

INTERVIEW BRIEF GUIDE

Congratulations on securing an interview through Early Learning Placements! Now you need to do some research and preparations to increase your chances of securing the position.

PREPARATION & RESEARCH

The key to success for any interview is good research and preparation. Ensure that you take the time to research information relating to the facility you are applying for. The easiest way to do this is by reviewing their website and/or brochures or documentation available on the facility/centre.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

It is normal for most people do get nervous during an interview. Therefore we strongly recommend that prior to interview you make a list of some example questions and different situations you have been in that you are likely to be asked during the interview. It is common for employers to ask you questions around your qualifications, strengths, weaknesses and how you have handled various situations relating to children.

It is advised that you practise with a friend or family member prior to the interview. This will get you thinking about different experiences that you have been in and hence during the interview you will be easily able to demonstrate your ability to handle them. This is a great opportunity for you to promote yourself during the interview.

During the interview if you get stuck on a question, take a few minutes to think through the answer – there is no rush.

If you do not understand the question, ask the interviewer to repeat the question. If you are unable to answer the question as well as you would have liked, don't worry about it and ensure to focus on the next question.

SITUATIONAL QUESTIONS

The basic theory of situational interview questions is that past behaviour is indicative of future behaviour. Asking potential employees about experiences they had in the past, what the situation was; what action they took and what the outcome was will give you a good indication as to how they are likely to handle a similar situation in the future. You need to focus on giving specific examples here with positive outcomes. This can be difficult to articulate if you are doing such things on a day to day basis and hence we recommend that you write a few examples down.

RECOMMENDED COMPETENCIES TO FOCUS ON MAY INCLUDE BUT NOT BE LIMITED TO:

- + Programming
- + Team work (within a centre environment)
- + Communication (with parents, children & staff)
- + Patience
- + Dedication
- + Enthusiastic approach
- + Working with children with learning or behavioural difficulties
- + Prioritising work load

If you do find for any reason that you offer a situation without a positive outcome, ensure you back that up by saying what you learnt from that experience and what you would do differently next time.

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GENERAL QUESTIONS:

What are your strengths? What value do you think you can bring to this role? Why should we hire you?

Early Learning Placements believes that your answer to any of the above questions can be the same and suggest that you suggest you break your answer into three key areas:

- 1. Technical skills** – What are the technical skills that make you suitable for this role eg. Educational qualifications, experience etc.
- 2. Transferable skills** – These are the skills that you are able to bring from one role to another such as communication skills, attention to detail, team work etc.
- 3. Personal skills** – Qualities about your personality that you see as strength to your future employer eg. Professional, confident, hard working.

By breaking your answer into 3 core parts, this will ensure that you deliver an answer that is well rounded.

What is your weakness? What area do you think you to improve in?

It is important that you have an area to improve on. No one is perfect! When stating your weakness or area to improve on, it is important to state your level of competence firstly, and then talk about your area of weakness, then most importantly what / how you are going about fixing it.

For example; if I think my area of weakness is my ability to use MS Word, if I just say MS Word it sounds as though I can't use MS Word at all. If however I say, "whilst I'm an intermediate user of MS Word but I'd really like to get my skills to an advanced level, so what I am doing to change that is going home each night and using MS Word for Dummies to practise and I hope to be advance within the next month" it actually turns it in to a positive example.

EXAMPLES OF ADDITIONAL GENERAL QUESTIONS:

- What is your understanding of this role?
- What has attracted you to the position?
- What are your greatest achievements to date?
- How do you think your past Manager would describe you?
- Can you summarise the contribution you would make to our organisation?
- What has been your most challenging work experience to date?
- What are your career goals?

EXAMPLES OF INDUSTRY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS:

- Talk me through how current is your knowledge of the Early Learning Years Framework?
- Can you give me an example of where you incorporated the EYLF in to your curriculum?
- Tell me your understanding of the OH&S requirements of a centre?
- What has been the most difficult topic of your studies?
- Why do you want to work in the Early Childhood industry?

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PLEASE EXPLAIN THE SAFETY FEATURES / HYGIENE PRACTICES YOU NEED TO BE AWARE OF WHEN IN THE:

1. Nappy changing room
2. Arrival / Departure at the centre
3. Play room/Sleep room
4. Meal times

Can you talk through an example in your previous position where you developed programming activities for a specific age group?

IT'S YOUR TURN TO ASK QUESTIONS

Asking questions at the end of the interview demonstrates your interest in the position. It is always advisable to ask a couple of questions. Remember, you need to learn about the centre as much as they need to learn about you.

Below are a few examples:

How would you describe the team culture of the centre?

What do you see as the most challenging aspects of this position for somebody new coming on board?

Can you talk me through the centres philosophy?

HELPFUL HINTS

1. Don't be late - Ensure that you look up the address and directions allowing yourself plenty of time to arrive to the interview (particularly if you are on public transport).
2. Turn off your phone –Switch off your mobile phone prior to the interview.
3. Dress to impress –First impressions are important! Ensure that you take a bit of extra time to present yourself in a neat manner. Wear flat closed in shoes!
4. Answer in detail –Ensure that you do not answer questions with yes / no answers. You need to provide details

of the situations you are explaining.

5. Use correct English –Never use poor grammar, slang words or swear words during interview. It is unprofessional regardless of how relaxing the interview is.

6. Speak Slowly and clearly.

7. Focus on the positive aspects and experience you have gained from previous roles

8. Do not smoke prior to interview –Never have a cigarette prior to interview.

9. SMILE – It can be hard where you are nervous, but be sure to smile during the interview!

SALARY DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS

+ Don't discuss salary at the initial interview

+ Know your market value

+ Know the proposed salary prior to interview-How to negotiate-Performance is key

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Upon completion of the interview, ensure that you thank the interviewer for their time even if you are not interested in the position.

Be sure to call your Early Learning Placement's Consultant to given them feedback from your interview.

Good luck!