



Everything you need to  
know to get a job  
in childcare

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# Starting out....

Learning new things doesn't mean you have to sit in a stuffy classroom all day. If you have thought about a career working with children and want to earn money at the same time, an apprenticeship could well be the perfect route to your dream job!

A childcare apprenticeship is a work based training programme which allows you to earn as you learn. If you're aged 16-18, your apprenticeship will normally be fully funded by the government.

If you're still at school, you'll have to stay in education until the age of 18. However, many people don't realise that a childcare apprenticeship still counts as being in education so you can leave school at 16 to start one!

## Why should i do an apprenticeship?

1. Get hands-on experience
2. Earn £170 per week on average
3. Keep learning new skills
4. Meet and work with new people
5. Learn from experienced childcarers
6. No training costs if you're 16-18
7. Get a childcare qualification
8. Leave school earlier than everyone else

## What will I do?

Your main job role will involve playing and caring for children in an environment like a nursery; making sure they stay healthy and happy. You'll also support their physical and emotional development.

## What sort of job roles would suit an apprenticeship?

There are many childcare roles which you could choose from as an apprentice, these include:

1. A nursery or pre-school assistant
2. A playgroup assistant
3. An early years' worker
4. SEN teaching assistant

## What could I do next?

Once you've finished your training, there is scope for you to be able to progress to an advanced role with more responsibility - for instance from nursery assistant to room leader and then nursery manager. You may also wish to branch out and start up your own childminding business.

# Looking for a job

There are many different ways you can search for a suitable job in childcare. Here are some suggestions:

1. dedicated websites which advertise [childcare jobs](#)
2. the job page of your local newspaper
3. information boards in shops and supermarkets
4. websites of nurseries in your local area
5. word of mouth from family and friends

Be sure to let as many people as possible know that you are looking for a job in childcare. The people in your close network could prove useful; if they hear of a job going in a local pre-school or nursery they can let you know.

## 8 simple steps to a standout CV

Trying to land your perfect job all starts with composing a brilliant CV. Small mistakes can let you down and mean that you don't even make the 'Maybe' pile. With this in mind - read our top 8 tips for preparing your CV below:

### 1. Miss Price or Mrs Price?

Check the title and name of the person you're addressing your CV to is correct. This is your first chance to make a good impression!

### 2. Use spellchecker

After you've typed your CV, use spellchecker to weed out any spelling and grammar mistakes that you might have missed the first time around.

### 3. Don't waffle

Having an excessively long CV will make you more likely not to be considered for the job! Keep yours to a maximum of 2 pages in length.

### 4. Know your key words

Repeat key words from the original job advert. Key words are qualities that the employer is looking for in their ideal person, for example 'team player' and 'passionate about childcare'

### 5. Tell the truth

Don't exaggerate your work experience or make up jobs you've never really had. Employers now do routine background checks and there's every chance they'll ask you about your previous jobs during the interview.

### 6. Check your formatting

Be consistent with the font, size, and spacing you use. If you use a professional looking and easy to read CV - this will impress employers more. [Use our template if you're stuck.](#)

### 7. Check your contact information

Make sure you have all your key contact information clearly visible and double check it's all correct...It could literally mean getting a call about the job or not!

### 8. Don't undervalue other experience

At the end of your CV, make sure you include details of any hobbies you have, any charity work you do or societies you belong to. This will show the employer that you're hard working, caring and a team player.

### Lastly, get someone to check!

It doesn't hurt to get a parent or teacher to read over your CV one final time before you hit the 'print' button. Get someone's second opinion before you submit it to an employer.

# What is a cover letter and why do I need one?

Whenever you apply for a new job, it is customary to submit a cover letter with your CV. A cover letter will explain to the employer why you're applying for the job and also why you think you would be the ideal person.

Because it's the first thing an employer will see, it's important to get your cover letter right. Here's how to do it.

1. Customise the letter to the job
2. Mention if you know anyone who works there currently
3. Get a contact name to address the letter to
4. Tell them why you're applying for the role
5. Keep it short - a few short paragraphs will do
6. Use spellcheck to make sure there're no glaring errors
7. You can use our [template](#) to see how your cover letter should look.

# What do employers really look for in school leavers like me?

We caught up with a Nursery Manager, who told us what things she looks for when employing school leavers at her nursery. Her name is Alison Walker and she manages The Nursery at St Peter's Church in Maidstone.

## **"I want someone who's motivated and bright"**

Attitude goes a long way in childcare. I'm looking for people who are bright, bubbly and motivated. Young children spend a big part of their day with us and, at that age, they're really impressionable. I want staff who can be great role models to the children.

## **"I check the person wants the job for the right reasons"**

Childcare shouldn't be considered a fallback option or a choice you make because you couldn't think of anything else. You should be passionate, excited about working with children and understand what modern childcare involves. Make sure you've researched it and know it's the right job for you.

## **"I'll still choose someone who hasn't got all A's"**

More than ever, a solid academic background is important in this industry. I'm not saying you have to have all A's, but paperwork is a fundamental part of Early Years now. I look at grades and grammar on CVs, because I need to know my employees can read, write and calculate to a decent level.

## **"I look out for a good CV"**

A CV is my first introduction to someone who wants to work at The Nursery, so it really has to count. Personally, I'm not a fan of gimmicks, like photos or too much colour. I want to see a well-written CV that talks about qualifications and achievements.

## **"Having team experience is ideal"**

When applying for a first job, use your CV to tell an employer about sports teams you've been involved in and anything you've done in community groups, like Girl Guides. These show you can operate in a team, have leadership abilities or have picked up skills that may be useful in a childcare setting.

## **"You must have a sensible email address"**

The other thing to remember is that having an inappropriate email address can put a lot of employers off! Create one that's based on your full name, even if it's just for job applications.

## **"I choose people who make an effort at interview"**

If I like someone's CV and invite them for an interview, I look a lot at presentation. You should demonstrate that you're taking the job seriously and wear appropriate clothes. Staff may wear polo shirts and jeans in a nursery to do their jobs, but dressing smartly for the interview is always a good thing; it's a business after all.

## **"I need people to make this job their priority"**

I have nothing against piercings, but remember they're a safety concern in a childcare setting and showing you realise that by taking them out is advisable.

## **So, what happens next?**

If I offer the job after interview, I'll put the person on a three-month probation period. This gives both parties chance to make sure it's the right career for them. Hopefully they fit in, care for the children, stay enthusiastic and make it the first step in a happy career!

# Being brilliant at the interview

The key to tackling difficult questions when you're called for interview is preparation. Practise what you might say if you were asked the following questions.

1. Why do you want the job?
2. What makes you a good candidate for working in childcare?
3. What previous experience do you have?
4. Are you a team player?
5. Have you researched what the job involves?
6. What are your strengths?
7. What are your weaknesses?
8. What 3 words would your friends use to describe you?

It's easy to feel anxious and under pressure in an interview situation. Make sure you take a breath before you talk if you have a habit of rushing your words. When you give your answers, be sure to maintain eye contact as this will give the interviewer the impression that you're capable and confident (which you are!). Try your best to speak clearly. You should also try not to fidget too much. Body language plays an important part in the impression you give the employer and shifting in your seat a lot can make you appear uncomfortable.

# Surviving your first week at work

Many young people worry about how they'll do on their first week in a new job. This fear can be increased when you're a school leaver and have no previous experience of work! We've put together our top tips to make sure you finish your first week confident and happy...

## 1. Arrive on time

Find out exactly where you'll be travelling to and roughly how long it will take you get there. Allow 20 minutes extra time for unforeseen difficulties, such as your train being delayed.

## 2. Take pride in your appearance

Check your appearance in the mirror before you leave the house and think about whether you give the right impression to a new employer.

## 3. Have breakfast

If you're not a fan of eating first thing in the morning have something small, like a piece of toast. You will be able to concentrate on what you need to learn on your first day rather than feeling those 11am hunger pangs!

## 4. Smile!

It only takes people 7 seconds to judge someone they meet for the first time, so make sure you enter your new place of work with a smile on your face, regardless of how you really feel!

## 5. Put your phone away

When you arrive at the nursery and put your belongings away, keep your phone in your bag and only check on it when you're on a break. If people are trying to talk to you, you'll make a bad impression if your eyes are glued to your phone screen

## 6. If you don't understand, say so

If you really don't understand what is being explained to you then you should say so straight away! No one will think you're stupid if you don't get something the first time around.

## 7. Ask questions

Show your interest in what your colleagues by asking questions when they're showing you something new. They'll enjoy that you're keen to learn as much as you can about all the aspects of your job.

## 8. Help your colleagues

If you see one of your colleagues struggle to do something, don't just ignore them - offer to help. You'll make a great impression and will bond very quickly with your fellow team memb

## 9. Don't rush out the door

When finishing time rolls around, don't be the first person to hot foot it out the door. Stay behind and ask the manager if you can help with anything extra. That way, you'll end your first week knowing you've done everything possible to make a great impression!

## And finally....

Remember, Parenta are here to help make your journey into a childcare career easier. If you have any questions about starting a childcare apprenticeship after school you can **call 0844 504 5504** or email [contact@parenta.com](mailto:contact@parenta.com).