

# Tinies

The Childcare Experts

## The Process of Hiring a Nanny



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## Introduction

Here is some helpful guidance on the process of hiring a nanny. We will start by looking at the interview process and then at how to successfully introduce your nanny to your family and your home. Finally we will take a look at your responsibilities as an employer.

## Interviewing your nanny

### Planning the interview

Whilst it is important to see how the nanny interacts with your children, it may not be advisable to have them present for the whole interview as it could be distracting. In addition, to introduce the children to all the candidates may be both confusing and unsettling for the children. So, if possible plan to interview potential nannies either without your children being present or with the children being introduced to the nanny briefly at the end of the interview. If you are interested in the nanny, you can then arrange a more informal second interview so that the children can spend some time with her to ensure that you have made the right choice.

### The structure of the interview

An interview will normally take 45 minutes to 1 hour. A formal structure of the interview ensures that all the points are covered that you want to discuss. This will make the interview fair and productive for both you and the nanny. However you should try to put the nanny at ease from the beginning as she will then be more responsive to your questions. Once you are both settled, explain how the interview is going to be structured so that the nanny knows what to expect. Below we set out a suggested structure:

- Tell the nanny about your family and children
- Tell the nanny about the position (see section below)
- Ask the nanny to tell you about herself and what she is looking for in a new job
- Go through the nanny's CV in detail, asking her to describe each childcare position (see section below)
- Run through a list of questions relating to the nanny's abilities as a childcarer, her views on discipline, activities for the children etc, and questions relating to her own background (see section below)
- Ask the nanny if she has any specific questions.

### **Describing the available position**

You will need to describe the position that you are offering in detail. Set out below is a suggested list of issues that should be covered:

- Start date
- Hours of work
- Duties and responsibilities, relating to both the children and around the house. In particular if you require something more than nursery duties (e.g. family shopping, laundry etc) this should be mentioned
- Routines that you would like kept - e.g. swimming lessons, playgroups etc
- Salary
- Holidays - in particular discuss whether you require her to take some of her holiday when you take some of your holiday
- House rules such as nannies visiting, boyfriends visiting, use of phone etc
- If it is a live in position, describe and show the nanny the accommodation. Also talk about when she can use the kitchen and the other communal areas of the house, and what meals will be provided, if any
- Use of car (if applicable)
- Babysitting requirements
- Whether she will be required to prepare all the children's meals and whether there are specific dietary requirements
- Any medical issues relating to the children of which the nanny should be aware

### **Suggested interview questions for the nanny**

Try to use open-ended questions that will prompt for informative answers, such as questions starting with What? When? Why? How? Where? Or tell me about... This will avoid just getting Yes & No answers.

The following are some questions you may wish to consider asking. This is by no means a definitive list and is not set out in any particular order of priority:

#### **Being a nanny**

- Why did you choose a nannying career?
- What do you think are the qualities needed to be a good nanny?
- What do you enjoy most about being a nanny?
- What do you enjoy least about being a nanny?

#### **Education & development activities**

- In view of our children's ages what areas of development would you be concentrating on and what sort of activities would be suitable?
- How would you plan a typical day?
- What are your favourite activities with children?
- How would you occupy our children during the day?
- What kind of equipment or materials would you need?
- Have you had experience of potty training and how do you go about potty training children (if applicable)?

### **Meals**

- What kind of food would you cook for our children?
- How would you think to approach planning menus and buying the food?
- If appropriate: Have you prepared a baby's bottle before? Used a sterilizer? Weaned a baby onto solid food

### **Discipline**

- What would you do with a child that threw a tantrum in the middle of a shop?
- How do you introduce good manners to children?
- (Discipline is an area that needs to be discussed up front to avoid any differences of opinion on how the children should be disciplined - as the parent you should be telling the nanny what you find acceptable or unacceptable in terms of disciplining your children)

### **Reading & television**

- What sort of books do you think would be appropriate for our children?
- How often would you use the library?
- How do you feel about children watching television?

### **Coping with an emergency**

- For example what would you do if a young child locked themselves inside the car?
- What would you do if a child was choking?
- When did you last update your first aid training?

### **Reliability**

- How is your time keeping?
- How many days sick leave have you had in the last year?

### **Personal family questions**

- Are you from a big family?
- Where does your family come from?
- Have you got a partner? What does he do for a living?
- If it is a live in position, how is the nanny planning on meeting up with her partner - did she intend for him to stay or will she be going away at weekends?

### **Going through the nanny's CV**

It is obviously important to ask the nanny to describe her previous childcare positions. Working through her previous work experience you may consider asking the following questions in relation to each position:

- How did you spend your days with the children?
- Was it a sole charge position or were there elements of sole charge?
- Why did you leave?
- What did you enjoy most about the job?
- What did you least enjoy about the job?

You should also read through the nanny's written references, and raise any questions you may have in relation to those references.

If the nanny has childcare qualifications, ask her to describe the course - how long it was for, whether she studied full time or part time, and what the course covered. In particular ask whether it involved her doing work experience and placements either with families or in nurseries.

### **Questions from the nanny**

Encourage the nanny to ask questions about you and the family set up, specific details about the jobs, routines, hours etc. Do not be surprised if nannies come armed with a list of questions to ask.

### **Bringing the interview to a close**

Once you are both satisfied that the interview is over and that you have covered everything, bring the interview to a close. You will need to let the nanny know exactly what the next steps are.

If you want to offer her the job it is worth making this clear now as she will undoubtedly be attending other interviews and you may lose the opportunity of employing her. If she does want to take up the position then you can arrange a separate time for her to come back and have an informal second interview with the children and discuss the nature of the contract together.

However if you are unsure and want to see other nannies, then tell her that you will be contacting Tinies after the interview and that the agency will contact her to let her know the outcome.

Once the interview is over please contact Tinies to discuss how you would like to proceed. If you wish to employ the nanny, then it is best to make an offer as soon as possible. Alternatively you may want to see other nannies in which case we can arrange that for you. In particular we would welcome your views and feedback on the nanny whatever the outcome.

## **Nanny induction**

When you hire someone to look after your children in your home, you owe it to the nanny, and to yourself, to have a very clear picture of exactly what the nanny's duties will involve. If this nanny is taking over from a previous nanny, it is a good idea to have a week or two handover. Or as the employer you may need to take a week off to settle the nanny in with your children and home.

Some areas to think about are set out below:

### **Your children**

1. What are their likes and dislikes?

- Favourite toys, books and characters
- Special soft toy friends or comforters
- Any allergies or regular medications - how and when to administer
- Food - what are their favourite dishes and what do you prefer them to eat
- Who are their nearest and dearest - grandparents, cousins, aunties, uncles and friends

2. Go through:

- Routines (sleep, play, bath time, eating)
- Approach to discipline
- Television
- Taking telephone messages and making calls
- Dealing with people who come to the door
- Petty cash/expenses
- Nanny diary – how will you correspond with each other at the start and end of the day

**General**

1. Around the house:

- Kitchen – how does the cooker/washing machine/microwave work?
- Where do you keep your Hoover and cleaning products?
- Where is your first aid kit and medicine?
- Where is your sewing box?
- Locking up procedures - alarm codes
- If the nanny is live in - does she need a shelf for her own food etc

2. Introduce your nanny to your:

- Neighbours
- Playgroups, swimming classes, NCT etc
- Children's teachers and play workers
- Children's friends and their carers and parents
- Any other people who are important to your family

3. Prepare a contact list:

- Phone numbers to include parents' work and mobiles; neighbours; school; doctors; grandparents; friends
- Will your nanny always be able to contact you at work?

4. Equipment check and demonstrations

- Car seats - correctly fitted into car (check with her car and your car)
- Pushchairs, buggies and highchairs - collapsing demonstrations
- Tour of the local area: local parks, library, shops, swimming pools, schools, playgroups, doctors, hospital

## **Responsibilities as an employer**

As the employer of a nanny there are lots of responsibilities you may not have considered when you took the decision to bring a nanny into your home.

### **Immediate responsibilities**

The main concern is obviously to find the best person to care for your children, but please remember that you are becoming the employer of the nanny. The person who comes into your home is making a career out of caring for your children and as such there are some fundamental employment guidelines that you should follow:

*Job Description* - a precise job description should be discussed and agreed with the nanny before she commences work for you.

*Contract* - it is now a legal requirement to have a written contract of employment. You should agree the terms of this contract with your nanny and finalise the contract with each party signing and keeping a copy each. Tinies provide a standard form contract and we are happy to advise you on how to tailor the contract to your specific requirements.

*Guidelines* - as well as a job description and a contract you should think about the way you like your home run and how you would like the relationship with your nanny to develop. If you would like to keep the relationship fairly formal then state this at the outset. In particular, discuss and agree any house rules from the outset for example, is the nanny free to use the phone when she wants? Can the nanny invite other nannies around? Do either of the parents prefer being left alone when they return from work? Every family has a number of idiosyncrasies. Are there any in particular that the nanny should be aware of?

### **The ongoing relationship**

Like any employer/employee relationship, your relationship with your nanny will have its ups and downs. There will be times when she is performing better than others and times when you may not agree on everything. You should make sure that there is an ongoing review process as well as ensuring an ongoing dialogue between you and the nanny. Take time every few months/6 months/year to sit down with the nanny to discuss how she is doing, and give positive feedback as well as looking at areas where you would like change or improvement. Perhaps you need to discuss how your child's development needs to be taken forward a stage as he/she gets older.

### **Legal obligations**

The nanny is an employee and therefore as her employer you have a number of legal obligations. For example:

- You have a responsibility to pay tax and national insurance. There is often a temptation to pay cash but this is illegal and you can be fined and charged interest by the Inland Revenue for unpaid tax. (Click for: Tinies Payroll Information). If you wish to look at ways of reducing your tax liability, then you should look at the possibility of claiming the childcare tax credit or using childcare vouchers issued by your employer/company (see information on Nanny Approval and the OFSTED Childcare Register free resource)

- You are responsible for paying your employee's statutory sick pay; statutory maternity pay and holiday pay (see information on this in our Holiday Advice free resource). If you wish the nanny to accompany you on holiday, then please note that this does not count towards the nanny's annual leave and she will need to be paid as normal. Also if you want the nanny to take some of her holiday when you take holiday, this should be specifically stated in the contract
- You must ensure that your household insurance policy covers you for employers and public liability insurance

### **Cars and transport**

It is important that the nanny has appropriate insurance cover for the car that will be used to transport the children (she may need to get insurance to cover her for business use if using her own car). If appropriate, a child car seat may be needed. It is usual for the employer to provide this. If you are providing a car to the nanny, or you are allowing the nanny to drive your car, check with your insurance company as it can be expensive to put a nanny on your insurance.

The nanny will need to be reimbursed for petrol and running costs whilst transporting the children around. You may either consider a flat rate sum per day or use a mileage rate, if she is using your car. If she is using her own car, then the nanny should be paid 0.44p per mile (tax year 11/12). You will also need to clarify issues such as whether the nanny is allowed to use the car for her own personal use and, if so, who pays for the petrol.

All information and advice contained in this resource are meant as guidance only.