

FAMILY INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following are suggested guidelines for questions to ask and information to share during an interview with prospective nanny applicants. We have also included some important process “Do’s and Don’ts”.

PART ONE: QUESTIONS TO ASK OF APPLICANTS

FAMILY BACKGROUND

- **Size and composition of candidate’s family.**
- **Applicant’s position in the birth order**
- **Relationship to each parent and to each sibling**
- **Did both parents work? If yes, what form of childcare was provided?**
- **How was discipline handled? How were conflicts managed?**
- **What were important family values, affiliations and activities?**
- **Is the family supportive of the applicant being a nanny?**

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

- **Overview of high school experience; favorite courses, teachers? Least favorite courses? Any extracurricular activities?**
- **Overview of college experience: major and favorite courses? Least favorite courses? Extracurricular activities?**
- **Has the candidate had any courses, internships or training in childcare, child development, teaching, child psychology, etc?**
- **What are the applicant’s future academic or career goals?**

WORK EXPERIENCE

- **Does applicant have a comprehensive resume listing every position ever held?**
- **How many jobs has the candidate held? How long as each job lasted and why did they end? What were the major responsibilities held in each position?**
- **Which were the applicant's most positive jobs? Least positive? Most challenging?**
- **What percentage of jobs held were childcare related?**
- **What does the applicant look for in a boss? Most admire? Least admire?**

CHILDCARE EXPERIENCE AND PHILOSOPHIES

- **How many formal and informal childcare experiences has the applicant held?**
- **What ages has the applicant had most experience with? Least? What would be the most comfortable age for candidate to work with? Least?**
- **What activities does applicant enjoy most with infants? Toddlers? Pre school age? School age? Teenagers?**
- **How does the applicant approach building a relationship with a new charge?**
- **What do they regard as their strengths and relative weaknesses when it comes to working with children?**
- **What do they love most about working with children? Least?**
- **Why does the applicant want to be a nanny at this point in their life? Does she/he have a realistic assessment and expectations of what it is like to work with children in a home environment and on a daily basis?**
- **What priorities would the applicant hold in working with children as a nanny?**
- **Ask the applicant to discuss philosophies and actual experiences around discipline and limit setting. How do they view this in the context of working as a nanny in a household? Are the candidate's expectations for behavior age appropriate and compatible with yours?**
- **What would the candidate do in the case of any emergency? Create a short list of specific hypothetical questions based upon the ages of your children.**

- **How would the applicant handle sibling rivalry? Tantrums? Whining? Ongoing crying? Emotional withdrawal of an unhappy child? Boredom? Challenge of authority?**
- **How open to instructions and feedback from parent is the applicant. How much do they respect the ideas of others even if they differ from their own?**
- **How would candidate rate their communication abilities? How do they do with employers? Are they capable of disclosing important information about what has happened with your children in the course of a day? Are they comfortable in the giving and receiving of positive and critical feedback? Do they listen well and are they able to make important compromises. Are they willing to invest the time and energy for weekly or bi weekly nanny/ parent meetings?**

JOB EXPECTATIONS

- **How does the candidate envision the role, expectations and responsibilities of the nanny role?**
- **What does the candidate view as the most important attributes a nanny should possess?**
- **Is the applicant willing to be helpful with light housework revolving around the care of children? Do they have experience with cooking for children, household tasks and child laundry? Where do they draw the line on light housework?**
- **Is applicant more proactive or a follower of very specific directions?**
- **What would the ideal nanny job or ideal nanny employer be like? Why? What would the biggest nightmare job or employer be like?**
- **What type of relationship does the nanny hope for with their employer?**
- **How often would they like to meet with employers to discuss how things are going, job performance, questions, challenges, etc?**
- **What kind of schedule does the applicant hope to have as a nanny?**
- **What salary and benefits is the candidate ideally seeking? What would they settle for if salary is too high for employer?**
- **How would the candidate like to see conflicts on the job handled? What experience have they had with this in the past?**

PART TWO: INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH CANDIDATE

FAMILY INFORMATION

- **Describe the composition and structure of your immediate family. If relevant let applicant know about extended kin network that might be involved. If there are significant household staff member involved let the candidate know about their role.**
- **Discuss and introduce each member of your family. Let the applicant know as much as you can about each child in terms of personality, strengths, growth edges, developmental stage, interpersonal style, likes and dislikes.**
- **Share what you would describe as the family emotional climate and life style. What are major values and activities? Be as descriptive and honest as possible.**
- **Describe the most important priorities that you would want a nanny to draw upon in working with your children in your household. What would be the biggest mistake a nanny could make?**
- **Let the applicant know about your home, community, schools children attend and people that they will be interfacing with as your nanny.**
- **Be descriptive and frank about relationships between siblings and how you like to see conflicts and rivalries managed.**
- **Share your nanny history letting the candidate know what worked and what did not work. It is smart to offer applicant nanny references who can explain what it was like working for your.**
- **Describe how your family deals with tension, conflict, discipline and disappointments.**
- **Disclose any travel plans or any second homes that might involve the nanny.**

JOB REQUIREMENTS

- **Be clear with the hours, actual responsibilities, and priorities of your job.**
- **How is the day structured and scheduled? What are the specific hours?**
- **How often might the nanny be expected to work overtime?**
- **Share any basic house rules.**
- **Describe your priorities as they relate to childcare, safety, and household responsibilities.**
- **Be clear on salary and benefits. Make sure that the applicant understands the difference between “net and gross” Will there be any salary reviews? If so, when? Year end bonuses. Will you provide health coverage?**
- **Spell out the benefits, paid vacation time, paid holidays, sick days, provision of care or offsetting portion of nanny’s own car expenses, tuition allowance or remission, travel with family, etc.**

- Be clear on how nanny is to manage limit setting and discipline, ideas about appropriate and inappropriate activities, where they can and can't go and how it is best to build a relationship with your child.

PART THREE: PROCESS DO'S and DON'TS

- DON'T** Interrogate. Interrogation shuts people down. Frame your questions as tactfully as possible. Converse rather than cross examine!
- DO** Break the ice by being as cordial and open as possible. Candidates might feel shy or nervous in an interview situation. Potential employers can sometimes intimidate without realizing they are doing so. The more relaxed and welcoming you are the more open the candidate will become
- DO** Give the candidate the time and space to talk, answer and formulate questions. Be an attentive listener.
- DON'T** Monopolize the conversation. Encourage the applicant to share by asking the kinds of questions that will demonstrate your interest in the applicant's professional and personal background.
- DO** Be as honest about your family and job description as possible. Blatant misrepresentation can lead to the hiring of the wrong type of nanny or unhappiness down the road when the nanny understands the reality of your situation.
- DO** Present the good things about your family and job that set you apart from the competition. Be positive and upbeat about how you envision the role of and contributions that a nanny can offer to your family. Try not to dwell on past nanny bad stories- it is better to explain what does and what doesn't work for your family.
- DON'T** Pressure a candidate into a quick decision. Let things sink in.
- DO** Talk to the prospective nanny at least a couple of times and suggest a "trial day" to test things out.

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