

Hiring a Respite Worker? Suggested Interviewing Process and Questions

The following questions and techniques have been compiled from various sources and are suggestions to utilize when interviewing potential candidates for the position of a respite or support worker.

- You may want to ask a friend or family member to be present during the interview.
- If you plan to include your child in the interview, introduce yourself and your child to the potential candidate and observe the interaction between your child and the worker. If you do not plan to include your child in the interview, you may want to plan a second visit to introduce the potential candidate to your child.

Step #1 -Explain what you are hoping to gain from this experience and what your child's needs are.

This could include the following:

- Days of the week and times you require the worker
- The type of responsibilities expected
- Transportation expectations (Will the candidate be expected to transport your child in their vehicle? Do they have adequate insurance to do so?)
- Ensure that you give specific information that relates to your child (e.g. allergies, likes, dislikes, medical information, strategies that work for your child)
- Physical requirements (lifting, feeding, etc.).

Step #2- Review the potential candidate's resume. Ask questions that will provide you with valuable information about the candidate. These could include any number of the following questions:

1. Ask the candidate why they would like to be a support worker and what skills they would bring to the position.
2. Question if the candidate is flexible. Is the candidate able to follow a routine when necessary?



3. Question if the candidate can work independently. Does the candidate require frequent supervision? Does the candidate demonstrate initiative?
4. Question if the candidate can take direction or suggestions well.
5. Would the candidate consider themselves to be reliable? Are they enthusiastic about their work? Have the candidate describe their sense of humour.
6. Discuss their experience with children in your child's age grouping.
7. Discuss the candidate's educational background.
8. Question any experience that the candidate may have had working with children with special needs. Are there specific diagnoses that they are familiar with?
9. Question if the candidate would be interested in training opportunities (e.g., by therapists involved with the child or community-based workshops).
10. Discuss activities that the candidate would be doing with your child.
11. Discuss the specific needs of your child and activities that would complement those needs. Ask the candidate how they would meet your child's needs.
12. Question what types of behaviour management strategies the candidate would utilize with your child.
13. Give specific scenarios and question how the candidate would handle the situation, as this will give you insight into their problem solving skills. This could include questions such as: "What would you do if my child has a seizure?", "What would you do if my child ran away from you?", "If my child became frustrated with an activity, how would you encourage success and self-esteem?", "How would you handle a temper tantrum?" and "Who has the right to make final decisions regarding my child?".
14. Question whether the candidate has had a criminal reference check, completed a Children's Aid check, and if they have successfully completed First Aid/CPR training? Is the candidate willing to provide copies of these checks or certificates?



15. Discuss rate of pay and conditions of employment (Will they work with your child in your home, their home, or out in the community?)

Step #3- Ask for and check the potential candidate's references:

When contacting the reference:

- Inform the reference that the potential candidate has shown interest in working with your child.
- Explain the requirements and type of position that you have interviewed the potential candidate for.
- Question if the reference can take some time to answer your questions about the candidate.

Suggested Questions to ask the reference

1. How long have you known the candidate?
2. In what capacity have you known the candidate?
3. What would you consider to be their strengths?
4. What areas do you feel they need to develop further?
5. Are they flexible?
6. Can they work independently?
7. Do they take direction well?
8. Are they enthusiastic about their work?
9. Are they reliable?
10. Do they demonstrate initiative?
11. Can they follow through on instructions independently?
12. Would you hire (or rehire)? If not, why?
13. Have I missed anything that you feel would be helpful for me to know in deciding about their possible employment with us?

