

Careers In Child Care

It is essential to understand thoroughly whether you are suited for a particular career, before you even consider the option. If you are short-tempered, impatient or have a criminal record, a career in childcare is not for you. Handling children can be tiring at times. It is best to get hands-on experience in the field, while still in high school or college. A few options to consider would be baby-sitting, teaching at Sunday school in church, volunteering as a classroom helper or daycare assistant and working at a summer camp.

Nature Of Work

The job involves nurturing and caring for children who have not yet entered the formal schooling years and older children in before-and-after-school situations. Childcare workers are expected to care for children and take the place of their parents. They play an important role in the child's development, by attending to the basic needs in the parents' absence.

To stimulate the physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth of children, childcare workers also have to be skilled to organize various activities. They are expected to help children explore individual interests, recognize and develop talents, build a sense of independence and self-esteem and learn how to get along with others. These are done via specially designed games and interaction. The childcare worker combines basic care and teaching, to enhance the skills inherent in the child and those that will be required in school.

Among the other duties are maintaining contact with the parents or guardians through meetings, to discuss the progress and needs of the children, maintaining progress records and suggesting ways to stimulate a child's learning ability.

Childcare workers employed in before-and after-school programs are expected to help students with their homework, engage them in extra-curricular activities including field trips, learning computers, painting, photography and participating in various sports. Taking the children to school and bringing them home can also be a part of the duties assigned. Similarly, keeping the children healthy and looking after their eating habits is an important responsibility too.

Areas Of Employment

Self-employment is a good option. Many childcare workers have their own businesses. However, employment is possible as a private household worker, babysitter and family childcare provider in childcare centers. These centers provide pre-school services for children between 3 or 4 years.

Those in charge of infants are called "infant nurses". "Nannies" work full or part time for a single family. Employment as an Au Pair will take the worker abroad as a nanny. The other employment options are pre-school leaders, pre-school workers, early years care and education workers, nursery assistants, learning support assistants, classroom assistants, play leaders and assistant play leaders.

Job Outlook

There is a demand for child care personnel, creating good job opportunities. People who are qualified and interested in the field get good jobs within no time. Childcare can be very rewarding, as you become a role model for children and derive a deeper job satisfaction with the responsibility. However, the working conditions can be stressful and the salary depends on the age and experience of the worker.

Training Requirements

This varies from a high school diploma to a college degree, depending on the position. On the job training and experience is essential in certain situations.

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