



**RealCareer™  
Employability  
Skills Program**

**CHILD CARE CAREER  
SCENARIO CARDS**

**Realityworks®**  
*Live it. Learn it.™*

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# Suggested uses for Scenario Cards:

## **5-minute icebreaker activity**

1. Begin your class with a quick 5-minute workplace scenario challenge. Pick one scenario and read it to the class. You could also show it on a document projector.
2. Get students into small groups to discuss the workplace scenario, key questions and various points of view.
3. Have the class come back together and share answers to the key questions.

## **Journaling activity**

1. Choose a Workplace Scenario Card.
2. Use the workplace scenario as a journal-writing prompt and have students answer the key questions in writing.

## **Pre- and post-assessment** (for use with Employability Skills Program)

1. Choose the employability skill you wish to teach. Find the Workplace Scenario Card that matches that skill. Have students answer the key questions in writing.
2. Teach the lesson on the employability skill you have chosen.
3. After teaching the lesson, have students go back to the original Workplace Scenario Card and answer the key questions again using the new skills they have learned.

# RealCareer™ Employability Skills Program

## Child Care Careers

### Listening

**Scenario:** You have been working as a toddler teacher for the past two years. You love the kids and your coworkers, but there is also a part of you that is feeling restless and unsettled. You find yourself being short with the children and your coworkers, you aren't motivated to complete lesson plans, and are annoyed by little things that never used to bother you. This is all very concerning to you, so you decide that you need to talk to a supervisor. The owner is the one you usually talk to, but she's gone, so you decide to talk to the center director.

As you are explaining things to the center director, she is doodling on her tablet and keeps checking the time. She has very little to say and seems to be very distracted. You ask her to share this conversation with the owner and thank her for her time. Two weeks pass and the owner hasn't said anything to you. You are feeling even more frustrated now and decide that the owner must not really care any more than the center director seemed to. You begin to look for a different job and give your two-week notice.

# Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
  - Your coworkers and children in the room with you
  - Your center director
  - The owner
- 

## Key questions

- What non-verbal cues are you, the employee, showing to your coworkers and the children in your care?
- What non-verbal cues did the center director show during your meeting with her?
- Did you feel that the center director listened to you and heard what you were saying?
- How do you, the employee, feel after two weeks of no feedback from the owner?
- Do you think the center director talked to the owner?
- How do you think you could have handled the situation differently based on past experiences with the owner?
- Do a short role-play where the center director uses active listening skills and the owner follows up the next day.

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## Child Care Careers

### Respect

**Scenario:** You struggle with asthma and certain smells make it hard to control. A child in your care comes to class in a soiled cloth diaper, and the smell of the diaper and the blanket she brings in causes your asthma to flare. You speak with the center director and she asks your co-teacher to change the child in the mornings. You wonder why the center director won't ask the parents to change their child before arriving and take time to wash her blanket. You voice your frustration to a coworker, who says she'll also talk to the center director.

Later that week, the center director sends out an email stating that another concern was brought up about the smell of the child's diapers and blanket. She thought the diaper situation was addressed and is having the blanket washed at the center every week. She spoke with the parents about the asthma issue and will have the center supply disposable diapers for the child, since they can't afford diapers or extra laundromat visits. She instructs staff to use center-provided diapers for this child and to continue to wash her blanket every week. The center director asks that no one request that diapers be brought in by them.

# Points of view to consider

- You, the teacher with asthma
  - The parents and child
  - The coworker who spoke up
  - The center director
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## Key questions

- How do you and the other teacher feel now that the center director has shared this information about the child and family?
- Do you think the center director should have shared her thoughts with you sooner?
- Would knowing how the parent felt have helped you to cope with the smell and asthma flares in a better way?
- How do you think the parents feel about the request to use disposable diapers provided by the child care center?
- Did the center director handle this situation in a respectful manner to everyone involved?

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## Child Care Careers

### Responsibility

**Scenario:** One day, a child in your care breaks his arm. This was traumatic for all involved, but you made it through and the child is doing okay. The center director needs a detailed report on the accident. She asks you to take the last 20 minutes of your shift to complete the forms for the insurance company and the State Licensing Department. She will be asking your co-teacher, Gretchen, to fill them out also.

It's been a tiring day and you want to leave early. Gretchen is also filling out the forms and she's a better writer, so you scribble down some general information and put it in the center director's box. You get to leave 15 minutes early!

Later that night, you receive a text from the center director, asking for specific details of the accident. She needs more information because your forms weren't thorough. You text Gretchen and ask her about the report. She tells you that the center director asked her to fill out the actual report documents. She is working on them right now and they are due first thing in the morning. You feel badly because you didn't complete your responsibility and others are needing to pick up your slack.

# Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
  - Your coworker, Gretchen
  - Your center director
- 

## Key questions (Review the definition of responsibility)

Definition of Responsibility: A duty or task that you are required or expected to do; something that you should do because it is morally right, legally required, etc.

- What are you responsible for in this scenario and why?
- What should you have done differently?
- How has this impacted each person involved in this scenario?
- How can you restore trust after you have been irresponsible?

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## Child Care Careers

### Patience

**Scenario:** Every month, there is a mandatory all-employee meeting at the child care center where you work. During these meetings, there is always business to discuss, training information to learn, and important information to share. The center director does most of the talking, but there is also a lot of laughter, talking, commenting, and sharing of personal stories by coworkers. Some of you sit very quietly, while others talk and interrupt constantly. The center director doesn't seem to mind this. She laughs along with them and answers their questions. She always asks if there are any other questions or comments, but you get too annoyed with your coworkers to ask. Why do they need to talk so much! Your time is valuable too; if they would just be quiet, the meetings could get done a lot quicker! You mention this to the center director, but she says that most of the employees like getting together and enjoy talking with each other and hearing each other's stories. She encourages you to be patient with them and to participate in their conversations.

# Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
  - Your fellow employees
  - center director
- 

## Key questions

- What signs of impatience do you exhibit during the staff meetings?
- What do you feel is the root cause of your impatience?
- Do you think your coworkers sense how you are feeling during the meetings?
- Do you think your center director should make your coworkers be more considerate of your feelings?

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## Child Care Careers

### Presentation Skills

**Scenario:** As a lead teacher at a child care center, there are times when you need to talk with parents and present them with information about their child. Sometimes it is as easy as telling them a silly story or that their child had a great day. However, you get nervous when you need to talk to a parent about a concern you have or discuss negative behaviors with them. There is one parent who makes you exceptionally nervous, and you tend to repeat the same thing in different ways in front of them without fully expressing your thoughts. One day, you try to tell this parent that her child was being more physical than usual. You want to ask if she has noticed him giving forceful hugs and tackling at home, but you just keep repeating that you observed him jumping on you and his friends all day. You get flustered when she asks if this was something that she needed to be concerned about and were relieved when the conversation ended. You later find out that she called the center director and asks why you just repeated the same thing over and over. The center director explains that you tend to repeat yourself when you are nervous, and that you were only trying to let the parent know what you had observed.

# Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
  - The parent
  - The center director
- 

## Key questions

- What could you have done to better prepare yourself for presenting the information to the parent?
- What types of presentation skills could you have used during this scenario?
- How could your center director help you to improve your presentation skills with parents?
- Is there anything that the parent could do to help you with your presentation skills?

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## Child Care Careers

### Using Technology

**Scenario:** Sarah loves her job as a child care teacher, but she is feeling like she would like a new challenge. She also loves technology and has many ideas on how to improve the company Facebook page. Sarah approaches the Center owner and asks if she can implement some of her ideas. As they are talking, her boss seems very open and excited about the things that Sarah is presenting. Her boss tells her that she needs to see if she can afford a part-time social media person. Sarah leaves the meeting feeling confident and excited. About a week later, Sarah's boss calls her into the office and tells her that she is sorry, but there isn't room in the budget for a new position. Sarah offers to do some updating of the website and Facebook page for free, but the owner says, "No, thank you". Sarah is confused and disappointed. Later, as she is talking to her close friend, she mentions this situation. Her friend suggests that maybe Sarah's boss looked at Sarah's personal Facebook page and decided not to have her representing her company in that way. Sarah is ashamed and hopes that this is not the case. She never considered that her personal use of social media could influence future job opportunities.

# Points of view to consider

- Sarah
  - Sarah's employer
  - Parents at the child care center
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## Key questions

- What are appropriate and inappropriate examples of technology usage?
- As an employer, would you consider looking at social media posts of current and potential employees? Why? What would you be looking for?
- How would you feel about an employer or future employer searching your social media profile?
- How do you think parents would feel about you caring for their child if they were to look at your social media profile?

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## Child Care Careers

### Problem-solving

**Scenario:** You are a new teacher in a 3-year-old classroom and have been training in this new classroom for two weeks. Today is your first full day as the lead teacher and you are excited. You greet each child by name, say hi to the parents, and document each arrival time. At breakfast time, the cook delivers French toast and apples to your classroom. As the children eat, another child arrives, but you weren't expecting her until after breakfast. You hurry to get a plate ready and offer it to her as she sits down. The mother is still in the room and says, "She can't have that! It has eggs in it!" You grab the plate and, before thinking about it, you ask, "Is she allergic to eggs or something?" The parent is visibly upset and rudely snaps, "Yes! Everyone here knows that!" Before you can respond, the cook enters with different food, the mother storms out the door, and the other children start asking to be excused. As you glance at the refrigerator, you see the card that notifies you of all allergies in the classroom. You know that you forgot to check it, but didn't realize French toast contains eggs since you've never made it. You feel frustrated, embarrassed, and upset about the whole situation.

# Points of view to consider

- You, the teacher
  - The parent
  - The child
  - The cook and/or center director
- 

## Key questions

- There are many factors at play here. How do you decide which is the most important thing to focus on?
- Who else needs to be involved in the problem-solving process for this situation?
- What role does the center director play in this situation?
- How can you respond to the parent the next time you see her? Is there anything you can do to establish her trust in you?
- What can be done to prevent this scenario from happening again?

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## Child Care Careers

### Negotiation

**Scenario:** You just completed your degree in Early Childhood Education. You interviewed for a full-time teacher position at a child care center. The wage was not posted or discussed, but you feel that you deserve at least \$12 per hour. Paid time off and paid holidays would be great too! You have been offered the job, but when you ask about the starting pay and benefits you are told that you will start at \$10.75 per hour. \$12 per hour is what most lead teachers make when they are managing a full classroom, lesson planning, conducting observations and assessments, holding parent-teacher conferences, and carrying out all the other day-to-day tasks required of a lead teacher. The wage will be looked at once you begin taking on these lead teacher responsibilities, which could be in as little as 2 months or as much as a year, depending on your comfort level and desire. Paid holidays and paid time off don't start until a person is employed for one year.

# Points of view to consider

- You, the potential employee
  - The Owner
  - Other employees at the center
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## Key questions

- Do you accept the offer as is? Why or why not?
- Why do you believe you are worth at least \$12 per hour?
- Why should you start at a higher wage than some of the current employees make?
- Do you believe you should negotiate the starting pay? Why or why not?
- How can you use the five stages of negotiation to reach an agreement?

Five Stages of Negotiation:

Stage 1: Preparation and planning

Stage 2: Definition of ground rules

Stage 3: Clarification and justification

Stage 4: Bargaining and problem solving

Stage 5: Closure and implementation

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## Child Care Careers

### Networking

**Scenario:** Megan will be graduating from college and is searching for her first job in the Early Childhood Education field. She knows that a lot of her classmates already work in child care centers, but she chose to focus on her studies and work in a coffee shop during school. Now there are job postings for many different child care centers, but they all require experience and she doesn't know anything about any of the centers. She's very quiet and finds it hard to talk to people, so she decides to look at day care center Facebook pages and will try to message a few classmates about good centers to work in.

# Points of view to consider

- Megan
  - Megan's classmates
  - Potential employers
- 

## Key questions

- Do you think Megan can find a job by searching Facebook profiles?
- Are there other social media platforms that she could use for making meaningful professional connections?
- How could Megan let employers know that she is interested in applying for employment with them?
- How would you define a good place to work?

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## Child Care Careers

### Self-confidence

**Scenario:** You are attending the monthly staff meeting and everyone is talking, as usual. There is a particularly good training topic that you are all discussing. The center director has asked for input on an upcoming center-wide assessment, but most people keep getting off topic. You feel like you have some good thoughts to share because you've been to several trainings on this subject, but you're nervous and shy. You don't want anyone to think that you're trying to score points with the boss, but you are pretty sure that your input could make a difference for most of the classrooms.

# Points of view to consider

- You, the employee
  - Your coworkers
  - Your boss
- 

## Key questions

- Should you speak up and share your thoughts? Why or why not?
- What kind of positive self-talk can you use to increase your confidence?
- What could your boss or center director do to make the atmosphere more comfortable for sharing ideas?
- What can your coworkers do to make the atmosphere more comfortable for everyone to share ideas?