

FIRST STEPS LEARNING ACADEMY

Candidate Evaluation Guide

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We're so excited that you're considering joining our childcare family. We know that our application process is quite thorough- and that's intentional. Each step helps us discover not just your skills, but how we might fit together in providing the best care for our children. You will start by answering some questions on your own, then we'll meet for an in-person conversation. Following that, you'll spend some time engaging with our kids in a 30-minute working interview. Finally, we'll wrap everything up with a summary session to reflect on all we've learned together. We look forward to this journey and can't wait to see if we are a perfect match

Qualifications	Additional Requirements
* Must be 18 years of age * Must have a High School Diploma or the equivalent *Must be able to read, write, and speak English *Must be able to lift 40lbs or more, pass specific physical requirements (AND) stand for long periods of time *Must satisfactorily complete MANDATORY state and national criminal background checks	* Must obtain 40hrs of introductory CC Training *Must obtain CPR & Pediatric First Aid equivalent certification *Must submit Affidavit of Good Moral *Must submit COMPLETED employee application package (checklist attached) *Must possess maturity, good judgment, and checks like working with children!
Job Description	
ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES Little or no previous training or experience is required, however you will be responsible for the following duties, in addition to other possible task. • Accountable for the whereabouts and safety of children and youth ranging in age from 6 weeks to 18 years. • Assists in providing and leading planned activities • Assist children and youth with special projects, homework, and life skills • Performs simple routine task following step-by-step instructions • Helps establish a program environment and promotes positive child and youth interactions with children, youth, and adults • Helps prepare, arrange, and maintain indoor and outdoor activity areas and materials to accommodate the daily schedule. • Uses prepared curriculum/program materials and assists with developing a list of needed supplies and equipment • Helps create adult-made games and play materials (play dough, assembling props, etc.) Interactions with Families, Staff, and Children 1. Interacts with children and youth using approved child guidance and youth development techniques as provided by the supervisors 2. Attends to the physical needs of the children, as applicable 3. Interacts professionally with staff members, parents, supervisors, and volunteers 4. Supervises children and youth during daily schedule of indoor and outdoor activities, on field trip outings, and special events 5. Promotes and models safety, fitness, health, and nutrition practices 6. Cares for special needs children and youth as directed by the supervisor FACILITY COMPLIANCE • Notifies supervisor of health, fire, and safety compliance concerns • Helps arrange for/serve appropriate snacks/meals, where applicable • Observes program participants for signs that may indicate illness, abuse or neglect, and report as directed. YOU WILL BECOME A MANDATED REPORTER IF YOU TAKE THIS JOB! • Observe and conform special instructions provided by parents • Ensure that children and youth depart with an authorized person according to written parental instructions • Assist in maintaining program participation data and completing required daily reports • Participates in program evaluations as required • Ensures compliance with policies and regulations applicable to "The Florida Department of Children and Families"	

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

APPLICANT

Full Name: _____ Date Applied: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Date Available: _____ SSN: _____ D.O.B: _____

Position Applied for: _____ Desired Salary: _____ Salary for this position: _____

Are you a Citizen of the United States: ☐ Yes ☐ NO, if no, are you authorized to work in the U.S.: ☐ Yes ☐ NO

Have you ever worked for this company: ☐ Yes ☐ No, if yes, when: _____

Have you ever applied for this company: ☐ Yes ☐ No, if yes, when: _____

Have you ever been convicted of a felony: ☐ Yes ☐ No, if yes, explain: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Interview Expectations - Welcome to your Journey with us! Here is a peak at whats ahead

Table of Contents

Part 1: Thoughtful Reflections – We have created questions from Ten Insightful Topics that depict daily life as a childcare provider - we can not wait to hear about your experience and your take on each discussion point.

Key Objective: Delve into detailed responses about key areas of your experience.

Part 2: Real-World Scenarios – We have created Four Situational Challenges that typically occur within the childcare environment and we are excited to learn about your approach to each item

Key Objective: Face four scenarios and show us how you'd navigate each one.

Part 3: Interactive Exchange – In-Person Questions with the Director

Together, we'll discuss ten topics and four scenarios—this is where we chat and explore your approach in real time ("This time, I have to do all of the writing").

Part 4: Classroom Showcase – Hands-On Demonstration - We have prepared (4) activities for you to choose from - The activity you select will be demonstrated in the classroom - Your choice will depend on whether you feel your skills and abilities align more with a classroom lead or a classroom assistant.

Key Objective: Step into the classroom and pick one activity to demonstrate your leadership or support skills.

SECTION I – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (INDEPENDANTLY)

In this upcoming session, you'll find a series of questions across different themes related to early childhood education. There aren't strict right or wrong answers here! We're excited to learn how you think, how you problem-solve, and what inspires you. We want to see your unique approach to real-life situations. Take a deep breath and be yourself – this is about finding the best mutual fit and we can't wait to hear your perspective!

Focus Area 1 – “Candidate Introduction”

Tell me about yourself and what led you to choose a career in early childhood education.

What age groups have you worked with (Birth–12 years), and which age group do you enjoy most? Why?

What do you enjoy most about working with children?

Focus Area 2 – “Experience and Classroom Management”

Describe your previous childcare experience.

How do you build positive relationships with children?

How do you handle challenging behaviors while maintaining a positive classroom environment?

Describe your classroom management style.

What does a successful classroom look like to you?

Focus Area 3 – “Safety, Supervision, and Licensing”

Describe what active supervision means to you.

During outdoor play, how do you ensure every child is being supervised?

Have you worked in a licensed childcare program before?

If you noticed another staff member violating a safety policy, what would you do?

What steps would you take if you suspected child abuse or neglect?

Focus Area 4 – “Daily Schedule and Classroom Expectations”

How do you feel about following a structured daily schedule?

How do you keep children engaged during transitions?

How do you balance learning with fun?

Focus Area 5 – “Professionalism”

This position requires reliable attendance. How many absences would you consider acceptable in a typical year?

How do you respond to constructive feedback?

Our dress code is business casual every day. Are you comfortable meeting that expectation?

Cell phone use is limited to emergencies and breaks. Will this be a problem for you?

Focus Area 6 – “Camera Policy”

How do you feel about working in a classroom with live cameras?

Do you believe cameras promote accountability and transparency?

Have you ever worked in a classroom with cameras before?

Is there anything about our camera system that concerns you?

Focus Area 7 – “Workplace Relationships”

Tell me about the most challenging supervisor you've had. How did you handle the relationship?

Have you ever disagreed with a workplace policy? What did you do?

Tell me about a time you received feedback that was difficult to hear.

What do you believe employees owe their employer besides simply showing up?

What does workplace loyalty mean to you?

Have you ever left a position on difficult terms? If so, what did you learn from the experience?

Focus Area 8 – “Social Media and Professional Reputation”

How do you believe social media can affect someone's professional reputation?

Would you ever post about a disagreement with an employer online? Why or why not?

Tell me about a time you disagreed with someone professionally. How was it resolved?

Do you believe employees represent their employer outside of work? Why or why not?

Have you ever written an online review of an employer or business? What influenced your decision?

How would you handle seeing another employee discussing confidential workplace matters online?

Focus Area 9 – “Career Mindset and Professional Growth”

Where do you see your career in Early Childhood Education five years from now?

What professional certifications or degrees would you like to earn?

If tuition assistance were available, would you take advantage of it? Why or why not?

How do you stay current on best practices in childcare?

If you were not planning to continue growing professionally in childcare, what career path do you see yourself pursuing instead?

Focus Area 10 – “Accountability”

Tell me about a mistake you made while caring for children.

SECTION 2 – SCENARIO QUESTIONS (INDEPENDENTLY)

Next, you'll see some real-life scenarios that can happen on any day in childcare. There's no perfect right or wrong answer. What I'm truly interested in is how you naturally respond. Just walk me through what you'd do, step by step, as if you're right there. This helps me understand how you think on your feet and what strengths you bring to the classroom. So relax, be yourself, and let me see how you'd handle it!

While supervising the playground, another teacher begins chatting with you while children are playing.

You notice a child has wandered toward the far end of the playground while several children are climbing.

A coworker tells you to ignore a licensing policy because "we've always done it this way."

A child refuses to participate in an activity.

SECTION 3 – STOP – COMPLETE WITH DIRECTOR (IN-PERSON / VERBAL)

In this upcoming session, you'll get to sit down with me for a friendly, in-person conversation! I'll have a few questions for you, and I want you to feel super prepared. While you're working on this part, here's a sneak peek of what I'll be asking – think of it as a fun roadmap, so when we chat, you'll already have ideas ready to shine!

SECTION 3 – FOCUS AREA 1-10 / DIRECTOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

F1 – Getting to know

What qualities do you believe make an exceptional childcare professional?

What accomplishment in childcare are you most proud of?

F2 – Experience and Classroom Management

How do you encourage children who are shy, withdrawn, or struggling to participate?

How do you communicate with parents about concerns or achievements?

F3 – Safety, Supervision, & Licensing

Tell me about a time you had to follow a policy you didn't necessarily agree with.

How comfortable are you maintaining accurate documentation and following state and federal regulations?

F4 – Daily Schedule & Classroom Expectations

What would you do if children became restless during circle time?

Describe your approach to maintaining classroom routines.

F5 – Professionalism

Tell me about a time you made a mistake at work. How did you handle it?

How do you handle disagreements with coworkers?

What does professionalism mean to you?

F6 – Camera Policy

If a parent called with questions after watching the classroom, how would you feel about that?

Is there anything about our camera system that concerns you?

F7 – Workplace Relationships

At our center, we value positive relationships with families while maintaining professional boundaries. Can you tell me how you typically handle communication with parents outside of the classroom, and what boundaries you set to separate work and personal life?

Working with children requires a positive and focused environment. How do you personally make sure that any personal stresses or challenges stay separate from your work with the kids? Can you share an example of how you've handled that in the past?

Tell me about the best supervisor you've ever worked for. What made them successful?

If you strongly disagreed with a decision made by administration, what would your next step be?

What do you believe employees owe their employer besides simply showing up?

F8 – Social Media and Professional Reputation

If you were frustrated with something happening at work, what would your first step be?

F9 – Career Mindset and Professional Growth

Are you interested in furthering your education in this industry? What excites you most about learning more in this profession?

Do you consider childcare your long-term career or one chapter in your career journey? Tell me more.

F10 – Initiative

Tell me about a time you saw something that needed to be done before someone asked.

F8 – Culture and Commitment

Why are you interested in working at First Steps Learning Academy?

What are you looking for in your next employer?

Where do you see yourself in three to five years?

What motivates you to come to work each day?

What type of leadership helps you succeed?

What does being part of a team mean to you?

F8 – Candidate Questions

What questions do you have for me?

SECTION 3 – SCENARIO QUESTIONS

A two-year-old repeatedly bites other children despite redirection. How would you respond?

A parent becomes upset during pickup and begins raising their voice. How would you handle the situation?

You accidentally make an error in a child's documentation. What steps would you take?

You have several children crying, one child needs a diaper change, another is asking for help, and the phone is ringing. How would you prioritize your responsibilities

SECTION 4 – HANDS ON ASSESSMENT

“Now comes the fun part! To wrap up, we have an exciting hands-on moment where you get to show us your teaching sparkle! We have four fun classroom activities ready, but don’t worry—you’ll just pick one or two based on where you see yourself shining! If you’re aiming to lead a classroom, we have leadership-focused activities for you to showcase your skills. If you see yourself as a fantastic support in the classroom, we have activities to highlight that. Take a moment to think about the role that excites you most, pick your favorite activity or two, and then we’ll see you shine! We can’t wait to watch you in action!”

Leadership Activity Options 1 & 2

Activity 1 - Circle Time Leadership: lead a short circle time using a book, song, calendar, or discussion.

Activity 2 - Transitional Leadership: transition the class to another activity (such as lining up for recess or moving to centers).

Assistant Activity Options 1 & 2

Activity 1 – Playground Supervision Assistance: before going outside, briefly listen to our school's supervision expectations and supervise in that manner (assigned zones, active scanning, engaging with children, limiting staff-to-staff conversation).

Activity 2 – Initiative Challenge: take a few minutes to help wherever you think you're needed

STOP – OFFICAL USE ONLY BEYOND THIS POINT

Professionalism		Communication Skills	Childcare Knowledge	
Safety Awareness		Classroom Management	Supervision Skills	
Compliance Mindset		Coachability	Reliability	
Teamwork		Reputable	Overall Cultural Fit	
Professional Appearance	Punctuality	Friendly & engaging	Communication Skills	Overall First Impression

Strengths

Concerns

Additional Notes