

Safer recruitment in toddler groups

Toddler group leaders and helpers are employed (whether in a paid or voluntary capacity) to work with children and are likely to be seen by the children as a safe and trusted adult. Because of this, even if they are never technically responsible for the children or are never left alone with them, we should include them in our Safeguarding Policy and only appoint following a safer recruitment procedure.

Safer recruitment includes asking the candidate to complete a job application form, holding an interview with them, taking up references and performing the relevant level DBS check. You will also need to obtain the applicant's agreement to abide by the toddler group's Safeguarding Policy.

No-one has an automatic right to work with children, and by operating a safer recruitment policy you will send a powerful message to parents, children and staff, as well as those intent on harm, that you take safeguarding children seriously in your group.

Consider the following when you are looking to fill a position in your toddler group (whether paid or voluntary):

The role

Give applicants a clear and up-to-date job description (duties, role and responsibilities), a person specification (experience and/or qualifications required), as well as details of any support and training available.

Application form

Always ask applicants to fill in an application form. It is easy to hide important information on a CV, or to be selective about the information divulged.

Self-declaration form

Give candidates the appropriate self-declaration form for the level of DBS check to complete form to complete.

Interview

Once the candidate has completed application and self-declaration forms, carry out a short interview with the applicant. This should include a discussion of safeguarding issues.

References

Always obtain references. This is an important part of gathering information about the applicant and can provide useful insights into their experience and character.

Take into account all the information you have on the candidate to help you decide whether to appoint them. If you do decide to appoint, arrange for a DBS check to be carried out. (See below and for more detailed information contact the thirtyone:eight disclosure team).

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

DBS check

This will reveal any information held on central police databases such as cautions, convictions, reprimands and warnings. It will also disclose data from local police databases if it is relevant to the role for which the person has applied. This is why it is important to be specific in the job description and not rely on checks made by other organisations or for other roles.

Do the same standards apply for volunteers and for those who are paid?

Every parent or carer has the right to expect the same standards of recruitment and professionalism regardless of whether an individual is paid or works voluntarily. A potential volunteer's willingness to complete all the necessary forms and undertake interviews shows they are valued both as a person and for the role for which they are volunteering. Generally, people will not be put off by paperwork where its importance can be shown.

For more information, help and advice, contact Thirtyone:eight, an independent Christian safeguarding charity. Tel: 0303 003 1111. Web: www.thirtyoneeight.org

Find out more: www.cff.org.uk/playtime

Care for the Family

Tel: 029 2081 0800 • Email: mail@cff.org.uk • Web: cff.org.uk

Care for the Family is a Christian initiative to strengthen family life.

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