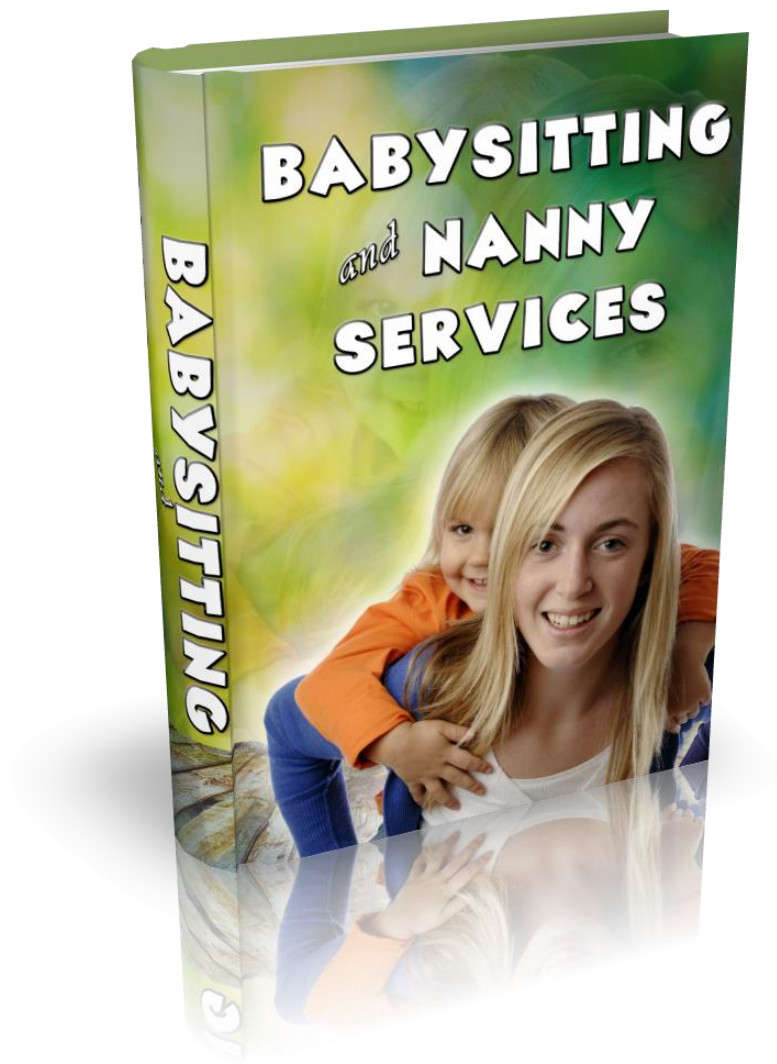


EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NANNY BABYSITTING SERVICES

Special Report



Steven Spellborgh

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Finding A Nanny Agency--Online? Here's How.



These days, you can find everything online; clothes, books, shoes, music, food, nanny agencies--nanny agencies? It's true! You can now find nanny agencies online as well as in person, perfect for rural families who may not have access to a local nanny agency. Oftentimes, these nanny agencies will prescreen and preselect the best

possible candidates for the position, and walk you through the process of hiring a nanny. Some nanny agencies will actually go so far as to select a nanny for you; others offer suggestions and advice for first time nanny employers, but leave the ultimate selection of the nanny up to you.

Of course, as with anything else, you have to be careful when you're selecting a nanny agency online. Nanny agencies online often don't offer the same services as local agencies, and the same one on one interaction is rarely available. If you do your homework, however, there is no reason why you can't get as much satisfaction out of an online nanny agency as out of a brick and mortar one. The key is to do your homework and know what you're looking for. Some sites offer reviews of various online nanny agencies; these rarely have ulterior motives for recommending one nanny service over another, but again, be cautious and do your homework. Check out several of these review sites (a quick search for 'nanny agency' should turn up several review sites in most popular search engines), and read what each one has to say carefully. If there are two or three online nanny agencies that keep bubbling to the top of the list on various review sites, it's a good bet that the site is a good one to check out.

Finally, always know what you're getting into *before* paying any fees. An online nanny agency should provide clear information about what services they provide; never use a service assuming that it will offer everything that similarly priced services will.

What Does a Nanny Background Check Entail?

A nanny is someone who will most probably be solely responsible for caring for your children. The best nanny would be someone with a professional attitude and aptitude, as well as someone with a spotless background.

This is where the nanny background check comes into play. Many parents usually attempt the check themselves, and to a certain extent, that is a good decision. However, access to official records and other such data will not be easily available. Under such circumstances, it is better to support the personal check by a professional nanny background check.

Many agencies offer detailed checks. From the traditional private investigator to specialized websites that cater only to nanny background check, there is a wealth of opportunities available.

These agencies usually scan databases of criminal records and cross check information supplied by the nanny. All agencies are however requested to adhere to the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FRCA), and this in turn implies that parents performing a nanny background check obtain the signed consent of the prospective candidate regarding a background check on him or her.

The nanny background check looks into information such as the Social Security Number (SSN) trace to verify the candidate's address and any other instance where the SSN has been used for the past 7 to 10 years. SSN is actually the foundation of all background checks. It checks all the information provided by the candidate, as well as provides the list of all jurisdictions the number has been used under. This helps to open the way for further search into other counties or states where the candidate might have worked or lived. Statewide and county level checks help in asserting if the candidate has been convicted in the past. Sex offenders' records also fall under the same category. DMV records, even if the nanny will not be required to drive, provide a wealth of information. Speeding tickets and accident records can already show character, and these records can also show if there have been any DUI records, indicating substance abuse.

Yet, the nanny background check should also be verified personally by the prospective employer. References should be checked, and in the end, going with the gut feeling even if a candidate appears the perfect choice is advised.

To Nanny Cam or Not to Nanny Cam?

Should you use a cam to spy on your babysitter? An increasing number of parents are turning to small hidden home cameras--often known as spy cams or cams--to make sure their babysitters or live in nannies are not abusive or neglectful of the children. There are both advantages and disadvantages to owning and using a nanny cam; we'll discuss these in detail in a moment. There are also several concerns that parents have about using cams; is it legal? Is it expensive? We'll also look at these concerns.

There are advantages to using a nanny cam, certainly. You can, for example, be sure that your nanny isn't abusive, and that they keep a watchful eye on your children. You can also see how your children react to the nanny; sometimes, your little angels may surprise you.

However, there are also disadvantages to using the nanny cam, *especially* if you are using it without the babysitter's knowledge. You can get equally satisfying results from a cam if you use it with the babysitter's knowledge and consent; in fact, many babysitters say that the nanny cam lends a feeling of connectedness to the parents. Plus, it can be a way of proving to the parents that it really was the child's fault. However, if a nanny is taped without her knowledge, then finds out about it later, the discovery can lead to a breach of trust between the parents and the nanny. And *that*, in turn, can lead to you losing what might actually have been a wonderful babysitter. Cams are useful tools, but only when used appropriately.

With that said, it is not considered illegal to video tape someone without their knowledge. The problem is not so much a legal one as a moral one.

Finally, is it expensive? No, not really. Cams are priced at a level on par with other small, technological gadgets, and you can sometimes find them quite inexpensively. The key is to do your homework and know what you're looking for beforehand.

What is the Nanny Contract?

As daunting as the name sounds, a nanny contract is nothing more than a document that spells out what the nanny's job entails, and is signed by the nanny and the parent/s.

A nanny contract is not compulsory, but it helps in already laying down the nanny's job description, and can help in clearing a lot of issues in the details it provides.

The nanny contract should cover just about everything an employer would expect of the nanny. No detail is too small. It is better to have it all spelt out than for misunderstandings and other complications to arise. The agreement can be drawn up by the employer, or else the many forms available on parenting and nanny websites can be

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used. The contract can also be drawn up by a lawyer, or else it can be reviewed by a lawyer afterwards.



The nanny contract should contain the entire agreement made by the two parties. As such, it should cover all aspects pertaining to the job. Detailed descriptions of the duties expected by the nanny should be listed, as well as work hours. The payment roster should be explained,

with the salary scale and the payment schedule. It should also be mentioned that state and federal taxes will be deducted from the nanny's salary. The list of holidays the nanny is allowed, whether paid or unpaid, should be included, as well the sick-day policy of the employer. The salary package should also specifically mention all the components it provides the nanny, for example, food and board. It is however not a bad idea to specifically lay down the terms and conditions of the housing agreement, including household rules. It is also a good idea to lay down if there will be a trial period for the nanny, as well a clause pertaining to a specific date for contract terms' review. Other details such as agreement over evening work, special circumstances, and additional cost as well as emergency situations may also be included.

Given that the nanny is exposed to much of the private matters going on in the house, a nanny contract can also contain a confidentiality agreement.

Both parties should sign and date the contract. If an amendment is needed, it is to be added to the contract and both parties should initial the amendment.

Three Qualifications for Getting a Nanny Job



Have you ever wondered what the qualifications and responsibilities for getting a nanny job are? Most of them are fairly simple--and yet infinitely complicated. Taking care of someone else's children is a huge responsibility, especially since often nannies and live in babysitters have never had children of their

own before, and have to rely on common sense to take care of their employer's children.

The first qualification for getting a nanny job is Responsibility--and that's always spelled with a capital R. A nanny must be as responsible as a mother, or even more so. Children are naturally rambunctious, but a nanny has to be able to keep them under control without being harsh. A mother will overlook bumps and bruises if they happened on her watch, but a nanny has to be far more careful.

The second qualification for getting a nanny job is experience. This is very important, even if it's only four or five years of regular weekend babysitting jobs. A nanny isn't a babysitter; it's closer to a surrogate parent. You can't practice your child care skills or, heaven forbid, decide whether or not you like being around children, with a nanny job. The children you take care of must be able to trust you; the parent you're standing in for must be able to trust you. Get some experience under your belt. Learn how to handle disputes among the children and whiny kids who should have had their nap hours ago, without losing your cool. The skills you learn from babysitting will serve you well in your nanny job, or in parenting children of your own, if you even have a family. Never overlook the importance of experience when looking at nanny jobs.

And the third qualification is simply love. You must be able to love the children as though they were your own, to discipline them, if discipline is part of your job, without anger, and to raise them as their mother should and would.

What to Include in Nanny Salaries

Nanny salaries can vary greatly depending on a number of factors. The following are the most common.

Experience is a determining factor. An experienced nanny with a college degree will definitely require a salary at the higher end of the payment rate. The salary should basically be proportional to the amount of experience the nanny has. The responsibilities and duties the nanny will have to cater for is also a large part of nanny salaries. Typical duties such as looking after children form the basis of the job, but additional tasks that do not pertain specifically to the children, may very well increase the pay due for their services. The number of children to care for should also be taken into account – salaries increase for every additional child. Longer working hours – over the usual 45-50 hours required of the nanny – will require extra compensation.

Other facilities such as food and board for a live-in nanny hang in the balance too. A live-in nanny is usually paid less than a live-out nanny. The area of residence is also important. Where the standard of living is higher, salaries need to be higher. Major metro markets usually tally higher nanny salaries. The laws of demand and supply also considerably determine salaries for nannies – where the demand is higher than the supply, the wages will be expected to be very compensating.

If benefits are included in the salary, these can be tallied up to the salary rate. Benefits such as paid holidays, sick days, vacation time and use of a car can weigh in the balance.

Typically, a nanny will average 45-50 hours of work per week. It has to be noted that nanny salaries fall under the minimum wage rate. Average nanny salaries for live-in nannies can vary between \$400-600 per week, and for a live-out nanny, it can vary between \$500-700 per week. Overnight care or any over working hours' services needed can be paid to an hourly rate or can be done on a set wage basis if it is for longer than a few days.

It should furthermore be noted whether the salary paid will be the gross salary or the net, take-home, salary. Employers should usually deduct nanny taxes from the nanny salaries.

Finding Reliable Nanny Services



Finding good nanny services can be hard. Every mother wants the best for her children, even when she isn't able to be with them full time, but too much of what's out there seems second rate. But there are some tips that can help you find the best of what's out there for

your children. Nanny services are designed to help you get the best nanny for your children, and they do--if you know what you're looking for.

First of all, never go with nanny services where the service selects the nanny for you. Services should prescreen applicants, and run background checks, but they should only put you in touch with potential candidates; you should be the one interviewing and, ultimately, hiring the nanny. Make sure that the nanny service you select will see that possible candidates can arrange to spend a few hours with you and the children together, so that you get a chance to see how they interact with each other. Be aware that kids won't necessarily like **any** nanny; it means a change for them, and kids hate that. It's more important to see how the nanny reacts to the kids not liking her; is she in their faces, trying to be too friendly, or is she content to sit back a little while they get used to her? You want someone who will keep a sharp eye on your children without hanging over them every moment of the day.

Second, make sure that the nanny services you choose prescreens their members in **addition** to running a background check on them. Too many places do the bare minimum when it comes to finding out if this person is actually suited to working with children; the best places do a background check, run a psychology test or two, and actually observe the potential nannies working with real children before trying to get them a job. If you can find a place like that, you have a much better chance of getting a good nanny; good nannies come from good nanny services.

When The Nanny Tax Calculator Helps

The Internal Revenue Service requires that any employer with a household employee he pays more than \$1500 cash wages in a year be compelled to tax filings for that employee. Nannies, whether live-in or live-out, fall under this category. This payment is often referred to as the nanny taxes.

The nanny taxes and payroll tax obligations cover Social Security and Medicare Taxes, which amount to 7.65% of gross wages, Federal Unemployment Tax (FUTA) which is 0.8% of Gross wages or less in most circumstances, state unemployment and disability insurance taxes levied by the employer, and may also include state and federal income tax.

The employer is solely responsible for paying the Social Security and Medicare taxes. Even if he does not deduct it from the employee's salary, he would still be responsible for paying the tax. The federal and state taxes can be filed by the employee herself, but employers usually deduct them through payroll, ensuring that the employee receives the net salary.

Yet, all this may sound like a foreign language. This is where a nanny tax calculator comes in handy.

The nanny tax calculator allows an employer to calculate his nanny taxes. It literally takes the hassle out of this tedious and daunting task. Presented as an interactive form via specialized nanny or other financial websites, the nanny tax calculator only requires that the employer enter his relevant information and it provides the necessary calculations with just a click of a button.

The nanny tax calculator usually includes a few general fields that provide the parameters for the calculation. Fields such as pay date, weekly gross wages, pay frequency, nanny withholding rate, and withholding allowances require data entries. Other remaining fields need less detail, and usually ask straightforward questions to further narrow and tailor the calculation. Fields such as whether federal and state income tax is to be withheld require a yes/no answer, and then the user simply needs to select the state he is in. Further fields may then ask if the state selected was Maryland City or County, where another set of parameters are entered. Whether or not the nanny is a New York City resident completes the nanny tax calculator form.

With these few details, the amount of nanny taxes needed is calculated, taking the stress away from the employer.

A Parent as Super Nanny



Thanks to the hit British TV show, parents are more aware than ever of the importance of discipline in their child's life. Many parents wish they could have a super nanny sweep in and train their children. But few parents think of themselves as

'super nanny' material. However, this is exactly what they are. Discipline is one of a parent's responsibilities; you might say it comes with the job description. But being a super nanny is hard for most parents, for two reasons.

First of all, we live in an age where we seldom deny ourselves anything if we can help it. Giving the child their way too often seems a small price to pay for a few minutes of peace and quiet, and too often parents give in in the short term--not realizing that they're only making things worse down the road. On a similar note, when children look as though we're depriving them of something through our discipline, it's far too easy to let our super nanny ideals go out the window, and give them what they want. But it's important to remember that when we do that, we're only raising up another generation of kids who won't know how to say no, and who won't know how to cope when they get out into the Real World and find that whining won't always get them what they want.

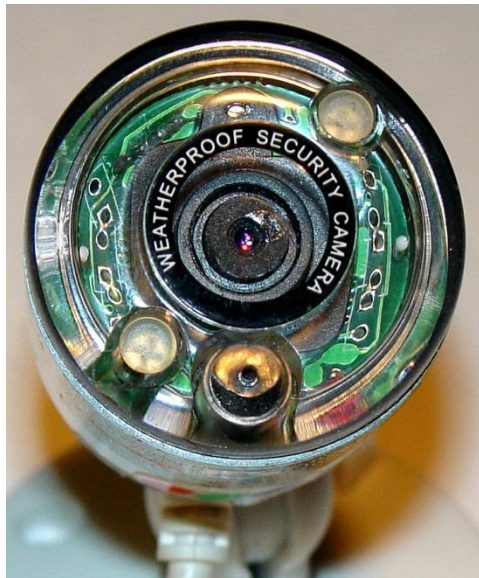
The second reason few parents have the super nanny courage to discipline their children is that too often, they don't know how. When they do discipline, they're likely to do it wrong; the child's behavior doesn't improve, and the parent feels worse than before. It's important to remember that consistency is the key when it comes to discipline; the same offense must be punished the same way, and it must be punished immediately, not later or "when Daddy comes home." With consistency and courage, even the most timid and overwhelmed of parents can be transformed into a super nanny of her own.

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The Advantages of Using a Wireless Nanny Cam

A nanny is someone to whom children are entrusted when parents are not there. Parental constraints may pertain to having to go to work, or not wanting to leave their children in a day care center. The solution then comes in the form of the nanny who stays at home with the children, caring for them.



Yet, many parents have come to ask themselves the question whether or not the nanny was actually taking good care of their children. Horror stories of horrendous nanny behavior have hit almost every area, and parents are all the more wary of the times when they are not at home with their kids.

The solution to this dilemma has however presented itself in the form of the wireless nanny cam. This security device operates like a typical surveillance camera. The wireless nanny cam records images of the room in which it is placed, and the images can be viewed live or can be recorded for later viewing.

The wireless nanny cam is usually a tiny device. So tiny even that it can be hidden in almost every common, every day objects. Thus, the camera can be fitted in a clock, a lamp shade, a teddy bear. There are even cameras that can be placed in a screw, making it completely inconspicuous. Being wireless, no long cord or wire will be there to alert anyone to its presence.

The wireless nanny cam provides video streaming of relatively good quality, with color images. The live streaming feature on many cameras allow for quality pictures of the action as it happens, without any worry over choppy low frame rate streaming. Some cameras come with a motion-activated recording system, which starts recording as soon as a motion is detected in a room, thus only recording when someone is present and eliminating long hours of tape records of a room where nothing is happening.

The wireless nanny cam usually operates with batteries. It is thus a good idea to check the batteries every now and then to ensure optimal efficiency.

Some newer models of wireless nanny cam can be relayed to IP transfer systems, making their streaming available over the Internet, and thus accessible from virtually everywhere.