


Employee Selection

 Ellett, A.J., Ellett, C.D., Ellis, J., & Lerner, B. (2009). A research-based child welfare employee selection protocol: Strengthening retention of the workforce. *Child Welfare*, 88(5), 49-68.

WHAT IS THIS RESOURCE?

This journal article explains the development and implementation of an employee selection protocol (ESP) used to strengthen recruitment and retention in child welfare agencies. The article describes all components of the ESP, including the goals, elements and effectiveness of the intervention.

WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL FINDINGS?

Many child welfare agencies face high employee turnover rates, especially within the first two years of employment. Turnover has many organizational and professional consequences including lost investments in recruiting and training new employees, legitimacy with the general public, and the quality of services provided to children and families.

Hiring the right staff is a first step in the process of reducing turnover and enhancing retention.

The ESP was designed to facilitate a better match between new applicants' commitments, beliefs, and expectations and the demands of work in child welfare. The ESP allows applicants to self-select out of the ESP process before making more formal applications for child welfare positions.

The chart below identifies the goals, key elements and steps of the ESP:

ESP GOALS	ESP KEY ELEMENTS	ESP STEPS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve employee retention • Reduce employee turnover • Facilitate better match between applicants beliefs, knowledge, skills, values, abilities, and work demands • Consume less time on selection process • Lower long-term costs • Improve employee selection process • Improve quality of services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow applicants to opt out of process before making formal application for position or organizational investments are made • Web-based review of written material • Realistic job preview (RJP) video • Web-based self-assessment • On-site assessment • Assessment decision making 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information about elements of job (salary, benefits, schedule, typical workday) - view RJP, description of stresses, self-assessment, written feedback 2. Make personal decision to proceed with formal application - written personal statement (motivation/career goals), resume, references, transcripts 3. On-site visit - assessment activities, team-interview, assessment of skills (personal judgment, reasoning, analytical), on-site writing sample 4. Juried process - three-person assessment team considers all information, makes individual decisions regarding applicant, discusses/decides as group

Research supports the value of ESP in establishing a common assessment framework. ESP allows agencies to hire applicants with stronger personal and professional commitments to the field.

*Limitations exist regarding the lack of research regarding employee selection procedures and organizational outcomes.

WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR WORK?

Child welfare agencies must recognize that hiring high-quality staff is the first step in reducing turnover, and explore ways to better select and train new child welfare employees.

Organizations should consider implementing similar employee selection procedures as an important means to improve child welfare outcomes for children and families.