

# Ultimate Guide to Hire a Nanny

by Elizabeth Malson



# Need or Have a Nanny? You Will Love This eBook

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The information contained in this guide is provided for informational purposes only and should not be construed as legal or financial advice.

# Chapter 1: Why You Need a Nanny

“Please, please let me find a great nanny,” begged Liz, a single mom with a newborn who just moved to Los Angeles for a new job and was feeling overwhelmed.

Children are treasures whether you are a mom, dad, grandparent, guardian, or childcare provider. Adjusting to the 24-7 responsibility and never-ending commitments can be tough. There are a lot of pictures of beautiful babies but there are not many pictures of stressed-out moms and dads with spit up in their hair and poo on their hands as they change a diaper at 2am. Honestly, many of us are stretched to our limit.

Parenting is a tough job. Have you ever wondered how much you would earn if you were paid for being a parent? Using “mom” as an example to represent any type of childcare provider, let’s start with the average number of hours worked per week. According to a [study](#) conducted by Market Research OnePoll in partnership with Welch’s nutrition program, moms work an average of 98 hours a week. That may surprise some, but moms routinely get up at 6:30am and do not finish their day until after 8:30pm. According to Salary.com, moms averaging 98 hours a week would earn \$162,581.

Let’s break down these hours into an average week:

- **Childcare** = 30.2 hours. Caring for our children involves an ever-changing list of tasks that includes feeding, bathing, getting them ready for school, helping them through temper tantrums, play time, getting them ready for bed, and holding them when they wake up from a bad dream.
- **Teaching and Coaching** = 7.9 hours. Moms do a lot of teaching and coaching to help their children grow and develop. Moms teach younger children how to walk and talk. They teach toddlers the alphabet and help older children with homework. Additional activities include transportation to sports practice, after-school events, and community clubs such as the Scouts. Some moms volunteer to coach sports teams or help in the classroom.
- **Household Management** = 45.9 hours. Running a household encompasses a lot of activities that include laundry, cleaning, cooking, sewing, ironing, repairs, lawn care, and managing finances.
- **Errands** = 10.7 hours. Moms also run a lot of errands such as going to the grocery store, shopping for household goods, and buying clothes and shoes.

If you are a mom, dad, or guardian who feels you are balancing 2.5 full-time jobs, then you are not alone. Four in every 10 of the 2,000 American mothers asked, feel that each week is a never-ending series of tasks that need to be completed. It is not surprising that a lot of moms and other primary caregivers feel stressed every day. What are some tips to help parents with all this work?



- **Get help.** Whether it is your partner, a family member or hiring a nanny or family assistant, getting help and support will ease the burden. Identify the most stressful times of days or activities that you struggle to get completed and seek help. For new moms and dads, this might be hiring an overnight nanny to help you get some sleep. For working parents, it may be a family assistant to pick up the kids, cook dinner, and help with homework. If you cannot stand the thought of cleaning, create a chore list for the family and split up the work or hire a weekly housekeeper.
- **Involve the kids.** From toddlers to teens, kids can help. Toddlers can put away their plastic dishes in a low cabinet and elementary school kids can help fold laundry and pick up items that need to be put away. Middle schoolers can learn to cook. Teaching children how to complete these tasks not only eases the burden on you but teaches them important life lessons. It is important for children to understand their role in the family and be able to help the family.
- **Intentionally manage your time.** Planning helps you use your time wisely. For example, if you plan weekly meals and include a few slow cooker meals, you can save time in the kitchen. Sneak in errands during lunch or bundle them together to reduce the number of trips required. Instead of leaving all the chores to the weekend, do a little bit each day so that it is not so overwhelming. Prepare in advance, when possible, and plan time for sleep and exercise so you can stay healthy.
- **Do not do everything.** There are no perfect families, and no one can do it all. Let the children pick 1 or 2 extra-curricular activities but do not feel that they must participate in everything or have an activity for each day of the week. Encourage the children to play independently during downtime. Try to cook healthy meals but do not fret if you order pizza one night.

It will take trial and error and time to find what works for you and your family. Each family is unique, so what works for you will look different from what works for other families and that is okay. Being a parent is tough work so surround yourself with those who love you and are willing and able to help.

## Chapter 2: Nanny Job Titles and Duties

Daryl Camarillo, Owner of Stanford Park Nannies, which earned the 2017 Association of Premier Nanny Agencies (APNA) Honors Award, shares “a big challenge in the industry is that terms and skills are often confused. It leads to a disconnect in expectations making it harder for nannies and families to manage expectations about job duties and compensation.”

A nanny’s career path ranges from parent’s helper to sitter to specialist and professional nanny. It is important for parents to understand the differences in job titles, duties, and skills so they can determine the right type of childcare for their family.

## Understand Your Family Needs

Every family is unique and so your childcare requirements will also be unique. Some families need daytime help for young children who are still at home. Others need before and after school care. If both parents are working and travel is involved, families may need overnight care.

Start by determining your childcare needs. Do you have newborns and need overnight care or older children who need after school care? Is the position for a short time or are you looking for a commitment of at least a year or longer? Do you need full time or part time nanny services? Are you looking for a live-in nanny or a live-out nanny?

To determine what will work best for your family, a list of expected duties and responsibilities should be created. This list should include the days and hours care is needed, regular duties, and a backup plan if the nanny or child becomes ill. Take time to write out as many of the logistical needs as possible. Then, create a separate list of all the activities and tasks that need to be completed by the nanny.

## Align Your Needs to Childcare Job Titles

Matching the family needs to childcare job titles and skills is essential to finding the best fit for your family and situation. Families cannot realistically hire Nanny Poppin at a sitter rate, so it is important to understand the different types of sitters, nannies, and family assistants.

### 1. Parents' Helper

Parents' helpers are considered sitters-in-training, as they help care for children under the direct supervision of a parent or guardian. Often too young or inexperienced to care for children independently, parents' helpers play with children, feed babies or make easy lunches, and perform light housework. An entry level position in childcare, parents' helpers should have CPR and First Aid training, but may not have experience working with children.

### 2. Sitters

Sitters provide for the safety of children for several hours, often with the family members nearby and available by phone. Working in the evening or over the weekend, sitters monitor or participate in playtime, offer parent approved snacks, and help children get ready for bed. If asked, sitters may do light housekeeping, such as washing the dishes associated with the snack or emptying the diaper bin. Sitters should have CPR and First Aid certification and it is recommended they complete some childcare training. For those less than 16 years old, the American Red Cross offers an online class and local YMCA's may host a sitter training day.

### 3. Nanny (Part or Full Time)

Nannies have contracted, consistent work for at least 3 months but usually a year or more and are responsible for a child or multiple children throughout the workday while family members are at their places of

employment. Care includes feeding, bathing, and playtime for the children and nannies manage the children daily schedules which are developed in conjunction with the parents. Nannies may also provide transportation to and from school, clubs, sports practices, playdates, and other activities. Nannies work autonomously and may have full responsibility to care for the children when families are out of town.

All nannies, whether part or full time, should have CPR and First Aid certification and invest in childcare training that teaches age-appropriate growth, development, and activities from newborn through primary years. Nutrition, fitness, health, art, music, and communication courses provide practical skills to help nannies excel as in-home childcare providers.

#### **4. Specialty Nanny - Newborn and Infant Care Professional & eLearning Facilitators**

Specialty Nannies have varying qualifications that may include early childhood education, special needs education, or psychology with childcare experience as a nanny, in daycares, teaching, or in child advocacy positions. Specialist nannies may also be travel nannies or have training in facilitating eLearning or the educational philosophies of Montessori, RIE, or Waldorf. Some specialty nannies help children learn a second language or musical instrument.

Newborn and Infant Care Professionals are non-medical infant caregivers who care for infants from birth to 1 year. Newborn and Infant Care Professionals support new parents and help them gain confidence as they offer hands-on care to establish feeding schedules, develop a routine, and ensure healthy sleep habits. Newborn and Infant Care Professionals typically provide overnight care and may offer around-the-clock or daytime support care as well.

eLearning Facilitators primarily support child development and academics by following a provided curriculum from the local public school district or a private program provided by the parents. eLearning Facilitators provide childcare in the form of snacks, meals and playtime. eLearning Facilitators often specialize with children ages five- to ten-years-old.

Specialist nannies generally have diverse work experiences as a nanny, in daycares, teaching, or child advocacy. Specialist nannies are passionate about their work and are often leaders in the nanny industry. Many specialist nannies work for high profile and/or high net worth families and are extremely desirable within the nanny market.

#### **5. Professional Nanny**

Professional nannies manage all schedules, logistics, and needs for the entire family. Daryl Camarillo describes the role of a professional nanny: "Families think of [professional] nannies as in-home professionals who do everything to care, nurture, and develop the children. These include household duties related to childcare and the upkeep of the home such as washing bottles, meal preparation for the children, emptying diaper bins, and the child's laundry. Families are seeking nannies to take the child to activities and invest in their development and growth. They view the nanny as part of the childcare team." Professional nannies can have different types

of specialization based on training and experiences that elevate their skills as family assistants, early childhood educators, or special needs childcare providers.

## 6. Family Assistants and Household Managers

Family assistants (sometimes referred to as household managers or nanny managers) perform childcare duties along with additional responsibilities such as managing a weekly schedule, scheduling and attending children's doctor appointments, picking up the family dry cleaning, planning and hosting birthday parties, household organization, shopping, pet care, meal planning, and preparing meals for the entire family. Family assistants are often committed to the role as their primary employment and have the maturity to work unsupervised while remaining responsible for several children and an allocated budget.

Family assistants have a combination of childcare experience, training, and organizational skills. Family Assistants often have between 2 to 5 years of in-home childcare experience with additional experience managing their own household or working in the service industry as a personal chef, pet sitter, or cleaning service provider. Most have completed childcare and household management programs.

Many people confuse Family Assistants and Household Managers. Household Managers direct and manage other domestic workers and contractors in the home where they are employed. Household Managers have a working knowledge of human resources, management of service contractors and personnel, and technical experience to perform some maintenance or other service tasks including administrative, appliance cleaning, clothing repair, and formal dining. The Household Manager often hires and manages all domestic staff including the nanny, cleaning staff, and cook or personal chef, and pet-sitter. An Estate Manager is the top-level executive position in a large household or complex of properties that employ a wide array of staff. They are responsible for working directly with the owner to plan and execute the plan to manage the property and other employees.

## Other Nanny Industry Terms

With so many different terms and titles, it can certainly feel overwhelming. "A big challenge in the industry is that terms are often confused. It leads to a disconnect in expectations making it harder for families and nannies to manage expectations about job duties and compensation" shares Erin S., a nanny agency owner in New York. Nannies often describe their careers and experiences using many of these terms.

**Career Nanny.** A career nanny has chosen childcare as their profession and has worked as a nanny for a significant amount of time. He or she has made a conscious choice to remain in the field and has no intentions to leave.

**Nanny Sharing.** When two or more families employ one nanny, it is a nanny share. In this situation, the nanny either watches the children as a group, or splits her time among the families. Most nanny shares watch the children together, but many families work together to come up with a schedule tailored to their specific

needs. In a nanny share, nannies earn 65-75% of a non-share nanny salary. This allows the nanny to make more than average for the added complexity and care of multiple children. Parents also benefit financially as they get a 25-35% discount by sharing a nanny.

**Overnight Nannies.** Overnight nannies care for children off hours and for a specific period, often a few weeks, allowing parents of newborns to get some much-needed rest. Overnight nannies can also be on-call when parents have jobs that require night shifts or job-related travel.

**College Nanny.** These nannies are full-time students with a flexible schedule. While not available to work full time, college nannies are great for weekends and evening care. They may have advanced skills if they are studying nursing or early childhood education. If they are studying to be teachers, they may be available to tutor.

**Summer Nanny.** Often a college student, these full-time nannies care for children during the summer break. Summer nannies make sure the children have their basic needs met as well as provide activities to do throughout the day. They may provide transportation for the children to and from day camps and other summer activities. Some summer nannies are live ins while others work specified hours each week.

**Nanny Mom:** Nanny moms are professional childcare providers and career nannies who bring their own child to work. Families with only one child may seek out a nanny mom so their children can interact with other children while some nanny moms arise when families hire a great nanny who then starts their own family. When considering a nanny mom, many families have concerns about the nanny paying more attention to their own child, planning for backup care when the nanny mom's child is ill, and the logistics of having food, toys, and supplies needed by an additional child in the home. Additional concerns include liability in the event of an accident.

**Au Pair.** Au Pairs are part of a one-year culture exchange program where a host family in the United States provides room, board, a weekly salary, and a class. In exchange, an au pair provides childcare as well as household duties pertaining to the children. The Au Pair program is a government-regulated foreign exchange program in the United States. Au Pairs provide childcare for a maximum of 10 hours a day and 45 hours per week in exchange for room and board, an approved training class, and a weekly stipend. Au pair programs have specific requirements, and more information can be found at the [US State Department](https://j1visa.state.gov/programs/au-pair) (<https://j1visa.state.gov/programs/au-pair>).

**Live-in versus Live-out Nannies:** Live-in nannies work and reside in their employer's residence while live-out nannies have their own residences and come and go to their place of employment.



There are a lot of things to consider when hiring a live-in nanny as this is not a typical job. A live-in nanny will work, eat and sleep under the same roof as your family, children, and pets. This means they will not leave your home when they finish work, so you will have to be disciplined to ensure you give them time off from their job duties at the appropriate times.

A live-in nanny wears many hats. They may be a teacher, a best friend, a mediator, an assistant, a first aid technician and so much more. Whenever they are in the home, even when the live-in nanny is not 'on the clock', they should act as an extension of the parents regarding care of the children and household management. It is imperative that you and the live-in nanny be cohesive with the child rearing philosophy for the children and be consistent with the household rules.

Having a great relationship with alive-in nanny is wonderful. You may become great friends but remember that you are also an employer. If you are going through a personal issue that may impact your family (such as having to travel more for work), then it is important to share this information with your nanny. However, if you and your spouse are having an argument, it is not appropriate to share this personal information or vent your frustration with your employee.

A live-in nanny can be a rewarding experience but do not offer this type of position without understanding all the expectations. Working and living within the same residence as your employee takes discipline and accountability as the nanny has a right to privacy and boundaries within your home.

## Social Media Lingo

Like all industries, the childcare has social media shorthand. Here are some common abbreviations you will see in job descriptions and on social media.

- |                        |                                 |                                |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • B2 – 2-year-old boy  | • NCS – newborn care specialist | • STAP – stay at home parent   |
| • DB – dad boss        | • NF – nanny family             | • WFH – work from home         |
| • G8 – 8 year old girl | • NK – nanny kid                | • UHNWI – ultra-high net worth |
| • HP – high profile    | • NP – nanny parents            | • USNA – US Nanny Association  |
| • HNW – high net worth | • NWOC – nanny with own child   |                                |
| • LO – little one      |                                 |                                |
| • MB – mom boss        |                                 |                                |

## Chapter 3: Au Pair

An au pair is part of a federal program that allows an adult from a foreign country to come to the United States, typically on a J-1 Visitor Exchange Visa to work for, and live as part of, a host family. Typically, au pairs take on a share of the family's responsibility for childcare as well as some housework and receive a monetary weekly allowance for personal use.

Au pairs are, by definition, young people from overseas who travel legally to the U.S. to care for children on a cultural exchange visa. Au pair working conditions are regulated by the U.S. Department of State, so there are rules that must be followed. An au pair can work up to (but no more than) 45 hours a week, 10 hours per day. Au pairs are not considered an employee but rather an extended family member earning a weekly allowance and get at least one complete weekend off each month.

Au pairs make a commitment to participate in the program for 12 months. If an au pair is in good standing at the end of 12 months, they have an option to apply for an extension of duration of stay to continue for an additional 6, 9 or 12 months.

Au pairs are participating in a culture exchange program and often, they are not professional childminders. Au pairs help families in a variety of ways that include childcare and domestic work. Au pairs can help with waking the children, dressing infants and toddlers, bathing and playing with children. Au pairs may prepare meals, do laundry and stay at home with children when they are sick.

The cost of hosting an au pair can be broken down into three (3) parts: Fees paid to an agency for the program administration and year-round support (\$9,000 to \$12,000), fees paid for travel and to fulfill the education requirement (\$500-1000), and a minimum weekly stipend of \$195.75 (in 2021), paid directly to the au pair. Parents are also responsible for providing room and board as well as three (3) meals a day.

There are some advantages and disadvantages to hiring an au pair. Hosting an au pair means you get up to 45 hours of childcare. This works for most families but the 10 hour per day maximum may not work for a family that needs 12-hour coverage for an extended shift or 24-hour coverage due to business travel. Au pairs are more affordable than nannies; however, au pairs may not have significant childcare training or experience.

Hosting an au pair allows your children to gain a wider cultural perspective as they meet a person from another country. Children learn about new foods, music, language and holidays. Parents are expected to include the au pair whenever possible in family meals, outings, holidays and other events.

If you would like additional information, the US Nanny Association lists au pair organizations on its website that are organization members of the Association and thus agree to the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

## Chapter 4: National Nanny Standards

“Childcare certification programs for nannies, like those offered by [US Nanny Institute](https://usnannyinstitute.com) (usnannyinstitute.com) and [US Nanny Association](https://usnanny.org) (usnanny.org) are available to help families ensure their children are cared for by qualified persons” shared Dr. Lauren Formy-Duval, a child psychologist, adjunct professor, and mom. “Nannies

and sitters investing in high-quality training based on national standards not only gain practical skills but also enable a career path, just like teachers and other professionals.”

The US Nanny Association’s [National Nanny Standards](https://usnanny.org/standards) (usnanny.org/standards) define the nanny industry by providing a comprehensive approach to childcare and child development that enable nannies to successfully use and adapt caregiving techniques. The standards include diverse, proven methodologies and childcare skills that align with the differing needs of families, parenting customs and laws in the United States. US Nanny Association National Standards align with US laws, childcare standards, education requirements & cultural norms.

The US Nanny Association National Nanny Standards for childcare are based on the research of childcare educators and industry leaders. The National Nanny Standards align with national early childhood development post-secondary curricula, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessments, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the US Center for Disease Control (CDC), and the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). While there are no laws requiring nanny standards in the United States, industry standards and credentials recognize quality training and work experience.

The National Nanny Standards were established and approved by the Standards Advisory Team. The US Nanny Standards are reviewed and updated by the Standards Advisory Team. The Standards Advisory Team includes select members of the US Nanny Association Board of Directors and additional faculty, professional nannies, Newborn and Infant Care Professional, agency owners, nanny employers, and other childcare industry leaders.

The standards are divided into three categories - Nanny (N), Newborn and Infant (I) and Professional Nanny (P). These levels align with the skills valued by nanny agencies and employers. In the United States, some families maintain that the childcare provider’s primary role is to supervise children and ensure they are kept safe. These families hire sitters and entry-level nannies, often paying entry-level wages. Other families want to hire a fully trained childcare specialist or professional nanny. These families view childcare as a profession and expect training and additional qualifications for higher wages.

## Chapter 5: Cost to Hire a Nanny

“Nannies deserve fair wages as families seek affordable childcare. It’s a challenge as families don’t always think of themselves as employers,” shares Samantha from Washington, D.C. “I have a full-time nanny and have to pay her a living wage out of my salary. It’s not easy.”

Childcare costs are often the highest or 2<sup>nd</sup> largest family expense and the salary you can afford to pay is one of the most important elements in finding a great nanny. Families cannot realistically hire Nanny Poppin at a sitter rate, so it is important to help families understand the different types and rates for sitters, nannies, and family assistants.

Salaries vary widely across the country and even within states. According to [ZipRecruiter](#), the average full time, live-out nanny earns \$54,574 with a salary range of \$19,500 to \$80,000. Top nannies in premier markets can earn over \$100,000 although most salaries are between \$35,000 and \$60,000. The wide range in salaries reflects the flexibility in hiring a nanny and that hourly salaries can vary from \$15 in Ohio to \$23 per hour in California. According to the [Care.com 2020 Cost of Care survey](#), the average nanny makes about \$565 a week in the US or about \$14.13 per hour.

Research local pay rates to determine an appropriate range of compensation. Many websites offer information on local sitter and nanny rates and some professional salary sites, such as [payscale.com](#) and [glassdoor.com](#) also provide this information. Check several sites including nanny job boards to determine the average for your area.

Before you begin negotiations, you should know the average rate for your area and what level of experience the average salary represents. For the most part, the average wage reflects supervising 1 to 3 children with childcare only duties and holding the position for 1 to 2 years. For jobs that have additional children, meal preparations, and other duties, the salary should be higher. Also, nannies with training and certifications have invested in their career to provide better care for the children and deserve higher wages. Keep this in mind when you are evaluating and posting hourly wages with the job description.

A nannies primary role is to care for the children so be prepared to pay for additional services. They may help with household tasks causally related to childcare including cooking children's meals and light housekeeping pertaining to the children (i.e. children's laundry and dishes). Services such as pet care, dog walking, grocery shopping, household chores and party planning are not traditional nanny roles. These are services that pay extra and/or fall into the higher paying family assistant and/or household manager position. When adding to a nanny's position, be mindful there are a limited number of hours in a shift. If the nanny is overwhelmed with a list of additional responsibilities, they are not able to provide quality childcare.

## Chapter 6: Find Nanny Candidates

"I work in human resources and have over 15 years of experience hiring employees, but I admit it, hiring my first nanny was the most stressful hire in my career," shares Elisa M. from Dallas, Texas. "Finding a nanny is different than hiring for a traditional job. I wanted to make sure I hired someone I felt I could trust to care for my only son."

According to a Nanny Salary & Benefits Survey Results, 34% of nannies found their current position through online recruiting such as [Care.com](#), [Sittercity.com](#) or similar sites while 31% of nannies used an agency or domestic placement service. Nannies also found their family employer through networking (24%) or a local internet site such as a mom's group, parenting forum, or college job board (9%).

Families looking for nannies utilize the same resources. Finding nanny candidates and selecting the right nanny for you takes time. Many families seek a nanny with just a few weeks' notice but planning ahead can save a lot

of stress. Although the average is about 4 weeks, it can take several months to find your perfect nanny. Heated competition among families for top nannies requires employers to act fast but you must be careful to get the right fit for your family.

## Online Nanny Job and Recruiting Sites

There are too many to list but top online nanny recruiting sites include Care.com, Sittercity.com, Urbansitter.com, and ViatheVillage.com. These services require a monthly or annual fee to view nanny candidates. Online nanny job boards allow families to view candidates and post available jobs.

Most recruiting sites allow nannies to input detailed information regarding their training and experience. A complete profile demonstrates a stronger commitment to finding a position than a limited profile. Information that is commonly entered includes their nanny experience, childcare training, salary requirements, references, and background check information. Many also include a space for the nanny to share additional information to help families find candidates with similar employment goals.

Families can also post a job on most nanny job sites. The content of the job post can attract or repel top nanny talent so take a few minutes to write a strong job description. Posts that include photos are three times more likely to be clicked so if you are comfortable, upload a nice photo of your family (it is okay to block or blur the child's face). You want to complete as many of the profile elements as possible, so nannies can understand your family's needs and the job duties. You may also want to share a personalized story about the children such as their favorite snack or how they like to ask a million questions. Be descriptive so that nannies have enough information to decide if they want to connect to learn more about the position. Also, be aware that the information shared will be viewed by others so do not post private information. To boost your profile value, ask your current nanny and occasional sitters to leave positive reviews and write insights into the comments box.

Here is an example job post:

Family needs a live-in nanny for early mornings, evenings, overnights, and weekends

A single mom is looking for a nonsmoking, live-in nanny to work ~20 hours per week to help care for a 4-year-old boy and help manage the household. The child is in daycare (Monday - Friday, 8am – 5:30pm) and a live-in is needed to build a strong bond with the child so the routine stays familiar when mom travels overnight (on average 2-4 nights a month) for business. The nanny will need to have a car, driver's license, auto insurance, and a clean driving record. The nanny can have a second job or take college classes when the child is at daycare during the week as long as the nanny is available if there is an emergency or the child becomes ill and must go home.

In exchange for childcare (pick up, drop off, babysitting, sick days, driving to karate and swim class) and household management (cooking, laundry, cleaning), the nanny will get a furnished private bedroom and bath with all utilities (including cable tv and wifi) plus an hourly rate of \$15 per hour.

The nanny should have current CPR and First Aid, at least some college and/or a childcare certification, and 3



years of nanny experience. The ideal nanny will be looking to join our household long term with a minimum of a one-year commitment. For those who like pets, we have a cat.

## Local Recruiting Sites

There are local resources that can also lead to finding a great nanny. Social media groups, especially those on Facebook, show 'nanny listings' as part of mom groups or local nanny groups. These forums are great places to find families who no longer need a nanny but want to recommend their employee. The forums often allow families to post 'nanny wanted'. With the connections across social media, posts can be shared which help a family network through extended family, friends and even acquaintances.

Non-traditional sites can be a gold mine to finding high quality nannies. Searching LinkedIn for nannies in your area will uncover professional and career nannies as many nannies who use LinkedIn have a bachelor's degree. University job boards are a fantastic way to find part-time help for after school care or a summer nanny. Sites like Craigslist and traditional job boards like Indeed can find former day care workers and those looking for part-time positions.

Be appropriately wary when meeting people online. The internet is a great tool to find nannies but not everything shared online is honestly represented.

## Chapter 7: Work with a Nanny Agency

Families can choose to use a nanny agency or domestic placement service to help find their nanny. A nanny agency saves between 10-50 hours of work posting the position, screening applicants, checking references, and completing the background check. With a database full of nannies, an agency may shorten the time to hire a qualified nanny and help families who are hiring their first nanny.

"For most placements, I require at least 2 years of work experience", shares Rebecca Percy, owner of Windsor House Nannies in Austin, Texas. "Nannies with US Nanny Association credentials are easier to screen and place since I know they meet our work experience requirements and are invested in their childcare careers."

Nanny agencies and domestic placement services can be national or local. The first step is meeting with someone at the nanny agency and sharing a snapshot of your needs. If the nanny agency feels they can support your needs, you will be asked to sign a contract. Read the contract carefully as most nanny agencies do not offer refunds if a referred nanny quits or does not work out. Most contracts also say the nanny agency will make their best effort, but they do not guarantee they will find you a nanny. Most reputable nanny agencies will include a free referral replacement if the nanny departs the position within 1 year.

The contract will include the fees for service which are due when a nanny is hired. Nanny agency fees vary significantly across the United States and some have a retainer fee, usually between \$150-300. Most of the service fee is due when a nanny is placed and can be 10-15% of the nanny's salary or a flat fee per placement between \$1,000 and \$6,000 depending on the type of nanny placed.

Working with a nanny agency should be conversational with information being shared back and forth. This exchange will help the nanny agency better understand how to provide the best candidates. The more the nanny agency knows about you and the family environment, the better they can assess if you would prefer a high energy, chatty nanny or a calm and quiet nanny. In the same way, do not be afraid to ask about the nanny agencies screening policies. How many references do they check? Do they conduct a national and local background check as well as sexual offender's database check?

## Find a Reputable Nanny Agency

Nanny agencies are not regulated and most of them are good with a robust screening process and a database of qualified childcare providers. When selecting a nanny agency, choose a nanny agency that is a member of an association such as the US Nanny Association (USNA) or American Association of Premier Nanny Agencies (APNA) as membership requires that the agency abide by a Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

The US Nanny Association lists agencies on its website that are organization members of the Association and thus agree to the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. You should ask a few questions to make sure the agency can meet your needs:

- Are you a member of an industry association?
- How long have you been in business? If required in your state, are you licensed?
- What is your nanny screening process? What are the minimum acceptable skills and training?
- Do you (the nanny agency) provide any training or continuing education to the nannies you place?
- What services are included in the standard contract and what additional services are recommended?
- What guarantees or replacement services are included if a nanny does not work out?

When you have completed the application form, family information form, and signed a contract, the nanny agency will introduce you to nannies that meet your job requirements for you to interview. In addition to referring candidates, nanny agencies can provide local information to help you offer a competitive salary. Ultimately, it is up to you to determine if you want to hire one of the candidates, and if so, the hiring process and work agreement is between you and the nanny. The nanny agency earns their fee for making the referral.

## Specialized Nanny or Sitter Agencies

The standard business model for a nanny agency is to find and recommend a nanny who is hired by the parents. In some nanny agencies, the agency employs the nannies (aka a staffed agency) and provides childcare services to members. Staffed agencies provide the same services including part-time and full-time childcare. Staffed agencies often provide sitters as well. While most nanny agencies serve a local community or targeted geographical area other agencies are nationwide.

Specialized nanny agencies include those that offer backup care, resort or vacation sitters and/or provide household staff. Household staffing agencies serve high-net worth families and may only recruit nannies with household management experience who are able to relocate. Nanny agencies do not place Au Pairs. Au Pair programs are operated a separate, specialized business.

## Chapter 8: Nanny Training and Certifications

“We all want the best for our children and because there are no requirements for nannies to be trained or certified. There is an easy way to find top talent,” shares Becca from Texas. “Nannies who are serious about their careers or learning how to excel as a childcare provider invest in childcare training and earn a US Nanny Association certification.”

All nannies, whether part or full time, should have current CPR and First Aid certifications that must be renewed regularly, generally every 2 years. Nannies should also invest in childcare training that teaches age-appropriate growth, development, and activities from newborn through primary years. Nutrition, fitness, health, art, music, and communication courses provide practical skills to help nannies excel as in-home childcare providers.

### Nanny Training

When reviewing nanny training and certification, take time to quickly investigate the training programs website and learn about the instructors and curriculum. Unfortunately, some ‘professional nanny certifications’ have little value as they can be earned or downloaded with minimal effort. The US Nanny Association lists training organization on its website that are organization members of the Association and thus agree to the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

Many colleges and universities offer degrees in child development, early childhood education and other child related fields. Associate and bachelor’s degrees are preferred by some high-net-worth families searching for nannies, and nannies with these qualifications should earn a salary that covers a 2 to 4-year investment in education. Below an associate degree is the child development associate (CDA). This program requires 120 hours of formal childcare training and 480 hours of professional work experience in a group (daycare) setting. Most nannies opt for a Childcare Certification.

The US Nanny Institute (usnannyinstitute.com) is a professional trade school with affordable college-level training for nannies and sitters. With over 30 faculty, the US Nanny Institute developed a nanny-centric curriculum over 50 hours of online training (access 24/7). The curriculum aligns with the CDA and early childcare development programs and is tailored to nannies working independently in the home versus in a daycare. Faculty members include child psychologists, physician assistants, nutritionists, teachers, lawyers, and professional nannies so the resulting curriculum is both comprehensive and practical.

The [US Nanny Institute](https://usnannyinstitute.com) (usnannyinstitute.com) offers 7 levels of training specifically designed for a Nanny career that matches the needs of parents and families. The Basic to Professional levels build on the previous level while the eLearning Facilitator and Newborn Care Specialist programs are stand alone.

1. Basic Childcare Certification

Families and employers expect nannies and sitters to provide a safe environment when caring for their children. The Basic Childcare program ensures in home childcare providers can establish and maintain a safe, clean, and healthy environment for children. The Basic Childcare curriculum includes courses on understanding children and emergency planning, as well as home, water and food safety. Courses also educate nannies and sitters on their legal requirements when working with children, provides skills to help nannies and children manage stress, and teaches positive discipline skills to be used by nannies when children need help expressing themselves or the nanny needs to correct an undesired behavior.

2. Intermediate Childcare Certification – Children grow and learn quickly, especially during the first 5 years of life, which is the focus of the Intermediate Childcare program. Building on the Basic Childcare curriculum, the Intermediate courses offer advanced instruction on early childhood development, child growth, and health. The curriculum focuses on nutrition, motor skill development, and enrichment activities including reading and STEM.

3. Advanced Childcare Certification – Many parents understand the importance of music, art, fitness, and helping with homework so their children gain learn and thrive. As children reach these milestones and gain a bit of independence, they need more support academically and emotionally. Specialized courses in the Advanced Childcare program teach nannies how to engage with children in a way that makes learning more fun. Nannies also gain better communicating skills with children and families.

4. Specialist Childcare Certification – Family assistants and household managers are increasingly popular with families and employers. Not just a nanny, family assistants can support special needs including medically required diets. Building on the Advanced program, the Specialist curriculum includes how to work with children at risk and special education environments. Family assistant jobs have elements of household management so additional training in etiquette, scheduling, and pet care is provided.

5. Professional Childcare Certification – The Professional Childcare Certification shows that a nanny has successfully passed a rigorous training program that builds on the Specialist program and includes child development theories, multi-cultural activities, current trends in childcare, and human brain development.

6. eLearning Facilitator - The eLearning Facilitator program is a stand-alone program that provides practical skills needed to manage multiple children throughout an academic week with activities that support learning and the child's overall growth and development. eLearning Facilitators primarily work Monday through Friday as they are the central core to implementing the schedule and logistics during the workweek.

7. Newborn Care Specialist - If a nanny plans to work exclusively with newborns, consider a Newborn Care training and certification program. Many parents seek Newborn and Infant Care Professional (NICP) to help navigate the first year. Newborn and Infant Care Professional primarily work during the first 12 months of a child's life and help families learn best practices and help establish schedules.

Many Newborn and Infant Care Professional work overnight and/or as consultants to assist new parents.

## Specialized Training Programs and Certifications

Continuing education provides enhanced skills that may be popular in your local area and increase the value of offered childcare services.

- Foreign language skills. Many families seek bilingual nannies who can support or teach children a second language. Exposing children to different language patterns as a young age can improve retention and fluency. Language skills can be used by infants in the form of sign language while 2- and 3-year-old can absorb new words as their language skills rapidly develop.
- Car seat installation. A car seat is one of the best ways to protect a child, but proper installation is not always intuitive. Many state agencies and some local healthcare systems and hospitals offer car seat installation classes and certifications. Nannies can earn a technician certification from the [National Child Passenger Safety Certification](https://cert.safekids.org) (cert.safekids.org).
- Fitness, nutrition, potty training and positive discipline. Most comprehensive training programs include these topics. Nannies can earn a [Kid's Nutrition Specialist](#) certificate from the National Exercise & Sport's Trainers. They can also become a [Certified Children's Fitness Specialist](#) through a course run by the American Fitness Professional and Associations. Many specialists offer parenting and nanny classes on specific subjects including potty training and positive discipline.

## Nanny Certifications

The US Nanny Association is committed to elevating the nanny profession to mirror other professional trades and align with other childcare and child education opportunities. Like teachers, nurses, and social workers, earning credentials demonstrates a commitment to quality with a focus on the skills needed to succeed in childcare.

The US Nanny Association offers three (3) [credential programs](https://usnanny.org/credentials) (usnanny.org/credentials):

- Nanny and Childcare Provider (NCP) Certification
- Newborn and Infant Care Professional (NICP) Certification
- Professional Nanny and Childcare Provider Credential (PNCP) Certification





US Nanny Association certifications have 6 requirements for the Nanny and Childcare Provider (NCP), Newborn and Infant Care Professional (NICP) and Professional Nanny and Childcare Provider Credentials:

- Must be at least 18 years old (NCP) or 21 years old (NICP and PNCP)
- Must show proof of a high school diploma, general education diploma (GED) or equivalent education
- Must show proof of current CPR and First Aid certification (adult and child)
- Must show proof of training from a reputable organization, a professional trade school or college
- Must show proof of childcare work experience (1 year for NCP, 2 years for NICP and 3 years for PNCP)
- Must pass a competency exam based on the published National Nanny Standards (see Chapter 4).

The US Nanny Association does not conduct background checks or employment assessments. The US Nanny Association reviews submitted documentation for training, education and work experience. The US Nanny Association cannot verify the quality or completeness of training or work experience conducted outside the US Nanny Association.

## Chapter 9: Conduct Nanny Interviews

“It’s time consuming to screen and interview potential nannies,” shares Lisa M., a working mother in Los Angeles. “I look for an investment in childcare training and I always call their references after conducting a background check.”

Before interviewing a Nanny, you should know the requirements and skills needed for the job and have a thorough job description available. A standard interview process has multiple steps:

1. Review the nanny’s resume, the profile on a job board, or get background information about the nanny from the nanny agency to determine if they meet the minimum requirements and are within the desired compensation range for the job.
2. Conduct a screening interview via phone or video conferencing to determine the nanny’s level of interest in the position and ask your most important interview questions. This 30-minute call can determine if the candidate is a potential fit for the nanny job.
3. Meet the nanny in person to get to know them without the children present. Often, families and nannies meet for coffee or tea.
4. Introduce the nanny to the child or children in a neutral, stress free environment like a neighborhood park and see how they interact.

When interviewing nannies, it is important to remember you are vetting their qualifications to care for your children. You are hiring a nanny, not trying to make a friend or help someone who needs a job. Ask each question in a neutral tone of voice and be careful you do not give them the answer you want. For example, you want to say, “tell me about a time you handled an emergency” instead of, “you have handled an emergency when you had to comfort a child who fell and scraped their knee, right?”

You want to hire a nanny who makes you feel confident that they are qualified to provide great care for your children. Asking about and hearing stories on how nannies interact with children and what ages they have cared for is a great way to learn about their skills. The responses to various questions provide insights and help you learn more about the nanny's skill set. Here are a few questions to ask in a screening call.

- **What training and certifications have you completed?** An investment in professional development and continuing education can identify nannies who are committed to providing the highest level of childcare. Current CPR and First Aid certification are often required, and a Childcare or Nanny Certification may be desired. Lifeguard and car seat installation training is generally a bonus.
- **Tell me about a time you had to handle an emergency.** With this question, you can learn about a Nanny's ability to manage the unexpected. If they have never been in an emergency, then it's likely they are early in their career and you or someone you trust should be accessible while they care for your kids. If the nanny can share an emergency experience and communicate that they handled it as well as can be expected, the nanny may be ready to care for your children when you are out of town.
- **Tell me about a time a child would not listen to you.** What was the situation and how did you respond? With this question, you can get a better idea of how a nanny manages stress and their approach to discipline. Did the nanny send the child to their room for a time out; did they take a different approach and offer a reward; or did the nanny delay and leave the matter for the parents? There is no right answer to this question, just make sure the response is appropriate and that it would be consistent with how the child is managed by you, other daycare workers, or teachers at school.
- **Are you willing to get a flu/covid shot?** Vaccinations benefit the young and elderly as these populations are the most at risk of having serious consequences when they get ill. A flu shot may not benefit a healthy adult as much, but a nanny's willingness to get vaccinated to reduce exposure to the children in their care is an important insight. Vaccinations are a personal decision, but it can be an important topic to cover during the interview.
- **Would you consent to work in a home with cameras?** Families are not required to get a nanny's consent as families are legally allowed to install a nanny camera in their home, except in private areas such as the bathroom or a live-in nanny's bedroom. Many nannies are uncomfortable with cameras feeling that families should trust them; however, checking in on a nanny can provide a sense of extra security for the family.
- **Do you have any pictures of the children you have cared for on your social media?** Ideally, the answer is 'no' to protect the privacy of the children. Only the family should post photos of their children. However, if the nanny pulls out their phone and shows you photos, ask them if they have received the parents or guardians' permission prior to posting. Some families may be comfortable with the nanny sharing photos.
- **Do you stay in touch with children that have been in your care?** This question is useful when you are looking to hire a long-term nanny. Good nannies develop close bonds with the children and the children care for the nanny. A nanny's response shares if the nanny has a history of leaving families on good terms and if the nanny appreciates their connections and attachments with the children in their care.

- **Would you consent to work in a home with the parents working from home?** Many nannies enjoy working with the children while the parents are working from home and some nannies will refuse to work if the parents are in the home. If you will be in the home while the nanny is caring for the children, make sure the expectations and roles are clear.

Here are some in-depth interview questions about the nannies' qualifications for the role, childcare education and training, childcare experience, and fit with the family will help you gain insights into the nanny's character and skills. After asking some but likely not all these interview questions, you will have enough information to assess the nanny's fit for the position. If you are interviewing several nannies, it will help to print out the questions and take notes as the nanny provides the answer. This will be a huge advantage as you review the nannies, especially if you interview 3-5 nannies in a single week.

## Nanny Interview Questions – Eligibility

Applicants may be nervous during the interview, so it is often beneficial to start with basic background questions. This allows you to restate the requirements for your job and begin with easy to answer questions.

- Have you ever been arrested or convicted of a felony and/or a misdemeanor? Have you ever been the subject of a substantiated complaint of child or sexual abuse?
- Are you comfortable completing a background check? What about a drug screen?
- Are you legally eligible to work in the United States?
- Do you have a driver's license, reliable vehicle, and auto insurance? Have you ever had a moving or driving related violation or traffic accident (including tickets)?
- Do you have any food allergies? Do you have any pet allergies? Do you have any diet restrictions? Are you comfortable with the physical demands of the position?
- Do you have a checking account and are you open to direct deposit payments made by a payroll company?
- Are you available during the days and times needed for the position?
- Do you have a second obligation such as a part time job, college, or another childcare commitment?
- How long would you be interested in this position? What is the longest you have stayed with a family or employer?
- Can you share 3 to 5 professional references that I can call?
- Would you be willing to travel and help the family during vacations? Do you have a current passport?
- Are you looking for a nanny position that only supervises and cares for children or are you open to some family assistant duties such as light housekeeping?

## Nanny Interview Questions - Childcare Education and Certifications

All nannies, whether part or full time, should have current CPR and First Aid certifications and invest in childcare training. When nannies share certifications and course completion certificates, take time to check

the reputation of the organization. Professional trade schools and most organizations are reputable but there is at least one online website that offers a free “professional nanny certificate.”

- Do you have current CPR and First Aid Certifications? When do they need to be renewed?
- Do you have a high school diploma, GED, or equivalent?
- Do you have any post-secondary (college) level childcare training? Have you earned a Childcare Certification? Are you a certified nanny by the US Nanny Association?
- What formal nanny or childcare training have you completed? If you have not completed formal training, are you open to taking classes?
- Do you have relevant training such as certified nursing assistant, newborn care specialist, lifeguard, or certified to install child car seats?
- Are you fluent in a second language such as sign language, Spanish, French, German, or Mandarin?

## Nanny Interview Questions - Childcare Experience

It is helpful to share information about your family and the children before diving into child experience questions. Explain how you see the nanny fitting into the current structure and schedule of the family as well as share some insights on the personalities of the children. Then, use open ended questions to learn about the candidate's experience.

- Can you share your previous nanny experience? Do you have overnight experience? Can you describe each childcare position?
- What age children have you cared for? How many children have you cared for at one time?
- Are you available to care for a child that is ill? Can you share a time you cared for a child that was ill?
- Tell me about a time you had to handle an urgent childcare issue (illness, injury, other). What happened and how did you manage the situation?
- What was your typical daily routine at your last childcare position?
- What are your favorite ages to care for and why?
- What would you do if you got locked out of the house?
- What would you do if my son fell off the monkey bars and hit his head?
- What are your strengths as a nanny? What is an area you would like to improve as a nanny?
- Tell me about a time you taught a child a new behavior, skills, or provided an age-appropriate learning experience.
- What would you do if a toddler refused to nap and kept getting out of bed?
- Did you prepare dinner for children in a previous position? If so, what did you prepare? Did the children sit at the table to eat dinner?

## Nanny Interview Questions - Fit with Your Family

Finding a great fit will be important for success with a nanny. The parents, nanny, and all children need to be comfortable. Here are a few questions to help you understand if the connection feels right.

- What role do you think a nanny should play within a family?

- What is your working style? What is an example of a style difference you had with a parent and how did you manage it?
- What would you do if my child disobeyed your request or was not listening to instructions?
- Can you share a time you handled a difficult situation like a baby crying uncontrollably or a child having a temper tantrum?
- What type of activities would you do with the child(ren)? What activities would you do on a rainy day?
- What experiences do you have providing educational activities? Do you have experience helping with homework?
- What do you think is an appropriate snack for our children, ages 3 and 5?
- A friend just texted you while you were caring for the children and asked to talk about an unexpected break up with her boyfriend. What do you do?

## Nanny Interview Questions – Questions NOT to Ask

Being an employer means your home is a workplace. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) prohibits discrimination based on the following:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy)
- National origin
- Age
- Disability

To be an equal opportunity employer, you cannot ask a nanny if he or she has children of their own or plans to have children in the future. It is okay; however, for a nanny to volunteer they are a nanny mom or that they are planning to have their own children. To be an equal opportunity employer, you cannot ask a nanny if they are a citizen from another country, but you can ask a nanny if they can provide documentation to legally work in the United States.

## Chapter 10: Assess Nanny Candidates

“I interviewed 3 candidates recommended by a top nanny agency and they all were great,” shares Ann from Boston. “I didn’t know how to pick the best one for my family.”

It seems simple enough but picking the right person to hire can be challenging. In some cases, it is easy to disqualify a nanny if they do not meet the desired training, have the years of experience desired, or their hourly wage is higher than your budget. Always disqualify any potential nanny who make you feel uncomfortable or uncertain. You may be able to articulate why you are not comfortable or it may be a gut



feeling, but if you do not think it is a good fit, then do not hire that person. Your goal is to hire someone to take care of your children, so you should feel secure when you have selected the right nanny.

An easy way to organize your thoughts is to list all the job requirements and duties. Then, check your interview notes to confirm the candidates have the desired training, years of experience, and seek an hourly wage that is within your budget.

If all the nanny candidates have the desired backgrounds and experiences and you are still stuck, it may help to think about realistic scenarios and desired behaviors. It is also helpful to think about the characteristics you want your children to learn from their nanny. Children spend a lot of time with nannies, so selecting a nanny with similar traits can help children transition from being nanny supervised to parents taking over after work. If you are very talkative, you may want to hire a nanny who is talkative. Conversely, you may want to hire a nanny who is quiet, so the child can learn how to engage with different personality types.

Some families prefer mathematical and analytical evaluation methods while other families will want more of a personal engagement or subjective approach to help assess candidates. You will likely prefer one method over the other, but we share each to provide you with additional tools to help you assess potential nannies.

## Candidate Assessment – Analytical Method

For the analytically minded, you can create a scoring system. Start by ranking each job requirement by importance. Give each job duty an importance ranking number between 1 and 5. Give the job duty a 1 if it is absolutely required, a 3 if it is desired, and 5 if it is nice to have.

Then, rank the candidate from 1 to 5 on how well they meet the job requirement. Give the candidate a 1 if they exceed the requirement, a 3 if they meet the requirement and a 5 if they do not meet the requirement.

Multiply the importance ranking number times the candidate's assessment ranking for each job requirement. Finally, add the scores to get a total for each candidate. The candidate with the lowest total score will be the best fit for your family. Here is an example:

### Nanny #1

Job Duties	Importance 1-5	Nanny score 1-5	Calculate Score
Has 3 years childcare experience	1	1	1X1 = 1
Is First Aid and CPR certified	1	1	1X1 = 1
Has Specialist Certification	1	1	1X1 = 1
Hourly rate between \$20-\$25	1	5	1x5 = 5
Is available for emergencies	3	1	3x1 = 3
Prepares healthy meals & snacks	3	3	3x3 = 9
Plans to daily exercise activities	3	1	3x1 = 3
Does light housekeeping	5	3	5x3 = 15
<b>Total Score</b>			<b>1+1+1+5+3+9+3+15 = 38</b>

## Nanny #2

Job Duties	Importance 1-5	Nanny score 1-5	Calculate Score
Has 3 years childcare experience	1	1	$1 \times 1 = 1$
Is First Aid and CPR certified	1	1	$1 \times 1 = 1$
Has Specialist Certification	1	3	$1 \times 3 = 3$
Hourly rate between \$20-\$25	1	3	$1 \times 3 = 3$
Is available for emergencies	3	5	$3 \times 5 = 15$
Prepares healthy meals & snacks	3	3	$3 \times 3 = 9$
Plans to daily exercise activities	3	5	$3 \times 5 = 15$
Does light housekeeping	5	1	$5 \times 1 = 5$
<b>Total Score</b>			$1+1+3+3+15+9+15+5 = 52$

In this scenario, the first candidate appears to be the best fit for this family. The concern would be that the candidate does not meet the salary requirement. The second candidate meets the salary requirement but is not available for emergencies. These are typical candidate assessment results as it is extremely unusual to find a candidate that meets or exceeds all requirements at a desired hourly rate.

## Candidate Assessment – Behavioral Model Method

There are no right or wrong strategies, the goal is to pick the right nanny for you and your children. The decision criteria for one family will be different from every other family. It is a professional but also a deeply personal choice. Here are a few traits to think about when interviewing and assessing a nanny:

- **Leading by example.** Did the nanny share a story about how they reacted when another driver cut them off? When you are driving and another car cuts you off, do you yell at the other driver? If your children were in the care with a nanny, would you want the nanny to comment about the rude driver?
- **Listening to the children.** Children see the world in wonderful and surprising ways. Because of their curiosity, they often see things that adults overlook. It is easy as an adult to ‘half-listen’ when a child is sharing something. Did the nanny share any stories about how well they listened to a child or that they love learning new jokes from their 7-year-old charge? Do the children seem to like the nanny?
- **Using positive communication techniques.** Nannies (and parents) can get into the habit of saying “No” a lot. Of course, in a situation where the child may get hurt – “No” is important and children must be kept safe. Did the nanny share a story that required her to say no? Did the nanny share stories that successfully reframed ‘no’? For example, did the nanny share this story: Johnny wanted to go outside but it was raining. I bent down so I was at his level and said, “Johnny, it’s raining so we can’t go outside right now. Would you rather play with your blocks or train set?” By getting down to Johnny’s level, the nanny showed her knowledge in how to best engage children with open body language. The nanny also shared a story that demonstrate her ability to reframe a ‘no’ answer into a sentence that created two options for Johnny. Instead of throwing a fit about the rain, Johnny is more likely to choose one of the options and begin to play.
- **Managing stress.** Everyone has stress in their lives, including children. Having a way to manage stress positively is important for nannies, especially when children may be stressed. During the interview, did the

nanny share a time they helped a child through a challenging situation. Was the nanny able to communicate how they helped a child take a few deep breaths or jog in place. Did the nanny share a story about how the nanny recognized stress in a child and helped them cope by playing soft music or making sure they had their favorite animal or blanket?

- Being confident. Children need to feel safe and secure and if they think an adult is scared or unsure, then they may feel insecure or anxious. Did the nanny communicate confidence when sharing the day-to-day interactions at her old job? Did the nanny use a strong voice and clear sentences to convey confidence in her answers? Did the nanny's body language match the confidence in her voice? Was the nanny sitting up straight and leaning forward with interest?
- Having positive relationships. Children will learn how to build relationships with family, friends, and future romantic partners based on their relationships as children. If a family hugs and freely shares their feelings, then children will be comfortable with these behaviors. If friends are treated kindly and show understanding and forgiveness, then children will be better able to adopt these traits. Did the nanny share insights into their relationships with past families and children formerly in her care?
- Being humble and kind. Teaching children about charity and kindness can help them see past their daily needs and understand more about our world and the power of working together. Children watch our daily interactions with others and we need to make sure they learn humility and politeness. Did the nanny share any volunteer experience or a story about how the nanny taught a child to give up their subway seat to an elderly passenger?

Hiring a nanny provides childcare when you are at work or away from the home, but the nanny will also be a role model for your children. As young children learn by watching others, it is important to consider the behaviors you want your children to experience, mimic and learn. If you want children to be patient, then make sure you and the nanny show them how to patiently wait for an appointment. From fist pumping when your favorite football team scores a goal to calming an upset friend, children will mimic you and the nanny. Take a few minutes to think about how each nanny candidate behaved during the interview process.

## Chapter 11: Respectfully Reject Candidates

"There are many times that nannies apply to my agency without having the proper qualifications required and I have no choice but to reject that nanny applicant", shares Heather P. from Nicole's Nannies. "Having to turn a nanny away is never an easy task, but it's one that many agency owners have to manage effectively.

When you are rejecting a nanny, whether it is due to their lack of training, experience, or references, it is important to do so gracefully and with respect. This not only demonstrates your professionalism as an employer but also allows lets the nanny know that they need to continue their job search. While ghosting is increasingly common, it is important all applicants are informed when they are no longer under consideration for a position. You want to build your reputation as an effective and caring communicator.

## When to Reject a Job Applicant

Your hiring process may take a week or as long as six weeks. During this process, it is important all applications know where they stand. If it is clear from the application or resume that the candidate is not a good fit, then let them know right away. Thank the candidate for submitting an application, communicate the application has been reviewed, and they are no longer being considered for the position.

It is recommended that you call or email each applicant as soon as you determine that he or she is not the right person for the job. Some employers want to wait until they have hired a nanny or until the nanny starts the job before notifying the unsuccessful candidates. This is disrespectful to the applicants as they may not pursue viable jobs thinking they are in contention for a position with your family. Let candidates know as soon as you know. This is the only fair approach to rejecting a job applicant. Additionally, as an employer, if you have decided that the candidate is not the right person for the job or your family, retaining the applicant tempts you to settle for an under-qualified or less than you had hoped for childcare provider.

Treating all candidates with respect is important. Nannies and parents post job descriptions online in social media groups and make comments about the expectations, pay and the employers. The Human Capital Institute report, [Rethink Your Candidate Experience](#) shares the following statistics about what happens when a job searcher is treated poorly.

- 72% of job seekers report sharing their negative candidate experiences online.
- 55% of job seekers report avoiding certain companies after reading negative online reviews.

## How to Reject a Job Applicant

You may reject applicants using an email up until they have come into home or met you for a coffee during an in-person job interview. After an interview, you should call the applicant. You owe the candidate the courtesy of a call even if you follow up the call with a rejection letter by email, text message, or instant message. Here is an example message:

Thank you for investing time to apply and interview for the nanny position. We have received a lot of applications from highly qualified and experienced nannies. At this time, we have chosen to proceed with another candidate whom we feel more closely meets our needs. We wish you the best in your job search.

Employers in the United States do not have to give a reason for not hiring a candidate. Most employers choose to send a standard rejection letter without explaining why a candidate did not receive the job. One of the most common reason why companies do not provide you with specific feedback is the fear of lawsuits. Many candidates when given interview feedback may not want to accept the company's reasoning and assume there was underlying discrimination. Various state and federal discrimination laws allow prospective employees to file a lawsuit against the prospective employer in cases of discrimination. Another reason why companies may choose not to give feedback after an interview is because some eliminated candidates get angry and argue the decision.

When rejecting an applicant, make sure the applicant cannot misconstrue the words you use or find evidence of unlawful discrimination. Applicants may ask and you may be tempted to share details on why an applicant was not hired. Be careful about any criticisms or advice that you offer.

Many applicants are seeking feedback to improve their interview skills and/or better understand their local job market. If you are working with an agency, they will be in a good position to help the nanny gain insights from the experience as their role is to manage the experience for everyone during the interview and hiring process.

## Chapter 12: Check Background and References

“You only have to google nanny horror stories once see articles about a nanny who hurt a child. A background check can’t prevent a tragedy but screening out high risk candidates and those with a known criminal history can help” shares Sally, a retired New York police officer.

Hiring a nanny and welcoming them into your home requires trust and a personal connection. Take the time to complete a robust background check and call references. Then you will have the confidence to hire someone who can really help with the day to day of caring of your children.

Background checks search federal, state, and local databases for criminal records to help families hire with confidence. To legally run a background check, you must be an employer (Chapter 15 will share how to become an employer with a Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN)). If you want to conduct background checks before filing for an EIN, you can do so with permission from the nanny or asking the nanny to submit for the background check on their own.

### Types of Background Checks

Legal and criminal information is housed across the United States in different federal, state, and local government systems. Up to 70% of employers conduct a background check before hiring, but it is not a straightforward process. With consent from the nanny, most families invest in the criminal background check, but additional checks are also available. Consider these types of checks:

- **Criminal history.** Comprehensive criminal background checks search county, city, state, federal criminal, federal civil, and the sex offender registry. Nannies must submit their addresses for the past 6 years to identify all the locations that need to be checked to ensure a thorough review.



- Identity check and verification. This check obtains US address history and confirms social security numbers as well as verifying government identification and eligibility to be legally employed in the US.
- Motor vehicle report. Motor vehicle reports provide the dates and circumstances of any traffic violations, license suspensions or revocations, and accident reports. This may be important for a family hiring a nanny to transport their children daily to and from school or other activities.
- Drug screening. Some employers mandate a drug free workplace and require drug testing. The nanny would have to be willing to volunteer for a laboratory-based urine test, with all expenses paid by the employer.
- Employment and education. Not all potential employees are honest, and some families may want to confirm their educational and professional backgrounds. Employers, professional licenses, and educational degrees can and should be verified prior to any job offers.
- Credit report. Assessing the financial risk of a potential employee can be conducted by reviewing a credit report. Check your state laws to ensure you comply with them, as they vary from state to state.
- Civil litigation search. Non-criminal disputes between a potential employee will not show up in a standard criminal background check as these are civil lawsuits filed to resolve money, contract, and other disputes. A civil litigation search can identify the propensity of a potential employee to be sued or to sue others, a potentially important characteristic when hiring an employee to work in your home.
- Public web search. You can execute this search by simply inputting the nanny's name in a web search browser and see what information is provided in the results. Does the nanny have a website or public pictures online? How does the nanny represent themselves online?

Many companies offer background check services with prices that range between \$20-\$75 but be aware of 'instant' results. If a company is providing instant results, they are likely using a single, privately compiled database. To use secure databases and include up to date information, reputable background screening companies will need some information about the nanny and between 5-7 business days to complete the research.

Families can pay to run a background check or ask the nanny to run a background check on themselves using a reputable service that complies with the Fair Credit Reporting Act. Nannies can then choose to share the report with potential employers. [The US Nanny Association lists background check businesses on its website that are organization members of the Association and thus agree to the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.](#)

## Why Do Nanny References Matter?

You have found a great nanny – he or she is qualified, confident, and nailed the interview. You are pulling up a work agreement example and ready to dive into the details. Keep your excitement but slow down and invest the time to call the nanny's references.

When you call a nanny's reference, you must be professional and respectful. References are volunteering their time to help a nanny. If references are treated poorly by potential employees, then they are less likely to be a reference in the future and will tell the nanny about the experience such that the nanny may no longer be interested in working with your family. References are not the candidate so do not interview them or grill them. Focus on open ended questions where they are free to share their experiences. An appropriate amount of time for a reference call is 10-15 minutes and you must thank them for their time.

Many families do not call references, feeling that anyone willing to take the call will only have positive things to say about the nanny. Although this is likely true, hearing the tone of voice and type of answers from a reference can provide tremendous insights. Does the reference readily provide examples and stories, or do they share vague positive statements, "she did a good job." Responses from references can also help fill in gaps in the candidates' performance history and provide deeper insights into the type of nanny work that was completed under the reference's supervision.

Good references are from the most recent childcare work experiences, not from family members or friends. Ideally, the nanny worked for the employer for at least 6 months. If you are provided with a long list of references, focus on the most recent employers who required duties and responsibilities like the job you have available. It is important to know that some companies are only allowed to confirm dates of employment but not comment on employee performance. This can be relevant for candidates who may have worked in larger, franchised childcare settings.

Bad references are people who barely remember the nanny or do not know the nanny well enough to comment on their professional or childcare skills. When you encounter these references, ask them a few questions, genuinely thank them for their time, and move on. Extending a call with a reference who cannot share meaningful insights will only cause frustration for both you and the reference.

A negative reference is different from a bad reference as a negative reference is someone who worked with the nanny and can provide insights into their professional and childcare skills. Negative references may provide useful insights; however, they may also be exaggerating or remembering events incorrectly. Ask the nanny for additional references and if they are not available, then the nanny may not be the best fit for your family. If additional references are available, use your best judgment to assess both good and negative references.

Some nannies work for families that require a non-disclosure agreement and for privacy reasons, these families do not allow the nanny to disclose any information about their work. While genuine, most nannies who work with high-net-worth families have a career that built up to this station filled with positive references. Be wary if a nanny with only a few years of experience claims they cannot provide any references because they signed a non-disclosure agreement. This may be true, or it may be an attempt to conceal a lack of positive references.

## Questions to Ask the Nanny's References – About the Nanny Job

Every family employer is unique, so it is helpful to understand the job and duties that were valued by the reference. Context can be important and can help you understand the insights being shared. A reference may share that the nanny communicated daily by text, but you are looking for someone who is more independent. Asking a follow up question like, “was it your preference to be updated daily or was the nanny reaching out every day with questions?” can provide powerful insights.

The response to the follow up question may show that the nanny was flexible and sent a daily text to reassure a worried mother versus sending texts asking questions about what to do with the children when rain interrupts outside play time. Here are some potential questions to ask:

- What type of childcare services did the nanny provide?
- How long did the nanny work for you?
- How many children did the nanny care for and what were their ages?
- Did the nanny drive your children to activities and if so, were you comfortable with her driving skills?
- Was the nanny allowed to let the children watch television or use screen time?
- Did the nanny provide snacks or meals and if so, what food did the nanny serve?
- How did you and the nanny communicate with each other? Did you talk during transitions, have a written message center with daily summaries, text or email, talk on the phone?
- How often did you communicate – daily or just to manage changes in the schedule?
- How much independence did the nanny have in this role regarding the schedule, planning activities, and ways to care for the children?
- What type of training did you provide the nanny?

## Questions to Ask the Nanny's References – About the Nanny's Performance

References can share a lot of information about a nanny's engagement with the children, initiative to implement dynamic play, and how satisfied the nanny was in their chosen job. These insights can help you understand how well the nanny would fit with your family and childcare needs.

- What was the nanny's role within your family?
- What did your children say about the nanny?
- Did the nanny always arrive to work on time? Did the nanny seem excited to be at work?
- What types of games and activities did the nanny do with your children?
- Was the nanny reachable when you contacted her during working hours?
- Can you share a story about a difficult situation that was handled well by the nanny?
- Can you tell me about a time you think the candidate could have handled a situation better?
- Did the nanny have to handle an emergency such as an injury, while caring for your children. If so, can you share what happened and how the nanny managed the situation?
- Did you end the position or did the nanny provide notice? If the nanny left the position, how much notice was given?

- Would you hire the nanny again if you needed a nanny and this nanny was interested in working for your family?

## Nanny Reference Questions – Questions NOT to Ask

Being an employer means your home is a workplace. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) prohibits discrimination based on the following:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Sex (including gender identity, sexual orientation, and pregnancy)
- National origin
- Age
- Disability

To be an equal opportunity employer, you cannot ask a nanny if he or she has children of their own or plans to have children in the future. It is okay; however, for a nanny to volunteer they are a nanny mom or that they are planning to have their own children. To be an equal opportunity employer, you cannot ask a nanny if they are a citizen from another country, but you can ask a nanny if they can provide documentation to legally work in the United States.

## Chapter 13: Nanny Work Agreements

“I use a work agreement template to help me write the job description,” shares Linh L. from Portland. “The structure allows me to think through and write down the job duties. I share a drafted work agreement with the top candidates, so they can read and review the requirements, schedule, and compensation.”

Many nannies and families are reluctant to have a work agreement (or employment contract). After all, we all hate paperwork and if you have a good relationship, you are understandably hesitant to rock the boat. Also, many are afraid of formal contracts, worrying it could limit flexibility.

Taking the time to draft, agree on terms, and sign a work agreement can protect both parties. Even more importantly, it can ensure everyone has the same expectations. Confusion between a family and nanny is reduced when everyone is clear on the responsibilities. A too-informal work arrangement can cause confusion whereby, a well written agreement can provide clarity and make disputes easier to solve amicably. Setting expectations and guidelines at the beginning of a working relationship will create a foundation for success.

## What is a Nanny Work Agreement?

A work agreement is simply a written document that specifies the relationship between an employee and an employer including expectations and compensation. While it can be beneficial, you are not required to use a lawyer to write and review a work agreement. You can create a document that when signed by both parties, it is a legal contract. The employer made an offer that was accepted by the employee. Of course, the agreement can range from an outline to several pages. The most important thing to remember is to be clear about what is expected and how much the position pays as well as the hours. This emphasizes the essential elements to the arrangement. It will ensure the nanny earns compensation for overtime.

## Components of a Nanny Work Agreement

Work agreements should always include some basic information. First, the names of the childcare provider and the family as well as their addresses and an emergency contact in case the parents cannot be reached. The agreement can start with the job description including the days that will be worked and number of children. Take time to list out all job responsibilities and specific duties. For example, is the job solely about childcare or will there be household or pet care duties? Next, ensure the pay rate including any benefits, expense reimbursement and vacation or sick days are included.

Most work agreements include a confidentiality clause or a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to protect the family's privacy. The exact wording may vary for each family and/or state but the intent is that all information the nanny knows or sees is confidential. The agreement is that the nanny will not disclose any confidential information to anyone. This protects the family from the nanny posting photos of the children on social media, sharing private information with their friends, or discussing private family details publicly.

The work agreement should also cover the house rules for the children. If children are allowed electronics, what content is approved? Video games, online web browsing, and television all have content that may not be age appropriate for a child. Finally, document any special considerations or needs. Is the child on a special diet or are their behavioral considerations that need attention?

Make sure the work agreement addresses any special circumstances in your home. For example, if a parent works from home and has information that could be considered private or confidential, a privacy policy may be needed in the event the nanny overhears information while performing her duties in the home.

## Download Free Nanny Work Agreement Examples

As every family is unique and each position may have different responsibilities, work agreements protect both families and nannies by clearly communicating expectations and helping to structure a conversation about the job. To download free nanny work agreement examples including a special version for live-in nannies, visit [US NannyInstitute.com/ free-course/](https://usnannyinstitute.com/free-course/). These examples are provided to inform parents, nannies and lawyers about nanny industry specific considerations. As each state has its own laws, these examples are not guaranteed to meet any state legal requirements and should be reviewed by a local lawyer. Here are a few tips to include in work agreements so you can get started.



**Full Time Childcare Providers.** Full time childcare comes in many forms including weekly care for young children while parents are at work, summer care when children are out of school, families needing overnight care, and vacation care at a resort. Care may be needed for one or more children making each of these positions unique. The childcare requirements will likely involve physical care, academic or activities, and logistics. Additional responsibilities may include light housekeeping, transportation, and/or meal preparation. The agreement should include the compensation (hourly rate), benefits, mileage reimbursement (56¢ per mile in 2021), hours, vacation, and tax management.

**Family Assistants and Live-In Nannies.** Family assistants and live-in nannies will have additional considerations including household management and errands, possibly adding pet care, travel with the family, overnight care, and other considerations. The agreement may include a guest policy, require confidentiality, and vaccinations, as well as use of family equipment and amenities such as a car, pool, or recreational areas.

Prepare to reasonably negotiate with the nanny remaining focused on the goal to ensure both sides are comfortable with the job requirements and compensation. By evaluating the job responsibilities, skills of the nanny, and wages in the local area, you are ready to thoughtfully discuss wages and benefits. During the interview, learn about the nanny's training and certifications as well as previous experience to understand why they may be seeking higher than average pay. Share the results of your research on pay for additional responsibilities such as caring for groups of children or taking on family assistant or household management tasks. Finally, be willing to listen and remember the goal of negotiating is to ensure both you and the nanny are comfortable with the compensation.

Each state has its own laws, and some cities have minimum wage requirements for local workers. Work agreements should have a section dedicated to at-will employment, performance reviews and how departures will be managed.

## Performance and Work Agreement Reviews

The work agreement should include when performance reviews will occur. The purpose of a performance evaluation is to encourage open communication and provide useful feedback about job performance, to facilitate better working relationships, to provide an historical record of performance and to contribute to professional development.

In addition to performance reviews, the work agreement should be reviewed and updated at least annually. If the job changes in scope with the birth of a new baby, addition of pet care responsibilities or a change in hours worked, the work agreement should be updated in a timely manner to incorporate these additional responsibilities.

## What are Guaranteed Hours?

Guaranteed hours are specific hours that you guarantee that your nanny will be paid for, so the nanny can rely on a consistent paycheck. A guaranteed hours clause applies to circumstances where a family chooses not to use their nanny during her regularly scheduled hours. If you guarantee that your nanny can work 30 hours a week with your family, but sometimes you don't need the nanny for all of those hours, you still pay the nanny

for those hours worked, regardless if the nanny works them or not. The guaranteed hours benefit only kicks in when the nanny is willing and able to work, yet the family for any reason decides that nanny services are not needed. Guaranteed hours do not apply when the nanny is unable or unwilling to work.

Guaranteed hours apply when they are included and defined in a work agreement. Guaranteed hours generally apply when the family is on a vacation that does not include the nanny, when visiting family wants alone time with the children, a parent returns home early and chooses to dismiss the nanny early, and other times when a nanny is schedule and able to work but the family chooses not to have the nanny work.

Guaranteed hours do not apply when the nanny chooses not to work, and the nanny does not have any paid time off available. If your work agreement provides for five (5) sick days and the nanny must take a 6th day off from work, the time off is unpaid. If the nanny asks for additional vacation days having used her allotment, guaranteed hours do not apply, and the additional vacation days are unpaid. The work agreement should clearly define when and how guaranteed hours will be applied.

## Chapter 14: Nanny Trial and Orientation

“It's important to me that my children are comfortable with the new nanny, so I like to have them meet each other before offering a nanny the position”, shares Karen from Detroit. “My kids want to be a part of the hiring process and I want my children to know they can tell me about their experiences with a new nanny.”

### Pre-Job Offer Nanny and Children Introduction

Before hiring a nanny, many families have a nanny play date also called a working interview, so the nanny and children can meet one another before the family decides to offer the position and the nanny decides if they want to accept the position. This interaction should not be longer than 1 hour with the goal of the nanny and children meeting each other and perhaps engaging for 30 minutes together.

Create a comfortable, normal environment such as the home or a local park and let the nanny play with or engage the children. Your job is to observe. Does the nanny enjoy it? Is the nanny engaged and listening to the children? Does the nanny seem confident or hesitant? How are your children responding? Does everyone seem comfortable? Are the children comfortable? If your child throws a block across the room, does the nanny gently correct the child's bad behavior or let it go unnoticed?

### Nanny Trial and Orientation

Nanny trial periods and orientations allow the family to show the nanny how they communicate with the children, their expectations for the children, and how they interact with the children. The nanny can learn

morning routines, meals and snack preparation, and naptime sleep routines through shadowing. The nanny can better understand the family's needs, learn the house rules, and gain insights into the family dynamics.

The orientation is a great time to discuss milestones. You must tell the nanny how you want the nanny to communicate (or not) the first laugh, first crawl and first steps. Most parents want to experience the milestone first and thus many professional nannies will not tell a parent if the baby takes their first step. Instead, the nanny asks the parents if they notice the baby is getting ready to walk. This allows the parents to experience their child's 'first'. However, some nannies will send you a video or photo of the 'first' if it occurs while you are not with the child. Think about the experience you want and then ask the nanny to create that experience for you.

By working together for a day or two, and letting the nanny supervise the children on their own for a few hours, the family and nanny can ask questions to learn more about each other as well as ways to execute the duties associated with the job.

Some nannies and families agree to work together for a few days to get to know each other better before signing the work agreement. Others have an orientation after signing the work agreement and making a firm commitment to each other. Whether it is a nanny orientation or a nanny trial, working for a family for several days can help both the family and nanny make a confident choice about working together.

If a nanny is shadowing, getting oriented, or supervising your children, they must be compensated for their time. Nanny candidates or new hires must be paid at an hourly rate during orientations and trials. This investment should be scheduled so that both the nanny and family are prepared to make the most of the opportunity to collaborate and communicate expectations and preferences for a successful working relationship.

Live-in nannies may move into the home for a two-week trial prior to committing to the family full time. If a nanny is flying from out of state for a live-in position, the family pays for the airfare, travel expenses, and allows the nanny to stay in the nanny quarters for the duration. This trial period can help the nanny, parents and children ensure the job is a good fit for everyone prior to moving in permanently. During this type of trial, the live-in nanny should be provided room and board plus an hourly compensation.

Paid trial periods help assess fit with a family. Put a note in your calendar to check in between 6-8 weeks to determine if the nanny is working out. You can ask the children what they think, how they spend their time with the nanny, and what they like or do not like about spending time with the nanny. You can ask the nanny how they feel it is going to address any questions or concerns. If you have cameras in your home, checking in during the day or playing back video can help you understand how the nanny is performing their duties once they have become comfortable and accustomed to their job.

# Chapter 15: Payroll, Taxes, and Insurance

The Nanny Tax is a hot topic as Laura Saunders reports in the Wall Street Journal article, [You're Not the Only One Who's Not Paying Your 'Nanny Tax'](#). One economist estimates that only 5% of Americans who should be paying the 'Nanny Tax' are doing so and recently, several prominent Americans have been caught.

Hiring a nanny requires a family to become an employer, pay taxes, and extend their insurance coverage to include a domestic worker. There are countless service providers able to automate and help with these tasks. The US Nanny Association lists payroll businesses on its website that are organization members of the Association and thus agree to the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. It may sound complex but legally employing a nanny does not have to be overwhelming.

## How to Pay Nannies and Taxes

If you compensate a household employee, in this case, pay a nanny more than \$2,300 in 2021, then you are a legal employer, and the nanny is a household employee.

Household employees are not independent contractors. Families that misclassify their nanny as an independent contractor by providing a Form 1099 can be charged with tax evasion. Fines for avoiding nanny taxes are significant, averaging between \$25,000 to \$100,000 and could include jail time. Not only do you risk legal consequences, but not paying a nanny legally denies the nanny a credit history, paystubs that may be required to rent an apartment or purchase a car, and cheats them out of social security and unemployment benefits.

1. Get a federal and state EIN. A Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN) is obtained by visiting the [IRS website](#). You then use the federal EIN to obtain a state EIN, when required, from the appropriate tax agency in your state.
2. Check the nanny's eligibility to legally work in the United State. Complete [IRS Form I-9](#), the Employment Eligibility Verification form, within 3 days of hiring your nanny and keep copies of the government issued identification(s) for your records. The nanny should provide a social security number or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN).
3. File a New Hire Report and Submit for an Unemployment Number. States require that all hires are reported and there are time limits mandated by each state. Visit your state's local employment website to understand how many days are allotted to report a new hire, the process to file a new hire report, and

how to get an unemployment number for the employee. The unemployment number is required to pay unemployment tax.

4. Have the nanny complete a [Federal W-4](#) form and the corresponding [state income tax withholding form](#) if you live in a state with income taxes. The form is also known as the Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate and is needed to determine tax withholdings.
5. Calculate the taxes owed based on the nanny's gross pay. Federal and state tax requirements are provided in [IRS Publication 926](#).
  - a. Taxes withheld from the employee include Social Security and Medicare taxes (FICA) as well as federal and state income taxes
  - b. Taxes paid by the employer (family) include Social Security, Medicare taxes (FICA), federal and state income tax, and state unemployment insurance.

Your tax obligations will vary depending on your state as not all states have income tax while other states require additional taxes be withheld such as disability or workman's compensation.

Live-out nannies are legally required to be paid minimum wage and overtime rates for hours worked over 40 in a 7-day period. Live-in nannies must also be paid minimum wage and in some states, like Massachusetts, are also entitled to overtime.

6. Set up a payroll and documentation process that complies with Federal and State Labor laws. It is the employer's responsibility to ensure the nanny receives a W-2 form by January 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. In addition to filing a W-2, you will need to file a W-3 form to the Social Security Administration by February 28<sup>th</sup> of each year.
7. File taxes. Typically, you will need to file state tax returns quarterly, but some states require monthly filings while others accept annual filing. Check the requirements for your local area. You can learn more from the [2018 IRS Household Employer's Tax Guide](#).

## Benefits of a Payroll Service

If searching state laws and paperwork is not your gig, consider using a payroll service. Many providers are available that can help with weekly or monthly payroll. Payroll services will prepare pay stubs and year-end tax forms to help ensure you are compliant with federal and state labor laws.

Fees for payroll services vary and often include a set-up fee of around \$100. Services can include filing new employee forms, calculating and withholding deductions, automatically processing earned wages through



direct deposit, and compiling tax forms. Reputable payroll providers charge between \$75-150 per month for family employers and small businesses.

## Flexible Spending Accounts

If your employer offers a Flexible Spending Account (FSA), you can set aside up to \$5,000 of your pre-tax earnings to pay for childcare, including nanny wages and taxes. Depending on your tax rate, an FSA contribution can shave up to \$2,300 a year. If you qualify, you can claim the [Tax Credit for Child or Dependent Care](#). This deduction, depending on your tax rate, can save between \$600 and \$1,050.

## Do You Have Enough Insurance Coverage?

You likely invest in auto, homeowners, and other types of insurance to protect your family and finances. Now that you have a domestic employee, or a nanny, working in your home, you should consult a reputable insurance agent. Here are a few things to review with an insurance specialist.

- **Liability Insurance.** Homeowners' liability insurance provides coverage for bodily and personal injury inside your home. Depending on the policy, persons injured while working in the home will not be covered. Personal umbrella policies provide additional insurance to your homeowner's policy.
- **Worker's Compensation.** If not already required by your state, consider investing in workers compensation in the event your nanny gets injured on the job. Worker's compensation plans can protect your family financially as well as provide benefits to an injured nanny. Without a worker's compensation policy, you may be personally liable for any damages sustained by the nanny working as your employee. Common injuries include falls, dog bites, and cutting food.
- **Auto Insurance.** If the nanny is going to drive your car, add them to your insurance policy. By having her on the policy, if the nanny is in an accident, the policy will cover the damage. If the driver is not listed on the policy, the insurance may not pay the claim.

If the nanny will be driving the children in their personal vehicle, you should pay a mileage reimbursement to cover gas, insurance, and maintenance. It is appropriate to ask about their insurance coverage and if you want additional coverage, including medical cost coverage for passengers, it may be appropriate for you, the employer, to provide additional funding to cover the extra insurance. The nanny should also inquire about converting the insurance from personal use to business use as laws vary by state.

- **Health Insurance.** Providing health insurance or compensation to support a nanny's ability to pay for health insurance is an increasingly popular benefit. As an employer, you can contribute funds to a private

health insurance plan or enroll your nanny in a policy, paying the bill directly to the health insurance company. Some families set aside a dedicated amount each week or month from each paycheck to put toward health insurance. There are many ways to help your nanny with the increasing costs of health care coverage, but remember their medical information is private and you are not entitled to any doctor or medical information beyond the monthly bill.

- **Renters Insurance.** If you have a live-in nanny, they may need a renter's insurance policy to cover their private property. They should be aware that as an employee, their possessions may not be covered by your homeowner's policy in the event of a break in and theft or fire.

## Chapter 16: Employee Training

"We all want the best for our children and good teachers and nannies help instill a love of learning," shares Sherice from Charlotte." I want my son to embrace a lifetime of learning and he sees me take online classes, read books, and do homework. I also invest in my nanny's career development with annual training so she can benefit from continuing her education."

You can hire a nanny early in their career and help pay for their training and certification. If you hire a professional nanny, you can support their continuing education. The Professional Nanny and Childcare Provider (PNCP) certification requires Certified Professional Nannies to renew every 3 years by submitting 20 hours of continuing education courses. Investing in courses specific to their childcare duties also enhances the nanny's ability to better care for children.

Continuing education will help nannies stay up to date. This is important as car seat regulations and nutrition or fitness recommendations may change. Also, nannies should plan to take First Aid and CPR refresher courses as these certifications are only valid for two to three years. Training is an investment whether a nanny pays on their own or asks an employer to share or cover the tuition. Many employers recognize the benefits of childcare training. Whether part of a compensation package or paid out of pocket, nannies should keep the receipts as job training from a licensed program is tax deductible.

Parents and nannies can attend the annual [Parent and Nanny Conference](https://usnanny.org/conference) (usnanny.org/conference) which is hosted online each year as well as locally in some cities. The Parent and Nanny Conference has over 40 seminars that are on-demand for parents and nannies to watch at their convenience. The Parent and Nanny Conference also offers seminars in Spanish. This conference is a great way for parents and nannies to learn and align on childcare skills and child development approaches.

# Chapter 17: Nanny Arrivals and Departures

“I put my heart and soul into my nanny job”, shares Tanisha from Orlando. “It is my job to love, protect, and encourage growth and development in the kids I nanny for. Investing that much into something does not come without attachment. When you must let go, leave behind, or move on from something you are attached to, it is not without challenge, and that is especially true for something near and dear to your heart.”

Transitions can be a challenge for children and adults but with some planning and focus, there are ways to make it smoother for everyone. When welcoming a new nanny, show enthusiasm and positivity. As a nanny transitions out of the home, be respectful and compassionate. With support and communication, children can learn to manage change and develop resiliency.

## Preparing for a New Nanny

In addition to all the employment documents, preparing a nanny welcome letter with important information can help a nanny transition into her new role. A cheat sheet that contains emergency contact information, an example daily schedule, lists with ideas for meals and snacks as well as the children’s favorite books can help the nanny better connect with the children. A checklist can help you orient the nanny, so you remember to share where the pediatric medicine is kept and where to find the spare wipes. A map of nearby parks and directions to swim class is also helpful for a new nanny. If you want a daily log completed, have a few printed out to help the nanny learn to track the information needed to complete the entries.

When the nanny has accepted the position, share with the children that there will be a new nanny who will spend more time with the family. If they met the nanny during the interview process, remind the children of the activities they did with the nanny, so they can remember the positive experience. During the first few days, be available to support the transition as the nanny and children get comfortable with each other. Until settled into a new routine, do not overschedule the children or have playdates where other children may disrupt the newly forming relationships between your children and the new nanny. Try not to schedule any overnight trips during the early transition period.

## How to Fire a Nanny

Firing a nanny is not easy as they have been working in your home and have a relationship with your children. There are both personal and professional elements to the relationship which can be difficult to manage during a termination. You should check your state’s employment laws and you may want to work with a lawyer if you are terminating an employee. As an employer, it is your responsibility to know and follow federal, state and local employment laws. This article provides general information human resource information not legal advice.

At-will employment means your nanny works at the will of your family. You can fire your nanny at any time for good reason or no cause at all. Your nanny can also quit the job at any time for any reason or no reason at all.

Check your state laws as most employment is presumed to be at-will. Potential exceptions to at-will employment include a signed contract for a fixed period. Signed contracts for a fixed period of time are not common.

Why do you want to fire the nanny? There are reasons to fire a nanny immediately and these include illegal actions, reckless behavior or putting the child in danger. The family's safety is the primary concern and any of the following may require immediate termination: misconduct, theft, neglecting the job duties, misuse of family property, substance abuse on the job, dishonesty and/or a safety concern.

Other reasons to terminate a nanny include repeated instances of absenteeism, tardiness, poor quality work, failure to perform job duties, lack of attention and/or failure to enforce the house rules. Before firing a nanny, make sure you have set realistic expectations for the job, you have stuck to the original job description, and you have made every effort to communicate and mediate any issues.

A first step is a job performance review so you can document your concerns and have a conversation with the nanny on how to improve. A performance review may allow an open conversation on what is working and how a nanny can improve their performance. Evaluating a nanny's work, providing feedback and establishing guidelines on exactly what, when and how to improve may remedy the issue. Some nannies will be uncomfortable with a negative performance review. Instead of improving, the nanny may quit without notice. Have a backup plan (see Chapter 18).

If you are having problems with your employee, it is important to identify these issues and provide written documentation that is dated and signed by you and your employee. Again, provide a copy to your employee and keep one with their personnel file. By having documentation, you can show just cause for firing your nanny. It also demonstrates a progressive process and that you tried to rectify the situation and terminating employment was a final step. Documentation may also be needed if your nanny files for unemployment and the state contacts you.

Ideally, you have a work agreement in place with the nanny that contains a section on how terminations and resignations will be managed. This section of the work agreement should have an at-will statement such as, "employment is for an indefinite period of time and it is subject to termination by the employer or employee, with or without cause, with or without notice, and at any time". This section should include the amount of time to give notice, severance and list the reasons for an immediate firing. You do not necessarily need to give a warning before a termination provided it is indicated in your work agreement. The work agreement should be signed by you and your employee, which serves as an acknowledgment that the nanny has read and understands the document.

When terminating the nanny, you should provide them with a termination letter. This letter should include the time and date of termination, what is included in the final paycheck, when the final check will be issued and any other relevant information. The nanny is owed pay for all work performed up to their termination even if they are immediately fired. You may also have to pay for unused paid time off based on your work agreement. On the date of termination, guaranteed hours, if included in your work agreement no longer apply as the nanny is no longer an employee. Never withhold pay for hours worked as you can get into legal trouble. If you have included severance in your work agreement, you may need to follow that agreement. You are better off finding backup care than having a fired employee care for your children.

You have developed a professional and personal relationship so firing a nanny by voicemail, email or text is inappropriate. Plan a professional and honest conversation at the end of the workday to minimize the time

between termination and the nanny leaving for the day. Have another person attend the meeting if possible and hold the meeting in a private location. Children should not attend or be around during the meeting.

Be honest with the nanny. Share that you have documented the issues, attempted a remediation plan and are still unsatisfied with their job performance. Be brief and state only the facts. Let the nanny know about their pay and any severance. If you have a confidentiality agreement, remind them that it covers termination and remains in effect after their employment has ended. Have a list ready of the items that you need returned by the nanny (house key, car seats, credit cards, garage door openers, insurance cards, et al).

This is a conversation, and you should allow the nanny the opportunity to respond. While genuinely listening to the nanny, do not be swayed into letting the nanny keep their job. You have provided feedback and an opportunity to improve. The improvement has not happened, and it is time to part ways. Do not give the nanny false hope that you will hire them back at some point or use them for sitting.

After the termination conversation, take a few additional steps. Write down what happened so you have a record of what was discussed and keep it with the employee's records. Change your home security codes and remove the nanny from school, daycare and doctor office lists. If your nanny files for unemployment, your state will ask about the terms of dismissal and you will need to communicate if it was for cause or not. If you do not respond, the state will rule on the nanny's behalf and if they are awarded benefits, your unemployment tax rate will increase. Also, be prepared if you were paying your nanny illegally. A nanny filing for unemployment is one way for a household employer to be reported to the IRS.

## Managing a Nanny Departure

If you are letting a nanny go through no fault of theirs, you should honor the notification time line and severance in the work agreement. If you do not have a work agreement, provide at least two weeks' notice. If you feel comfortable, provide additional notice.

Providing notice puts the family and nanny in a vulnerable position. If families need childcare coverage during the notice period, they should have a backup plan as most nannies will need to immediately look for another job. Nannies will rightfully prioritize a new job over a job that is ending. If the nanny is upset by the position ending and/or the nanny finds a new position, the family may be without childcare. If the nanny was a good employee, provide a letter of recommendation and/or agree to be a reference to aid them in their job search.

Nannies may work for a family for a few weeks and depart abruptly or stay with a family for years and know a departure is coming months in advance. Either way, it may be difficult for the children to understand why someone who has cared for them is leaving.

Young children do not realize the nanny is being paid to care for them. They view the nanny as an extended family member, a playmate, and someone who can tuck them into bed at night. The first transition is often the most difficult as younger children may still be learning object permanence. Younger children may also fear a parent may be next to leave as they are still learning who is family, who is a nanny, and who are friends.

As children get older, it is easier to explain that many nannies and teachers will be a part of their lives for different periods of time. Comparing nannies to teachers can be helpful as children are able to understand that they will have a new teacher and new classmates when they move from kindergarten into first grade.

When possible and age appropriate, tell the children in advance that the nanny will be departing. Align with the nanny and give consistent answers about when and why the nanny is leaving. Allow children to ask questions and help them through their emotions and feelings. Share the positives things the nanny did for the children and how those things will still get done, either by a new nanny or by other members of the family. Let children know it is okay to miss the nanny. Importantly, make sure the children know the nanny's departure is not their fault.

If appropriate, help the children create a special way to say goodbye to the nanny or give a special gift. To help children process a nanny's departure, they can create a memory or photo book with pictures of the nanny and places they went together. Children could also create a piece of art or do a craft activity to gift the nanny. For older children, writing a special note or story may be a great way to say goodbye. If a nanny is departing on good terms and the nanny is comfortable with staying in touch, comfort the child by letting them know they may contact the nanny or perhaps visit a park together in the future.

After the first experience, children may better adapt to nanny transitions as they understand that a new person will arrive and help care for their needs. As children process the transition, they may have changes in behavior for up to 6 months. Some children may be anxious and have more temper tantrums while others may not seem affected but regress in toilet training.

Departing nannies and the parents may also have strong emotions about a departure. As children will be watching the parents and nanny for cues on how to behave, it is vital that all the adults set aside their feelings and behave respectfully. Even if the experience was not positive, the children and nanny likely had a connection that may make a transition difficult.

If a nanny leaves abruptly without a farewell to the children, the parents need to make sure the children understand the nanny departing is not their fault. The children may experience feelings of abandonment or hurt and anger. Parents should focus on reassuring the children and refrain from negative references about the nanny's departure. If children are struggling with a nanny departure, have the children write the nanny a letter or draw a picture for them, even if you never plan to mail it to the nanny.

If children experience too many nanny transitions or if they struggle with a recent nanny departure, they may become jaded and may not engage with new nannies for fear the new nanny will depart soon. Realize that new nannies may have a difficult entrance into the family if the children are still processing their feelings about a departed nanny. The children may not as readily engage with the new nanny. The lack of engagement with a new nanny may not be about the nanny herself, but the process the children are experiencing to adapt to a new caregiver.

Like most aspects of parenting, it is important to stay tuned to both your family as a whole and your child's individual needs. If you have a child or children who are more sensitive to transitions, you should consider this factor in your hiring decision and aim to hire long-term nannies over those who have a high turnover rate.



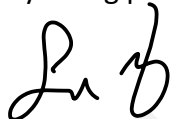
## Chapter 18: Backup Care

“Childcare is essential” according to Nita M. Lowey and Richard E. Neal who authored the Childcare Care for Economic Recovery Act during the Covid-19 pandemic. This makes sense as employers depend on employees who depend on childcare. Whether a nanny gets sick, their car breaks down or they quit without notice, an unexpected lack of childcare is often an urgent issue for the parents.

Rather than scramble when a nanny is not able to work, have a backup plan. If you work for an employer who offers flextime or remote working, you may be able to manage as the emergency childcare provider. Some employers offer emergency childcare services and some agencies specialize in sitter or backup childcare. Increasingly available in urban areas, some drop-in childcare centers allow for unscheduled children to be cared for by daycare staff. You may be able to ask a family member, friend or neighbor if they would be willing to be an emergency backup. If you are a single parent, make sure you have an emergency plan if you get sick or injured and the nanny is unavailable.

### About the Author – Elizabeth Malson

Every relationship that your family has with a caregiver- no matter if they are a sitter, nanny, or family assistant is unique. I hope the information shared in this guide has helped you and your family through the nanny hiring process and that you have found a great nanny that fits your family!



Elizabeth Malson is a Master Instructor, author and speaker who inspires and empowers families and nannies by sharing her experiences and challenges as a working mom. Elizabeth collaborated with 30+ faculty leaders as the founder of the US Nanny Institute. She also collaborated with other nanny industry leaders and experts and founded the US Nanny Association. Elizabeth has a Master of Science from the University of Southern California, a Master of Business Administration from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and has held executive positions with global Fortune 500 companies. Elizabeth can be reached at [info@usnannyinstitute.com](mailto:info@usnannyinstitute.com).

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The US Nanny Institute (a wholly separate entity from the US Nanny Association) provides online and in-person childcare classes with seven (7) certification programs based on a curriculum specifically designed to advance the skills of Nannies and Sitters. The US Nanny Institute has over 30 college faculty with a passion for education and childcare, bringing them together to help childcare providers gain practical skills and qualifications that benefit their careers and the children in their care. For more information, visit [US NannyInstitute.com](https://usnannyinstitute.com).



The US Nanny Association (a wholly separate entity from the US Nanny Institute) advances childcare skills to elevate the nanny profession with nationally recognized standards, credentials, conferences, professional development, and events. Serving parents, nannies and childcare businesses, the US Nanny Association provides resources, information, and tools. Parents can join the [US Nanny Association](https://usnanny.org) (usnanny.org) as an individual member and gain access to 100+ childcare webinars in our digital library. Parents are also invited to join us for the annual [Parent and Nanny Conference](https://usnanny.org/conference) (usnanny.org/conference) which has expert seminars and live workshops.

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