

# Childcare bliss

## How to select the right caregiver for your family

BY KRISTEN J. DUCA

**S**electing a caregiver for your child is one of the most important decisions many families will make. Whether you need childcare because you are returning to work, craving some time to yourself, or spending some time with your significant other, you will want to find the ideal caretaker for your child. Below are a few tips to help you navigate the nanny search:

### One size does not fit all

A multitude of childcare possibilities exist for you to consider, and of course

there are pluses and minuses to each of them. Just remember that you are in the driver's seat and can choose the path that best fits your family's needs. Hiring a caregiver to look after your child is a very personal decision. Every family has its own dynamics and unique views on

parenting. Feel secure and confident in your child-rearing decisions.

### Be patient

Do not rush the childcare search. Finding the ideal person to take care of your little one will take time and patience. It is important to be prepared and detailed in your search. Finding the ideal caretaker for your child requires a lot of time and hard work. However, if you put the effort into the search up front, you will be rewarded with the result.

### Lay groundwork

Laying the foundation toward building the ideal childcare situation is critical.

Formulating a clear description of your childcare needs now will save you loads of future frustration. You can zero in on exactly what type of situation you need to make sure your household runs smoothly and happily.

The ideal or "perfect" childcare situation depends on you and how specific you are in recognizing and expressing your needs, as well as on how your family spends its time. It is important that before you start your childcare search you set aside time to sit down and ponder what it is that you are hiring for and develop interview questions based on your needs.

### Interview candidates thoroughly

Always remember to conduct a thorough interview and check references. You will want to conduct interviews (by phone, in person, or via webcam) with potential candidates in order to screen them through a series of questions. You need to ask prospective candidates the right questions in order to narrow down your list and eventually pick a suitable nanny for your family.

If possible, try to interview candidates



in person so you can see their immediate reactions, facial expressions, and overall poise. These interviews do not have to be conducted in your home. You can always meet up at a local diner or coffee shop or get together at another mutually convenient location such as a library or bookstore.

### Be reasonable

Be aware of what assistance you are asking for, and make sure it is reasonable. To put it bluntly, if you are not willing or able to do it all, then your childcare provider should not be expected to either.

Childcare providers are not superheroes. They are humans who have strengths, weaknesses, and feelings, just like you. As a rule of thumb, it is generally never a good idea to ask your childcare provider to do tasks that you cannot handle yourself.

### Understand that your childcare situation will evolve

As your child changes or your family dynamics change, your childcare needs will change. These childcare needs will constantly evolve as your child blossoms

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through the stages of life. It is important to realize that you are not pigeonholed into the first childcare situation you created at a specific point in time.

A situation that works for your newborn child will likely need to be scrapped, tweaked, or revised as your child starts school. You may have to realize that expecting the unexpected and having the ability to be nimble is crucial to formulating the right childcare situation at any given point in time.

### Go with your gut

You may luck out and hire the first nanny you meet, or you might have to interview several candidates. Everyone

has a different experience, but if you are dedicated to the childcare search, you will find the best candidate for your family.

Always go with your gut, and trust your instincts.

### Trial

Suggest the nanny candidate you are interested in start working with your family on a trial basis so you can ensure you find the right fit for your family.

A trial period of a few days, a few weeks, or even a month is a good way to find out if your nanny's personality and style fit well with your family's. Remember that a happy child makes for a happy parent!

*New York-based working mother Kristen Duca and her husband are the parents of two girls. Duca has worked in the financial services industry for two decades in addition to serving as a contributing writer for New York area publications. She is the author of "Ultimate Nanny: How to Find, Interview, and Manage the Most Important Person You Will Ever Hire - Your Child's Nanny" available on amazon.com now. Get the inside scoop on how develop the right criteria, identify, and select the ultimate nanny.*



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