

Sample Interview Questions for Hiring a HealthySteps Specialist



1. What interests you most about this position and why? What feels potentially most challenging?
Listen for desire to be part of a fast-paced environment. Flexibility and the ability to work/triage/multitask and the ability to tolerate isolation (from other colleagues in their field) and work independently. Interest in population-based health, ability to enjoy a large list of patients, rather than deep and long-term work with just a handful of patients. Listen for a match between their desires/goals and the reality of the position.
2. Tell me about a family you worked with in which you were particularly proud of the outcome.
Listen for cultural humility, evidence-based practice, reflective practice, connection with the family, and positive results.
3. Tell me about a family that you've worked with that you were disappointed or frustrated by the outcome.
Listen for the candidate to acknowledge missteps and that they learn from their experience.
4. Tell me about a time you overcame a bias and/or practiced cultural humility? How do you practice antiracism in your work?
Listen for understanding of racism, prejudice, and bias and how to mitigate them daily.
5. How would you describe your preferred working style and conditions?
Listen for ability to manage their task load when different providers give multiple, overlapping demands, remaining efficient, and managing stress. (If not addressed directly, describe clinic practice, business, noise volume, etc., to get their response to how they might do in such an environment.)
6. How would you describe your organizational style?
Listen for someone who is organized with clear strategies for managing multiple, simultaneous tasks while paying attention to detail, and following through over time.
7. Share a time you had a difference of opinion with a coworker/supervisor and how you handled it.
Listen for indication of accountability, good communication skills, and the ability to work through conflict directly.
8. What are some strategies you use to build trusting, collaborative relationships with parents?
Listen for strategies including respecting parents as experts on their child, humility in learning from families' cultures, and attributing positive intent to parent behavior.
9. Please give two examples of general developmental or behavioral questions that caregivers of very young children might bring to you, and how you would respond.
Listen for knowledge of development and behaviors the candidate is familiar with regarding young children.

10. Would you informally assess for Autism Spectrum Disorder at an 18-month visit? If you had concerns, how might you approach it with the parent?
Listen for discussion regarding joint attention and how to address the HS Specialist's observation of any limited social relatedness to parents. Listen for sensitivity about conveying results of a screening, and the difference between screening and assessment related to diagnosis.
11. How would you bring up your concerns about a child's development with the child's physician if the physician had already met with the family and had not brought up concerns?
Listen for a candidate that is comfortable being part of a professional team and seeing their contribution as important as that of the other health care providers. Candidate should also suspend judgement, as perhaps the provider did have concerns as well but planned to continue surveillance at the next visit prior to making a referral.
12. What guidance would you give parents reporting that their toddler has aggressive behaviors?
Listen for what the candidate brings to the work (cultural and personal beliefs vs. research and child and brain development knowledge about why toddlers are aggressive), and strategies for positive parenting.
13. What developmental and behavioral areas would you focus on in a well-child visit with a 2-month-old? What anticipatory guidance would the candidate give? What does the candidate know about this age, attachment, and infant mental health?
14. During a well-child visit with a dad he asks you what to do for diaper rash. How would you answer this question?
Listen for professional boundaries and knowledge of those in a clinical setting. The HS Specialist would not discuss this as it is a topic for a health care professional. An appropriate answer would be, "Let's bring that up with the provider."
15. Can you tell me about any experience you have training or teaching?
Any teaching or training of relevant topics is a plus.
16. How might you respond to a provider who says, "Co-sleeping is never allowed."?
Listen for answers that are balanced while highlighting the risk factors and safety information. Responses need to balance the importance of respecting the providers' standard medical guidance (with respect for SIDS) and realistically understanding that parents will not be honest with team if they feel disrespected.
17. Having a HS Specialist in a pediatric practice improves the quality of care for all patients, even though only a small percentage of families may ever work directly with a HS Specialist. Why do you think that statement is true? What impact do you think you could have on our practice?
Listen for understanding about the importance of a population-based health approach and how integrating an early childhood development and mental health expert will gradually educate all levels of staff via consultation and direct education, as well as more general helping to change clinic practice, e.g., screening, trauma-informed care, etc.