**Ministry Safe’s Principles for Skillful Screening:** An effective screening process is meant to address areas of risk, including the risk of hiring or accepting as a volunteer an applicant whose motive is inappropriate.

Principles of Skillful Screening

* Use the **same** screening process for each applicant.
* Make reasonable and diligent effort to access evidence of *past criminal behavior.*
* Get a release signed in the application process, allowing you to investigate appropriate background information. Use application questions to reveal areas of potential risk.
* Use the applicant’s references and information from prior employers or past volunteer supervisors to help create a more complete picture of applicant’s qualifications.
* Build in opportunities for the applicant to ‘opt out’ on his or her own. (Example: don’t ‘chase’ an applicant who is not calling *you*.)
* Remove applicants from the applicant pool when you determine they are not qualified or appropriate for the position.

Application, interview, and reference information that may be important risk indicators:

* Unstable work history (short durations/abrupt departures)
* Gaps in work history
* Gaps in dates of residence
* Unclear reasons for leaving previous employment
* Overeducated for job or position
* Inaccurate or incomplete information on application
* Pattern of volunteer or work history around a particular age or sex of child
* Difficulty with authority (rebellious stance or attitude)
* Prior supervisors not listed as references
* Prior peers in children’s programming not listed as references
* References do not know applicant in the context of work with children
* Defensive/angry/evasive responses (particularly to questions about being a molester)
* Applicant regularly gaining access to children of a specific age and sex
* Contradictory information
* Learned of position with no relationship to church or ministry (no reference, no relationship to program or program participants)
* Answers to questions on application which reveal an unrealistic belief that children are ‘vulnerable’, ‘clean’, or ‘innocent’
* Accepting a lesser-paying job (“money isn’t important to me.”)
* Portions of application left blank
* Short length of relationship with personal references