



The Best Guide on

How to Interview Child Care



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!

Questions to choose from

- ☐ Why are you looking for work?
- ☐ What are you looking for in an employer?
- ☐ Are you flexible? Punctual? Reliable?

Work experience

- ☐ Do you have experience? Describe your childcare experiences and why they ended. How many children have you cared for at a time in your previous positions?
- ☐ What kinds of activities do you personally like doing with the kids?
- ☐ What were the best parts of your previous jobs?
- ☐ What do you find to be the most challenging part of working with children?

- ☐ Have you ever had to handle an emergency? If so, what happened and what action did you take?
- ☐ Can you tell me a time when you felt like you lost motivation in a job?
- ☐ Can you tell me about the most difficult child/family/ parent you worked with?
- ☐ What was your worst experience with a family or when caring for a child and how did you resolve it?
- ☐ Would you care for a sick child?

Communication

- ☐ How do you prefer to communicate?
- ☐ In your previous job caring for kids, what worked well in terms of daily updates between family and you?
- ☐ Can you give me some examples of unexpected issues that have come up in your previous jobs and how you and your former employer worked things out?
- ☐ How would you feel if I brought up an issue with the children and I felt very strongly that I wanted it handled a certain way? In other words, if I couldn't see a way to compromise on an issue, do you think you could work with that?

Fit with the family

- ☐ How would your closest friends would describe you? What are three strengths? Three weaknesses?
- ☐ Tell me whatever you feel comfortable sharing about your childhood and your current relationship with your family.
- ☐ What do you like to do in your free time?
- ☐ What was one of your favorite places to travel to and why?
- ☐ What are your future plans?

If you are looking to hire someone who is already in the country, there are five basic steps to the helper hiring process.

Once you get more comfortable, you can do a hire (if someone is in your city) as fast as 48-72 hours. Otherwise its usual to expect this to take about 1 to 3 weeks.



If you decide on the live-in caregiver or au pair process, it usually takes several months. Your helper may or may not need a visa and a work permit depending on nationality.

1. Describe what you need – the MUST haves and the NICE to haves

- Logistics and basics, things such as location, start date and salary range
- Job expectations, for example:
 - *Child care needs, including number and age of kids*
 - *Is there more than child care (e.g. cooking, cleaning) and is it optional or required?*
 - *Any special circumstances*
 - *Any bonus abilities or interests*
- The family style, including answers to questions such as
 - *Do you prefer someone who follows instructions well or rather takes initiative?*
 - *What kind of household style do you have? Busy, Active, Laid-back, Professional?*
 - *Are you more indoors and academic or more active and outdoorsy?*
 - *What activities does your family enjoy?*

The order of things you list in your job description is important:
helpers are not uncaring when they ask about logistics - they are being practical.

2. Review candidates and decide whom to interview on the phone.

You may want to ask some additional questions by email to both assess the answers and the rapidity and engagement of the reply. A candidate who is not on task to impress at this stage is not likely to improve performance after being hired.

Verify eligibility to work in the country, CPR/First aid, driver's license, and any other requirements.

3. Do quick 15 min calls with the candidates you like the most.

It will allow you to rapidly confirm who you want to spend more time meeting in person. Call the applicants you are interested in and speak to them for 10-15 min. In this conversation, you need to:

Thank you for your interest! We thought that you may be a good fit to our needs, and wanted to find out more. Is this a good time to ask you a few questions?

- Confirm that the person is available for the location, start date, hours and rate as advertised.

***We need someone to work for us [8 to 5pm five days a week] and start [in two weeks]. Can you start then?
Are there limitations – holidays, weekends, nights, etc. – as to when you can work?
Our budget is [\$15/hour plus overtime] and that is what we can offer. Would that be acceptable?***

- Get a sense of why they are interested and what they think of the opportunity

***What made you interested in this position?
Do you have prior experience?
Could you tell me a little about yourself?***

- And finally, of course, ask if they have any questions and answer them! Then thank them for the call and give them an approximate timeline to how soon you plan to make a decision about interviews and whether they will get called if they are not selected.

***Tip: I usually ask them to describe one happy memory associated with childhood.
If they can answer that well than it's definitely a green light to proceed with an interview.***

4. Conduct in-person interview.

Look through the applicants you called and choose three up to five candidates to schedule appointments for an interview. Don't call the ones not selected yet unless you are sure you will not want to hire them under any situation.

Often done in two steps – in a public place such as a coffee place or a playground, and then if that goes well, a trial session in one's home. There is no need to have the kids present at the first in person discussion as usually “if the adults get along, children are never the issue”. The trial session will help confirm the relationship between nanny and kids.

Schedule one hour and split the discussion into several parts:

- **Introduction:** Small talk to put everyone at ease, explain the plan of the discussion, reassure person that they can ask questions at the end
- **Part A:** Get to know the person - **Key question:** Do they like children and playing?
- **Part B:** Describe your situation - **Key question:** Do they have the work ethic and skill set?
- **Over to them:** Key question to end on: “Is there anything that we haven't asked. that is important for you to share?” Then ask if they have any questions? If yes, answer them.
- **Closure:** So what do you think? As now the nanny knows the job and family and if she is still interested, she can really make her best case at this point.

Explain the timeline from here on - for example: “I have more interviews to do, but should make a preliminary decision in 1 week. Then we do a 3 hour trial period, and if that goes well, then we do the contract etc and you can start.”

Resist the urge to tell candidates you really really like that you will likely hire them until you have interviewed all whom you were going to interview. It's key as you may like the first person and then love the second one - and unless you left your options open you will be stuck!

Tip: While there are a million and a half of questions you can possibly ask, the more experienced parents interview quickly knowing that some questions are so key and that the rest you can sort out.

For example, if the person is clearly a fast learner and respects requirements, you can make sure they reflect your views on play, outings, discipline and food - their own beliefs aren't as key to find out. Most kids even within the same family are different, so there is a learning curve anyways.

5. ALWAYS check references

I always call **three** references (even when I used a nanny agency who had done reference calls) as it an HR best practice to do so, proven to be worthwhile time and again. I ask them:

- ☐ Can you confirm that this person is a trustworthy, reliable and caring human being?
- ☐ How long have you known them for and under what circumstances?
- ☐ Can you give an example of something memorable about them?
- ☐ Would you hire them/work with them again?
- ☐ Was there anything that I did not ask that you think I should know?

The last question is THE most important one. This open ended query allows to keep the call short but effective at catching anything you that wasn't directly triggered by another question.

I also usually ask about advice on how to be a good employer for that person. What are the ways to make the person more effective and happier at work?

Background checks are another thing you can do, but keep in mind that many nannies and sitters are rather young, and thus most background checks come back negative.

Tip: It's really important to do these calls but less than 30% of parents actually do them.

6. Arrange a pre-hire trial session

If possible, do a 3 hour session to see how things go with the children present. Explain to the nanny that this is the last step before a hire is confirmed. This pre-hire session is usually paid.

Initially I tried to leave the kids in the care of the nanny, as the issue is that if I stayed, they always cling to mom and run away from the nanny. Leaving them behind was not any better however.

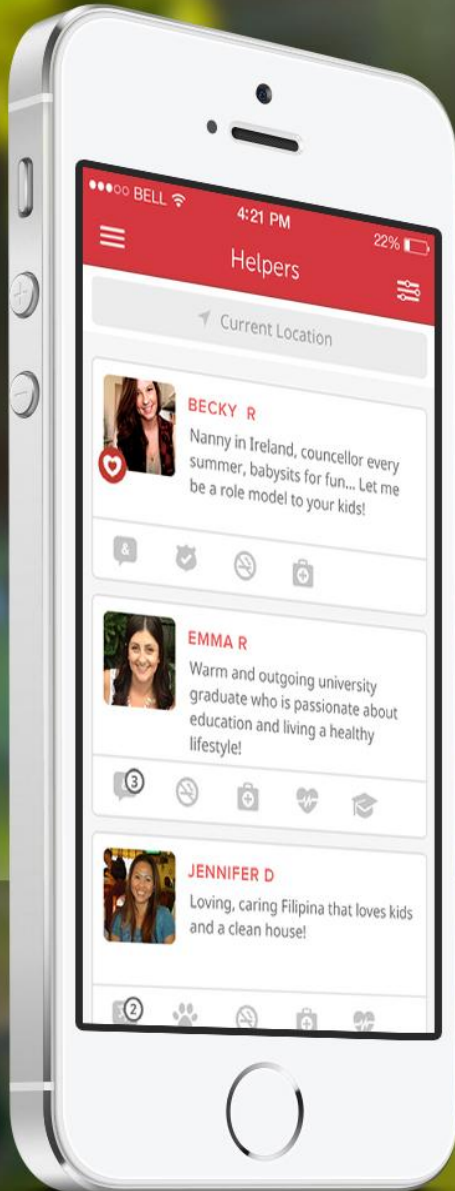
So over the years, another approach seemed to work much better - make this session similar to a playdate visit from a family friend, and include coffee or even a meal. Then there is no pressure on anyone, and things still come through in terms of how well the nanny interacts with me and the kids as well as how well the kids like her. Things just happen gradually and this makes the transition after the hire much faster and much easier on the kids. .

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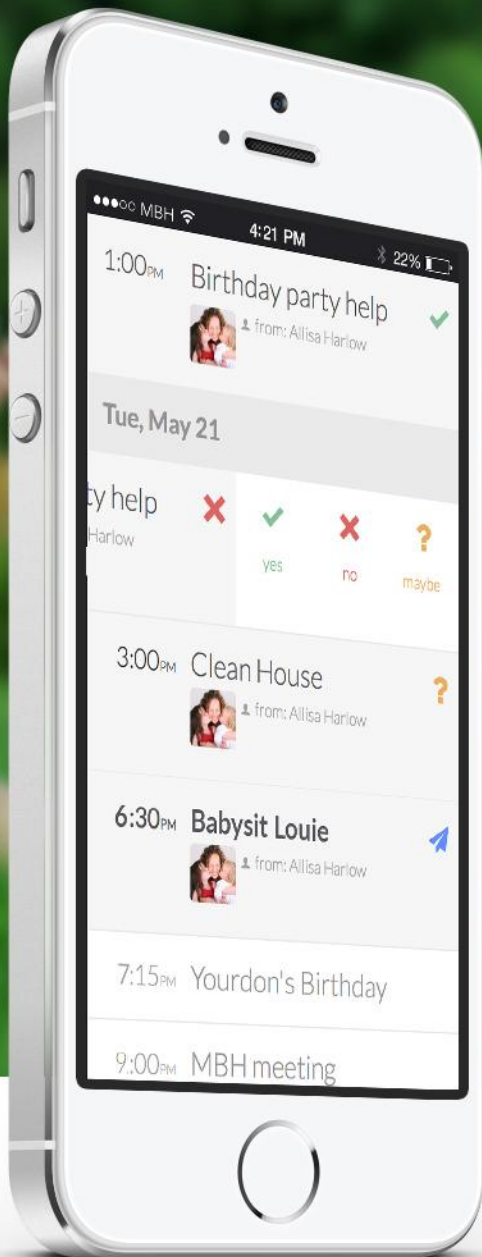
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- 3:50PM  Usual nanny cancelled last minute.
- 4:01PM  Requested help on the myCrew app. "Need sitter ASAP."
- 4:30PM  3 people are available.
- 5:32PM  Help is on the way!
- 10:30PM  Paid nanny using myCrew app.

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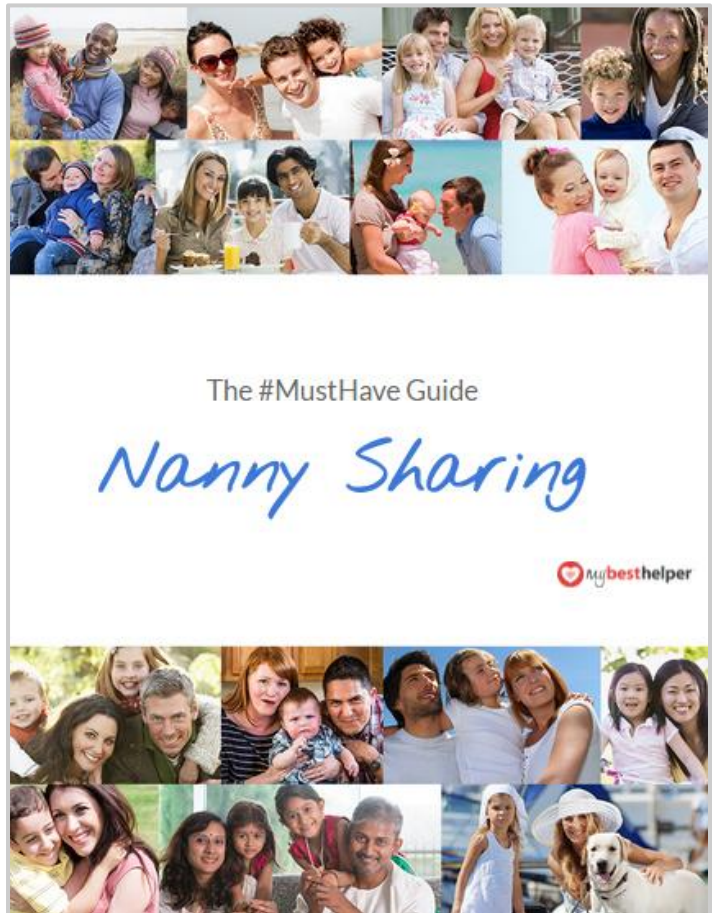
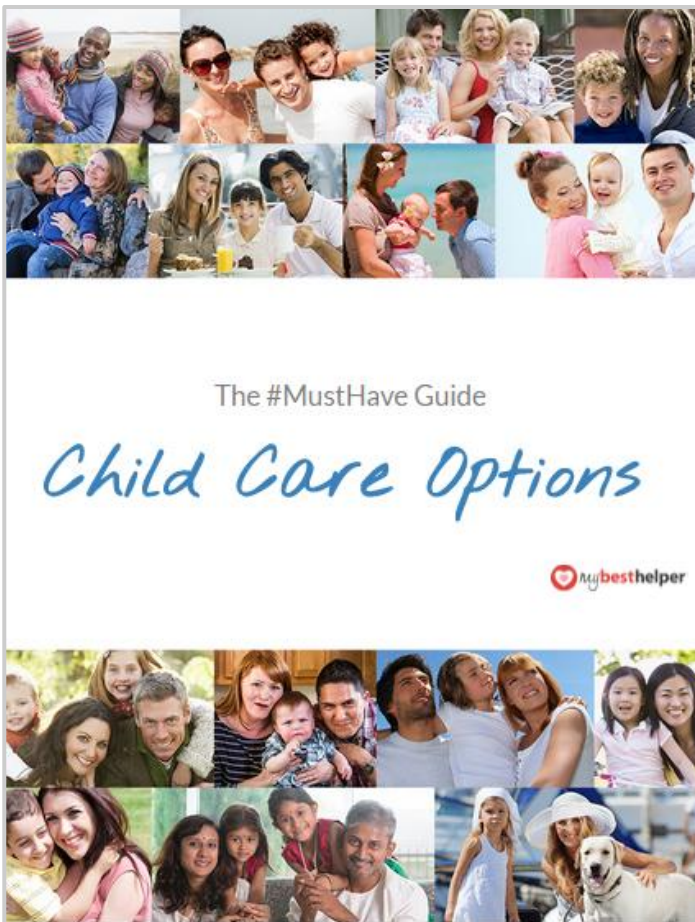
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About the Author



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.



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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.

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We'd love to hear from you!

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