

# Tips and Tricks for Staff Hiring, Creating a Strong Team, and Staff Retention

## Recruiting

### Where are you recruiting from?

#### 1. Posting a Job

- a. Make sure your Job Description includes the hours, rate of pay, and is professional sounding
  - i. Otherwise applicants won't take you seriously or will waste your time
- b. Make sure you have enough budget to post ads. If HR has a slow process or only posts to certain sites, go ahead and publish yourself.
- c. Make sure your ad is at least on the following sites
  - i. Craigslist
  - ii. Indeed

#### 2. Use other staff

- a. If you have a great job culture, your staff will want to suggest the work to friends or former coworkers. Always ask your team as you are posting a job and have them put their feelers out!

#### 3. Local colleges and universities

- a. Students make the best part-time workers. Their schedules are ideal for part-time work and they are people who are driven, yet still figuring out their career path.

## Interviews

1. Check out the [interview guide](#) in this toolkit.
2. Make sure you ask why the person is working in **after-school specifically**. Even though this may not be their dream path, you also don't want someone who is "lowering" themselves to work in this position.
3. **Hire for strengths** - focus your questions on their interests and passions and when you hire them, bring these elements forward in their position so that they feel that they are being utilized and have a chance to be successful.

\*\*\* One BIG trick that I've found is creating a co-teaching classroom with a TA and Lead Teacher. That way you don't have to only hire leads, but can start staff in an easier role under the guidance of a teacher. Later, they can move to a Teacher position when ready.

## Creating a Strong Team

## Program Culture

1. **Have a strong vision for program and make sure staff are bought in**
  - a. Bring in everyone's **values** in the beginning of the year (using Be The Change Values Cards)
  - b. Refer to those values throughout the year and make sure they are integrated in the work you do each day
2. **Physical Environment**
  - a. People want to work somewhere that feels good, as much as you can, create a workspace with
    - i. Good lighting
    - ii. Vibrant Colors
    - iii. KID ART!
    - iv. Photos of kids having fun
    - v. Organizational framework (one word, Ikea Expedits)
3. **Flexibility and Professionalism**
  - a. You should have **high expectations** of your staff in all professional levels
    - i. Organization
    - ii. Timeliness
    - iii. Dress
    - iv. Communication, etc.
  - b. At the same time, be **flexible where you can**
    - i. Schedule
      1. Staff are often working several jobs, try to make their schedules flexible
    - ii. Due dates - as long as they are communicating with you
    - iii. Bring pets / children to work
      1. As long as they aren't distracted
4. **Build a fun group and remember why people join after-school!**
  - a. Go out together
  - b. Be silly with your staff, when appropriate
  - c. Team-build during meetings
5. **Be Clear**
  - a. Don't have your staff be surprised,
    - i. Create clear roles and responsibilities
    - ii. Be clear with your expectations (planning templates, due dates, emails and calendars)

## Hiring Mid-Year

### This is always going to be tough!

1. Use the general hiring tips above. In addition,

- a. **Create a staff manual** so that you do not have to verbally train all new staff when they come on part-way through the year and you have no time!
- b. **Reach out** to other programs in case they are still receiving applicants that they can't use.
- c. Think about the **staff you already** have - is there anyone you can promote to fill the more difficult position?

## Staff Retention

### Create a Formal Career Path

2. **As much as possible, create pathways for professional growth in your organization and program.**
  - a. **Student Aides** - can work one on one with a student with Special Needs and can be funded by GGRC (so they don't come out of your budget).
  - b. **Teacher's Aides** - can work side by side with the lead teacher as a support. This helps the group as well as creates a more entry-level position.
  - c. **Lead Teachers** - should be compensated at a higher level and be developed as serious teachers.
  - d. **Assistant Coordinator** - if you can afford it, this is a great role to have. This person can be out of numbers and therefore support if you have any gaps. But they can be apprenticing for a Site Coordinator position. You won't have to pay too much because of the professional development inherent in this position.
3. **Find Professional Development opportunities whenever possible.**
4. **Be a mentor**
  - a. and regularly check in about the future, even if it's not at your program. Be ready to be a reference and support!

### Believe in your staff!

1. **Bring in staff on decision-making**
  - a. Hold regular staff meetings
  - b. Let staff be a part of the decisions that impact program the most, especially the ones that impact them the most
  - c. **\*\*Remember to still assert that you have the final word and don't let meetings become an argument, make sure to let people give opinions and then cut off the conversation**
2. **Staff opportunities to use skills and abilities**
  - a. Play on staff strengths and put them in positions that will highlight them

- b. \*\*\* **Believe in your staff**, let them create lesson plans as much as possible, give them a chance to be TEACHERS, not childcare providers
- b. Continue to create new challenges for staff

## **Be a support**

### **1. Brainstorm solutions**

- a. And make sure any frustrations feel heard
- b. Be ahead of the game, notice what may be a challenge and help

### **2. Support self-care**

- a. Create a "Wellness" Calendar that shares free exercise classes in the city (i.e. Yoga at Grace Cathedral on Tuesday evenings)

### **3. Regular Check-ins**

## **Find ways to make your staff feel COMPENSATED**

Put as much of your budget as you possibly can into staff wages. But no matter what, they will never be high enough. However, there are some ways you can make staff FEEL compensated

- 1. Give room for **wage increases** each year

### **2. FOOD**

- a. Have food at staff meetings
  - i. Even once every few meetings makes a big difference
- b. Have snacks for staff in your office
  - i. Program goes late and they are on their feet all day!

### **3. Pay for the hours they work**

- a. Most staff work beyond their regular hours. If that's the case and you can't pay them directly, pay them for a day when they are out!
- b. Start a referral fee system where they are compensated if they refer someone who gets hired

### **4. Give celebrations and gifts constantly**

- a. Shout outs at meetings
- b. Gift cards for staff who are going above and beyond
- c. Celebrate all birthdays (have everyone sign the birthday card)
- d. Collect donations from parents to be divided as staff bonuses throughout the year