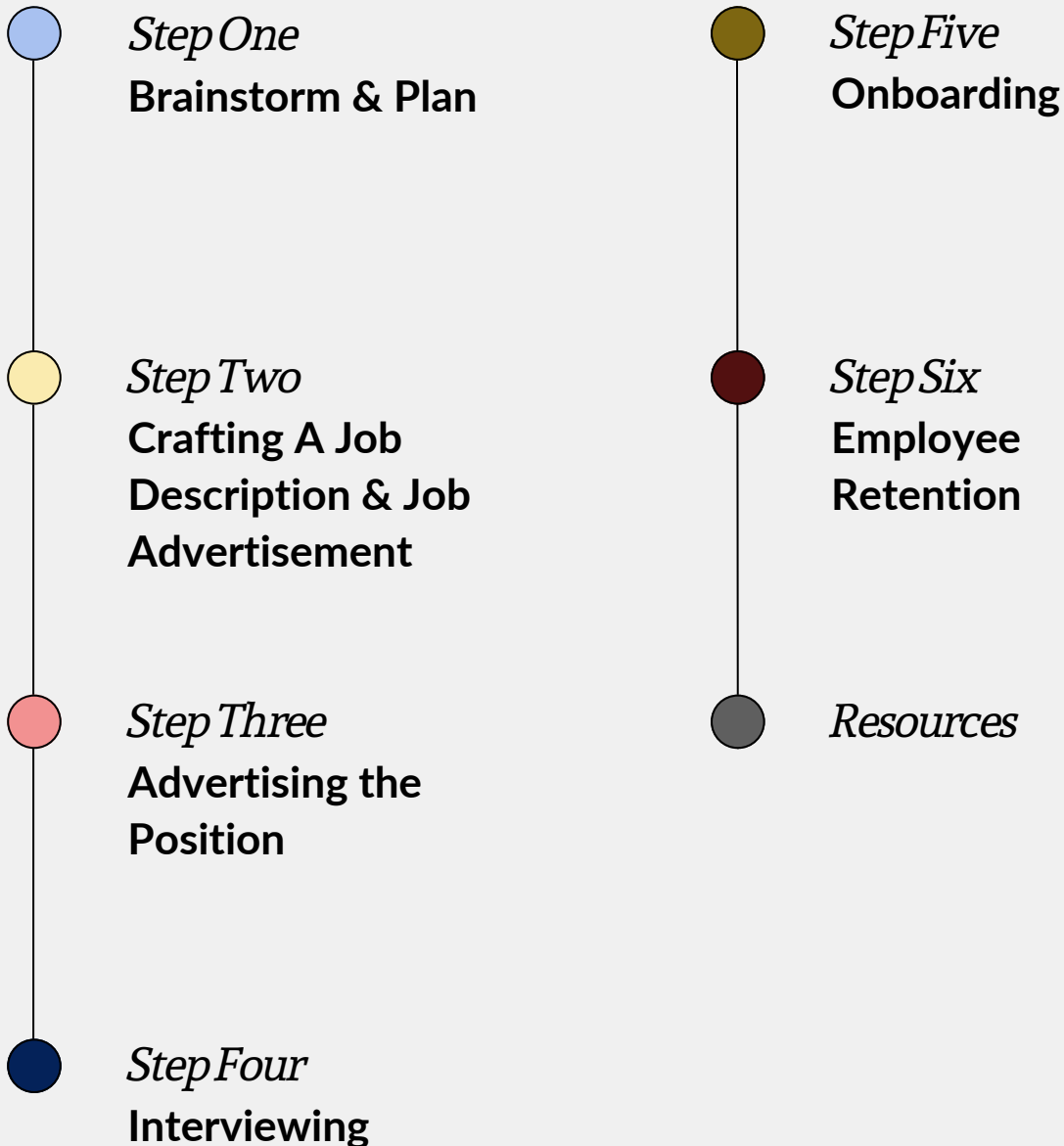




CHILD CARE

Hiring & Onboarding Guide

Hiring & Onboarding Timeline



Brainstorm & Plan

You're ready to add a new staff member to your team... what should be your first step? Before creating a job description, think about the following questions to assist you in crafting the perfect job description:

- How many staff do you need to hire to meet child/staff ratios and to have a floater to cover staff absences?
- Are you ensuring that you have enough staff to complete all required tasks? (Cook, janitor, transportation)
- What is your desired timeline to have a new staff member on board? Think about average waiting times for fingerprint and background checks that must be completed before your new hire can start.
- What is a competitive wage for similar positions in your area? If you can't offer a higher wage, are there other additional benefits you can offer to make your compensation package more attractive to applicants?
- Have you completed a budget to determine what wage and benefits you can afford with your current revenue?



Resources to Guide You

- [Virginia child care background check requirements](#)
- [VECF's 2023 Regional Profiles including average child care wages](#)
- [*Budget tools including full editable spreadsheets](#) *requires paid membership to the Virginia Shared Services Network

Crafting a Job Description

Accurately and genuinely describe expectations

- To find the right candidate for your job, it's important that your job description accurately depicts the job duties for the position. Clearly and concisely explain the tasks and responsibilities that are expected of the position. This should include your education/experience/skills requirements so that candidates can ensure they meet the qualifications before applying. Accurately describing the job from the beginning will decrease turnover from candidates who didn't know what to expect.
- 1

Share information about your company

- In addition to details about the job role itself, your job description should also include your company's mission and how the specific role fits within the company as a whole. It's also appropriate to include the position that role reports to.
- 2

Establish a framework for job expectations

- In addition to being used for staff recruitment, a job description should also establish a framework for expectations for that specific role. An employee should be able to refer to their job description to understand what is expected of them and their job performance. A job description can be used in conducting annual performance reviews for staff.
- 3

Resources to Guide You

- [*Early Childhood Job Description Templates](#) *requires paid membership to the Virginia Shared Services Network
- [Indeed's Guide to Writing a Job Description](#)
- [LinkedIn: How Can You Align Performance Evaluations with Job Descriptions?](#)

Converting a Job Description into a Job Advertisement

Job descriptions and job advertisements are both important documents, but serve different purposes. A job description should be lengthier and provide more detail about day-to-day tasks, responsibilities, and expectations. A job advertisement should be shorter and should sell candidates on wanting to apply for the position and work for your company. Here are some items to highlight in your **job advertisement**:

Explain your company culture

- 1 Now is the time to highlight what current employees enjoy about working for your company. Think about unique benefits you offer. Avoid clichés and buzzwords and try to truly capture your company's culture and why people like working for you.

Sell the position

- 2 It's important to remember that while you are finding the right fit for your company, candidates are also finding the company that is the right fit for them. While accurately describing the job expectations, you should also be selling the position and selling your company to the applicant. Explain why they should want to work for your company and what is appealing about the job itself.

Salary and compensation

- 3 In today's job market, salary transparency is important to many candidates. Providing this information at the start will reduce time spent interviewing candidates whose salary expectations are not aligned with what your company is offering. This is a great opportunity to showcase any non-salary benefits you can offer to complete a compensation package. This might include health insurance benefits, paid time off, paid professional development days, or flexible schedules.

Resources to Guide You

- [Job Postings and Job Descriptions: What They Are & How They Differ](#)
- [Early Education Business Consultants: Employee Benefits Worksheet](#)
- [*Early Childhood Job Ad Templates](#) *requires paid membership to the Virginia Shared Services Network

Advertising the Position



The VA Child Care & ECE Job Hub can assist you with posting and managing your vacant positions. All available positions added to the Job Hub are automatically posted simultaneously on 16 job search websites (including Indeed, Google, and LinkedIn) to increase your potential applicant pool. This platform also allows you to track interviews, monitor background checks, document notes, and send automatic emails to inform applicants of their status.

Other ways to get available positions on the radar of job seekers interested in opportunities in child care include:

- Using social media platforms
- Sharing with local community groups to post within their networks
- Word of mouth by encouraging enrolled families and current employees to spread the word about your open position

www.vachildcarejobs.com

Resources to Guide You

- [Create an account with the VA Child Care & ECE Job Hub](#)
- [VA Child Care & ECE Job Hub Active Jobs](#)
- [LinkedIn: Recruiting Quality Candidates for Small Businesses](#)

Optimize Job Ads



KEEP TITLES SHORT AND SWEET:

Use 5 words or less and make sure the position is clearly understood- now isn't the time to be creative. Include information about bonuses in the body of the job post because putting it in the title may flag it as spam.

2

ATTRACT MORE APPLICANTS:

Know the key words that applicants are searching for and try to use them all when possible (child care worker, child care teacher, early childhood teacher, etc.) Your job posting should be between 100-325 words. Avoid "must-have" language for negotiable requirements and always post salaries.

3

MINIMIZE NUMBER OF POSTS:

Having multiple job postings within the same company means you are competing with yourself for views! Try to combine open positions into one job posting if possible (explain the difference in requirements for assistant/lead teachers in the body of the job description or include all assistant positions and all lead positions in one posting, for example).

4

DON'T VIEW YOUR OWN ADS:

Job boards use an algorithm that increases visibility of job ads that are being viewed often, for a long period of time, and that are receiving applications. If you are searching for/viewing your own job posting, you likely aren't spending a lot of time on the posting and will skew the algorithm and make your posting less visible to actual job seekers.

5

DON'T TURN ADS ON AND OFF:

If you have a paid Indeed account (remember jobs posted on the VA Child Care & ECE Job Hub automatically post to Indeed for free!) don't try to turn ads on and off to save money. This can interfere with the post visibility to those seeking a job.

Interviewing



1 PREPARATION

Prepare a list of questions for each position you are interviewing for and ensure that you are using the same questions for each candidate. Consider creating an interview scorecard so that each candidate is evaluated fairly and consistently. Tools like Google Calendar and texting services can make scheduling interviews more simple. It may also be helpful to conduct phone screenings prior to full in-person interviews to narrow down your list of most desired candidates.

2 DURING THE INTERVIEW

Remain professional throughout the interview. Now is the time to interview the candidate, but it's also the time for the interviewee to interview YOU and make sure your company is the best fit for them. Allow the candidate the opportunity to ask their own questions. Consider having an additional staff member as part of your interview panel.

3 FOLLOW-UP

Consider scheduling second interviews with your strongest candidates. When you are ready to make an offer to your chosen candidate, make an offer in writing on company letterhead and include all relevant details such as start date, salary/benefits, and expected work schedule.

Resources to Guide You

- [*Interview Guides](#) *requires paid membership to the Virginia Shared Services Network
- [Indeed Interview Scoring Sheet Guide and Template](#)
- [Forbes Offer Letter Templates](#)

Interviewing Tips

THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX

Interviews are a time to get to know candidates and what they can bring to your organization. Be creative about how your organization wants to structure interviews, but make sure interviews are always consistent from one candidate to the next. Behavioral interview questions ask candidates to explain how they have handled specific situations in the past. Hypothetical interview questions ask candidates how they would react in a specific situation that occurs in your industry. Other examples of interview techniques include asking all candidates to prepare a work sample, such as a lesson plan, prior to their interview.

UTILIZE PRE-INTERVIEW SCREENINGS

If you are receiving a large number of applications, it can be helpful to conduct phone screenings prior to scheduling in-person interviews. As with in-person interviews, phone screenings should use a standard format and ask the same questions of all applicants. This is a great time to make sure that candidates fully understand the position, job expectations, and salary. It's also a time for you to make sure the candidate has the skills you are looking for in the position. Phone screenings can weed out applicants that would not be a good fit for your company before the in-person interviews.

REVIEW WHAT QUESTIONS ARE LEGAL TO ASK CANDIDATES

To avoid legal trouble, make sure you review what questions you are legally allowed to ask applicants. You should never ask about an applicant's marital/parental status, religion, race/ethnicity, or disabilities. Again, remember it is best practice to ask ALL candidates the same list of questions.

Resources to Guide You

- [Indeed: How to Create an Effective Interview Structure](#)
- [Questions to Ask in a Child Care Interview](#)
- [A Guide to Interview Preparation for Employers](#)
- [*Helpful Hints on What to Ask and Not Ask in an Interview](#) *requires paid membership to the Virginia Shared Services Network

Onboarding

Welcoming New Employees

Onboarding should educate a new employee about their role, your company, and help set them up for long-term success. It should take at least 3 months to fully onboard a new employee. A best practice for employee retention is that onboarding takes place for a minimum of one year. Create an established routine that takes all new employees through the same orientation and onboarding process.

Onboarding starts before the first day of work.

Welcome Letter

It's important to make sure new employees feel welcome when they arrive for their first day of work. Send your new employee a welcome letter prior to their first day with details that will help them feel comfortable and prepared.

Consider including:

- What time to arrive on their first day
- Where they should park
- Company dress code
- How they will access the building (do they need a code or will someone meet them at the door?)
- What paperwork they should bring with them
- What personal belongings they are allowed to bring inside
- Where they will be able to store those personal items during the day
- If possible, plan to have lunch provided for the new employee. If this is not possible, let the new employee know what time they are able to take a lunch break and if refrigerators/microwaves are available for staff use.

Resources to Guide You

- [*Welcome letter templates](#) *requires paid membership to the Virginia Shared Services Network
- [Indeed: New Employee Orientation Do's and Don'ts](#)
- [Harvard Business Review: A Guide to Onboarding New Hires](#)



QUICK TIP

Send a letter to all families and current staff introducing the new staff member prior to their first day. This will help welcome the new employee and prepare staff and families for the change.

Onboarding

Day One

When programs are short staffed, it's tempting to place new employees in their classroom on day one. If possible, ensure that employees have time to receive a thorough orientation before starting in the classroom. Consider implementing the following on day one:

- Provide a thorough tour of the facility and the employee's new classroom, if applicable
- Introduce the new employee to the other employees and any families that are present during pick-up
- Have current employees sign a welcome card or hang a banner/poster welcoming the new employee
- Find out how the new employee learns best and try to adapt training to fit their learning style

Items to Share on Day One

- New Employee Orientation Checklist
- State Licensing Regulations
- Employee Handbook
- Emergency Preparedness Plan/Procedures
- Health and Safety Procedures
- Cleaning Protocol
- Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedure

Resources to Guide You

- [Virginia state regulations by provider type](#)
- [Child Care Aware of America emergency preparedness resources](#)
- [*Employee handbook template*](#) requires paid membership to the Virginia Shared Services Network
- [Society for HR Management: New Employee Onboarding Guide](#)



QUICK TIP

Assign a “buddy” to act in a mentor role- this person should be a veteran peer and not a supervisor.

Onboarding

Virginia New Provider Training

As the employer, you should be aware of the training requirements for your staff. Refer to the specific regulation requirements for your type of program. The Virginia Preservice Training for Child Care Staff is available through Better Kid Care. Regardless of your regulatory requirements, the trainings below are best practice for all child care staff.

- Virginia Pre-Service Training
- First Aid & CPR
- Medical Administration Training (MAT)
- Child Abuse & Neglect
- Emergency Preparedness Training



Resources to Guide You

- Child Care Aware of Virginia's Online Training Academy
- VDOE Training and Professional Development Resources
- *Additional Training Resources *Requires paid membership to the VA Shared Services Network



Employee Retention

It's not enough to just recruit and hire quality staff. In order to have a sustainable and thriving child care business, it's necessary to retain the good employees that you've already hired.

MARKET SURVEYS

Ensure you are remaining competitive in your market by conducting routine market surveys and updating salary and benefits to reflect new rates. Increases made to attract new staff should consider current staff as well.

VALUE EMPLOYEES

The reason most often cited for employees leaving a job is their supervisor. Show your employees that you value them through respect, recognition, and listening to them. These simple things go a long way!

WAGES & BENEFITS

As much as child care professionals love working with children, they also need to be paid a living wage. Employee turnover is expensive and paying competitive wages is worth it in the long-term. Also think creatively about what benefits you can offer if health care and paid time off aren't possible for your company.

FLEXIBILITY

Flex work schedules may not be possible at all times in child care settings, but allow flexibility when possible. Can floaters cover full-time teachers for weekday appointments or can teachers be given their choice of AM or PM schedule? Think outside the box!

Resources to Guide You

- [*Best Practices for Engaging New Employees at 3, 6, and 12 months](#) *Requires paid membership to the VA Shared Services Network
- [Early Education Business Consultants: Employee Benefits Worksheet](#)

Employee Retention

You've hired a rock star team... now what? While hiring bonuses can be tempting to recruit new talented staff during a hiring crisis, it's important to remember to recognize and reward current employees as well. Bonuses and increased wages only for new employees can be damaging to employee morale if veteran employees are not recognized for the years of work they have put in.



QUICK TIP

According to Indeed, employee turnover costs employers about 33% of the employee's annual salary to find, hire, and train a replacement.

Employee retention should be an important component of your hiring and onboarding plan in order to maintain a quality team and sustainable child care business.



Resources to Guide You

- [*Recruitment & Retention Strategies*](#) Requires paid membership to the VA Shared Services Network
- [*Becoming an Employer of Choice](#) *Requires paid membership to the VA Shared Services Network
- [How to Retain Staff at your Child Care Center](#)

Resources

We've covered a lot of topics so far and referenced many resources that will be beneficial to you while you hire and cultivate a strong staff. Below you will find all of the resources linked in this document.

Resources Available with a Shared Services Membership

- [Budget tools including full spreadsheets](#)
- [Early Childhood Job Description Templates](#)
- [Early Childhood Job Ad Templates](#)
- [Interview Guides](#)
- [Helpful Hints on What to Ask and Not Ask in an Interview](#)
- [Welcome letter templates](#)
- [Employee handbook template](#)
- [Additional Training Resources](#)
- [Best Practices for Engaging New Employees at 3, 6, and 12 months](#)
- [Recruitment & Retention Strategies](#)
- [Becoming an Employer of Choice](#)



Free Resources

- [Virginia child care background check requirements](#)
- [VECF's 2023 Regional Profiles including average child care wages](#)
- [Indeed's Guide to Writing a Job Description](#)
- [LinkedIn: How Can You Align Performance Evaluations with Job Descriptions?](#)
- [Job Postings and Job Descriptions: What They Are & How They Differ](#)
- [Early Education Business Consultants: Employee Benefits Worksheet](#)
- [Create an account with the VA Child Care & ECE Job Hub](#)
- [VA Child Care & ECE Job Hub Active Jobs](#)
- [LinkedIn: Recruiting Quality Candidates for Small Businesses](#)
- [Indeed Interview Scoring Sheet Guide and Template](#)
- [Forbes Offer Letter Templates](#)
- [Indeed: How to Create an Effective Interview Structure](#)
- [Questions to Ask in a Child Care Interview](#)
- [A Guide to Interview Preparation for Employers](#)
- [Indeed: New Employee Orientation Do's and Don'ts](#)
- [Harvard Business Review: A Guide to Onboarding New Hires](#)
- [Virginia state regulations by provider type](#)
- [Child Care Aware of America emergency preparedness resources](#)
- [Society for HR Management: New Employee Onboarding Guide](#)
- [Better Kid Care Training](#)
- [Child Care Aware of Virginia's Online Training Academy](#)
- [VDOE Training and Professional Development Resources](#)
- [How to Retain Staff at your Child Care Center](#)

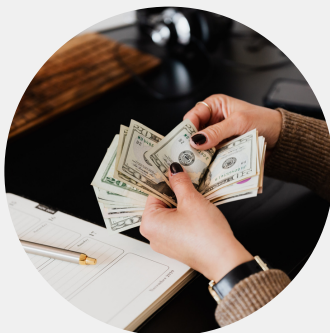
The Virginia Shared Services Network

The VA Shared Services Network is a web-based platform open to all child care programs in Virginia to access a variety of resources and discounts.



Save Time

Access over 1000 resources for child care providers including customizable templates for staff/parent handbooks, policies and procedures, job descriptions, daily reports, lesson plans, and more. Everything you need to start and maintain a quality child care program is available at your fingertips!



Save Money

Stretch your budget and access discounts to over 25,000 retailers including those most likely to service child care programs. Telemedicine/teletherapy, vision, and dental plans are also available for child care programs.



Raise Quality

Our goal is to simplify management and administrative functions so that you can spend more time in the classroom focusing on growing and sustaining a quality child care program.

The Virginia Shared Services Network

Access to health insurance is an important deciding factor for many candidates when accepting a new job. If your budget does not allow for comprehensive health insurance plans for your employees, the VA Shared Services Network may be able to help.

Docs by Phone

Employees can have access to telemedicine 24/7 to speak with doctors via phone, video or mobile app. Board certified doctors are able to prescribe medication and this program also includes a prescription discount card. Plans start at \$8/month/employee with teletherapy services available to add-on for an additional \$6/month. All plans include an employee's spouse and dependents as well.

Dental Insurance

A variety of dental insurance plans are available for purchase through the Virginia Shared Services Network. Plans start at \$36.99/month/employee and additional plans are available to include an employee's family as well.

Vision Insurance

Purchase vision insurance plans for employees starting at \$6.94/month/employee or \$18.09/month for an employee and their family.

Membership Fees

- Child Care Centers: \$120/year (includes up to 6 individual members)
- Family Day Homes: \$60/year (includes up to 2 individual members)



We're Here to Help!



Child Care Aware of Virginia is here to help, every step of the way. From hiring and onboarding support to business training to marketing strategies, our Technical Assistance Specialists can guide you. We have regional offices across the state of Virginia so a local team member is always available to provide one-on-one, hands-on assistance.



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This guide was created in collaboration with
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