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Nannies: Hiring And Firing Tips

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(CBS) This week on *The Early Show* it's all about nannies - from how to find one to how to use them effectively. Today we are talking about one thing that every family who has a nanny has had to deal with - how to hire them and how to let them go.

Bethany Sirt, Director of Public Relations for [Sittercity.com](#) and Dana Points, Editor in Chief of [Parents](#) magazine have suggestions for how to assert yourself with courtesy in both negotiation and termination.

It's tough to know how to hire and fire someone as important in your life as a nanny. Sure they are an employee and should be treated as such, but these are the people who are going to be handling your most precious cargo and act as another member of your family.

It can be uncomfortable once you have gotten to know someone during the interview process to assert yourself and get exactly what you want. As for firing, whether it's for reasons such as a transfer or move, or something frightening and upsetting -- it can be hard to know how to do it right and to maintain your piece of mind.

Hiring A Nanny - Negotiating Pay

OK, you have finally decided to make a firm offer to the nanny you have been interviewing. What's most important now? Dana Points says it is to know your number.

Talk it over with your spouse -- what can you afford? What is the least you want to pay (keep in mind these people are taking care of your children!), and what is the most you can afford? When walking into negotiations do not start with your top number. Negotiate from a lower number but do not insult them. Keep in mind, that these people should be treated as you would want to be treated by an employer. They deserve respect and they deserve fair pay. Nickel and diming is NOT THE WAY YOU WANT TO GO HERE. Also, before you offer know whether you are offering straight take home or whether you are offering to pay taxes for your nanny. Talk to your tax attorney honestly and get advice.

Next point -- do your research. Talk to other families in your neighborhood. Talk to other nannies. Keep in mind that NANNIES TALK TO EACH OTHER. So if you are low-balling your nanny in salary they will find out. You cannot do too much research on salary. Everything you learn will serve to make you a better educated employer.

Negotiating Duties

Like the salary negotiations, it's important to know what you want from your nanny before you start to negotiate your duties. How important is a clean house to you? Is it important to you that the nanny do dishes? Cook? Drive? Do laundry? Just your kids' laundry or laundry for the family? Try to keep in mind when making these decisions that each of these duties take time. How much time do you want the nanny to spend on housework vs. kids alone? Is your house a non smoking house? Is that a deal breaker for you? Think about what you want from a nanny -- figure out the base hours and stick to it.

Put it in writing. When things get tense between you and your nanny, it's nice to know that you defined the nanny's duties in writing so you have something to refer back to. Caught your nanny having a drink on the job? If it's number three on the list then you know you have it in writing and it becomes fireable. Nanny tells you that she is sorry she is late for the 20th time? It's in writing, punctuality is key. Keep in mind though, you need to have respect for the nanny when making out the duties. If the nanny is working from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day, make sure not to be late too often. That's a long day for someone -- and coming home on time is an important sign of respect.

Firing Your Nanny -- Letting Go Of Your Nanny For Natural Causes

Letting go of someone is never easy and it's always slightly uncomfortable. But if you find yourself in a position to let someone go for natural reasons such as work transfer, kids are too old or are starting full-time school, you could find yourself in the position of firing your nanny. There are no personal reasons here, just a necessary decision. In cases such as these, be courteous. This person is a member of the family so give them what they would want to feel better. Perhaps offer some severance (again know your number ahead of time), give proper notice. Offer to call other families with a recommendation.

Think of how you would like to be let go from a job like this and make sure the nanny has a way to explain to the kids what is happening and to say goodbye.

Firing Your Nanny -- Firing Your Nanny For Serious Reasons

This is a situation no one wants to find themselves in -- you don't like your nanny or she isn't following the house rules and

you have to let her go.

First of all, this is where the WRITTEN list of duties will come in handy. They will back you up as reasons to fire someone so have a copy standing by. Make sure you are clear, concise and quick. For instance, "Mary, we told you on our list that smoking in the house was non-negotiable. You have disregarded this and therefore we cannot keep you on."

It's also not a bad idea to NOT be alone in the room during this process of firing. You want to make sure that this conversation does not get ugly and if it does you don't want anything inappropriate or actionable being said.

GET YOUR KEYS BACK. Make sure you make that part of the firing. Ask for them right away. Ask if that is the only copy they have. Get your car keys back as well.

HAVE A BACKUP SOLUTION. Do not let your nanny go unless you have a backup nanny, or have cleared your own schedule. Someone is going to have to pick the kids up from school and get their lunch ready and unless you are ready to do it, you should have someone standing by to cover you during the transition.

Finally, and this is a decision every family should make for themselves -- decide whether or not you are going to let the nanny say goodbye to your kids. If you are not comfortable with it get them out quickly and explain it to your kids yourself. If you do, perhaps you want to be there when they do.

Part 1: Pay And Benefits

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