

37 Things You Must Know Before Hiring a Nanny



PlacementSolutions

Taking care of your most precious assets
Established 1988



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At Placement Solutions, we understand that hiring a Nanny can be a daunting task. We've had over 30 years in the business and are highly skilled at knowing how to pick an 'A' grade professional Nanny.

Below are our 37 tips on how to find a Nanny and make working with your Nanny a great experience.

1

The difference between a Nanny, an Au Pair and a Babysitter.

Nanny: Nannies duties can vary depending on the age of the children under their care. The first priority of a professional Nanny is the safety, happiness and health of children. Nannies undertake housework, however it is housework that is specifically related to the child and child care. Professional Nannies are skilled, experienced and have a natural love of children. They have chosen looking after children as a career.

Au Pair: An Au Pair is someone who works up to 15 to 30 hours per week looking after school age children only. Au Pairs have generally not been trained to be left alone with children under 5. Au Pairs receive two days off per week and are provided with pocket money. The Au Pair experience is designed to be mutually beneficial: the Au Pair learns another culture and another language, while the parents get help with their children. The level of care provided by an Au Pair is much more rudimentary than that provided by a Nanny.



Babysitter: Traditional babysitting is essentially 'child minding'. That is being around, typically in the evening, to get children to bed and make sure no harm comes to them. Babysitters generally have no formal training and have varying 'on job' experience.

Please understand these terms before hiring.

The checks and qualifications to look for in a Nanny.

By law, Nannies working in Victoria must have a current 'Working with Children Check'. To work with an Agency such as Placement Solutions, a Nanny must also have checkable, verifiable references, a minimum of three years experience, a national police check and a current first aid certificate. We also insist on Level 2 First aid and CPR, as well as every Nanny completing our in house 'Speak Up' Child Protection Training.

Anything on top of these prerequisites, such as formal training, is icing on the cake. We will emphasize experience over qualifications every time, but qualifications as well as experience – brilliant!

Placement Solutions is the only accredited Child Wise agency that offers Speak Up training to all our nannies. Through our close relationship with our training partner, Nurture Training College (RTO 22613), we offer a specialised Diploma and Certificate III - as well as short courses to ensure Nannies are able to constantly update and upskill.

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Look for gaps in resumes.

Find out why a Nanny left working with a previous Agency or place of employment, why they stopped working in the field for any period, and why they stopped working for a particular family. This can give insight into potential issues.



4

Checking references.

An agency like Placement Solutions conducts thorough reference checks before they hire a Nanny. Due to privacy laws, an Agency cannot directly pass on the details of conversations they have had with a Nanny's previous employer. However, you should expect a Nanny who you are going to interview to bring her references and resume with her. You are able to check these references with the Nanny's consent. It is strongly advised that you spend a good amount of time talking to references. They will give you much insight into who the Nanny is as a person and how well they will work with your family. Get a contact number and address where possible.

Punctuality is vital.

A Nanny who is regularly late is a problem that needs to be addressed. A consistently late Nanny means you're going to have your day thrown into chaos as you struggle to get to work on time. Utilise your weekly meeting time to address the issue!

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Reliability is vital.

For most people, no Nanny means that they cannot go to work either. Imagine a hospital closing down because the head registrar can't get out the door when the Nanny hasn't turned up for work. It's a big deal!

7

Treat your Nanny like gold.

Your Nanny cares for your most precious assets, so when you find a good one, do what you can to retain her. Maintaining a strong relationship with your Nanny over a long period will cause a lot less stress for you and your children. Happy Nanny, happy child, happy family. A continuing circle. It's that simple

9

Best practice is that a Nanny works up to 10 hours a day.

This covers for an 8 hours work day for you and an hour each way for you to get home to your child.

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Remember that being a Nanny is a job.

Respect your Nanny by getting home on time so she can leave work on time. She cares a lot for your children, but she also has a life of her own.





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Nannies need annual and sick leave entitlements.

All full-time and part-time workers in Australia need annual and sick leave entitlements. It's the right thing to do and the legal thing to do. Employment entitlements accrue once the contract with your Nanny starts and are payable either during the placement or at the end of the contract period.

The best Nanny for the job is the one that will best fit your child emotionally, socially and intellectually.

Be open when interviewing Nannies. While appearances and first impressions are important, what is more important is how your Nanny will treat your child. Let the Nanny show their potential by the way they interact with your children.

10

Out of pocket expenses.

Make sure you discuss items such as out of pocket expenses for unscheduled events or items and also discuss petrol and mobile phone usage, excursions and expenses – if these are tools that are needed for the job then how and when will you repay those expenses.

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Encourage your Nanny's professional development.

This is where a professional agency like Placement Solutions really comes to the fore. We offer professional training and development opportunities three to four times a year. Our 'PD' days are a great chance for Nannies to keep proactive; keep learning, keep up with current best practices in child care, have a little bit of fun and do some networking. All of this will be reflected straight back to the care of your children.

11

Review your Nanny's pay and performance.

In the beginning, look at reviewing your Nanny's performance at 3 months, then again at 6 months - and later move to an annual review. If your Nanny is doing a good job make sure you make a regular point of telling them. A reputable agency can help you with a performance appraisal checklist and a salary review.





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Help your Nanny stay organised.

Consider keeping a calendar or diary that you and your Nanny can use that have the weeks activities, types of meals that need to be made or appointments so when things get busy there will be something to refer to.

Make sure you always know where your children are.

Have very, very clear rules about this, including both an excursion form and a medical form. It is 'in-home child care' that your Nanny is providing and that means care in your home. It's not 'down the shops or going to check out your new house child care'. You should quite reasonably expect your children to be cared for in your home. Once you get to know your Nanny, you may be comfortable to have them take your children to the park down the road, but such an excursion must be child oriented.

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A stitch in time saves nine.

Remember that the Nanny is new in your family and house. A little preparation before the actual job starts can be helpful in getting everything off to a good start. Be clear about your expectations, show her routines and have a list ready with any important numbers or details. Show her all the facilities including first aid kit and resources for playing. The better the understanding your Nanny has of your family beforehand the better she will be able to integrate into the household and provide fantastic care for your family.

Hold scheduled communication meetings.

I recommend daily handover meetings – ten minutes in the morning, ten minutes in the afternoon – plus organize a sit down communication meeting every week. If you can't do it weekly, at least have a communication meeting every pay day.

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Give private feedback to the Agency.

Whether you just need to vent or wish to make a formal complaint, a good Agency will listen and take action if necessary. The important thing is to make sure you communicate with the Agency and don't keep your concerns to yourself. At Placement Solutions we believe in open communication always. We like to hear what's going right and what's going wrong – so don't wait until things have blown up before you call. We can help you and support you all along the way.

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Ask your children about their day and what they did.

Ask them what they like about the Nanny. Okay, some of them are still too young to talk, but you can tell when the children are looking forward to their Nanny coming and get feedback from them. One of the great things a Nanny can provide – that busy working parents often don't have time for – is teaching children how to make fun things, crafty things, cupcakes and so on. Nannies of older children can also have other children over for a play date.

If the children are younger, watch how their eyes light up when their Nanny arrives.

You are going to pick up signals as to whether they like her or not. However, don't confuse separation anxiety with dislike of the Nanny. There are many children who will be dismissive of anyone who is looking after them: they only want their Mum or Dad.

22

Do a hand over, night and day, without fail.

You especially need to know if something is out of the ordinary. For instance, if the Nanny noticed that your child went quiet later in the afternoon, or complained of a headache, you need to know about it. Obviously it will require follow up, but it may also be a warning sign of an impending illness.

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Involve the whole family in the process of choosing a Nanny, and maintaining that Nanny.

Both parents, and even older children, should be involved in performance reviews, communication meetings, and so on. That way everybody is on the same page and you can work together to create a situation in which all adults are helping to raise healthy, responsible, resilient children ... and that is what we all want.

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Ensure that your Nanny gets lunch and tea breaks.

A Nanny who is working 10 hours a day can't keep the momentum up with fit, healthy children if she is not getting her regular breaks. So make sure arrangements are in place for her to take good lunch and tea breaks, if she is sole-charge, as well as if you are in the home.





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Best not to 'friend' your Nanny on Facebook or Twitter.

Social media sharing could cross professional boundaries for both of you so best to avoid.

Have an emergency plan and practice it with your Nanny.

It's a good idea to go through all emergency scenarios with your Nanny and have a few practices so that if something happens everyone knows what is expected.

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When sharing a Nanny, best to have a plan before commencing.

Found a family to share with and ready to go? Some details to have ironed out before you start are: Where will the Nanny will be hosted? Will it be at one families' house on all the days or moved around different houses? How will everyone's schedules match up? If one child is sick, will they be kept with parents or will the Nanny still care for the child?

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What are my responsibilities if I have a 'Nanny Cam'?

Nanny cameras or surveillance cameras are legal in Australia; however the current law requires you to inform your employee / Nanny that they are under surveillance prior to commencing the job.

28

Consider sharing a Nanny with another family.

Sharing a Nanny with another family can be a great way of having all the benefits of a Nanny at half the costs. It is also a great way to provide social interaction for a only or first time child and a great way to form a community.

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Looking for a family to share a Nanny?

The best and most successful nanny shares are likely to be from someone with whom you share values and location - which may not necessarily be your best friend. Look around your wider network, your neighbourhood, workplace or Mum's group to find someone who shares your philosophy on raising children (including parenting style, nutrition and discipline), and who is likely to be working similar hours to you.



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Know your eligibility for Child Care Subsidies.

The criteria for eligibility are quite narrow, but if you work long hours or odd hours, or if you meet any of the other eligibility requirements, then you may be able to access the subsidies. The best way to find out your eligibility is to call the Department of Education and Training on 13 61 50.

Approved Government agencies come with paperwork.

While approved government Agencies come with rebates / subsidies, they also come with paperwork. Approved Agencies are obliged to provide the Department of Education and Training with a 'booked hours' / eligibility form for each client every six months. Even when the hours for a period are exactly the same as for the previous period, this form must be provided. These forms will also protect you against double billing if you have your child registered at other approved forms of childcare such as Long Day Care and the child spends part of the day with the Nanny.

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How to access Child Care Subsidy and changes about in home care.

We are waiting to update this, for commencement in 2018. This will come under the Minister's rules.

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After a Nanny has left, be generous with references and feedback for her to the Agency.

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A good agency debriefs every Nanny on every job, whether it is temporary or permanent. In this meeting we learn a lot of information about what went right, what went wrong, what we could do better next time as an Agency, and what the Nanny can improve on. A Nanny is only as good as her last reference, so your reference is crucial to her future employment. A written reference is fine, but it has to be verified when she is going for another job.

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When your Nanny leaves.

Let your children say goodbye to her. It is terrible for a child if a Nanny just suddenly disappears. From a child's perspective, everybody cares for them. They don't understand that there are payments involved. So even if you and the Nanny have come to an agreement that it is best if she finish up, let her say goodbye to the children. And if everything is happy, and the worst thing about the Nanny is that she is leaving, have her say goodbye professionally and then come back as a friend to birthday parties etc. We often hear of former Nannies who have moved into a different kind of relationship with a family, and we think it is an ideal situation.

Invite your former Nanny back.

It's lovely to have a former Nanny back as a friend when you are ready to do that. If you are working with an agency just check in for permission to contact the Nanny.

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You are not alone, let us help.

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Placement Solutions provides advice and assistance with finding the best Nanny for you in the greater Melbourne area. We provide a done for you service, where we not only interview, screen, train, induct, and professionally develop the Nannies who work for us, but we also employ them if you are eligible for a government rebate. If you prefer to hire a Nanny privately, we offer a complete done for you payroll service, where all of the heartache and headaches of employing someone in your home is taken off your hands. We run the whole process for you. The great advantage of this service is peace of mind – the knowledge that you are tuned into an Agency that is going to do all the hard work for you, and that you have a Nanny who is connected and tuned into all the professional learning and support that she needs.





Biography

Louise Dunham is the C.E.O. of:

- **Placement Solutions**, a Kew, Melbourne based niche recruitment firm specialising in nannies and household management, set up in 1988.
- **Just Family Payroll Pty Ltd** set up in 2011.
- **Nurture Training College RTO** set up in 2014.

All businesses are set up to provide professional, screened, supported help in the home paying all outlier staff legally.

In July 2016 Louise sponsored, hosted, organized and introduced together with Sue Downey, the founder of Nanny Palooza the first Australian Nanny Palooza Oz conference in Melbourne. This united the disparate Australian industry and showed the importance of ongoing professional development for Nannies. It also exposed nannies to great and relevant speakers and sponsors. Nannies is an all embracing term that covers Newborn Care Specialists, often known as night nannies, part time and full time live in and live out nannies and casual evening nannies.

Louise's company, Placement Solutions, is the first and only Childwise accredited Nanny agency in Australia and trains all its nannies in "Speak Up" training against child abuse. Louise served as the VP of the INA (International Nanny Association) based in America. She chaired the Ethics Committee for 5 years and was on the INA Board from 2012 to 2017. In 2001 Placement Solutions became an inaugural provider of the Dept. of Ed. approved In-home care scheme (metro Melbourne) and in 2016 the Victorian provider for the Nanny Pilot (regional).

Louise served on the Senate Steering Committee that wrote the In- home care standards in 2007. She is a passionate advocate for the need for children firstly to be safe in childcare and for those nannies who care to be respected and supported and recognized as childcare professionals with a valuable role to play within the greater childcare sector.

Louise is extremely knowledgeable after 30 years' experience in this sector. In early 2017 she published her book on the nanny industry called The State of The Nanny. In her spare time Louise enjoys spending time gardening, indulging in family genealogy and caring for her 2 year old grandson as well as travelling and spending time with friends.

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