

Snagging Talented ECE Teachers: Attract, Engage, and Retain the Best Teachers Who are in for the Long Haul

Presented by Jennifer Carsen, J.D.

Daycare In Demand



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A Little About Me

- Recovering employment lawyer
- Workplace policies & best practices writer and consultant
- Advocate of high-quality—and successful—child care programs
- Mom of two young kids



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Introduction

- Why great staff are so crucial for your child care center
 - High costs of turnover
 - Disruption to children, families, other staff
 - Institutional knowledge
 - “The virtuous cycle”
- Why great staff are so hard to find
- What you can—and can’t—control about the process

Let's Get Started!

- Session Overview
 - Where to find good prospects
 - How to write a compelling job ad
 - Tips for screening and interviewing candidates
 - The right—and wrong—way to kick off the employment relationship
 - How to effectively use mentoring
 - Retention strategies for the long haul
 - What to do when a great teacher leaves

POLL: Question #1



Get Your House In Order First



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Where To Find Them

- Your existing network
 - Parents (current and past)
 - Staff (current and past)
 - Referral bonuses are key
 - A caveat



Where To Find Them

- Online

- Craigslist
- Facebook/Twitter
- Indeed.com
- Monster.com
- Targeted pay-per-click ads
- LinkedIn – highly underutilized by ECE!



Where To Find Them

- Other places
 - Local colleges
 - Local CCR&R office



- Local newspaper - should never be your only source!

Where To Find Them

Bottom line: Go where the fish are!



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POLL: Question #2



How To Write the Ad

- Be specific
- Include some hoops
- Request a cover letter
- Don't be boring!
- WIIFM
- Set up a dedicated email address



Candidate Screening

- Do two to three passes on applications:
 - The clear “nos”
 - The maybes
 - The finalists you’d like to pursue further



- Reject prospects who don't follow directions

Candidate Screening

- Schedule a preliminary phone interview
 - Allow about 15 mins; no more
 - Have the candidate call you
 - Watch for poise & professionalism
 - Follow up on potential red flags
 - If all still looks promising, only then schedule an in-person meeting



Good Phone Interview Qs

- “What first attracted you to this position?”
- “Why are you leaving your current [or previous] position?”
- “Can you explain this [gap/inconsistency/red flag/etc.] on your resume?”
- “Do you have any questions for me about the position?”
- Watch out for self-serving answers

POLL: Question #3



The Interview

- Clear your calendar and cover the phone
- Go off-site, if necessary
- Consider a working interview
- Ask everyone the same questions
- Keep detailed, nondiscriminatory notes
- Give the candidate your full attention: This is crucial



Good Interview Qs

- Scenario-based
- Non-leading
- Asked for a specific reason
 - Give you insights about the candidate
 - Give you insights about possible on-the-job performance

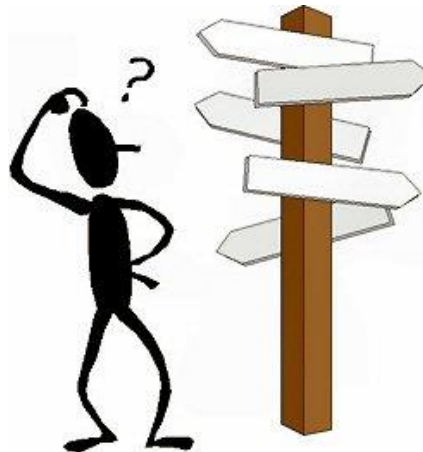


Good Interview Qs

- “What accomplishments are you most proud of in your life?”
- “What would your previous [current] manager say your greatest strengths and weaknesses are?”
- “Where do you see yourself in 5 years?”
- “What did you like most and least about your previous [current] job?”
- “How do you resolve personal confrontations?”

Bad Interview Qs

- Vague
- Silly
- Impossible to answer in a useful way



Bad Interview Qs

- “Tell me about yourself.”
- “If you were a tree, what kind of tree would you be?”
- “How do you feel about workplace gossip?”
- “What’s your biggest weakness?”

Illegal Interview Qs

**DANGER:
AVOID THESE AT ALL COSTS!**



Illegal Interview Qs

- “Are you married?”
- “Do you attend church regularly?”
- “When did you graduate?”
- “I see you really love kids—are you planning to start a family of your own sometime soon?”
- “You have an interesting last name—where is your family from?”

The Decision

- Review the interview in a holistic way (demeanor, guard-down moments, etc.)
- Get a second opinion
- Check references—always!
- Trust your gut
- Hire for attitude, not skills
- Sleep on it
- Post-hire: Follow up with *all* candidates



Teacher Onboarding

- The very worst thing you can do on Day #1
- Give the teacher the tools she needs
- Line up a mentor (more on this later)
- Have a handbook in place
- Give existing staff some background
- Get excited!



Mentoring That Works

- Build it into your culture
- Encourage informal mentoring relationships
- Put some money behind your program
- Know your endgame
- Check in periodically



Retention Strategies

- Challenge
- Trust
- Sincere appreciation
- Individual recognition
- Play to individual strengths



Retention Strategies

- Investment
 - Performance appraisals (at least 2x/year)
 - Training & continuing ed
- Fun



Retention Strategies

- The truth about money



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Retention Strategies

The Big Why



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POLL: Question #4



What Bosses *Think* Employees Want

1. Good wages
2. Job security
3. Promotion & growth
4. Good working conditions
5. Interesting work
6. Personal loyalty (to workers)
7. Tactful discipline
8. Appreciation for work done
9. Sympathetic help with personal problems
10. Feeling “in” on things

Source: Andrew Botwin

What Employees *Actually* Want

1. Appreciation for work done
2. Feeling “in” on things
3. Sympathetic help with personal problems
4. Job security
5. Good wages
6. Interesting work
7. Personal loyalty (to workers)
8. Promotion & growth
9. Good working conditions
10. Tactful discipline

Source: Andrew Botwin

Two Quotes To Remember

You have to expect things of yourself before you can do them.



—Michael Jordan

It's amazing how someone's IQ seems to double as soon as you give them responsibility and indicate that you trust them.

—Tim Ferriss

When Someone Leaves

- Keep the lines of communication open
- “Is there anything we can do to change your mind?”
- Offer to be a reference (and a resource)
- Know, going in, that great teachers WILL leave. This is OK.



When Someone Leaves

- Lay the groundwork for a boomerang



- Tell them in so many words the door is always open
- Stay in touch

4 Key Takeaways

1. Hiring in desperation → poor hires. Always be on the lookout for great talent.

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3. Retention begins on Day 1 and continues through the entire employment relationship

4 Key Takeaways

1. Hiring in desperation → poor hires. Always be on the lookout for great talent.
2. The better your program, the better the talent you'll be able to attract and keep
3. Retention begins on Day 1 and continues through the entire employment relationship
4. Happy, engaged teachers make your whole program better (and your retention efforts easier)

Thank You!

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