



The #MustHave Guide

# *Child Care Options*



## *Dedicated to...*

All the parents who work so hard to raise their children to be happy, healthy and bright.

And of course, to all the people who help them do so!

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## About the author

Physician mom Dr. Alexandra T. Greenhill

*But first...*

## are you a **bad parent** for leaving your child in the care of others?

This is a commonly asked question and even more common thought. Let me reassure you, all evidence points to that facts that:

1. Each family is different, and it's a conversation to have about what each person wants and how one can make it work, instead of assuming. Some mothers want to stay at home and raise their kids (67% said so when surveyed), but that survey also showed that one in three would prefer to continue to work. When paternal leave is an option, many dads choose to take a little or a lot of time off to be with the kids.
2. Each child is different – what may be great for one can turn out to be a challenge for another.
3. Meeting many new people develops children's Emotional Quotient (EQ) which is a stronger predictor of success in life than their Intelligence Quotient (IQ).

New research shows that kids of mothers who work turn out really well, but so do kids with stay at home moms.

- **The strongest predictor?** Kids who are loved (yes, regardless of finances or family composition).
- **Second strongest?** The “Good Enough parenting” – nurturing environment where parents human i. e. not perfect, and not overly protective nor overly demanding in terms of achievement
- **Third?** Connection to community. Yes, it does take a village to raise a child, so tap into that power.

**The bottom line:** There is no perfect child care solution, no golden standard to aspire to. Each family's path is different and can lead to equally good outcomes. So – RELAX and enjoy the parenting life. ☺

# Choosing Child Care

## 7 Key Dimensions to Consider

1

Align both parents' vision for what each views as the best.

2

Number and age of children guides what is A) possible and B) affordable.

3

Part-time, full-time & more than full-time care options tend to be very different.

4

Need for irregular/odd hours care limits available options.

5

You have more options if you have room for a live-in, or if you are willing to get creative.

6

Everything tends to depend on when and how soon do you need a solution.

7

Being very clear on what you want will increase your success in finding it!







We all want the absolute best for our kids. It's stressful to face the idea that we need to find someone else to care for them in our absence. Your choice of childcare will of course be influenced by what is available where you live and what is affordable for you, but there are still choices to be made.

This overwhelms most parents, especially while there are a great set of options and choices, most seem so inferior from the ideal visions we imagine! But not to worry – with time you will learn that **what matters most to kids are love and attention**, and that those two things come in very different packages.

I've seen parents very upset because they were still waitlisted for a Montessori program only to discover that the live-in nanny they “settled for” instead, could cook their meals and teach a full preschool program as she was a trained ECE (Early Childhood Educator) from Mexico.

Many parents initially concerned with the older decor of a home-based daycare, rapidly discover that their child looks loves and is thriving.



Care options you can choose from

So keep an open-mind and read the next section for the **7 Key Dimensions** to consider when choosing child care.

# #1

## Align both parents vision for what is ideal child care.

All grown ups involved in decisions about child care need to have an honest chat first:

- Share your **personal experiences**, impressions and assumptions about the different childcare options.
- Discuss your belief patterns of what is **best for a child's growth** – some parents believe that mom must stay at home, others think one-on-one care and free play is best while many are firmly convinced children need organized educational activities.

- Identify your **personal preferences**. Some parents are uneasy at the idea of having another person in their home during the day or even more “intrusively,” 24/7 as is the case for a live-in nanny or au pair. Concern about illness in daycare is another.

Sometimes all of this is not uncovered until one parent has done considerable work to investigate solutions, only to discover that their assumptions were not shared! Early discussion will hopefully avoid unnecessary effort and disappointment.





# #2

Number and age of children guides what is A) possible and B) affordable.



Most parents don't realize that if you have more than one child, it's often less expensive to hire someone to watch them in your home. Whether its daycare, pre-school or after-school care, the price of care multiplied by 2 or more ends up costing more than a person that comes to your home.

Of course, there are many more reasons than financial to decide what type of care is right for your kids, but with child care being the second highest item on most family budgets its not one to neglect.

Then there is the practical issue of are there any daycares in your area and do they have any openings. Also consider whether a daycare close to your home or to your workplace makes more sense.

Options are usually more limited if you are looking for care for a child that is less than 3 yo and even more so if less than 12 or 18 mo old – some home daycares accept younger children.

It also tends to be a little less expensive for older children as the ratio of child to adult is higher.

How much you pay your sitter or live out nanny tends to be unregulated , but the average “going rate” in most communities has made it possible for caregivers to actually earn more than a living wage with the majority making above minimum wage. Additionally, many now have benefits included in their employment package. See section on who are the helpers, facts and trends.







# #3

## Part-time, full-time and more than full-time care options tend to be very different.

If you need part-time care and have a child older than 3 years old, morning or afternoon preschool is a relatively easy-to-find option. For full-time care, daycares can be great, but many have limited hours from 8am to 4 or 5pm, making it difficult for parents who work 8 to 5pm. Many preschools and some daycares close completely for winter and summer holidays, especially if they are affiliated with a school. For more than full-time hours, a home-based daycare or a nanny are the most frequent choices. And then there is **cost** - for more than one child, costs can be vastly different between options.

	One Child 	More Than One Child 
Part Time Care	Daycare, preschool, home care, live-out nanny, sitter, SAHM*, au-pair, drop-in centers	Sitter, SAHM* or au-pair, drop-in centers
Full Time Care	Daycare, Preschool, home-care SAHM*, live-in or live-out nanny	Live-in or live-out nanny

\*SAHM = Stay at Home Mom

# Some scenario planning - an example

## DAYCARE

### Scenario 1 : One child

\$50/day for 8 hrs of care

Monthly = \$1000

### Scenario 2 : Two children

\$50/day x 2 children = \$100/day

Monthly = \$2000

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#### Pros:

- Exposure to other kids of same age
- Enrichment activities are included
- Trained early childhood educators
- Built-in connection to other parents
- Don't have to manage an employee

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#### Cons:

- Can be hard to find a spot
- More expensive if more than one child
- Regular start and end times
- May close for summer/winter holidays
- If child is sick, will need back up care

## NANNY

### Scenario 1: One child

\$15/hr x 8 hrs or \$12 x 10 hrs

Monthly = \$2400

### Scenario 2 : Two children

\$15/hr x 8 hrs or \$12 x 10 hrs

Monthly = \$2400

### Scenario 3: Nanny share

\$15/hr x 8 hrs or \$12 x 10 hrs

Monthly = \$1200

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#### Pros:

- Less expensive if more than one child
- Can usually easily hire someone
- More flexible weekly schedule
- More flexibility on holiday schedule
- Can include help with the home

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#### Cons:

- Need to do hiring and managing
- Will need to become an employer
- May not get someone with experience
- May need to help plan add on activities
- If nanny is sick, will need back up care



## #4

### Need for irregular or odd hours care limits options.

If you need hours that change constantly or if they fall outside usual business hours, having someone come to your home is a good option.

Some home-based daycares or Stay at Home Moms (SAHMs) also offer that flexibility and some even provide the option to have your child(ren) stay overnight if you are working late or even for a few days, if travelling.

The same issue also comes up if you have one child in school and the other in need of pre-school type care. Some places are close enough that an arrangement can be made to have another classmate's parent help with pick-ups/drop-offs of the older child to the younger child's location at the end of the day. This may involve some schedule juggling and for this situation, a nanny, sitter or au-pair might be better options.





# #5

You'll have more options if you have room for a live-in, or if you are willing to get creative.

If you are considering home-based care, it may be much cheaper to get a live-in caregiver or an au-pair provided you have the space, at least a room or ideally a studio. It may be difficult to adjust to the idea of stranger living in your home, but usually it works out great!

Failing that, you can reduce your costs by A) setting up a nanny-share arrangement, B) hiring a SAHM who would be allowed to bring her own child to your home or C) if you work part-time, swapping childcare with another part-time parent.



The huge shortage of daycare spots means parents need to sign up on waitlists as soon as they know about the pregnancy.

# #6

## Everything tends to depend on when and how soon you need a solution.

Busy times for finding childcare are school, work and holiday-related transition periods - Aug./Sept., Dec./ Jan. and May/Jun. It can be both harder and easier to find a solution at these times, as many parents are either seeking or no longer requiring care. Although the possibilities are greater, they are also rapidly filled and the hiring cycle can be very fast.

Many daycares are only accessible if you put your name on a list when you first become pregnant. A few phone calls in your area will give you an idea of how things are in your neighborhood. For all of us who laughed at the idea, we found ourselves shocked and confused at the archaic world of having to visit in person to add oneself to a wait list and even sometimes having to pay \$10 to \$50 to do so!

Ironically, when a spot does become available, many daycares and preschools need to go through hundreds, if not thousands of names on their lists before they find parents who have not set up another arrangement, so the last on the list are often surprisingly successful in their mission to get a spot. Home-based daycares are often a little bit more accessible, but still can command long wait lists.



Securing a live-in caregiver who is currently not in the country is also a long process which you can tackle on your own or hire an agency to help you at a cost of more than \$1000. The process places a number of obligations and commitments on you and due diligence is required.

NOTE: While this is the right choice for many families, with so many great people already in the country who are available to help, we do not offer assistance with this process.

Consider looking for a live-in caregiver who is already here, but no longer needed by the family – this can be much faster.

Also, many locals are willing to spend a year or two as a live-in caregiver to explore a different area of the country or learn a second language. Both of these options can be accessed through [www.mybesthelper.com](http://www.mybesthelper.com).

It's of course much faster to hire a babysitter or a live-out nanny directly. To have the optimal choice, plan to have ideally three weeks or so. In many larger cities, it's possible to hire someone in 3 to 4 days - from posting a job to interviewing to checking references.

This process also depends on your own availability to lead the process coupled with your prior level of experience in hiring people, especially for the home, as hiring helpers for home-based situation is different from work-based hires: you are both hiring an employee as well as acquiring a household family member.

# The Childcare Ecosystem

What do the different options actually mean?

## Outside of the Home

1. Daycares and preschools
2. Before and after-school care
3. Home-based daycares
4. Stay at Home Moms (SAHMs)
5. Drop in childcare centers

## Inside Your Home

6. Nanny live-out
7. Live-in caregiver
8. Au-pair
9. Care swap or babysitting co-op
10. Sitter





# 1. Daycares & Preschools



Ideal 1 child



Large budget



Part or full-time



Regular hours only

Daycare centres and preschools can be run by private companies, local councils, community organizations, individuals, non-profit organizations or by employers for their staff.

They can be located in anything from church basements to specifically-designed child-care centers, but as they need a license to run, they must meet local government criteria..

Most full-day daycare centres will have an **early education component** to their program providing structured learning activities as well as childcare.

Unfortunately, daycares and preschools in most locations tend to have long waiting lists. There is also usually little flexibility in terms of when you child is ill – the policies can be strict regarding sending children home at the first sign of symptoms.

Daycare and preschool can be available for all day or part of the day - centres usually operate between 8:00am and 4:00pm. Some centres offer extended days, usually for additional fees, from 7:30am till 6:00pm.

Many preschools offer morning or afternoon sessions from 2 to 5 days a week, usually from 8:30am to 12pm and from 12:30pm to 4:00pm.

There are usually rigid pickup and drop-off times with penalties for being late. There may be an option to pay extra if you need early drop off or late pick up.

Some many preschools and some daycares close completely for the winter and summer holidays especially if they are attached to or housed in a school.

## 2. Before and after-school care

 1 child

 Large budget

 Part-time

 Regular hours only

Many school based parent associations have made arrangements for before and after school care of school aged children, starting as early as 7am and open until 6pm

You are lucky if your school has this, but then, there may be a wait list. Also they usually don't accept younger siblings. If you have more than one child, the cost anyways becomes a significant factor – cheaper to hire someone for the home.


## 3. Home-based daycares, also called homecare



 1-2 children

 Large budget

 Part-time or full time

 Irregular hours possible




Often less expensive, home based daycares can provide a nurturing, home-like atmosphere with smaller groups of children.

Many require licensing beyond a certain number of children being cared for, usually two more than the provider's own children.

While there is usually more flexible pickup and drop-off times than a daycare center or a preschool, there is also often no back up option if the provider gets sick.

The quality of experience in many of these home based daycares can be impressive as they are often run by ECE or teacher-trained moms who prefer to stay home with their young children and open a daycare to help the home budget.

## 4. Stay At Home Moms (SAHMs)





-  1-2 children
-  Small budget
-  Part-time
-  Irregular hours possible

Many SAHMs are happy to offer help part-time, especially if they own children are in school (usually available 9:30am to 2:30pm) or potentially full-time if they can bring along their young child.

They are usually flexible and loving, and again while less expensive, they are certainly often well qualified as many do it not only to help with extra income, but also because they love kids!



## 5. Drop in childcare





-  1-2 children
-  Large budget
-  Part-time
-  Regular hours only

Many cities offer drop in options – from private centers catering to SAHM who need a break – to YMCAs and community centers or even after a certain age, stores such as IKEA, that cover the care of kids usually at the most for 3 hours.

Cost can range from free (if in a store) to nominal (in a community center) to on par with hiring a sitter (in a private center). It's a great option for when you need care occasionally, but can be hard on a toddler or preschooler who has to deal with both unfamiliar surroundings and new groups of adults and kids. If your child is easy going, these options tend to work well.



## 6. Nanny live-out

-  1+ children
-  Small budget
-  Part-time & Full-time
-  Regular hours only

A live out nanny can be part-time, full-time or more than full-time. Most nannies nowadays are older than 21 and have some college or university education. They are often either younger (students or recent graduates) or older women (immigrants, transitioning between jobs or retired).

They come with various degrees of experience and also varied perspectives on what is optimal child care and development and it's important to discuss this.

Live-out nannies usually make between \$10 to 20/hr and most are in the \$12 to \$15 range. Nannies used to stay with a family for years, often going from housekeeper to nanny to housekeeper again. The new reality is that for many, it's a temporary career, usually lasting one to three years, so families end up having to look again.





When you employ someone regularly, whether part- or- full-time, you may be considered an employer and have to manage payroll and other obligations. Check local laws to see if that 's the case (you can also contact us for help).

For both live-out and live-in nannies, you can look for nanny sharing arrangements with another family. If you are interested, our Nanny Sharing Guide will help you figure out if this is the right option and how to make it happen.





## 7. Live-in caregiver

-  1+ children
-  Small budget
-  Full-time
-  Irregular hours possible




If you have room to house someone or even better a guest suite, you can have a live-in caregiver. This makes life easier on one hand as the person is more available to offer assistance, but can be a challenge if you are not used to living with a non-family member.

Cost-wise this used to be a great deal as the pay per hour was traditionally lower, and one could deduct room and board. Increasingly rules are being tightened to prevent abuse of caregivers from overseas, so the financial advantage is disappearing.

The official rules under which you can bring someone from overseas can take longer than finding someone local. Many nanny agency services offer assistance with this process with fees usually starting at \$1000 per placement.

Keep in mind that there are also people already here who may be interested in a live-in arrangement. Advertising such a position with us usually yields many great candidates so it may not be necessary to go through the hard and long process of bringing someone in whom you often can't even meet before they arrive to live in your home.





## 8. Au-pair

-  1-2 children
-  Small budget
-  Part-time
-  Irregular hours possible

While there may not be an official au-pair visa program to help expedite documentation, it's possible to bring in a young (or old) person from abroad to help with household tasks and child-care in an au-pair capacity. Usually, au-pairs are 18 to 21 year old (girls but increasingly boys too) that take a gap year, interested in experiencing life as a local and/or learn/improve a new language.

You can count on light duties and less than fulltime (<30 hrs a week), getting little or no pay in exchange for room and board, as well as a cultural experience. The new phenomenon of granny-au-pair is rising, where this represents an opportunity for healthy retired women to travel the world on lower budget while helping young families with school aged kids with before and after school.

## 9. Care swap or babysitting co-ops





-  1+ children
-  Small budget
-  Part-time
-  Regular hours only

More and more families set up care swaps or even more formal babysitting co-ops. Basically – you watch my kids and then I will watch yours with no money usually exchanging hands. This is a great option to expand parental ability to work and have fun, while not stretching the budget.

Some are informal while some assign points per child watched per hour – so if you have two kids, two hours is 4 points, but if you watch one child for another family, it's only 2 points.

A huge positive is that kids become familiar with different rules in different houses and develop a sense of community and belonging.

## 10. Sitters

-  1+ children
-  Small budget
-  Part-time
-  Irregular hours possible

Sitters fall under occasional care, either regularly scheduled or on demand. Many families maintain a roster of two to three people that they bring in regularly to help, both because it's needed and to maintain the relationship and ensure kids remain familiar with the person. Especially if on demand, sitters were once considered independent contractors and not employees, thus cash was the norm. Increasingly, rules are being tightened to both protect sitters from abuse but also to ensure revenues are properly declared. If you are not sure if your sitter falls under the category of employee or independent contractor, you can check with government.



# *How to Choose*

The Right Daycare,  
Home Care or Preschool

5 key things  
to consider



If you are lucky enough to have a choice of places, I recommend a quick visit first and if you like what you see and hear, then bring your child/ren to do a proper tour. This reduces the number of new places your child/ren will see and also helps make the subsequent visit easier, as you will be more relaxed knowing a bit about what to expect. **There are five main criteria** to consider:

### 1. Ask about their belief system.

- What do the leadership and teachers believe leads to healthy and well-developed kids?
- What is the schedule like?
- What activities are offered?
- How do they handle discipline?
- What accommodations do they offer to the individuality of each child's needs and your own beliefs and needs?



### 2. Do you like the people involved?

Think of both the leadership and teachers. Imagine what it would be like to be stranded on a desert island with them for a day or two – would you run out of topics to discuss? If you get along well, chances are, so will your child/ren.

### 3. Assess the environment –

both how safe it is and how child-friendly it is, as well as for accessibility and opportunity for playing and exploring. Is it well lit? How well maintained is it? Is there an outdoor play area? Is there soap in the bathroom?

### 4. How happy are the kids you see?

It's important to see if they are happy and engaged. Some daycares insist on an after-hours interview. If this is the case, make a point to go back and at least get a glimpse of what it is like when the children are there.

### 5. Ask to speak to three parents

who are current or recent users of the service. Interview them carefully about what they liked, how they made it work better, and if there is anything that they had wished someone had told them about the service before they signed on (this last question is gold).

# Who are the helpers?

Trends and facts  
to help you choose





## WHO ARE THE HELPERS?

 **90% WOMEN**  
 **10% MEN**

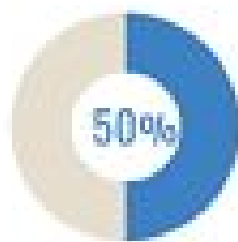
- 20 to 25 years old on average
- Certified in CPR, First Aid or safety training

## AVERAGE RATE

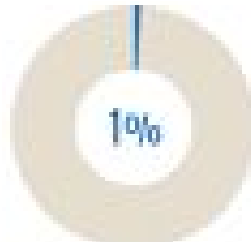
 **\$14**  
**PER HOUR**

Average pay for nannies and sitters ranges from \$10 - 20/hr

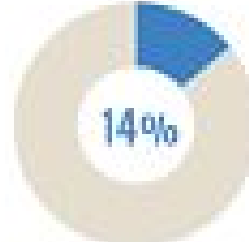
## WHO HIRES THE HELPERS?



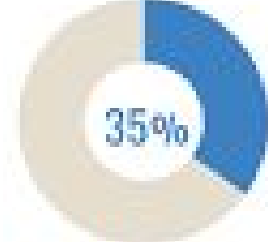
**MOM**



**DAD**












**BOTH**



**MOM FINDS,  
DAD APPROVES**

## HOW FAMILIES DECIDE WHAT TO PAY



   **2 IN 3** ask the helper  
   **1 IN 3** ask friends  
   **1 IN 3** use a pay rate calculator

## FACTORS AFFECTING PAY RATE

1. Location (neighborhood more than city!)
2. Experience of helper
3. Number and age of kids
4. Whether housecleaning is required
5. Timing (last minute, weekend, holiday)



## 3 REASONS WHY FAMILIES DON'T HIRE SOMEONE

**1** It's too expensive

**2** Too stressful to find one

**3** Can't get organized in time

## 4 Different Types of Helpers

Hi! I'm a

Stay At Home Mom

*"I'm a happy mom and I want to help another family. I understand how difficult it is to find affordable child care during working hours, and I'm here to lend a hand."*



Hi! I'm a

Granny Nanny

*"I'm happily retired, but love children so much that I would happily spend a few hours with them after school, or when you have date nights (a must!)."*



Hi! I'm a

COLLEGE STUDENT

“I need money to go to school. I've plenty of previous experience. Helping a family is perfect for me to fit in between study time!”

Hi! I'm a

New Arrival

“I just moved here and I love it! Got lots of care experience and would love to help. I can also teach another language and share stories about my travels.”



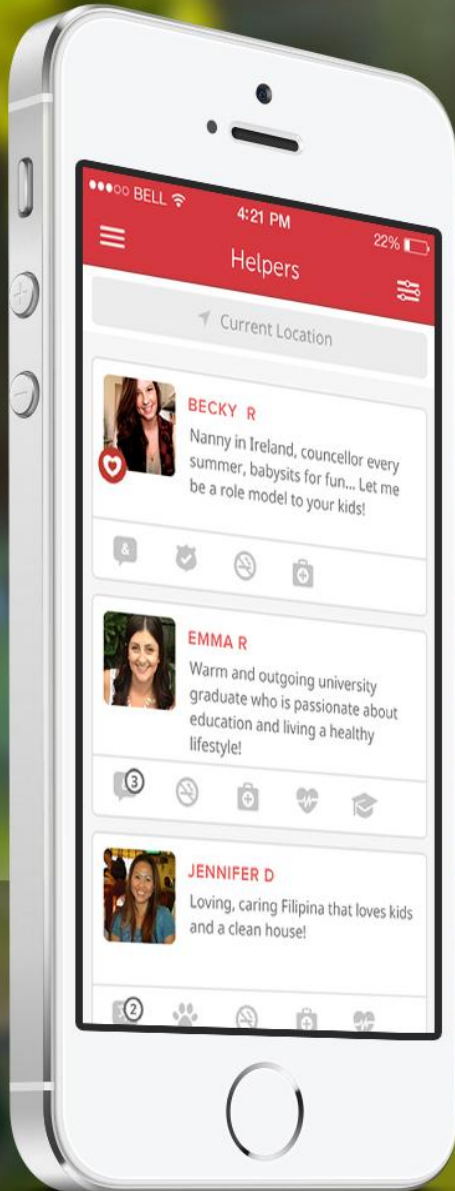


*Now what?*

Practical tools you can use  
loved by thousands of families



# WHO'S HELPING YOU?



Search for trusted helpers.  
All in your neighbourhood.



“ I liked that myBestHelper matched candidates who were a good fit, and who were available at the time I needed. ”

- Angela V., Mom Of Three  
Vancouver BC

[www.myBestHelper.com](http://www.myBestHelper.com)

Built by: Dr. Alexandra T. Greenhill  
Physician, mother of three



## AFFORDABLE

Three simple choices.  
Contact all of our  
helpers. Full money  
back guarantee.



## FAST & EASY

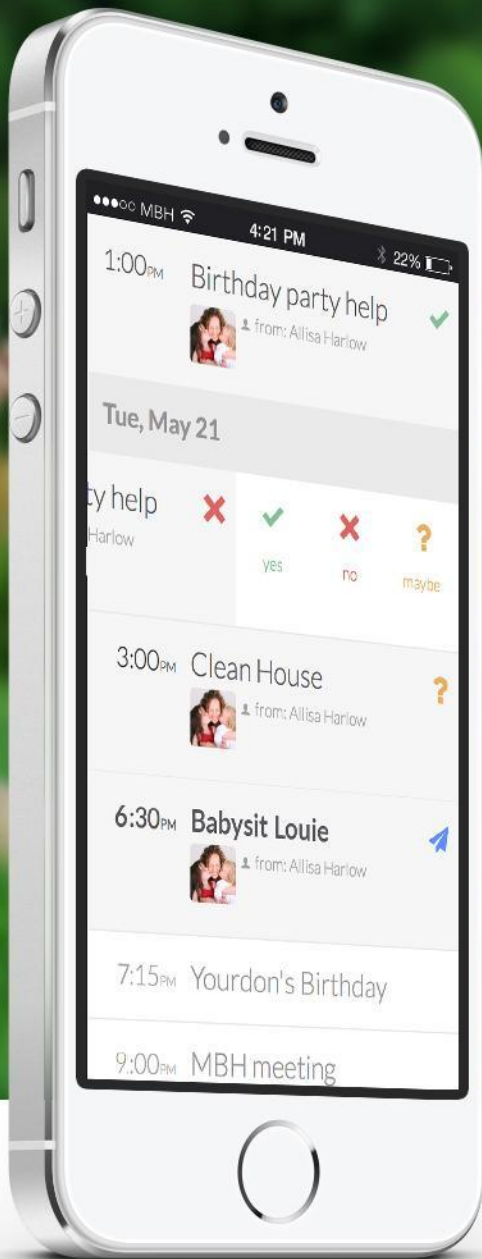
Post a job and relax while  
caretakers apply. Or  
search helpers and  
contact the ones you like.








## THE RIGHT FIT

Our Matching Wizard  
suggests great people  
who truly meet your  
needs.





- 3:50PM  Usual nanny cancelled last minute.
- 4:01PM  Requested help on the myCrew app. "Need sitter ASAP."
- 4:30PM  3 people are available.
- 5:32PM  Help is on the way!
- 10:30PM  Paid nanny using myCrew app.

**the uber-cool life tool**  
Organize. Delegate. Reward. *Live.*



Send requests to your contacts and groupsource your task.



Create Crews that would best fit your requests.

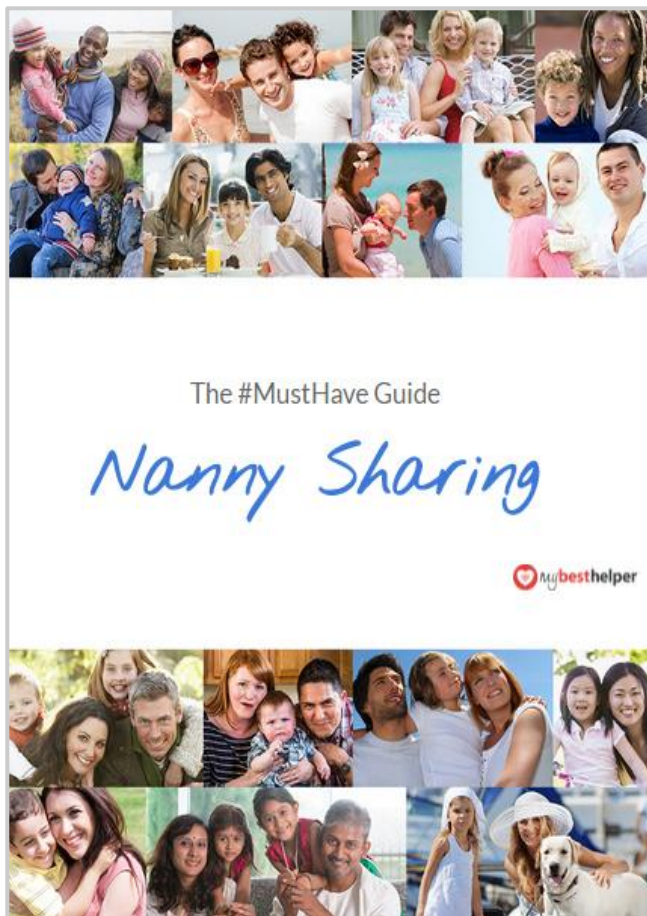


Problem solved? Alert everyone you contacted in one click.



# Email us!

To request the other #MustHave Guides,  
email us: [support@mybesthelper.com](mailto:support@mybesthelper.com)



# About the Author



## Alexandra T. Greenhill

CEO myBestHelper, physician and mom of three

This guide is written based on lessons learned about what really works from first hand experience as well as the thousands of families she has helped.

Passionate about making a real difference, Alexandra has served for decades on various volunteer causes including Chair of a Public School board and member of the Board of the Canadian Institute for Child Health. Her contributions have been recognized with many awards.



Queen  
Elizabeth II  
Medal of  
Service



Cartier  
Women's  
Initiative  
Awards  
Finalist North America

We wish you the best in your search for the right care option for your family.

If you decide to follow the route of nanny, babysitter or homecare, take advantage of our job post wizard - post your ideal job with the help of our questionnaire, view parent-approved profiles and contact helpers directly.

MyBestHelper helps families find the right child care option.  
[www.mybesthelper.com](http://www.mybesthelper.com)

We'd love to hear from you!

Email: [support@mybesthelper.com](mailto:support@mybesthelper.com)

Phone: 1.855.629.8872