



The #MustHave Guide

Nanny Sharing



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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Definitions, pros & cons

What is a nanny share,
why do it and
some common issues



Definitions: Pros & Cons



What is a nanny share?

A nanny share is any different combination of care between two or more families:

- **Option A:** A nanny who takes care of kids of two or more families full time with the families splitting costs
- **Option B:** A nanny who splits time between two or more families on different days
- **Option C:** One family dropping off their child for a few hours a few days a week and paying the nanny some additional per hour amount (thus making it more financially interesting for the nanny, while bringing a fun playmate for the child)

Sometimes both families hire together (which can take some time to set up), and sometimes you luck out and get to join a family that already has a nanny so you know exactly what you are getting into, for both the other family and the nanny.

Following the advice in this Guide is most critical for Option A and decreases in importance for B and then C.

That said, in all three cases, understanding what to focus on and how to deal with it is key to succeeding and creating a fun and unique environment for the kids to grow up in!

Why do families nanny share? It's a combination of:

1. Decision to hire at home as no available day cares in the area, and/or preference to avoid daycare
2. Need to save on child care costs or pay the nanny a higher income
3. More flexibility in some ways: better back up options for when nanny is sick or away
4. Better socialization with another kid or kids; a sense of a larger family
5. Compared to daycare, better ratio of care provider to number of kids.

“When grown ups agree, children thrive.”

Beyond the obvious challenge of finding another family to nanny share with, the following **common issues** can occur:

1. Scheduling woes - daily and vacation
2. Differences in parenting styles
3. Managing when one child is sick
4. Differences in income and expectations
5. Unexpected changes - one of the families has a baby, needs to move, loses job etc

“We’re all a little weird. And life is a little weird. And when we find someone whose weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up with them ..” - Dr. Seuss



Important practical points

Common assumptions
and difficult situations



Important practical points



“Being fair is not always the same as 50/50.”

We have seen too many parents stuck in the “fair means equal” mentality, while others thrive on making unusual arrangements work.

For example, if one family doesn’t mind hosting, has a bigger play yard or is closer to parks and activities, they can be the location of care - always. If one family has two kids but they are school aged so they don’t need as much attention, and the other family has a toddler, then the split could still be 50/50 - all is ok, as long as it’s pre-agreed and one family doesn’t feel taken advantage of.

One of the best nanny shares was with a family who had flexible schedules so they could be there to send the nanny home at 5pm, and then the other family came when they could, sometimes an hour late! To reciprocate the kindness, that family brought in all the pureed baby food for both toddlers, making life easier for the host family.

Asymmetrical arrangements work best allowing both families to add what they are best at, and creating greater opportunities to enjoy being parents.

“Location of care: to alternate or not to alternate...”

While many families initially see it as fair to alternate days at each other's homes, it makes the nanny and the kids' lives rather difficult. In an ideal situation, care happens in one household, so that systems can be established and maintained and also set up activities nearby.

“It’s possible to be too flexible!”

Another difficult situation is when one family drops off their child at unexpected hours, so the nanny can't plan the daily schedule as arrival time is never certain and the kids also find it difficult to adjust.



Did you Know...

The three keys to a successful nanny share are:

1. Similar parenting styles
2. Willingness to be flexible
3. Open communication

“Best friends don’t always make good nanny shares.”

There is often an assumption that because we get along as friends, it will automatically work out as nanny share. Surprisingly often it doesn’t and it causes damaging rifts in many happy groups of friends. To avoid falling into this trap, agree on a way out ahead of time.

Discuss upfront that parenting styles and family schedules can be very different, and that as soon as things are not working, either family should speak up immediately. Then take an hour to discuss the 7 questions of the compatibility questionnaire on the next page. And also agree upfront on what would happen, if the nanny share doesn’t work out.

The 7 aspects compatibility test

The basics you need to consider
before nanny sharing



The 7 aspects compatibility test

The first three questions represent the basic questions, before the other aspects are even considered.

1. Convenient location

Would you be the host, alternate the care locations or do you expect the other family to be the main location of care? Does drop off/ pick up locations work? Will one of the kids be heading to preschool/school and need to be close to it?

2. Compatible hours

What are the general hours needed? How many days of the week? Do you need overtime? How likely are you to run late (be honest)? The arrangement can work even if one family needs more hours but then it needs to be considered when deciding on location of care and on split of costs.

3. Workable budget

Do you agree on paying the nanny with declaring her as an employee? Do you agree on rates, benefits, perks, holiday? How do you think of additional activities and outings?



If the answer to those three questions looks promising, proceed to explore the final four questions.

4. Shared views on employment, flexibility and communication

How do you approach being an employer? Are you willing to synch up vacation time? Are you comfortable raising issues when they arise with the nanny or with each other?

5. Shared values and parenting philosophy

Eating and snacks, outings and naps, discipline and sharing, toys and activities, vaccinations and child proofing... What is non negotiable? What is nice to have?

6. Number of kids and their ages

There is no formula - sometimes it's easy to have kids the same age, but if they are younger than two it can also be exhausting. Different age kids are ok too as this is similar to life with siblings.

It's often easier to care for two kids if one is a bit older and more independent. Each child benefits too - the younger from being around an older one and the older one from being the big brother or sister.

7. Family chemistry

Last but not least: Do you like each other and each other's kids? Are your children compatible as playmates? You don't have to be best friends, but it helps



*Found another family,
then what?*

Important steps
leading up to the interview



Found another family, then what?

1. Define all the details

Define specific needs, expectations and where you need flexibility. Agree on budget, number of hours needed etc.

What is the minimum weekly pay that the nanny can expect to take home? Specifically, what happens if one family is late and how will you handle over-time, especially if only one family needs the Nanny to stay later? What happens if one family needs to cancel a day, or if one family is late to pick up etc.

Who and how pays for food, toys and supplies? The extra cleaning? Some families split the costs, some alternate shopping as the need arises, and some create a “cost of food and supplies” stipend to be paid to the hosting family.

How are costs of outside activities and memberships handled? Petty cash? What if one family values outings, and the other one doesn't or simply can't afford them?

Agree on who pays whom and when; sometimes both families write a cheque directly to the nanny. sometimes one family pays the other one who then pays the nanny.

Agree on a policy re: sick kids, who covers if the nanny is sick or away. Agree on how and when do you decide on holidays and most importantly, document it all including the decision on when and how you can revisit all agreements!





3. Setting up the arrangement

Who is the employer? For liability reasons, it's best to have both families on equal footing, thus in charge of decisions and payments. One family can get the employer number and the other one can pay to them, but as long as the contract between the two families is clear on the joint employer responsibilities.

Decisions need to be joint, but - how will you handle communication with the Nanny? Will there be one point person, or will both families speak to the Nanny together? Agree on opportunities for regular check-ins with the nanny as well as between the two families.

4. Find the Nanny

When both families are hiring a new, both families should interview the nanny together. When doing reference checks each family should also speak with the references, as it's important for both families to make the hiring decision.

If you are joining a nanny share, you should have a chance to interview the nanny and state your expectations up front.

4. Daily logistics

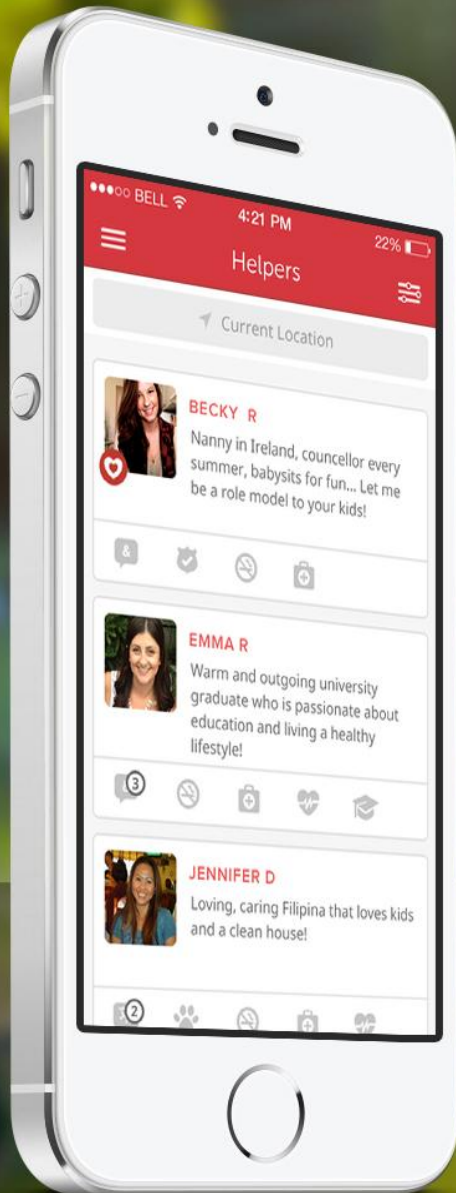
Define house rules, ensure contact / emergency information and allergies are displayed. Expect that as kids grow, there may be changes that lead to frustrations and discuss them.

Now what?

Practical tools you can use
loved by thousands of families



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- Angela V., Mom Of Three
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Built by: Dr. Alexandra T. Greenhill
Physician, mother of three



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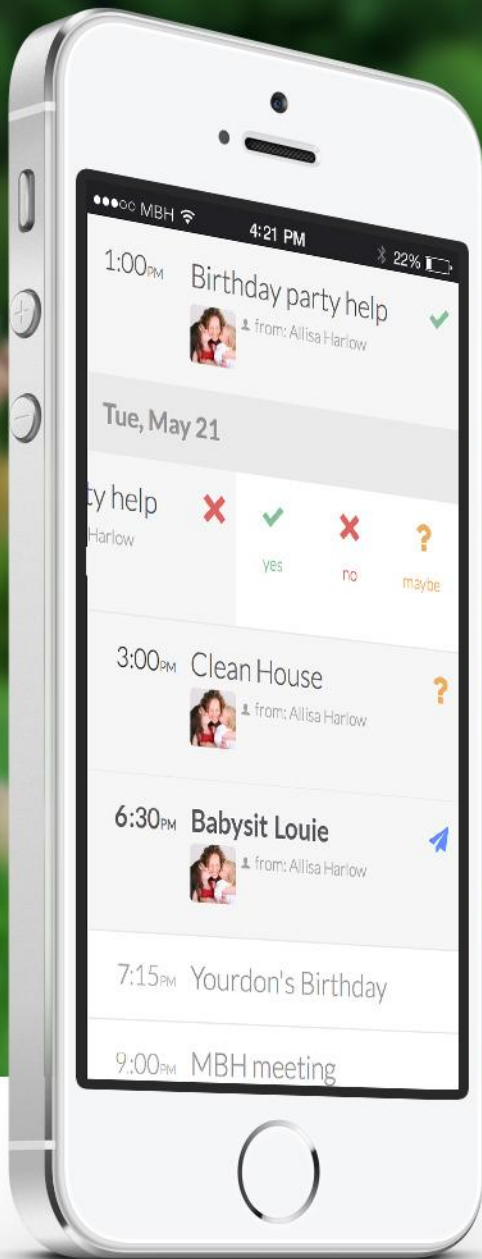
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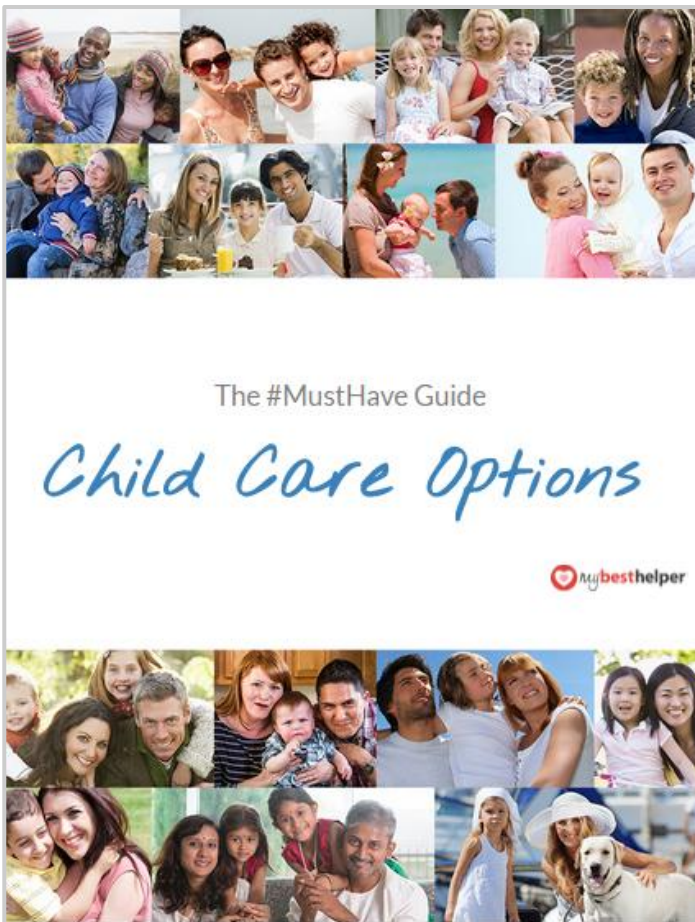
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About the Author



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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Elizabeth II
Medal of
Service



Cartier
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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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