



childcare

advice & information

0800 028 3008

www.employersforchildcare.org

Choosing a Nanny

The most important thing to consider when choosing childcare is the safety and well-being of your child. Registered childcare is regulated by the Health and Social Services Trusts (HSSTs) in Northern Ireland. Registration means, among other things, inspection of premises and police checks on individuals. Some childcare, for example Nannies providing care in the child's own home, are unregulated and are not required to go through the registration process. Parents need to be aware of the extra responsibilities involved in hiring a nanny (checking references and qualifications) and that this type of care is not eligible for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit (WTC), or childcare vouchers, because it is unregistered.

Nanny

A nanny is some-one employed to look after a child (or children) in the child's own home. There is no legal requirement for a Nanny to be qualified, but many have nursery nurse training, or other qualifications, in childcare. There is no national nanny register and unless they are looking after the children of more than two families, nannies will not be inspected or registered by the HSSTs as other carers are. A nanny can 'live in' or come to the home for set days or hours.

It is up to the parent to interview thoroughly and to **ALWAYS CHECK ALL REFERENCES.**

Make sure you have names, addresses and phone numbers of referees. A reference over a mobile phone is not a good idea - if at all possible, visit and talk directly to referees.

Employing a nanny is an important responsibility because it will be up to you to make sure the person is able to look after your children well. Being a nanny is a skilled and demanding job. Look for training, experience and a positive attitude to the job.

Benefits of employing a nanny include:

- Nannies can provide childcare tailor-made for your children's needs.
- Your children will be cared for in their own home.

Types of nanny

Live-in nannies live in your home and require a private bedroom and food in addition to their salary

- Daily nannies come to your home to look after your children
- Nanny share - an arrangement whereby a nanny is shared by two families. If a nanny is shared by more than two families they are required to register as a childminder.

Other types of childcare in the home

- Mother's/parent's helps usually work alongside the parent helping with childcare and general household work. Mother's helps are unlikely to have formal childcare qualifications, but may be experienced. They should not be given sole charge of children, however, for parents with older children at school a parent's help can be an ideal option.
- Maternity Nurses are specially trained to take care of new babies for up to three months after the birth.

They generally live with the family.

- Au Pairs are single young people, generally students, who come to the UK/Ireland from a member state of the EU, to live as part of an English speaking family in order to improve their language skills, learn about the culture and way of life. Their stay varies from a minimum of 2 months to a maximum of 2 years. An Au Pair helps the host family with childcare and general light housework for up to 5 hours per day, 5 days per week plus 1 or 2 evenings per week babysitting. They must have at least two full days off each week, and be provided with meals, an allowance and their own room. Au Pairs are not registered with HSSTs.

- Home child carers are registered childminders who look after children in the child's own home and parents can still claim the Childcare Element of Working Tax Credit or use childcare vouchers if they are eligible. This system is currently unavailable in Northern Ireland.

From April 2005 the new Approved scheme for nannies will come into effect in England only. More information is available at

www.childcareapprovalscheme.co.uk

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There are many issues to consider when employing a nanny such as considering exactly what duties and responsibilities you expect the nanny to undertake, how to go about finding a nanny, selecting and interviewing applicants and checking references and employment histories. Detailed help with all of these issues are available from the organisations listed below.

Parents are responsible for deducting a nanny's tax and NIC and forwarding this, along with the employer's NIC, to the Inland Revenue. To reduce the cost of employing a nanny, parents can pool their resources and employ one nanny between them. A nanny share post is usually live-out, days only and regular hours. If a nanny works for more than two families (ie three or more families) then she/he must be registered by the local HSST, in which case this type of care then becomes eligible for the childcare element of WTC or child. However, there are no restrictions on the number of children cared for from the same family.

A common nanny share situation is where one employer becomes the 'sole' employer. She/he pays the nanny a weekly or monthly salary while the other family(s) pay an agreed amount towards the nanny's salary. Nanny sharing can bring more problems than working with one family. It is crucial, therefore, that the nanny receives a written contract which incorporates the duties required by both families, overtime hours, rates of pay etc before beginning employment with either family.

The Inland Revenue operate an Employers Helpline on 08457 143 143 for friendly advice on tax and National insurance. Nannies are covered by national Minimum Wage regulations. For more information about the national minimum wage, or to order some free guidance please telephone the National Minimum Wage helpline on 0845 6000 678.

Parents should also ensure they have adequate insurance cover in the form of Employers Public Liability Insurance.

The Professional Association of Nursery Nurses (PANN), an organisation based in England, produces a useful information pack aimed at both Nannies and parents/employers entitled *'All you need to know about working as a Nanny.'* It covers everything from the interview process, to drawing up a contract, to payroll issues. It costs approximately £5 and the address is listed at the end of this leaflet.

There are a number of Nanny Agencies operating in Northern Ireland and you will find them listed in the Yellow Pages under Nanny & Au Pairs.

Useful contacts:

Professional Association of Nursery Nurses

2 St James' Court
Friar Gate
Derby
DE1 1BT
01332 372337
www.pat.org.uk

Inland Revenue Employers Helpline
08457 143 143

National Minimum Wage helpline
0845 6000 678

The Department for Education and Skills

The Department for Education and Skills produce a booklet called *Need a Nanny* - a guide for parents which is available online at www.dfes.gov.uk/nanny or by calling their publications line on **0845 6022260**. The guide is written with English and Welsh legislation specifically in mind, but the general information is valid for Northern Ireland.