



Finding Talent

This resource will help you find talent to support your child care business.

Introduction

Having (or not having) quality employees can make or break you in the child care business. In child care centers, your administrators, teachers, aids, cooks, receptionists, and everyone else you hire are crucial pieces to providing a safe and enriching environment for children in your care as well as comfort and peace of mind among parents and guardians. For family child care programs, your substitutes and volunteers are almost like extensions of you and your program's quality; you want that maintained at all times. However, finding that talent can often be difficult. To help you with this process, here is a simple yet effective research-based approach to finding and attracting the best talent for your organization.

Once you have your job announcement, how do you get it into the hands of the people that you want to hire? Most people start by posting the job announcement online or on local job boards. Additionally, using state-wide and national professional associations is another approach to getting the information out.

Active Talent Search

While these approaches are a good first start, they are also passive approaches. What this means is that you're just sending information out there and seeing if people who are looking for jobs find your job announcement and apply. That may not be the most efficient or effective way to find people because it is based on the assumption that the talent you want to attract to your organization is already looking for a job and that they're going to be able to find your particular job announcement and then apply for it. Research shows that our more active methods of searching for talent are much more effective in connecting your job announcement with top talent than passive approaches. This does not mean that you have to hire a big recruiting firm to help you with the process. What this does mean is that you will want to take the steps to ensure that your job announcement reaches the hands of your two most important audiences: candidates and connectors.

Candidates and Connectors

Candidates are the people who are going to apply for the job, that child care professional who sees your announcement and decides to apply. You can reach out to candidates that you know and that are in your own network. Connectors, in turn, essentially expand your network and increase the number of candidates that you will reach. One of the easiest ways to start with connectors is among the people who you already know: Your friends, your current employees, and the families that you currently serve. It can be really important to let them know because they can serve as your most effective connectors. Again, this does not need to mean that they're hunting down people like a recruiting firm. Simply let these people know that you are hiring and then ask them to think for a bit about some of the people they know who might be interested in a job like yours. They can then share your announcement with anyone who comes to mind and help you get the word out. This can be the simplest way to extend your ability to reach talent right in your area. Further, you may want to offer some incentives to families or employees, something as simple as giving them \$50 or \$100 if you hire somebody they refer who stays on for a set period of time. This provides a nice thank you for their efforts, and again, saves you time because they're doing the searching for you.

Another useful group of connectors can be other professionals in the child care field. Not everyone is extremely competitive and there may be people that you know in the child care field who don't see you as a threat who would be happy to help connect you with anyone who comes to mind. You may even want to share it directly with some child care providers who you think would be good employees, maybe at other locations. Again, it could be very simple, maybe it's a simple text via Facebook Messenger, sharing the announcement with them and saying, "Hey, if you know anyone, let us know," with hopes that they may have someone in mind who would be a good fit or may be interested in the position themselves.

Social media is another valuable resource as, increasingly, jobs are being found through this avenue of informal communication. We have seen child care providers who have been very successful in posting announcements on a local community Facebook group or a local parent's group because again, many of the parents will be attracted to child care hours and have skills that directly relate to your business. Posting in some of these places informally can be another way to further extend your ability to reach others.

Competition

As we enter the post-pandemic job world, we are seeing every indication that securing top talent is going to be highly competitive. This may be a time when you want to consider bonuses and incentives for new hires to be paid back if they leave your organization in less than six months. You can also offer incentive pay and say that for a period of time, like the first three months, especially while there's stimulus money around or available, you will pay a slightly higher rate to get talent into your organization.

The same can be true about your existing employees because what you don't want to do is have wage compression, which occurs when you start hiring new people at a higher rate of pay because there's so much competition in the labor market. This can leave your existing employees, who have been loyal to your program or with you for years, suddenly feeling like they're making much less than incoming employees. As such, you may want to consider employee retention initiatives such as offering incentives for people to remain with you in your organization, such as temporary bonuses or temporary wage increases (stimulus funding is a great way to do this).

What do I do if I need help?

Contact Our Child Care Team:

For questions, email azchildcare@lisc.org or leave a message on our help line: (602) 252-6315. A member of our child care team will get back to you as soon as possible.

DEVELOPED AND DESIGNED BY CIVITAS STRATEGIES

The content included in this guide has been adapted from *Lean Recruitment: Finding Better Talent Faster* (2017), by Gary Romano and Alison LaRocca.

Disclaimer: The information contained here has been prepared by Civitas Strategies and is not intended to constitute legal, tax, or financial advice. The Civitas Strategies team has used reasonable efforts in collecting, preparing, and providing this information, but does not guarantee its accuracy, completeness, adequacy, or currency. The publication and distribution of this information are not intended to create, and receipt does not constitute, an attorney-client or any other advisory relationship. Reproduction of this information is expressly prohibited. Only noncommercial uses of this work are permitted.

Copyright © Civitas Strategies, LLC