ensures an improved quality of service. Using this type of approach gives employees confidence in their employer and the knowledge that their points of view and interests are valued.

The topics highlighted in this section may provide a starting point in developing a structure to use and assist in the motivation, development, maintenance and retention of staff. The areas covered are:
• Role of the Manager
• Support & Supervision
• Performance Appraisal
• Staff Training & Development
• Communication
• Motivation
• Dealing with Conflict
• Teams
• Motivating Yourself

3.1   THE ROLE OF THE MANAGER

A manager can be defined as a person who has the authority and accountability for directing and supervising the work of others. The National Children's Bureau (1994) suggests the aim of management in an early childhood service is "to provide management which ensures that the nursery is operating smoothly, which is responsive to the needs of parents, children and staff members, and which is open to suggestions for development". The overall duty of a manager can be stated as helping to achieve the short and long-term aims of a service by the most effective use of the resources at their disposal.

The Management Skills training programme delivered by the Irish League of Credit Unions uses the following framework as the tasks carried out by a manager to achieve these aims. They can be looked at under the following headings:

- Objectives
- Analysing the situation
- Planning
- Organising
- Directing
- Motivating
- Controlling
- Developing

These headings originate from early management theory by Henri Fayol in 1916 and have been enlarged and adapted by others. The main features of the tasks are:

3.1.1   Setting Objectives
The manager and staff must know where they are going. The manager should have a vision of the ultimate goals of the service. There should be a statement of the ethos and the broad aims being pursued. Every manager must be able to restate these objectives in terms of the work of their own area or their service.

3.1.2   Analysing the Situation
A manager should have a clear perspective of the situation in which they are working. A manager should be able to understand clearly the environment in which the service is being delivered, including:
- Opportunities, problems and tasks
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Outside influences and threats
- Key factors, needs and priorities
- Policies and procedures of the service and the particular area in which it operates

3.1.3   Planning

A key part of the manager's role is to decide what should be done. Stages in the decision making include:

- Getting facts and analysing them
- Anticipating or forecasting future events
- Problem solving and creative thinking
- Assessing the options available
- Evaluating costs and benefits
- Deciding on a course of action
- Establishing detailed targets

3.1.4   Organising

The next step is to arrange the means to carry out the plan. This may involve:

- Deciding the who, where, when and how
- Defining roles, responsibilities, authority and accountability
- Resources
- Setting up procedures
- Organising the use of time appropriately

3.1.5   Directing

Making it happen:

- Communicating the plans
- Giving instructions
- Providing leadership and guidance

3.1.6   Motivating

Getting people engaged to carry out the plan efficiently:

- Getting the commitment of all staff to do their best
- Ensuring that there are good harmonious relationships between all the groups (individuals and management)
- Encouraging, praising, cajoling, rewarding and reprimanding!

3.1.7   Controlling

Once on track the whole operation needs to be steered in the right direction – you don't usually meet a car going backwards on the wrong side of the road! So there is a need to:

- Measure results and monitor progress
- Compare results with targets
- Identify problems, conflicts and deviations
- Respond to outside influences or changes
- Take corrective action if necessary
- Revise the plan

3.1.8 Developing

The manager should always look for ways to improve operations and get better results:
- Improve performance
- Develop staff
- Improve the quality of the service
- Improve the delivery of the service

3.1.9 Management Skills

It is acknowledged that within the childcare sector there are different management requirements. Services may be managed by employers, contractors, committees, parents, or privately owned. However, French (2000) suggests that whatever structure is chosen for the operation of a childcare service, there should be a system of consultation with parents.

French states that other points to consider are:
- How the management structure operates should be open and clear to all – including parents
- Management and senior staff should be responsive to the conditions of staff members and the needs of parents
- Correct legal procedures should always be adhered to
- The chain of command should always involve senior management taking ultimate responsibility in all areas of the service
- Unless the service is directly parent-managed, an advisory group should exist on which parents are strongly represented
- Discussion should take place with the whole group involved, about any major changes or initiatives
- Management decisions should be taken after a process of consultation with the people effected by them

The areas of the manager's role outlined above can form the basis for assessment and development for the individual manager and the service. It should also be noted that everyone has a different style of management. However, whatever the style, there is no substitute for clear communication, support and development of your staff.

3.2 SUPPORT & SUPERVISION

3.2.1 Why is Supervision Important?

It is a role of the manager to create and maintain the right conditions for staff to carry out their work. Supervision is essential in this framework – it provides support, backup and assistance to staff, as well as challenge, when necessary. It also encourages staff to maintain an interest in their current and future work. Supervision is also important in the motivation of staff. Staff need to be involved in the reviewing and planning of their work and to be committed to goals.

3.2.2   Support and Supervision

Support and supervision can be divided into the following headings:
- Planning
- Evaluation
- Enabling
- Supporting

3.2.3   The Role of the Manager
- Monitor, evaluate and approve the employee's performance
- Feedback to employees
- Facilitate communication and mutual understanding
- Discuss difficulties and sources of conflict
- Help the employee manage the workload
- Identify training needs
- Plan and set targets for the work

3.2.4   Supervision Structures
- The purpose of supervision
- Supervision needs of each staff member
- Responsibility for supervision
- Relevant training for people in supervision role
- How supervision will be evaluated and the structures reviewed

3.2.5   Manager and Staff Agree Broad Guidelines

Develop a contract – write up how you will conduct your meetings. Points to be considered are:
- Confidentiality
- Records
- Duration of sessions
- Frequency of sessions, e.g. weekly, monthly, fortnightly
- Dealing with difficulties
- Content
- Evaluation

3.2.6   Supervision Policy

Policies and procedures as outlined in Section 1 can play a vital role in ensuring clarification on issues and how things should be done. If things are not working it provides an opportunity to sit down and review and/or amend your policy and procedure, if required. Having a written policy on supervision will outline:
- What supervision and its purpose are
- How supervision relates to the overall aim and values of the service
- Supervision structures in the service

- Agreed guidelines about confidentiality, records, frequency and duration of sessions
- The procedure in case of difficulties in the supervision relationship
- The rights and responsibilities of the supervisors and the supervisees
- The experience and training required of managers

3.2.7   Requirements of a Manager

The following areas outline some of the competencies a manager should have:

Knowledge
- Vision and values of the service
- Future direction and plan of the work
- Work plans and how they relate to individual workers

Skills
- Communication
- Listening
- Observation
- Analysing
- Planning
- Evaluation
- Constructive feedback

Personal Qualities
- Openness
- Level headedness
- Objectivity
- Non-judgemental
- Assertiveness
- Patience
- Confidence

You might think that this sounds familiar – that you read it before. Yes, some of the competencies highlighted are talked about in the role of the manager. Don't worry; there are few managers who start out with all of these skills and qualities. Management often entails just using your common sense! It's about stopping to ask yourself questions so that your common sense can assist with the answers.

3.3   PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Many services do not use any kind of appraisal system. In setting up a support and supervision contract with employees it will assist or can be used to supplement the overall appraisal process.

Appraisals can be carried out as (a) comprehensive reviews, (b) progress reviews, (c) continuous monitoring.

It is generally recognised that a formal comprehensive appraisal should be carried out annually. An appraisal should be an assessment by both the manager (appraiser) and the staff member (appraisee) of the work that has been done in the past year. There is no hard and fast rule – if it suits the service better, appraisals can be carried out on a six monthly basis.

Appraisals are different to support and supervision sessions in that an appraisal takes a longer-term view of the work. Some services carry out annual appraisals and use the work objectives agreed as an ongoing structure for support and supervision sessions.

Areas to be looked at during the appraisal discussion might include:
- What has worked well?
- What hasn't worked well?
- Are there any training needs emerging?
- If the staff member has had training has this impacted on their performance?
- Have support and supervision sessions been adequate?
- Are there any difficulties? (If you have good communication and support systems set up, any issues of conflict should have been addressed or at least been dealt with outside of this process)
- Agree work objectives and work targets for the next year
- Opportunities to look at career plans

This is an ideal situation to look at the employee's job description to ensure it is still relevant and to see if it needs to be reviewed. Also to see if the employee has been doing the job they were employed to do!

DO - acknowledge any particular piece of work that has gone well or a suggestion that has proved successful!

DO - make sure you ask your employee if there is anything that you can do or change that would assist your employee in their work, and remember, **LISTEN** to what they have to say.

An appraisal discussion is an opportunity for a manager and their staff member to have a structured meeting, without interruptions and with adequate time allowed to discuss their performance over an agreed period of time. It is good practice to keep appraisals separate from issues on salary increases and terms and conditions of employment. If they do arise, ensure that they are addressed but in a different forum.

Fowler (1991) suggests the following structure for the appraisal discussion to ensure all areas are covered and that it ends on a positive note:
- A reminder of the purpose of the discussion
- A brief exchange between both parties highlighting the key points for discussion – setting the agenda

- Examination of the results of the aims and action agreed at the last appraisal
- Check each element against the job description – consider what has gone well, what hasn't gone well and why
- Discussion and agreement on the job performance aims and for the next period of time. Discussion on the appraisee's developmental objectives
- Agreement with both parties on what action needs to be taken – by who, by when – to achieve the objectives agreed
- Any other business – matters not raised earlier can be raised now
- Check there is a mutual understanding of the points addressed and plans agreed

The discussion techniques used in the appraisal process are similar to those of selection interviewing. The appraiser needs to let the appraisee do most of the talking and the questions should be open-ended.

McMahon (1999) suggests the following checklist may be used for follow up ideas as possible training or development. Not all the suggestions may be suitable so choose what's relevant to your service.

Coaching	Visit another service	Counselling
Set study tasks	Health check	Assign reading
Regular interviews	Educational assistance	Revise job description
Attend course	Amend job objectives	Observe 'model'
Enlarge job	Working party	Shrink responsibilities
Task force	Rotate jobs	Project assignments
Promote	Review procedures	Clarify career path
Additional equipment	Review structures	More resources
Shadowing	Insist on taking annual leave	Homeworking
Increase communication	Give more support	Career break
Job sharing	Working hours flexibly	Secondment

Source: McMahon (1999): Performance Appraisal Skills – Best Practice for Managers.

There are various styles of appraisal forms. Some organisations use the same form for both the appraiser and the appraisee to complete, others use separate forms. However, whichever style you adopt it is important that both parties are given time to prepare well in advance of the meeting. Your appraisal system should be evaluated periodically. Using the sample form is a starting point but it should be amended and/or developed. McMahon (1999) notes that subsequent to introduction the system needs to be checked to ensure that it does "fit". *Appendices 12 & 13* give an outline of items to consider in developing a form from an appraisee and appraiser perspective.

3.4   STAFF TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

The provision of opportunities for staff training and development should be high on the priority list. French (2000) suggests that training in the childcare area may include such areas as:

- Making observations and assessments of children
- Planning
- Evaluation
- Conflict resolution
- Positively managing children's behaviour
- Working with families
- Record keeping
- Anti-bias approach
- Childcare curricula
- First aid
- Child protection

The identification of training and development needs may emerge from support and supervision sessions, from the appraisal process, or from team meetings. When training needs have been identified it doesn't always necessarily mean, "pack the person off to the next available training course". Establish what type of training is required – is it relevant to the work, individual and the service? Depending on the training and development need/s they can be met using a range of activities such as:

- Seeing what others do (best practice)
- Adopting a role model (mentor)
- Involvement in other areas of work
- Involvement in the community
- Coaching others
- Training courses

Provision of training:

- Facilitates continuous professional development
- Develops the competencies of staff and their performance
- Updates skills/learning
- Evaluates progress and assesses learning
- Helps staff gain a better understanding of their work

Within childcare services it is often not possible for all staff to attend training at the one time. So addressing staff's training needs and prioritising what or which training is needed most is an important role for the manager. Management needs to plan for staff development and training in terms of staff time and cost (Clarke, 1995). Services therefore should give consideration to linking with other childcare providers locally to arrange joint training sessions. This may reduce the overall cost as it would be shared and give staff the opportunity to meet others working within this sector.

3.4.1　Induction Training

This area is often overlooked but can provide a valuable resource to the new staff member. The purpose of induction is to ensure that the staff member is welcomed into the service and that they are given the basic information they need to settle into the job and commence work. According to Armstrong (2000) induction has four aims:

- Smoothing the preliminary stages when everything is likely to be strange and unfamiliar to the new staff member
- Establish a favourable attitude to the service so that the staff member is more likely to stay
- Obtaining an effective output from the staff member within a reasonable timeframe
- Reduce the likelihood of the employee leaving quickly

Induction courses should ideally take place as soon as possible after the staff member commences work. Some services organise group induction courses on a quarterly basis. For smaller services it may be carried out on an individual basis. Induction courses usually cover the following areas:

- Information about the service – mission statement, ethos, values
- Health and safety – prevention of accidents, protective clothing, safety rules, nappy changing/ toilet time
- Child protection procedures – mandatory reporting, what to do, who to speak to
- Conditions of employment – hours, sick pay, maternity leave, parental leave, payment of wages, appraisal system, medical insurance, holidays
- Policies & procedures – discipline, grievance, bullying/sexual harassment, equal opportunities, no smoking arrangements

3.5　COMMUNICATION

3.5.1　Process

Communicating is an ongoing process; it is a serious of messages you give either spoken or unspoken. The person communicating the message is usually referred to as the 'sender' and the person receiving the message the 'receiver'. Once it is communicated, a message can't be undone.

3.5.2　Relationship

When you are communicating with an individual or group, think about how you want the relationship to be after the message is communicated. Care needs to be taken so that you don't unnecessarily damage the relationship. Think about how and what you are going to say beforehand. Try to ensure that you only convey the message and not anything else. If you don't do this, the receivers of the communication may pick up something other than the message you are trying to deliver.

3.5.3   Environment

Choosing where you are going to communicate is also important. If you need to speak to a member of staff about an issue, pick a place where there are no interruptions and you have time to communicate properly and clearly.

3.5.4   Emotion

Emotions often come between the person who is sending the message and the person who is receiving the message. Being in an emotional position is not the healthiest way to communicate a message to someone. Similarly, if you are conveying a message to an emotional person they may not hear or want to hear what you are saying.

3.5.5   Body Language

Your body language is also an important part of communicating. Remember, what you are saying should match your expressions, how you are standing, eye contact, etc.

3.5.6   Interference

Interference in communication is often referred to as noise. The noise can be physical noise and/or psychological noise. Psychological noise is usually where people's emotions get in the way. This can apply to the sender or the receiver of the message. It's important to check that your message gets through.

3.5.7   Checking It Out

When you have communicated a message you should check that your message has been received and understood. If you have verbally given a message but your body language hasn't matched, people may be confused about what you were trying to communicate. The more confident and clear you are about the message you are delivering, the more your voice and body language will match, thereby reducing the possibility of being misheard or misunderstood. Therefore, the more you have thought about and prepared the delivery of your message the clearer it will come across to your audience – particularly if you are delivering a message of importance.

The diagram below gives an example of communication. Interference along any of these lines can distort the message that is being sent and received.
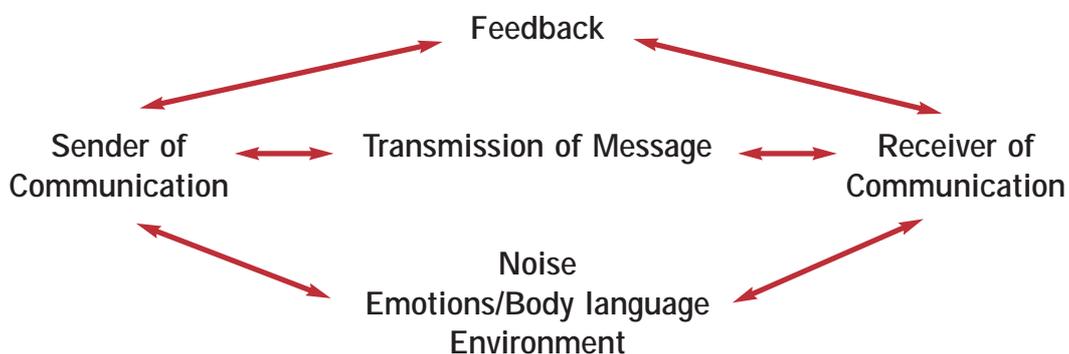

Figure No 1: Communication process model based on Weihrich & Koontz. Management – A Global Perspective (1993)

3.5.8   Communication Systems

Communication systems can be written or oral. Written communication systems might include:
- Newsletters
- Information Sheets
- Notice Boards

Oral communication systems can be:
- Team meetings
- Individual meetings
- Open door policy

Services should decide on which communication system or systems suits them best.

3.6   MOTIVATION

Why do people work? Why do some people work harder than others? What demotivates people? If we knew the key to what exactly makes people tick, someone would be making a lot of money!

3.6.1   Differences in Motivation

In the 1950s Hertzberg developed the "Motivation-Hygiene" theory. The positive motivators identified were achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and advancement. Although being well paid is nice, being valued and trusted is probably a higher motivator for a lot of people.

In a team there is likely to be some overlap and variation between what motivates individuals. Even if the team members were all doing the same job, there would be a variation because individual needs are different.

A manager can influence the local environment and the way in which they interact with their team. The feedback a manager gives to the team about their work is fundamental to their motivation. The team need to know where they stand and how they are performing. Giving people recognition for their achievements is important. The best time to give feedback is usually when the event occurs. Feedback should be straightforward, honest and constructive (no waffle!). Blair (2000) suggests using this formula:
- Highlight something good
- Point out what needs improving, if it does
- Suggest how to improve or look at something from a different perspective

So, the next time you see or hear about a member of your team doing something well, give them that round of applause.

Most people motivate themselves but can often be demotivated by the actions of others. Therefore how people are managed does make a difference to their motivation. Maher & Hall (1998) drew up a list of the top 10 motivators and demotivators.

MOTIVATORS	DEMOTIVATORS
1. Interesting Work	1. Excessive bureaucracy/control
2. Autonomy	2. Routine/boredom
3. Challenge	3. Not being valued
4. Working in a stimulating environment	4. Terms and conditions of employment
5. Money/reward	5. Lack of authority
6. Status	6. Failure
7. Recognition from senior management	7. Lack of feedback
8. Achieving results/success	8. Lack of promotion
9. Responsibility	9. Lack of variety
10. Novelty	10. Lack of job competence

(Source: Maher & Hall, Agents of Change)

3.7   DEALING WITH CONFLICT

Dealing with or trying to resolve conflict is never an easy matter. However, if you adopt opportunities for communication using the communication process and use the suggestions outlined under *Support and Supervision*, team meetings or other forums you may go some way to dealing with issues as 'molehills' before they become 'mountains'.

Problems, or challenges as I like to see them, can be small or large. Each individual is different, each situation is different. Every situation merits its own solution and approach. Be flexible with regard to personal problems. When circumstances like these arise, work with them, be adaptable, you can't change things. Focus on the problem.

A problem which derives from a lack of interest or commitment most likely needs to be resolved by providing motivation. Can the person be given greater responsibility, is there opportunity for advancement, can the work be redesigned or made more challenging? From time to time check out the day-to-day procedures or systems in the service. Do any of them give rise to conflict or bad feeling? You might not realise that the team meeting at 3pm on a Friday is not the most conducive time for your team to be 'high-energy' in terms of input and participation.

When an issue is a 'molehill' it's a small glitch for people to try and resolve, either to get over or to reach agreement at the top, depending on the issue. When the issue becomes a 'mountain' it takes a lot of time, energy, motivation and commitment from all concerned to get over it or meet

at the top. These are the situations which most often end up as major issues of conflict – which in turn end in unhappiness for all concerned.

3.7.1   Negotiation

Negotiation is a way of trying to resolve conflict. However it does not necessarily mean that one party must win and one must lose or that compromise is the only joint acceptable situation. A win-win solution is the optimum solution. Impossible? It doesn't have to be.

Maher & Hall (1998) based some of their 'rules' for resolving conflicts of interests on the work of Fisher and Ury in their book *Getting to Yes.* They suggest that both sides must be willing and able to:

- Focus on the objective of what they are trying to achieve in relation to both the substantive and the relationship issue, not on the means or the positions or roles they play

- Be creative and inventive and problem-solve together in order to find a solution which allows them both to achieve their preferred outcome

- Be tough on the problem not on the people

There is no doubt that having to resolve issues of conflict is tough, but to sweep them under the carpet means your 'molehill' becomes a 'mountain'. The facts of a situation get clouded and other factors contribute to the initial issue, which may make that 'mountain' erupt!

3.7.2   Some Tips

- Try to encourage an open problem-solving culture in your team so that people can feel comfortable in saying there's a problem or that they have a problem or that someone else is causing a problem. This type of culture won't happen if there's a continuous blaming of someone else for all the problems

- Agree standards of performance – individually and within the team – both in relation to behaviour and performance

- Support and supervision should be regular

- Develop your communication skills

- When dealing with conflict, consider all the options

- Investigate and gather all the information available

- Who 'owns' the problem? This is usually the person who is causing the problem. In most situations it is better to let the two people who have the difference try to sort it out

- What is your role in dealing with the conflict? Do you need to be involved at all or do you need to act as a facilitator or mediator?

- Be tough on the problem, not on the person

- Practise what you preach!

If you have to deal with conflict the following process might be helpful:

T hink through the issue

O rganise, plan the time and place to discuss

A ttend to what's being said to you

S pecific, only say what you need to say

T ry putting yourself in their place

E nd on a positive note

R evisit, only if it's necessary

© Mary Byrne

3.8   TEAMS

Teams or groups provide opportunities for people to combine their talents and to provide solutions to problems. Even when an individual can resolve a problem, there are benefits to a group making the decision. The motivational aspect of participation in the decision can make implementation easier. A team may have the capacity to consider a range of factors, which the individual may not.

Tuckman (1965) developed the following 'life-cycle' of groups or teams.

Forming
The team gets to know one another and everyone is very polite and there is a degree of formality. A lot of discussion about 'safe' subjects such as their objectives, rules about who does what and when. The group at this time is usually guarded in their opinions and very reserved. People usually try to make an impression on other members of the group. However, the group soon move to the next stage.

Storming
This second stage sees the group addressing personal agendas and beginning to have a real feel about where they are going and what they are doing which is usually through stormy discussions and disagreements. Sometimes objectives and views set at Stage 1 are changed. All Hell can break loose and people may feel as if they are being lynched! At this stage it is important that any conflict is dealt with openly and there is good negotiation. If issues are buried they arise later and the team may not complete its cycle.

Norming

This stage establishes how the group/team will work together as they see the merit of such a game plan. Earlier rules negotiated may not meet all the requirements of the team and may need to be redefined. Norms will be set about how people treat one another, how to work, how hard people work. The most significant achievement at this time is that people start to listen to one another. Individuals start to feel secure within the team. If a new member joins the team at this point they will be expected to fall in with the established norms of the group. When they don't the group will revert back to the storming stage. If the team continues to develop, some of the norms will be questioned, as the strengthening team may not require all the rules/regulations.

Performing

The final stage – this is only reached when the team has made its way through the three previous stages and enters this mature phase where the team works at its most productive and flexible. At this stage there is little dependence on rules/norms – they are only used on the occasion when something may be in dispute – which is usually openly discussed and quickly resolved.

In general, this life cycle occurs in all groups/teams and usually follows the sequence outlined. The timing of moving from one stage to another is hard to predict as it depends on the members of the group, the urgency of the task (if they have been formed to take on a specific job), the amount of time they spend together, the amount of agreement/disagreement, size and the diversity of the individuals who are forming the team/group.

3.8.1   Team Roles

Belbin (1981) defined the different types or roles played by team members as follows:
*   Chairman – controls the way the team operates
*   Shapers – specify the way teams should work
*   Company Workers – turn proposals into practical work procedures
*   Plants – produce strategies and ideas
*   Resource Investigators – explore the availability of resources, ideas and developments outside the team
*   Monitor Evaluators – analyse problems and evaluate ideas
*   Team Workers – support team members, improve team communication and keep everyone going!
*   Complete Finishers – maintain a sense of urgency in the team

(Source: Armstrong, Human Resource Management, 1999)

A group of people who work together can improve and develop their effectiveness through team building activities. Team building workshops can use a variety of approaches such as interactive training, role-play, group exercises, action learning, videos and outdoor development training. It is important to note that such workshops should be seen as relevant by the participants, reflect the service's objectives and fit in with work arrangements.

3.8.2   Indicators of Successful Teamwork

• Atmosphere
• Discussion
• Shared View of the Task
• Listening
• Disagreement
• Consensus
• Feedback
• Openness
• Action
• Leadership

(Source: Maher & Hall, Agents of Change.)

3.9   MOTIVATING YOURSELF

Well if you have managed to take on board and deliver on all of the areas outlined in Section 3 – you are a SUPER MANAGER! Or is it more likely that you are overworked and about to collapse?

So what can you do to motivate yourself and keep going? Here are a few suggestions that you might like to consider:

• Have you thought about networking with other managers in childcare services?

• Do you have an external support and supervision process set up for yourself, if relevant?

• Have you thought about self-assessment?

• Are you a member of a professional organisation, e.g. what are your qualifications, is there a professional body?

• Are you a member of any of the voluntary childcare organisations?

• Have you linked into your local health board inspection unit?

• Have you thought about your own training and development needs?

• Have you thought about time management?

• Do you delegate work or responsibilities to others, if appropriate?

1. If you are the manager or the owner of a service, are you clear about the ethos, aims and objectives of the service?

2. Have you conveyed the ethos, aims and objectives of the service to your staff?

3. How would you describe your style of management?

4. Have you set up support & supervision sessions with your staff?
    *   Have you written up that contract?
    *   Do you have a supervision policy?

5. Have you introduced an appraisal system?

6. Have you thought about training and development plans for your staff?
    *   Updating childcare skills, changes in legislation? Can they be addressed through short training courses or workshops?
    *   Can you use other training methods?

7. How are you going to communicate with your staff?
    *   Formal and informal structures, e.g. support and supervision, team meetings, open door policy, noticeboard, newsletter.
    *   Have you checked your messages have been received and understood?

8. Have you said "well done" to your staff recently?

9. Dealing with conflict – don't let that molehill become a mountain.
    *   Remember the **TOASTER** process!

10. How is your team working together?

11. How will you keep yourself motivated and informed on relevant matters?
    *   Have you thought about networking with other local childcare providers?
    *   Are you a member of one of the national voluntary childcare organisations?
    *   Do you have qualifications which would enable you to become a member of a professional body, e.g. if you have a personnel qualification, are you a member of the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development?

This section outlines some typical questions that are regularly asked and their answers. Have a go and see how many you get right. It's not a test and the answers are on a separate sheet at the end of the section. Good luck!

Q.1　An employer pays their employees by cash and decides to change to paying them by cheque from next month. The employer hasn't bothered to inform the employees. Can the employer do this?

Yes ☐　　No ☐

Q.2　Employees on maternity leave are required to confirm to their employer, their intention to return to work, four weeks before their actual date of returning to work.

True ☐　　False ☐

Q.3　Does an employer have to give an employee back the time they were sick during their annual leave if they produce a medical certificate stating they were sick for four days, e.g. two weeks annual leave and on their return they give a medical certificate confirming they were sick for four days during their annual leave?

Yes ☐　　No ☐

Q.4　The Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act, 1973 sets out the minimum periods of notice that an employer/employee must give in line with length of service. The staff member's contract states more than the legislative requirement, e.g. legislation states two to five years' service – two weeks notice. The employees contract states one month notice, they have been employed for three years. Which period of notice should the employer be entitled to from the employee or vice versa?
(a) As set out under the legislation ☐ or (b) As set out in the contract ☐

Q.5　Is the minimum annual leave entitlement under legislation?

(a) 19 days ☐　　(b) 18 days ☐
(c) 20 days ☐　　(d) 21 days ☐

Q.6　Can the employer decide to close down for a period of time during the summer and at Christmas and require their employees to take annual leave at this time?

Yes ☐　　No ☐

Q.7 Can long term absences due to illness affect annual leave entitlement?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Q.8 Is the employer breaking the law by not ensuring the employee takes their full statutory leave entitlement?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Q.9 Please tick the days you think are Public Holidays.

1 January	☐	St Patrick's Day	☐
Good Friday	☐	Easter Monday	☐
Easter Tuesday	☐	First Monday in May	☐
Last Monday in May	☐	First Monday in June	☐
First Monday in August	☐	Last Monday in August	☐
Last Monday in October	☐	Christmas Eve	☐
Christmas Day	☐	St Stephen's Day	☐

Q.10 Which of the following categories maintains their entitlement to public holidays during their absence from work?

Maternity & Adoptive Leave ☐   Health & Safety Leave ☐

Q.11 An employee's last working day is during the week ending on the day before a public holiday. If they meet certain criteria are they entitled to be paid for that public holiday?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Q.12 If an employee requests a written statement of their terms/conditions, is the employer required to comply with this request?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Q.13 An employee requests a change of working hours from full-time to part-time and the employer agrees. The employer has to confirm this change in writing not later than one month after the changes have been implemented.

True ☐   False ☐

Q.14 Is an employer required to give any reimbursement to an employee who is not normally rostered to work on a day that is a Public Holiday?

Yes ☐   No ☐

Q.15 How much maternity leave is an employee entitled to under the legislation?

14 weeks ☐   18 weeks ☐   16 weeks ☐

Q.16 An employer is required by legislation to have a Health & Safety Statement on their premises.

True ☐   **False** ☐

Q.17 Men and women may take Parental Leave   **True** ☐   **False** ☐

Q.18 An employee qualifying for Parental Leave is entitled to take how much unpaid leave?

8 weeks ☐   12 weeks ☐   18 weeks ☐   14 weeks ☐

Q.19 The Terms of Employment (Information) Act, 1994 requires that an employer give the employee (employed since 16 May 1994) written details of their contract of employment within what period of commencement of employment.

2 weeks ☐   2 months ☐   6 months ☐

Q.20 In what order would you list the following activities in relation to recruitment and selection of staff?

Job Description ☐
Interview/Assessment ☐
Reference Checking ☐
Advertising ☐
Person Specification ☐
Score Sheet ☐

ANSWERS

A1.   **No.** The employer must consult with their employee to change the method of payment. An employee's contract of employment or custom and practice will have established how they are being paid in the same manner, so any change must be negotiated and agreed.

A2.   **True.**

A3.   **Yes.** If an employee on annual leave produces a medical certificate on their return to work and it states they were sick during the period of annual leave, then the period of time they were sick should be allowed to be taken at a later time, as part of their annual leave entitlement.

A4.   **As set out in their contract.**

A5.   **20 days.**

A6.   **Yes.** The employer has the right to determine periods of closure, however it is good practice that this is indicated to the employees either in their contract of employment as outlined under Section III of the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

A7.   **Yes.** Continued absence may effect leave entitlements. See the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

A8.   **Yes.** The Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997 specifically indicates that the employer is obliged to ensure that an employee takes their leave entitlements. Unless there are good reasons and agreed with the employee, the employer could be exposing themselves to action by the employees.

A9.   **There are 9 public holidays in total.** They are 1 January, St Patrick's Day, Easter Monday, First Monday in May, First Monday in June, First Monday in August, Last Monday in October, Christmas Day and St Stephen's Day.

A10.   **Maternity and adoptive leave.**

A11.   Yes.

A12.   Yes.

A13.   True.

A14.   Yes.

A15.   18 weeks.

A16.   True.

A17.   True.

A18.   14 weeks.

A19.   2 months.

A20.   Best practice would recommend the following order:
1. Job Description
2. Person Specification
3. Advertising
4. Interview/Assessment
5. Score Sheet
6. Reference Checking

Bullying Response Unit
Health and Safety Authority
10 Hogan Place
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6147000
Fax: 01 6147020
www.hsa.ie

Chartered Institute of Personnel Development
7/8 Upper Mount Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6766655
Fax: 01 6767229
Email: info@cipd.ie
www.cipd.ie

Childminding Ireland
49 Applewood
Greystones
Co Wicklow
Tel: 01 2871111
Email: childm@indigo.ie
www.childminding-irl.com

Children's Rights Alliance
13 Harcourt Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 4054823
Fax: 01 4054826

Comhchoiste Réamhscolaíochta Teo
7 Cearnóg Mhuirfeán
Baile Átha Cliatha 2
Tel: 01 6763222

Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
Davitt House
65a Adelaide Road
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6312121 Lo-call 1890 220 222
Email: webmaster@entemp.ie
www.entemp.ie

Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform
Equality Division
Mespil Road
Dublin 4
Tel: 01 6670344
Email: info@justice.ie
www.irlgov.ie/justice

Dept of Social, Community & Family Affairs
Aras Mhic Dhiarmada
Store Street
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 8748444
Email: info@welfare.ie
www.welfare.ie

Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT)
65a Adelaide Road
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6313347 · 6313009 · 6313013 · 6313193 · 6313006 · 6313014

Employment Equality Agency
36 Upper Mount Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6624577

The Equality Authority
2 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2
Tel: 01 4173386. Lo-call 1890 245545
Email: info@equality.ie
www.equality.ie

Equality Investigations
3 Clonmel Street, Dublin 2
Tel: 01 4173300. Lo-call: 1890 344424
Email: info@odei.ie
www.odei.ie

European Commission
18 Dawson Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6341111
www.euireland.ie

FÁS - Training & Employment Authority
27/33 Upper Baggot Street
Dublin 4
Tel: 01 6070500
www.fas.ie

Focus on Children
13 Gardiner Place
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 8788708
Fax: 01 8788734

Government Publications Sales Office
Sun Alliance House
Molesworth Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6793515
(For copies of all legislative Acts including employment and Bills currently discussed by the Dáil).

Health and Safety Authority
10 Hogan Place
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6620400
www.hsa.ie

Health Boards:
East Coast Area Health Board
South Western Area Health Board
Northern Area Health Board
Midland Health Board
Mid-Western Health Board
North Eastern Health Board
North Western Health Board
South Eastern Health Board
Western Health Board
See local telephone directory for relevant numbers.

High/Scope Ireland
c/o NIPPA
6c Wildflower Way
Apollo Road
Belfast
BT 126TA
Tel: 04890 662825
Fax: 04890 381270

Irish Business and Employers Confederation, (IBEC)
84/86 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6051500
www.ibec.ie

Irish Congress of Trade Unions
Head Office
31/32 Parnell Square
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 8897777
Email:congress@ictu.ie
www.ictu.ie

Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC)
20 Molesworth Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6794944
Fax: 01 6791746
Email: ispcc@ispcc.ie
www.ispcc.ie

Irish Pre-school Playgroups Association (IPPA)
Unit 4
Broomhill Business Complex
Broomhill Road
Tallaght
Dublin 24
Tel: 01 6719245

Labour Court
Tom Johnson House
Beggars Bush
Dublin 4
Tel: 01 6136666 Lo-call: 1890 220228

Labour Relations Commission
Tom Johnson House
Beggars Bush
Dublin 4
Tel: 01 6136700 Lo-call: 1890 220227

**National Children's Nurseries
Association (NCNA)**
12C Bluebell Business Park
Old Naas Road
Bluebell
Dublin 12
Tel: 01 4601138
Email:info@ncna.net
www.ncna.net

National Children's Resource Centre
Christchurch Square
Dublin 8
Tel: 01 4549699
Email: ncrc@barnardos.ie
www.barnardos.ie

18 St. Patrick's Hill
Cork
Tel: 021 4552100
Fax: 021 4552120
Email: ncrc@cork.barnardos.ie

10 Sarsfield Street
Limerick
Tel: 061 208680
Fax: 061 440214
Email: ncrc@midwest.barnardos.ie

River Court
Golden Island
Athlone
Co. Westmeath
Tel: 0902 79584
Fax: 0902 79585
Email: ncrc@athlone.barnardos.ie

41/43 Prospect Hill
Galway
Tel: 091 565058
Fax: 091 565060
(opening during 2002)

**The National Framework Committee
on Family Friendly Policies**
c/o The Equality Authority
Clonmel Street
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 4173386
www.familyfriendly.ie/guidelines

National Irish Safety Organisation
10 Hogan Place
Dublin 2
Tel: 01 6620399

Pavee Point
46 North Great Charles Street
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 8780255
Fax: 01 8742626

Refugee Trust
Capel Chambers
199 Capel Street
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 8722371

Revenue Commissioners
Employer's Information
9/15 Upper O'Connell Street
Dublin 1
Tel: 01 8655000
www.revenue.ie

Armstrong, M (1999) *A Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice.* London: Kogan Page

Blair, G (2001) *Starting to Manage – The Human Factor.* www.ee.ed.ac.uk/~gerard/CV.html

Blair, G (2001) *Groups That Work.* www.ee.ed.ac.uk/~gerard/CV.html

Canavan, A and Gibbons, N (1997) *Establishing a Day Care Service: An Information Pack.* Dublin: Barnardos

Canavan, A and Gibbons, N (1998) *Child Care Act (1991), Part (VII) Supervision of Child Care Services: A Training Manual.* Dublin: Barnardos

Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development. (1999) *Information Note – Recruitment of Those Working with Young People.* London: CIPD

Clark, D (2000) *Big Dog's Leadership Page – Concept of Leadership.* www.nwlink.com/~donclark/leader.leadcon.html

Clarke, J (1995) *A Guide to Good Employment Practice in the Community and Voluntary Sector.* Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency

Clarke, J (1997) *Managing Better – The Staff Recruitment Process.* Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency

Clarke, J (1997) *Managing Better – Staff Support & Supervision.* Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency

Clarke, J (1997): *Managing Better – Staff Selection & Interviewing.* Dublin: Combat Poverty Agency

Dept of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Various Employment Legislation Information. Dublin.

Dept of Health and Children – *Child Care (Pre-School Services) Regulations (1996) and Explanatory Guide to Regulations.* Dublin: The Stationery Office

French, G (2000) *Supporting Quality: Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Services.* Dublin: Barnardos' National Children's Resource Centre

Fowler, A (1991) *Conduct Appraisals. Personnel Management Plus, June Edition*, London.

Hodgins, J (2001) *The Psychology of Staff Retention,* IPD News, 07: 01 Vol 1. No 4. July, Dublin: IRN Publishing

Irish Business Employers Confederation (2001) *Information Guidelines for Members.* Dublin

Irish League of Credit Unions (1999) *Management Skills Training Programme - Role of the Manager.* Dublin

Lane, F (1999) *Staffing A Child Care Service – Recruiting with Confidence.* Dublin: Barnardos

Maher, H & Hall, P (1998) *Agents of Change.* Dublin: Oak Tree Press

McMahon, G. (1999) *Performance Appraisal Skills – Best Practice for Managers.* Dublin: Oak Tree Press

Dept of Justice, Equality and Law Reform (1999) *National Childcare Strategy: Report of the Partnership 2000 Expert Working Group on Childcare.* Dublin: The Stationery Office

It is the policy of this service to ensure that employees with a grievance relating to their employment can use a procedure which can help to resolve grievances as quickly as possible.

Stage 1 Employee is encouraged to approach their immediate supervisor when grievance first arises.

Employee has the option to have a colleague/representative present.

The problem is discussed and outcome decided upon.

Meeting should be recorded and signed – by both parties, with copies issued to those in attendance.

Stage 2 Should employee be dissatisfied with previous outcome or feel they cannot approach their immediate supervisor, they can approach their supervisor's senior.

This may be done verbally or in written form.

Again the employee is given the option to have a representative present.

A discussion will be held and a prompt response given.

The meeting should be recorded and signed by both parties, with copies issued to those in attendance.

Stage 3 If the response is not adequate in resolving the issue, the employee may appeal to the Managing Director.

Again, a representative may be present.

The grievance will be discussed and response given.

The meeting should be recorded, signed by both parties and copies issued to all those in attendance.

In the event of a matter not being resolved internally, the matter may be referred through normal industrial relations procedures. The procedures referred to include reference to a Rights Commissioner, Labour Relations Commission, Labour Court, Employment Appeals Tribunal or Equality Officer as appropriate.

Guidance Notes:
- Informal discussions should resolve the vast majority of grievances.
- The stages should reflect the levels of management in the service.
- There should be time limits set within each stage, e.g. all stages will have a time response limit of 5 days. Time limits will prevent issues from running on and on and encourage managers to deal with matters promptly.
- It is good practice to put all matters in writing.
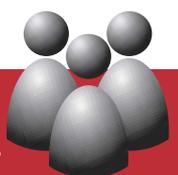
The service's aim is to encourage improvement in individual behaviour or performance. These procedures set out the steps that will be taken when the service rules are breached.

The following principles should be applied at all stages of the disciplinary procedure.

An employee's natural rights are:
- The employee will have the right to know the case against him/her
- The employee has the right to reply
- The employee will have the right to due consideration
- The employee has the right to representation
- The employee has the right to appeal

Stage 1 – Verbal Warning

Prior to this an opportunity should have been given to inform the employee that the work/behaviour has fallen below an acceptable level and be made aware that this is unacceptable, and point out how improvements can be made. A record should be kept of this meeting.

If the standards continue to deteriorate the following can begin:

A full investigation is held that is fair and just.

A meeting will be held complying with the above natural rights, and the employee told that the continuation of the situation is unacceptable. The problem will be discussed.

An action plan can be set out with a date for re-assessment.

A record should be kept, with copies issued to the parties involved.

The verbal warning may be active on the personnel file of the employee for 6 months with an agreed review period.

If there is no improvement Stage 2 may occur.

Stage 2 – First Written Warning

A full investigation is held.

Again the employee's natural rights must be adhered to.

A meeting will be held to establish what improvements must be shown and within what time-scale.

A date for re-assessment will be set.

The employee will receive a written warning, which will be active on their file for 1 year.

If there is no improvement the following Stage may occur.

Stage 3 – Final Written Warning

The previous (Stage 2) procedure applies, again complying with the employee's natural rights.

The employee will receive a final written warning, which will be active on their file for 1 year.

The employee at this stage will be warned that unless improvement occurs there is a possibility that he/she may be dismissed.

Throughout the entire process, it may be clearly communicated to the employee that at and during each stage the right to appeal exists. A time frame for appeal by the employee should be stated, e.g. seven working days.

This may result in suspension with or without pay. This option must be stated in the contract of employment.

Gross Misconduct

In the case of gross misconduct an employee may be suspended, on full pay, whilst an investigation takes place. Again the employee will be given every opportunity to make representations on their behalf and the charges that are being made against them. This will happen before any disciplinary action is made. If, following investigation, it is considered that an employee has committed an offence of the following nature (the list is not exhaustive) the consequence may be dismissal:

- Allegation of abuse against a child
- Theft, fraud, deliberate falsification of company documents
- Rude or abusive behaviour to fellow workers or parents
- Sexual or racial harassment
- Being unfit to work through use of alcohol or illegal drugs
- Gross negligence
- Leaving the work place without permission
- Horseplay (joking, clowning, rowdiness or fun that could lead to a possible mishap or accident)
- Refusal to obey a reasonable instruction from someone authorised to issue such instructions

The employee may appeal against this decision should they so wish. Again the time frame should apply. The appeal should be directed to the most senior person of the service, e.g. Managing Director or owner. In the event of a dismissal being confirmed and the employee wishing to challenge the decision, then in accordance with normal procedures, the matter shall be referred to a Rights Commissioner, Labour Relations Commission, Labour Court, Employment Appeals Tribunal or Equality Officer as appropriate.

Guidance Notes:

- It is unfair to keep details of warnings on the employee's file after the warning period has elapsed.
- The written warning should accurately record the warning given at the interview. Do not write the warning before the investigation and hearing have taken place.
- If appropriate, the warning should state clearly that dismissal might result from a failure to comply.
- At all stages of the procedure, the principles of natural justice must apply.
- At all stages of the procedure, the right to appeal should be confirmed as part of the warning or dismissal letter.
- In the case of gross misconduct it is usual that the employee would be suspended on full pay pending the investigation and hearing.
- At the disciplinary interview make sure:
  - that the employee knows the details of the allegation
  - that the employee has the opportunity to put their side of the matter
  - that the disciplinary action is appropriate to the circumstances

Develop these points into a list of duties for your job description (which highlights aptitude and skills required) and use to develop your person specification.

• Ensuring that the children's welfare and development are paramount.

• Involving the children in the planning of activities. Activities should be varied and appropriate to the developmental level of the child.

• Fostering a warm secure relationship with child/children.

• Observing child protection issues.

• Treating children as individuals and catering for each child's individual needs.

• Respecting children from different backgrounds, cultures and religions.

• Ensuring that children with special needs are truly integrated.

• Recognising and respecting parents' overall responsibility for their children.

• Keeping parents informed about their child's progress and daily activities.

• Promoting self-discipline for children in a positive way. Clear limits must be set and observed.

• Not using physical punishment when dealing with children.

• Observing strict hygiene procedures and taking precaution to guard against the spread of infectious diseases.

• Adhering to general safety practices.

• Being interested in further learning and training.

• Possessing personal qualities such as commitment, reliability, humour, flexibility and ability to recognise own limitations.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure clarity about recruitment and selection in the childcare service and to provide guidelines for the people responsible for recruitment and selection and to ensure a consistent and fair approach.

- 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 made 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 positions will not be treated less favourably on the grounds of sex (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 panels.

- 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' Applications, Person Specification, Job Description, Job Advertisement, Record of Candidates' Assessment, 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

Name & Address of Employer:

Job Title:

Location:

Responsible To:

* Hours & Days of Work:
* Salary Range:

Job Purpose:

Key areas of work to include:
- Day-to-day responsibility for children attending the service, including their physical and developmental care
- Planning, reviewing and implementing activities/programmes appropriate to individual and group needs
- Working co-operatively with parents
- Choosing, organising, presenting and caring for equipment and materials
- Being vigilant for signs of N.A.I./sexual abuse, neglect, and social, emotional and developmental delay
- Immediately reporting any and every aspect of concern to the supervisor
- Observing all procedures as required in terms of care and control, safety and good child care practice, and ensuring relevant others (students, volunteers, parents and visitors) are made aware of and observe same as appropriate
- Preparing regular and specific records/reports as required
- Participation in "child related education" courses, talks and workshops
- Active participation in the work reviews and meetings and contributing to the development of the service

Any other duties that may be required in relation to the duties of the position. This job description will be reviewed regularly and updated if required.

* **These points can be included in the job description or can be incorporated into a separate information note.**

Insert under the headings what your requirements are and indicate whether they are essential or desirable as outlined in the sample below.

POSITION:

Insert relevant education and qualifications		
Experience of working with young children in a variety of settings	✔	
Experience of working with children in groups using a specific programme with goals and objectives	✔	
Experience of working with and relating to parents of children	✔	
Experience of reviewing and evaluating the effectiveness of programmes	✔	
Experience of working as part of a team	✔	
Communication skills	✔	
Writing skills		✔
Humour, flexibility, interest in further learning and training, ability to work with others co-operatively, is a self-starter	✔	

May include the following:

- B.A. in Childhood Studies (Only available in University College Cork) (3 years full-time) (National Council for Educational Awards (NCEA) validation)

- National Diploma in Early Childhood Care and Education (1 year full-time) (2 years part-time) (NCEA validation) (National Certificate required first)

- Certificate in Caring for Children – City and Guilds Scheme 3240 (1-2 years) (National Council for Vocational Awards (NCVA) and City and Guilds validation)

- Child Care with Montessori Education Module (1 year full-time) (NCVA Award level 2 validation)

- Diploma in Nursery Nursing (2 years full-time) (Nursery Nursing Education Board (NNEB) validation)

- B.A. in Early Childhood Care and Education, (3 years full-time) Dublin Institute of Technology

- Diploma in Nursery Management – (2 years part-time – 10 core modules) National Children's Nurseries Association (NCNA) in partnership with University College Dublin Adult Education Programme (UCD)

- The Care of the Special Child (1 year full-time) (NCVA validation)

- FÁS Childcare 2 Programme (FÁS/City and Guilds Certificate) (This course first became available in 1997 and is recognised as equivalent to NCVA Level 2)

- I.P.P.A. (NCVA Level 2 Course)

- A.M.I. Montessori

- St. Nicholas Montessori, Ireland

- The Regional Technical Colleges offer both a National Diploma and a B.A. in Applied Social Studies in Social Care. (They are accredited by the NCEA).

Position applied for:	
Surname:	First Name
Address:	Telephone (home)
	Telephone (work):
	Telephone (mobile):

EDUCATION & TRAINING

Secondary Education

Dates		Name of School or College	Give details of examinations taken and results
From	To		

Third Level Education

Dates		Name of college/university or other institution (indicate part-time/full-time/ correspondance or other)	Give details of examinations taken and results
From	To		

EMPLOYEE HISTORY

Give details of all positions held since completing your full-time education. Start with your present or most recent position.

Dates		Name of employer, address and nature of business	Position and duties	Reason for leaving or wanting to leave	Salary and any other benefits
From	To				

Training

Give details of any specialised training received and/or courses attended

Interests

Please outline your interests/hobbies

References

Please give the names, addresses and phone numbers of two persons who are in a position to comment on your professional/work ability. (References will not be taken up without clarification/confirmation with you in the first instance.)

Name: _____   Name: _____

Address: _____   Address: _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Telephone No:_____   Telephone No:_____

Position: _____   Position: _____

I confirm the information given on this application form is correct.

Signature of
applicant: _____   Date:_____

Name of candidate: _____ Date: _____

Names of persons on interview panel: _____

_____

_____

	POOR	AVERAGE	GOOD	V GOOD	EXCELLENT
1. Relevant qualifications	1	2	3	4	5
2. Relevant experience with children	1	2	3	4	5
3. Relevant experience with parents	1	2	3	4	5
4. Abilities and skills to share with children	1	2	3	4	5
5. Understanding of child protection procedures	1	2	3	4	5
6. Ability to work as part of a team	1	2	3	4	5
7. Ability to communicate clearly	1	2	3	4	5
8. Ability to liaise appropriately with other agencies/workers	1	2	3	4	5
9. Experience of supervising students and volunteers	1	2	3	4	5
10. Ability to recognise children's cultural and ethnic identity	1	2	3	4	5
11. Ability/experience of writing children's reports	1	2	3	4	5
12. Personal characteristics as per person specification – flexibility, commitment, etc.	1	2	3	4	5
TOTAL					

Comments

Signed and dated by interview panel:

Use the following questions as a basis for designing your own reference check form. Ensure questions relate to the post that the person is applying for, e.g. some of the questions would need to be changed or omitted if this was for an administration position.

Position: _____

Referee name: _____

Organisation/company/address: _____

_____

Phone no: _____

Applicant's name _____

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- What position did the applicant hold?
- Length of service?
- Was his/her attendance satisfactory?
- Was s/he a good timekeeper?
- Was s/he efficient at their job?
- Was there ever need for disciplinary action at any time?
- How did s/he get on with other members of the team?
- How did s/he work with parents?
- What was his/her attitude to the organisation?
- Any strengths/weaknesses?
- Was s/he able to keep up with the pace of the setting they worked in?
- Was s/he able to work under pressure?
- Do you think the candidate is suitable to work with children in a pre-school setting?
- Would the candidate have the skills to manage a child displaying disruptive behaviour?
- Is the candidate able to respond to children in a way that takes account of the child's developmental stage?
- Would you re-employ? (If not why not?)
- Any other comments you would like to make?

Phone reference check completed by:

Position: _____   Date: _____
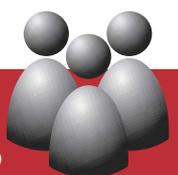
NOTE: Please see guidelines.

This statement applies to
(insert name of employee) _____

1. Name of employer *(see note a)* _____

2. Address of employer *(see note b)* _____

3. Place of work *(see note c)* _____

4. Job title or nature of work *(see note d)* _____

5. Date of commencement of employment _____

6. If temporary contract, insert expected duration of the contract _____

7. If fixed term contract, date when the contract will expire _____

(See guidelines before completing items 8-13)

8. Rate of remuneration *(see note f)* _____

9. Pay intervals (weekly, monthly, or otherwise) _____

10. Hours of work (including overtime, rest breaks and rest periods) *(see note g)* _____

11. Paid leave (other than sick leave) *(see note h)* _____

12. Discipline/grievance procedures *(see note i)* _____

13. Incapacity for work/sickness/sick pay *(see note j)* _____

14. Pension and pension schemes *(see note k)* _____

15. Period of notice to be given before termination of employment

    a) By the employer to employee _____

    b) By the employee to employer *(see note l)* _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Manager/Owner/Management Committee/or other relevant personnel)

(In relation to any changes in the terms and conditions please *see note m*)

(Source: Explanatory Booklet for Employers and Employees – Terms of Employment (Information) Act, 1994)

Guidelines for employers on completing written statement of terms of employment (contract)

a. Name of employer – employers must state their full name. In the case of a limited company, the name of the registered company should be stated.

b. Address of employer – there are a number of options here but the employee should be given the full and accurate address of the employer:
   • The full address.
   • The address of the principal place of the relevant business; this could be appropriate in the case of a business which has a number of locations.
   • The address of the registered office, e.g. the address of the company as registered with the Companies Registration Office.

c. Place of work – employers must state the place of work of the employee; if there is no fixed or main place of work, the employer must state the main place of business and state that the employee will be required or permitted to work in various locations.

d. Job title/nature of work – employers must state the job title, e.g. childcare worker or the nature of the work, e.g. working with children aged 2-8 years of age.

e. Note – regarding points 10 to 15 some employers may have these items collated as a separate document.

f. Rate of remuneration – if there are any other additional payments such as bonuses they should be included under this heading with the basic rate of pay. Details must be given of how it is calculated and how it will be paid.

g. Hours of work – detail of terms and conditions relating to working hours including overtime, weekends, etc. Details of rest periods and breaks should also be included.

h. Paid leave – details of any terms and conditions relating to paid leave (other than sick leave) e.g. holidays, maternity leave, special leave, etc.

i. Discipline/grievance procedure – details of these procedures should be given to the employee either within the terms of the contract or as separate documents with their contract. However they are given they should be referred to within the text of the contract. **(Details of a discipline procedure are required under the Unfair Dismissals Act, 1977-1993 and the employer is required to advise all new employees within 28 days of commencement of employment).**

j. Sick leave – state any terms and conditions that apply to the employee being unable to attend work due to sickness or injury. Outline the terms and conditions of any sick leave scheme, reporting absences, medical certificates, being required to attend the company doctor, etc.

k. Pensions – details of pension schemes should be outlined in relevant documentation if applicable.

l. Notice – details of periods of notice by both the employer and the employee should be given prior to the termination of the contract of employment. The notice period to be given or received by the employer, whether statutory or contractual, or – where this cannot be indicated when the information is given – the method used to calculate notice periods, e.g. contractual notice based on length of service. If no period of notice is given the Minimum Notice and Terms of Employment Act should be indicated.

m. Changes in terms of employment – any changes to the written details of a contract of employment must be notified to the employee within one month of the change taking place. It is usual practice that any changes would be negotiated and agreed in advance with the employee.

(Source: Explanatory Booklet for Employers and Employees – Terms of Employment (Information) Act, 1994)

Supplementary Guidelines:

Two copies of the written terms of employment (contract) should be given to the employee – one to sign and return to the employer and the other for them to keep.

Other terms that could be included in the contract but are not specified as a requirement under legislation are:
•   Probationary period*
•   Flexibility/interchangeability*
•   Requirements regarding shiftwork/overtime
•   Lay-off/redundancy/short time
•   Right to search
•   Grievance procedure*
•   Dismissal procedure – linked into discipline procedure*
•   Company rules*
•   Confidentiality*

Best practice recommends that the items * be included within the written terms and conditions (contract).

The employer must retain the contract for the period of the employment and for the period of at least one year after employment. Even if the employee leaves the employment within the two-month period for giving a written statement/contract, the statement/contract must still be given to the ex-employee.

1. **Appraisal Period:** _____

2. **Name of Appraisee:** _____

3. **Name of Appraiser:** _____

4. **General Review:** _____

   (a) What do you like most about your job?

   _____

   _____

   (b) What do you like least about your job?

   _____

   _____

   (c) What do you see as your strengths in your work?

   _____

   _____

   (d) What do you see as your weakness?

   _____

   _____

   (e) How do you see your role in the service?

5. **Review of the Past Year:**

   (a) What were your main achievements?
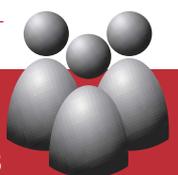
   _____

   _____

   (b) What goals did you not achieve?

   _____

   _____

   (c) What were the main helps and hindrances?

   _____

   _____

   (d) How did the key skills needed for your job develop during the period?

   _____

   _____

6. **Working Relationships and Teamwork**

(a) What do you think are your strengths and weaknesses as a team member/leader?

_____

_____

(b) What kind of working relationships have you with others in the service?

_____

_____

(c) Are there any changes you want to make in this area?

_____

_____

7. **Skills and Training**
(a) Consider which of the following skills are relevant to the your job and how you would rate your level of skill?

Indicate relevance by ✔
Rating: Excellent (ex), Very Good (vg), Good (g), Satisfactory (s), Poor (p)

The Service's Mission Statement, Ethos, Aims and Objectives		Policies & Procedures		
Planning & Evaluation of Work		Health & Safety		
Financial Management		Administration		
Word Processing		Office Skills		
Developmental Needs of Children		Managing Children		
Children's Daily Routines		Observations and Assessment of Children		
Curriculum Planning		Liaison with Parents/Carers		
Writing Up Children's Records		Liaison with Staff		
Meeting Objectives of the Work		Participation in the Service Generally		

(b) What other skills and abilities do you feel you have that could be better utilised and developed in your work?

_____

_____

(c) What are your priority training needs over the next year?

_____

_____

8. Does your job description describe your current job?

_____

_____

9. If not, what changes are required?

_____

_____

10. What are your goals in work over the next year?

_____

_____

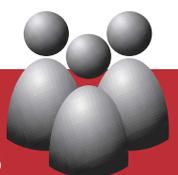11. What are your long-term career plans and how can the service help you move in this direction?

_____

_____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Source: Clarke, J Managing Better – Staff Support and Supervision)
(Source: French, G Supporting Quality: Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Services)

1. **Appraisal Period:** _____

2. **Name of Appraisee:** _____

3. **Name of Appraiser:** _____

4. **General Review:** _____

   (a) What do you see as the employee's strengths in his/her work?

   _____

   _____

   (b) What do you see as his/her weaknesses?

   _____

   _____

   (c) How do you see the employee's role in the service?

   _____

   _____

5. **Review of the Past Year:**

   (a) What were the employee's main achievements?

   _____

   _____

   (b) What goals did s/he not achieve?

   _____

   _____

   (c) What were the main helps and hindrances?

   _____

   _____

   (d) How did the employee's key skills needed for the job develop during the period?

   _____

   _____

6. **Working Relationships and Teamwork**

   (a) What do you see as the employee's strengths and weaknesses as a team member/leader?

   _____

   _____

   (b) What kind of working relationships has s/he with others in the service?

   _____

   _____

   (c) Are you aware of any changes which s/he needs to make in this area?

   _____

   _____

   _____

7. **Skills and Training**
   (a) Consider which of the following skills are relevant to the employee's job and how you would rate his/her level of skill?

   Indicate relevance by ✔
   Rating: Excellent (ex), Very Good (vg), Good (g), Satisfactory (s), Poor (p)

The Service's Mission Statement, Ethos, Aims and Objectives			Policies & Procedures		
Planning & Evaluation of Work			Health & Safety		
Financial Management			Administration		
Word Processing			Office Skills		
Developmental Needs of Children			Managing Children		
Children's Daily Routines			Observations and Assessment of Children		
Curriculum Planning			Liaison with Parents/Carers		
Writing Up Children's Records			Liaison with Staff		
Meeting Objectives of the Work			Participation in the Service Generally		

   (b) What other skills and abilities do you think s/he has that could be better utilised and developed in the work?
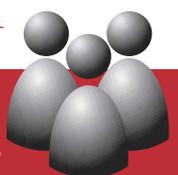
   _____

   _____

   (c) What training needs have you identified?

   _____

   _____

8. Does the employee's job description describe his/her current job? _____

    If not, what changes are required?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

9. What will be the priority areas over the next year?

    _____

    _____

    _____

    _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Source: Clarke, J Managing Better – Staff Support and Supervision)
(Source: French, G Supporting Quality: Guidelines for Best Practice in Early Childhood Services)