



Getting Started in Your Nanny Search

Have you decided to hire a nanny but don't know where to start? This tip sheet outlines the process for you, offering ideas on finding, hiring, and keeping a great nanny.

NOTE: Nannies and employers are referred to as "she" throughout this publication. This is not intended to diminish the importance of male nannies or fathers. It's simply a matter of convenience.

STEP 1 ~ Know What You Need and What You're Offering

Before you can find the right nanny for your family, it's essential to have a clear understanding of what you're looking for. Before you begin your search, take the time to answer three key questions. One, what are the requirements of my job (e.g. hours, responsibilities)? Two, what type of daily environment do I want for my child? And three, what type of person can I (or can I not) develop a positive parent / nanny relationship with?

A successful nanny / family match is a two way street so it's important to not only know what you're looking for but also what you're offering. Of course salary is the centerpiece of your compensation package but don't forget to include other benefits you offer such as health insurance, use of a car, use of a cell phone, or a professional development allowance. Also, remember nannies consider a "great family to work for" a huge benefit so if you truly are a great employer, include that in your benefits list.

STEP 2 ~ Develop a Written Job Description

Now that you know what you're looking for and what you're offering, it's time to put that information together into a written job description. A job description is an invaluable screening tool, helping you quickly and accurately eliminate nannies that don't meet your needs or that aren't interested in your job. **TIP!** For a step-by-step guide to assessing your needs, outlining your compensation package and creating a job description, check out our publication **Successful Nanny Searches ~ A How-To Guide**.

STEP 3 ~ Choose a Search Method

The search method you choose, full service agency, online nanny job site or self search, depends on how much money and time you can afford to invest in your nanny search. The general rule of thumb is that the more money you invest, the less time you'll need to invest. But that isn't always the case. Your success with any search method will depend upon being an educated and proactive consumer. In other words, the more you know, the more you stay on top of the process, the more successful you'll be.

A full service placement agency is the most expensive search method. However, a *quality* agency will do most of the time-intensive leg work for you. They will provide you with detailed information on fully screened candidates that meet your particular needs. Choosing the *right* agency is key to getting your money's worth. Far too many parents find themselves paying high agency fees but doing most of the work themselves. Our free publication, **Guide to Finding the Right Placement Agency**, is a must read before you register with any agency. Also, check out the *AllAboutNannyCare.com Agency Directory* for detailed information on agencies in your area.

An online nanny job site allows you to post your job online and view a large pool of available candidates. The cost is significantly less than a placement agency, however you will invest quite a bit of time and energy sorting through the responses. Also, you are fully responsible for all interviewing,

referencing, and background checks. Our *Online Job Site Directory* will give you detailed information on your choices.

A self search brings together many different recruitment tools: ads in local newspapers, flyers on community and school bulletin boards, word-of-mouth networking, etc. The cost of a self-search can vary greatly depending upon where you live (print ads are much more expensive in large metropolitan areas) and how broad-based your search is. **TIP!** Start your self search by investing in our **Do-It-Yourself Nanny Search Kit**. It contains everything you need to conduct a successful and cost-efficient self search.

STEP 4 ~ Narrow Down Your Candidate Pool

Once you start your search and begin receiving inquiries from nanny candidates, you'll need to decide which candidates you want to pass on and which ones you want to learn more about. Armed with a comprehensive job description (you didn't skip step 2, did you?), you can quickly and accurately eliminate those candidates that don't meet your needs or that aren't interested in your job. After the first elimination round, conduct short "get to know a little bit about you" phone interviews with the remaining candidates to further eliminate those that you don't click with. After the second elimination round, schedule in-depth interviews with the few candidates you're seriously considering for the job. **TIP!** For a detailed step-by-step guide on how to save time and money by quickly and efficiently narrowing down your list of potential candidates, check out our **Successful Nanny Searches – A How-To Guide**.

STEP 5 ~ Interview Nannies

Once you've identified the candidates you're seriously interested in, it's time to start in-depth interviewing. It's important to go beyond the standard interview questions and really explore who the nanny is both as a person and as a caregiver. An in-depth, probative interview is crucial in deciding if this nanny is the right nanny for you. **TIP!** The interview strategies outlined in our **Expert's Guide to Interviewing Nannies** will help you get to the information you need to make a successful hiring decision.

STEP 6 ~ Reference Nannies

Once you've interviewed a nanny, the next step is to contact her references and get their perspective on who she is as a person and as a caregiver. It's crucial to talk to a wide variety of references - past employers as well as co-workers or nanny colleagues, teachers, clergy, friends and family. Each person will have different information to offer you, allowing you to put together a more complete and accurate picture of who the candidate really is. **TIP!** The reference strategies outlined in our **Expert's Guide to Referencing Nannies** will help you get to the information you need to make a successful hiring decision.

STEP 7 ~ Perform Background Checks

Before a nanny begins work, make sure all recommended background checks have been run on her. Don't assume your placement agency or online job site has done the work for you. If they include background checks in their fees, ask to see copies of all information gathered. Many agencies perform a standard set of checks rather than tailoring their investigation to a particular caregiver. Sometimes those checks provide a complete picture, sometimes they don't. The background checks included in online job site packages often provide minimal information and should be viewed as a starting point only. It's up to you to make sure the background checks done on your potential nanny provide the information you need to make an informed hiring decision. Also, placement agencies rarely run background checks before they're confident of a placement. This policy often results in a nanny starting work before she has been cleared. Again, it's up to you to ensure your new nanny is fully screened before she begins work. **TIP!** For detailed information on what checks are available, check out **Successful Nanny Searches – A How-To Guide**.

STEP 8 ~ Make the Offer

Once you decide upon a candidate, don't hesitate to offer her your job. It doesn't have to be a formal, written job offer and you don't have to have each and every detail worked out. Things happen very fast in the nanny world and families often lose a desired nanny because they didn't act quickly enough. **TIP!** For insider strategies on how to stay ahead of the competition (other employers!) in your nanny search, check out **Successful Nanny Searches – A How-To Guide**.

STEP 9 ~ Develop a Nanny / Family Contract

Developing a comprehensive nanny contract is the single most important step you can take towards building a successful, long-term nanny / family relationship. Don't skip this step! We strongly suggest our popular A to Z Nanny Contract. It has helped thousands of parents get off to a great start in their employment relationship.

STEP 10 – Set Up Payroll and Tax Reporting

Before your nanny begins, decide how you're going to handle payroll and tax issues. You can handle these issues yourself or you can hire a payroll provider or individual accountant to handle them for you. If you hire an accountant make sure he or she understands and has experience with household employee taxes. Check out our *Tax Service Directory* for detailed information on companies specializing in household employment taxes.

STEP 11 ~ Welcome Your New Nanny!

Investing a little effort into welcoming your nanny will reap great rewards. Give her an empty drawer in the kitchen or common area, give her a tour of the area, introduce her to neighbors, teachers, and play date moms. Letting her know you're happy she's your new nanny will get your relationship off to a great start.

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