

# Preparing a Resume

As you think about getting a job in child care, one of the first challenges you will face is developing a resume. You may be wondering how to begin. As with many tasks, preparation is essential. The following hints can help you start preparing your resume.

## The Parts of a Resume

Most Parts of a resume are essential because they provide information that employers need or want. Other parts are not necessary, but give additional information to enhance your desirability as a job candidate.

## Personal Information

Employers need to know who you are and where they may contact you. Use the following guidelines in providing this information:

- **Name:** give your full first name, middle initial and last name. Do not use nicknames. To avoid discrimination, do use titles such as Ms. or Mr. before your name.
- **Address:** use your street address (including any apt. letter or number) or your post office box number. Spell out the name of the city, but use the official abbreviation for your state. Be sure to include your zip code.
- **Telephone:** give your home telephone number including the area code or the telephone number where someone is responsible can take a message for you.

## Employment Objective

Your employment objective should clearly state what type of employment you are seeking. It should be short and to the point. A well-written employment objective might be "To obtain a teacher's aide position in a preschool program" or "Seeking employment as a preschool director."

## Special Skills

Special skills include any abilities and qualities you have that will make you a desirable job candidate. When seeking a position in early childhood care and education, think about your skills or experience in the following areas.

- **Knowledge of Children:** What knowledge do you have of child development? Are you experienced in observing and recording behavior?

- **Management:** What skills do you have that would help you to plan and administer a program, work with parents, or supervise employees?
- **Aspects of Care:** Which of your qualities make you especially suited for caring for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, or children with disabilities: for identifying, and attending to children's needs; and for guiding children's behavior?
- **Preparation:** Can you set up a classroom, plan, prepare materials for learning activities, or prepare meals for children?
- **Activities:** What skills have you demonstrated in directing activities in an early childhood curriculum, such as art, language arts, science, math, and active play?
- **Maintenance:** What experience do you have in caring for a classroom, play areas, materials, and equipment?
- **Nutrition, Health, and Safety:** Can you plan nutritious meals and snacks, identify and eliminate safety hazards, administer first aid, or teach health and safety?
- **Miscellaneous Skills:** Do you have other skills; such as using copiers, answering telephones, driving vans, or keeping records that employers in the child care field might find valuable?

After developing your list of special skills, you can choose the items most relevant to your employment objective. Concisely incorporate these into your resume.

## Educational Background

Potential employers need to know about your educational background and experience. List the schools you've attended. List in reverse chronological orders with the most recent listed first (include dates, where, and how many credits). Also include any additional programs or courses you have taken that relate to your employment objective. Any special honors you have received also enhance your image with employers.

## Work Experience

Your work will be of key importance to a potential employer. List any former employers; including their complete addresses, dates of employment, job titles, duties, and special achievements in reverse chronological order. If your work experience is limited, look for other ways to emphasize your skills and qualities. Any previous volunteer work that relates to the job you are seeking is especially helpful.

## Activities and Interests

Personal interests and leisure activities can give an employer important clues about what you are like as a person. When listing interests and hobbies, be honest but selective in the activities such as gardening, writing, or playing a musical instrument show you have additional skills that could be useful on the job.

## Preparing References

Most employers will ask for a list of references before hiring job candidates. Select people who know you well, such as a coach, and can provide favorable information about your qualifications, character, and work habits. Be sure to request permission from these individuals so that they can be prepared with relevant details for your references, since employers may view them as biased. Generally you should supply references only when an employer requests them. On your resume, you want to include a statement such as **“References available on request.”** Prepare your references list ahead of time, including complete names, addresses, and telephone numbers. Identify each person’s relationship to you. Use a computer printer or typewriter to prepare your references list. Make several copies to keep on hand.

## Create Your Resume

Once you have gathered the information you would like to include on your resume, the next step is to write a rough draft. Many different styles and formats are acceptable for your resume. Check other resources in your school or community library for additional examples. Read through your rough draft with a critical eye. Is it concise, but complete? Does it show you in a positive light? If you were an employer, would you be favorably impressed when reading it? Consider asking an adult who knows you well to read your resume and offer suggestions for improvement. Use a typewriter or computer to create the final version of your resume. If you are unsure of your keyboarding skills, ask someone with these skills to do the typing for you. Carefully proofread your resume for any errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. Your resume may be the first and last chance you have to make a good impression on an employer, so it should be completely free from errors. After making corrections, ask at least one other person to proofread the resume again. When you are satisfied that your resume is accurate, neat, and error-free make copies of your final version. You may wish to use the services of a reputable printer for professional-looking copies. The printer can also recommend appropriate paper choices for your resume and references list.

## Circulating your Resume

To circulate your resume, consider networking. Make contact with people who can help you find a job may prove invaluable in getting your foot in the door for a job interview. Along with a well-prepared resume, networking often makes the difference in a successful job search. Distribute copies of your resume among friends, teachers, employers, and others in the child care profession. More than likely the time will be well spent.

## Don’t Lie

*Never* lie on your resume; not only does it erode your integrity, it is grounds for immediate dismissal from many place of employment. This includes saying you have done something you haven’t (worked someplace you haven’t or claiming to have a degree that you earned).

## DO be honest about your level of education.

For example, someone who never graduated from high school, but is enrolled in a program that will grant him a 2 year degree in early childhood, could phrase it honestly yet positively by stating “Attended Clover Regional High School; currently working towards AA in early childhood from Central City Community College.”

## DO highlight your education by placing it first in your resume.

Employers will be interested to see that you are in the process of obtaining your CDA, AA,BA or other degree or certificate in child development or related fields. Experienced professionals with advanced degrees often list education first.

## DO use action verbs and present tense.

“Plan daily curriculum for 17 five-year-olds; implement lesson plans; lead circle time; conduct monthly child evaluations and quarterly parent-teacher conferences” shows you in active light and highlights your achievements.

## DON’T use passive construction.

“It was recommended that I be promoted to lead teacher after my first year” is not as dynamic as “Promoted to lead teacher after 1 year.”

### **DO put, “References upon request.”**

You can ask your professors, former or present employer, or colleagues to act as references for you. Be sure you get permission from them before using them as a reference!

### **DON'T list your references' names or contact information on your resume.**

Employers will almost always interview you before they check your references. You should contact your references and alert them that a potential employer will be calling, and tell them about the job for which you are applying. You can check that they will be available, and you may wish to go over the points they should be sure to cover: that you are hardworking, punctual, creative, very patient, and nurturing with young children, a good listener with parents, or whatever else is true and appropriate.

### **DO proofread your resume, and get someone else to proofread it for you.**

Ask your professor, a trusted colleague, or fellow students to go over your resume when you have finished it. They can tell you if it is clear and concise, and they can help you catch errors.

### **DO correct all mistakes.**

Spelling, punctuation, and grammar do count—the employer first “meets” you through the written word, And the written word is therefore all she has to judge you by. Be sure you make a positive first impression!

DO update your resume regularly.

When you have completed a certificate or degree Program, finished a summer of internship, attended a professional workshop or conference related to your field, led a workshop or given a presentation to your peers, or otherwise reached a milestone in your career, take a few minutes to update your resume. Even if you are not looking for a job right now, the perfect job opportunity could suddenly appear, and you want a fresh, up-to-date resume on hand when that occurs!!

### **Common Resume Mistakes Checklist**

- Is the resume too wordy? Have I edited statements down to a few words, powerful words, short words?
- Is the layout attractive and open, with enough white space?
- Is my Job Objective specific? Short enough?
- Have I checked the spelling of difficult words?
- Are my job-description phrases action-oriented? Have I included *results* and *accomplishment*? Have I used *numbers* and *percentages* wherever possible to show *real* results?
- Have I given too much information (such as company address, phone number, supervisor's name, titles, ZIP codes, and so on?)
- Does the layout I'm planning to use *flow*? Or does it *jerk* and dart from one part of the page to another?
- Does the information sound like I am bragging about myself, rather than presenting hard facts and undoctored information?
- Have I correctly removed all proper names that show a political, religious, or philosophical preference?
- Have I listed a proper number of schools, rather than too many?
- Have I compressed my old jobs into a small space, rather than telling about them in detail?
- Have I listed too many part-time jobs separately, instead of more appropriately groups them together?
- Have I given too much information, expecting the reader to pick out what is the most important, rather than editing down to suitable length?
- Have I kept the length down to two pages or in the most extreme case, three—including sufficient white spaces on each page?
- Have I converted highly technical language into easy-to-understand and easy-to-read words, based on the person who will be reading and reviewing this document?