

## Tips On Hiring A Caregiver

Hiring a caregiver is a subject that most of us that are affected by SMA, will have to face at one time or another during our life. Whether you are hiring a caregiver to come into your home for a certain number of hours each day, or if you are hiring a live-in caregiver that will live in your home and be with you 24 hours a day, this can not only be frustrating, it can also be quite scary.

During this presentation, I'm going to give you my tips on hiring a caregiver. This is a process that I myself have gone through, and I'm hoping that this presentation will help you to avoid some of the mistakes that I made when I first started my search.

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There are so many things to think about before you start your search. Some of these concerns include the following:

Hygiene  
Meal preparation  
Laundry  
Assistance in getting dressed and out of bed in the morning  
Assistance in undressing and getting into bed at night  
Bathroom requirements  
Transportation

These and other requirements are some of the things everyone needs to be aware of and always thinking about.

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After determining the level of care that you are going to need, the next step will be to decide on whether or not you need someone for a given number of hours each day, or if you are going to need someone to live with you on a 24-hour basis. Unfortunately, many insurance companies do not include this as a paid option. While some insurance companies and insurance policies may cover this type of care, many of you will have to pay for this service out of your own pocket.



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When I first started my search for a live-in caregiver, I used craigslist and care.com. We have all heard horror stories about people on craigslist, and while I found my live-in caregiver using this search method, the first couple of caregivers that I found on craigslist did not work out like I had hoped. I was one of the lucky ones. While I am not necessarily telling everyone not to use this as a particular choice when searching, you need to be very cautious when advertising for someone to take care of you, no matter what search methods you are using.

When placing your advertisement for a caregiver, do not give your home phone number, your personal email address or home address. Create an email account either on Google or Yahoo and use this email address when corresponding with potential applicants. You will probably get quite a few responses to your advertisement, and creating a separate email account for this purpose will save you from getting potential spamming email and spammers who are looking to gain information.

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When placing your advertisement, be as specific as possible regarding the requirements for this position. If you need help going to the bathroom, make sure that you state this in your advertisement. While this may be embarrassing to admit, those applying for this position need to fully understand what they will be responsible for. **NOTE: Make sure you state that all interested applicants will have to agree to and pass a nationwide criminal background check.** (More about this in just a moment.)

If you are having to pay for this out of your own pocket, make sure that you list how much this position will pay. Also, make sure you state that this pay scale is nonnegotiable. You don't want someone coming in to take care of you and then demanding more money. Make sure that the applicant knows exactly how much they will be paid.

After you find three or four people who are interested, your next step will be to set up an interview with each one of them. Do not perform the first interview in your home. Go to a public area, like a restaurant or other public venue. You never want anyone to know where you live until you have met them and feel comfortable with them.

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If your initial interview goes well, you can then ask the applicant for the information that will be needed to run a nationwide criminal background check. If the applicant is hesitant about giving the information needed for the nationwide criminal background check, immediately terminate all conversations with this person and move on with your search with another applicant on your list. My experience tells me that if they're hesitant in giving you this information, they probably have something to hide.

You can search the Internet for reputable background search companies, just be sure to verify that this will be a nationwide criminal search and not just a statewide search.

You never want to run a background check only based on your particular state. If the applicant has never done anything criminally wrong in the state that you live in, the background check may come back clean. When you do a nationwide criminal background check, this will verify that the applicant doesn't have any warrants or pending charges in other states. Another benefit to running a nationwide criminal background check is that this will search for everything from misdemeanors to felonies.



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If the background check comes back with information informing you that this person has committed a crime, my suggestion would be to let this individual know that they failed their background check, and immediately cut off all conversations with this individual and not to respond to any further emails that they may send you. They will probably send you an email telling you that they were innocent of all charges and that it was just a misunderstanding, but trust me, as someone who has gone through this in the past, they will tell you anything they think you want to hear, even though they were actually guilty of the charges.

**If they fail the background check, immediately disqualify them as a potential candidate and move on to someone else.**

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After the background check comes back, and there are no warning signs presented by the background check itself, you can then decide on whether or not you are going to invite this person to your house for the second interview.

After completing the second interview, and both of you agree on terms with regards to responsibilities, you can then make the decision as to whether or not you are comfortable in offering the position to this individual. Before you make your offer, ask yourself this very important question: **Would you trust this person to take care of your child?** If your gut instincts tell you yes, then you have probably done everything possible to ensure a successful fit between you and your new caregiver.

I was a college instructor for eighteen years, and I used to tell my students to listen to their gut instincts. I'm giving you the same advice.

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