



# **Halton Region Early Years and Child Care Workforce Strategy**

## **Human Resource Supports Interviewing Resource Guide**

**August 2021**

## **Welcome to Halton's Early Years and Child Care Human Resource Supports**

Halton Region, in collaboration with the Workforce Strategy Advisory Committee is pleased to announce the launch of four new tools to support human resources in the early years and child care community. These tools will be helpful to support employers with recruitment.

We welcome you to explore the tools listed below:

### **1. Interviewing Resource Guide**

This resource provides:

- Details on interviewing best practices in all phases of the interview process
- Tips on Human Resource practices from Halton professionals

### **2. Competency Guided Interview Questions**

This resource provides:

- Interview questions and activities across ten core competencies identified as important for early childhood educators
- Definitions and examples of core competencies

### **3. Leading Practices in Onboarding- Onboarding Summary**

This resource provides:

- foundational information regarding policies, procedures and practices;
- tips for creating a welcoming atmosphere;
- guidance on how to set expectations early and often; and
- support for employers in helping the new employee to understand organizational culture and values.

### **4. Organize your Onboarding Process- Onboarding Checklist**

This resource provides:

- A brief checklist for employers to quickly organize their onboarding processes

Thank you for supporting Halton's Early Years and Child Care Workforce Strategy. If you have questions regarding this information, please contact Supervisor, Quality and Community Development, at [childcareservices@halton.ca](mailto:childcareservices@halton.ca)

**Welcome to the Interviewing Resource:**

# Interviewing Activities for the Halton Early Years and Child Care Community

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## 1. Introduction

Finding and hiring the best candidate is challenging. Use this resource as a guide to choosing interviewing activities that allow you to determine the best candidate and talent for your organization.

Designed to improve the chances of hiring success, this resource uses a framework of core competencies (key knowledge, skills, and attributes) to guide the recruitment process.

Core competencies ensure a solid recruitment and retention foundation when embedded in job descriptions, performance evaluation and coaching practices.

Created by human resource professionals working in the Halton early learning community, this resource draws on human resource leading practices as well as provincial and professional early learning documents.

This resource provides

- Interviewing activities across three phases of the interviewing process
- Interview questions for 10 core competency categories
- Core competency definitions and indicators
- Tips on Human Resource practices from Halton professionals

Always consult employment legislation when designing and carrying out your recruitment and hiring process. Legislation includes, but is not limited to the:

- *Employment Standards Act (ESA)*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)*
- *Accessibility for Ontarians Disabilities Act (AODA)*
- *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*

## 2. Before the Interview

### Pre-screen

**Human Resource professionals in Halton note that a pre-screen process allows organizations to:**

- Identify applicants to select for an in-person or virtual interview
- Have an initial discussion about the job with candidates, which helps eliminate unqualified, or uninterested, applicants and reduces the amount of interview no-shows

### **Before the pre-screen**

- Confirm qualifications and registration with the College of Early Childhood Education
- Determine if the applicant has applied or worked for the organization in the past
- Arrange for telephone pre-screen interviews of applicants

### **Email an invitation for a telephone screen interview**

- Arrange a time for the phone interview
- Describe the process
  - The pre-screen is a preliminary or initial part of the interview process
  - Successful candidates will proceed to in-person/virtual interview
- Give information about the timeline for the interviewing process
- Send the job description with the email

### **In your phone pre-screen interview**

- Ask about working hours to ensure flexibility to work within the program opening and closing hours
- Confirm they are able to travel to the location of the position; remembering that validation of a driver's license is not necessary
- Confirm their familiarity with Ministry of Education pedagogical expectations
- Review resume and experience; talk about any gaps in their resume
- Ask the candidate several questions to understand their background and why they are interested in working for your organization
  - Why did you leave your last employment position?
  - Why did you apply for this position in our organization?
  - How would your current supervisor describe you as an educator?
- Confirm the candidate is able to get a Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Screen prior to employment

- Advise each person that references upon request will be required should a candidate be selected for the position
- Discuss any accommodations required for an in-person interview
- Discuss timelines for the successful candidate to start

## Preparing for the Interview

### **Human Resource professionals in Halton share these tips about conducting the interview**

- Consider implementing second interviews when recruiting leadership positions
- Consider including a written exercise in the interview process along with a scoring tool for that exercise

#### 1. At the most preliminary level

- Know the job and how it fits in the organization
- Know the knowledge, skills, and experience you're looking for
- Know what you expect from the potential employee

This comes from your job description and job qualifications.

It helps you with the first phase of the interview process: selecting whom you will interview.

#### 2. Develop an interview protocol based on the job description and specifications (make sure your questions conform to the Ontario Human Rights Commission: [www.ohrc.ca](http://www.ohrc.ca) and that all panel members are well versed on all protected grounds).

- Decide on the type and content of questions based on the competencies required by the future employee

#### 3. Develop your interview process

- Use the interview guide to create a tool for documenting the interview – with questions, score, and responses you're looking for
- Incorporate a scoring system that weights each phase of the process e.g. interview versus written assessment
- Have more than one person conduct the interview with no consensus scoring
- Ensure the selection panel is consistent for all interviews as differing panel members can be seen as a flaw in the process, if challenged

### 3. Conducting the Interview

#### Tips for Starting the Interview

#### **Human Resource professionals in Halton share these tips about conducting the interview**

- Ensure panel members are familiar with conducting interviews, aware of prohibited grounds and have reviewed the questions, indicators and scoring in advance of the interview
- At the beginning of the interview, engage in a brief conversation to help relax the candidate
- Learn about the candidate; read their cover letter and know about their resume
- Act naturally and listen intently
- Interviews can be about marketing your organization to future employees; what would you say about why your organization is a great place to work?
- Consider telling the candidate about the organization – history, values, goals, future etc.
- Great interviews feel like conversations; this can reduce nerves and allow candidates to present their best responses
- Use a variety of questions including behaviour based and scenarios

**Post Pandemic:** Consider having candidates (who have presented Criminal Reference Check/Vulnerable Sector Screen and proof of immunization documents) participate in a classroom for a period of time to understand the program operation and to introduce candidates to current educators.

Consider utilizing feedback from current educators to support the hiring decision. If feedback will be used in decision-making, develop key indicators on which to evaluate candidates in this phase of the process

#### **Human Resource professionals in Halton share these questions for starting the interview**

- Tell me about your education and experience and how it relates to this role?
- What intrigued you about this posting and why did you apply for this position?
- What do you know about our organization?
- Where is your greatest opportunity to shine?
- What do others applaud you for?
- What are two things that motivate you?
- What are the two most significant accomplishments in your career so far?

- What are the most important rewards you expect in a career?
- What did your previous supervisor do to help inspire and activate your performance?
- If you started working for us, what is the first thing you would do to have an impact on program quality?

## Competency Guided Interview Questions

### Why use core competencies?

Core competencies represent the primary skills, knowledge and dispositions deemed essential for the role of early childhood educator.

This resource presents 10 core competencies accompanied by

- indicators that clarify the intent of the core competency
- sample interview questions that can be selected for individual and/or group interviews

Core competencies ensure a solid recruitment and retention foundation when embedded in job descriptions, performance evaluation and coaching practices.

- Leadership
- Inclusion/Diversity
- Relationships
- Professionalism
- Teamwork/Collaboration
- Flexibility/Adaptability
- Child Engagement
- Family Engagement
- Professional Communication
- Curriculum Development and Pedagogical Approaches



## Going Beyond Interview Questions

Consider adding any of these activities into your interview protocol.

### **Human Resource professionals in Halton share these tips for skill demonstration options**

#### **Portfolios**

Consider asking candidates to bring samples of:

- An activity that demonstrates the ability to design or modify learning for a child with unique needs (i.e. a learning activity that can be offered in different ways to learners at different levels)
- A certificate from a recent professional learning opportunity and discuss what they learned
- A sample of pedagogical documentation and come prepared to describe its meaning

#### **Written assignments**

This interview activity requires candidates to write a short learning assignment to reveal their knowledge of and ability to complete documentation and communicate ideas in written form to parents.

To ensure consistency in the process, the panel should determine one exercise for all candidates ensuring a fair comparison can be made. A standard written exercise for all candidates to complete is recommended.

Remember to create a scoring tool for this process.

- In advance of the interview, give individuals 2 - 3 questions to answer in written form to bring to the interview; this helps evaluate the candidate's communication skills in reading, writing, and presenting.
- Ask candidates to bring a sample email they would write to a parent regarding a special event happening in the classroom.
- Provide candidates with a written portion to complete after the individual or group interview. The written portion contains two photos with children engaging in

different activities. Candidates answer the following question in relation to the photos:

- We see children as curious, competent, capable of complex thinking, and rich in potential. Discuss how this is reflected in one of the two photos.

## 4. After the Interview

### Ending the interview

- For the interview panel, pre-book time after the interview to debrief and score; these discussions help form a hiring decision and consider any gaps that need to be addressed as part of the new hire's plan for success. Ask the candidate if there anything they want to add to the interview and if they have any questions for you
- Share timelines for making a decision
- Confirm availability to start if selected as the successful candidate
- Confirm the process i.e. review each candidate's interview documents and make a decision based on scored criteria
- Confirm how you will contact the person to let them know the decision

### Reference Checking

#### **Human Resource professionals in Halton share these suggestions and questions for reference checks**

- What were the dates of the individual's employment with you?
- Could you please confirm their duties?
- What was their reason for leaving?
- How would you describe them in terms of reliability?
- How would you describe their work efficiency?
  - Were they involved with their work and engaged in their tasks?
- How did the employee build relationships and communicate with colleagues and supervisors? Describe their relationships with parents/children/clients. Were there ever any concerns?
- Would you describe them as someone who takes initiative?
  - If so, please give an example.
- How would you describe the needs and frequency to supervise and coach this person?
- What would you describe as their greatest skill area?
- Would you say there is a skill area that requires more development/improvement? Are there any weaknesses we should be aware of?

- What advice would you give this person's future supervisor?
- Would you be prepared to re-employ them if you had the opportunity?
- Is there anything else you would like to add?