

Job Description and Person Specification

Role	Early Years Specialist (Access and Inclusion) x 1 (Cork Office)
Service	Better Start: National Early Years Quality Development
Reporting to	Service Co-ordinator
Role Purpose/ Summary	<p>Better Start National Early Years Quality Development Initiative was established in 2014 by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs in association with the Department of Education and Skills to co-ordinate the work of existing State-funded supports for quality in early year's settings and to manage the Early Years Specialist Service. This Service works with early years settings in a mentoring capacity to promote and develop the quality of practice, as set out in Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, and Aistear, the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.</p> <p>Better Start is a Government initiative. It is fully funded by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs and is hosted by Pobal on behalf of the Department.</p> <p>In June 2015, an Inter-Departmental Group led by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs with representatives from the Department of Education and Skills and the Department of Health and other Statutory and specialist agencies was established to agree a model that would support access to the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme for children with a disability. A model for inclusion was developed and implementation of this model of Government-funded supports commenced in 2016. As part of this implementation, the Better Start Early Years Specialist Inclusion Service was developed. Applications are now being invited for Early Years Specialists to be appointed to fill vacancies to implement the access and inclusion model.</p> <p>The role of the Early Years Specialist (Access and Inclusion) is to support a range of diverse early years ECCE settings to assist them in enabling inclusive practice and the optimal participation of a child with disability in the pre-school room. The Early Years Specialist, (Access and Inclusion) team will work in partnership with the management/staff to develop and implement the service which will be informed by the core elements of Síolta and Aistear.</p>

**Key
Responsibility
Areas**

1. Supporting Access and Inclusion:

- Supporting and mentoring providers in the development of enriched learning environments to support all children's participation and implementation of planned Early Intervention (EI) programmes, where appropriate to enhance the child's learning and development
- Providing guidance and support on undertaking an appraisal of the child within the ECCE setting (before or after enrolment) in order to prepare, respond and adapt to the child's needs and abilities
- Modelling and coaching providers in strategies to enable participation of children with disabilities in the ECCE programme.
- Working in partnership with parents
- Liaison with HSE professionals and others as required to support the child and family
- Liaison with the NCSE with regard to supporting the child's transition into primary school
- Enhance and develop the capacity of the ECCE service by carrying out a range of activities including on-site visits, providing expert advice and guidance, modelling inclusive practice and liaising with HSE Early Intervention and other professional services as required.
- Support early years services to develop and actively implement a range of policies and practice in accordance with the Aistear and Síolta Frameworks.
- Actively engage with, and input to, the assessment service as provided for under the new model.
- Provide advice and support to services in areas such as the inclusion of children with disabilities, governance issues and advising on how to build effective partnerships with parents and the wider community.

2. Information & Administration:

- Complete and maintain records pertaining to the role.
- Ensure all administration back-up and support on progress is kept updated by maintaining all relevant systems.
- Provide periodic progress updates to the Service Co-Ordinator.
- Review, develop and maintain efficient and effective administrative and information systems.
- Participate in and assist in the organisation of special events, visits and any other activities required.
- Participate in external evaluation of the service.

3. Networking:

- Actively participate and contribute as a team-member of the Early Years Specialist Service.
- Work co-operatively with other support services within the education sector, the Child & Family Agency - Tusla, the Department of Education and Skills, the local City and County Childcare Committee, Voluntary Childcare Organisations and the community and voluntary sector as relevant to the role.

	<p>4. Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any other duties within the general requirements of the role that may be assigned as appropriate for the grade.
<p>Critical Competencies</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strong communication skills which demonstrate experience working with children with disabilities and their parents 2. Customer Service and support 3. Team work 4. Building and maintaining relationships 5. Analytical skills
<p>Other Competencies</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Flexibility and adaptability 7. Problem solving and decision making 8. Attention to detail. 9. Organisation awareness 10. Corporate writing skills
<p>Required Experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum of 3 years post-qualification experience of working in early years' services, preferably in a supervisory or leadership role. - Demonstrate in-depth knowledge and understanding of inclusive early childhood education and care - Demonstrate experience of working with children with disabilities, their family and parents. - Understanding and experience of social inclusion and disability issues - Strong organisational skills - Ability to provide mentoring and coaching services - Experience of delivering education and training programmes to adults - Experience of inter-agency working with children and families - Proficient in MS packages e.g. Word, Excel, Outlook coupled with programme databases, SharePoint portals
<p>Qualifications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum third level qualification at Level 8 (or equivalent) on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care / or an equivalent professional qualification in Special Education / Disability / Early Intervention - Drivers Licence with suitable means of transport
<p>Other Relevant Information</p>	<p>Desirable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Knowledge of working in areas of social and economic disadvantage - Qualification related to the inclusion of children with additional needs or play therapy - Experience of working in multi-disciplinary teams - Understanding of the Irish language
<p>Terms & Conditions of Employment</p>	<p>1. Salary and Contract Duration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This post is placed within Pobal's appropriate salary scale as follows: €36,882 - €50,404 per annum - Contract is a fixed-term contract initially until 31/12/2022. It may be extended, subject to funding and staffing requirements. - The successful candidate will be required to undergo vetting by the Garda Síochána Central Vetting Unit

	<p>2. Probation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A probationary period of six months will apply <p>3. Pension</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pobal operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Employees have access to the scheme on successful completion of their six-month probationary period <p>4. Annual Leave</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual leave will be 25 working days, exclusive of public holidays <p>5. Travel & Subsistence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travel and subsistence will be paid at public sector rates <p>6. Location of the position</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The successful candidates will be located in the Company's Offices in Cork City.
<p>Selection Process</p>	<p>Selection will involve short listing of applicants for interview based on the criteria for the position as outlined in this job description. Not all applicants who meet the criteria may be shortlisted. A panel may be created to fill future vacancies.</p> <p>Closing date for applications is Friday 05th January 2018.</p> <p>Please complete the application form provided and email a copy to hrenquiries@pobal.ie</p>

Pobal is an equal opportunities employer and welcomes suitably qualified applicants from all sections of society.