



Questions a Nanny Should Ask at an Interview

By Emily Louange and Glenda Propst

When you prepare for a job interview, you might rehearse the responses you will give to the questions a potential employer might ask. Just as important are the questions you should ask a potential employer when considering a job position. This is a crucial step in assessing the fit and setting yourself up for success.

The work that you do as a nanny is important. During the interview it is essential to demonstrate that you value your work and yourself. You teach people how you want to be treated. The key is starting things off on the right foot. These questions will help you to do just that.

Take matters into your own hands. It is your professional responsibility to gather the answers to these questions before you agree to take the job!

Preliminary Questions- Phone Interview

Arrange a quick phone conversation before scheduling an in-person interview to be sure there are no “deal breakers”. Deal breakers will be unique to each nanny and family.

Questions to assess common deal breakers include, but are not limited to:

- What is the rate range for this position?
- Is this a W2 position?
- What is the start date?
- What are the hours?
- Is this a short or long-term position?
- Is this a live in or live out position?
- Is this a nanny share position?

In-Person Interview

Along with a copy of your resume, bring a list of the questions below. At the start of the interview, ask if it is alright if you take notes. This will not only ensure all the appropriate questions are answered, but demonstrate that you are a serious and professional candidate.



Many families that you interview with have never employed anyone in their home before. Too often nanny work agreements or contract are an afterthought. These questions will serve as a great start for developing the details of your work agreement.

About the Child(ren)

Basics:

- Names and ages?
- Any special needs?
- What are the children's interests and hobbies?
- What is your discipline plan or child rearing philosophy?

Schedule:

- Who makes the children's schedules (parents, nanny, or is setting their schedule a combined effort)?
- What's your procedure for spontaneous activities, outings, playdates, etc?
- How do you prefer updates/check ins throughout the day?
 - Text, email, app, etc?
 - Frequency?
- Do you want a daily record kept of activities, diet, sleep, etc?

Values/Religion:

- What values do you want taught and reinforced in your children?
- Is religion a part of your daily life?
- Do you expect your nanny to participate in any religious teaching or practices (prayers at mealtime, bedtime, holiday practices, etc)?
 - If you incorporate any religious practices or beliefs in the childcare you deliver, be sure this does not clash with the family's wishes.

Childcare history:

- What were your best and worst experiences with your previous childcare?
- If you've had a previous nanny, what did your family like most about the nanny? What did you like least?
- May I speak to your previous nannies about their experiences with your family and children?



The Work Environment

General:

- Occupation of the parent(s)?
- Do you work outside the home or from your home?
 - If the parents work at home, guidelines should be established on the structure of things as this can be a tricky dynamic to navigate.
- Are other adults, besides the parents, living in the home?
- Is there other household help?
 - Who supervises them?
- Can you describe your home and the neighborhood?
- Do you anticipate moving in the near future?
- Do you have a nanny camera? Do you plan to get one? Will you inform your nanny if you do?
- Is there a house alarm, gated entry or other system that requires a code?

Rules:

- What are your household rules?
- Are any rooms of your house off limits to children or nanny?
- Are guests allowed, such as other nannies and moms with age appropriate children for play dates?
- Are there any other household restrictions due to religion, personal preference, food allergies, or other I should be aware of?

Nanny specific:

- Is there any sort of dress code for nanny at work (i.e., no jeans)?
- Will there be a nanny workstation – desk area for files, bulletin board, monthly calendar, computer with high-speed Internet connection?
- Will workmans compensation (required in most states depending on number of hours worked) be provided or have you added a rider to your homeowner's insurance policy in case of injury of persons paid to be on your property?

Responsibilities

General:



- How would you describe the “ideal nanny”?
- Can you define your idea of your nanny’s role in your family?
- What are nanny’s responsibilities as they relate to children?
- Are non-child-related tasks and responsibilities a part of the job you want performed?
 - Light housework (Important- define this in detail! What does this include)
 - Dishes (used while on duty only or all dishes)?
 - General tidying (of mess made while on duty or off duty)?
 - What does “cleaning” mean to you (sweeping, mopping, cleaning toilets, dusting, etc)?
 - Laundry
 - For children? For parents?
 - Who makes and changes the children’s bedding?
 - Who plans the meals, cooks, and shops for groceries?
 - What financial arrangements will be made to facilitate the shopping?
 - Will the nanny cook for the children, parents, or family?
 - Who purchases the children’s clothes, toys, and supplies?
 - Will I be expected to take the children to doctor appointments, music lessons, classes?
 - Will there be any pet duties now or in the future?
- Do you plan on having more children?
- Will job description change during different times of year/with schedule change?

Transportation

- Is a car provided?
 - Is the car available for the nanny’s personal use, or only for use while she is on duty? Will the vehicle shared with the parents?
 - Confirm you are covered on insurance plan.
- Will I be expected to transport children in my own car?
 - This typically requires special insurance as it falls under driving for business (commercial use) rather than personal use.
- Who will pay costs for insurance, maintenance, and gas?

Travel

- Do you travel?



- Will your nanny be expected to travel with you?
 - Will your nanny be required to pack the children's bags for trips?
- Do you ever travel without your children, and if so, what arrangements are made for them?
- Will your nanny be expected to stay with the children while you travel?

Hours

- Will hours fluctuate (regularly, during summer, holidays, etc)?
 - How will work schedule be communicated and with how much notice?
 - Hand written, Google calendar, email, etc

*Special note- the nanny should define:

- If you have a maximum number of hours you work per week
- Any hours that you will not work
- How much advance notice is required if hours change (if you are not okay with them asking you to stay late, this boundary should be established during the interview)

Salary, Benefits and Reviews

Before discussing salary and benefits, it is important for a professional nanny to preface the discussion by explaining that this work is your career choice and your livelihood. Emphasize that you are serious about your job and you count on a regular paycheck as it is how you make a living.

Rate:

- What rate are you offering?
 - How often will I be paid, and by what method?
 - What is the rate for overtime, overnight or weekend work, or 24-hour duty?
- Is there a guaranteed minimum pay?
 - Will you compensate for unexpected days off that nanny does not initiate (such as grandparents come to town and parents giving the nanny time off or parents take the children to visit relatives, etc.)?



Benefits:

- Paid time off?
 - *Confirm nanny chooses own vacation day rather than being required to use vacation time when family takes vacation days.
- Number of paid/unpaid sick days?
 - What is your backup childcare plan if the nanny is sick or on vacation?
- Paid Holidays?
- Professional days for childcare related classes and conferences?
- Gym membership?
- Health insurance?
- IRA?
- Retirement benefits?

Reviews:

Express how important communication is between nannies and their employers. Confirm that the family will put your agreements in writing in a written nanny work agreement (sample in US Nanny Association Digital Library).

- Are you willing to meet with me on a regular basis so we can discuss how things are going?
 - 1 month after start date
 - 3 months after start date
 - Annually
- Will there be a standard 1-3% annual cost of living raise?
- Will there be a merit raise at annual review?
- In the event of the birth of another child, will there be a rate increase, if so, how much?
- Will the nanny receive severance pay if terminated early?

Work Agreement and Next Steps

Consider or suggest a working interview to spend time with the child(ren) before work agreement is signed.



Additional Questions for Live-In Nannies

- What accommodations are provided (room, bath, etc.)?
 - If a separate apartment, how will grocery expenses be handled?
 - Who is responsible for cleaning the area and by what standards?
- How will days off be respected/protected?
- How do nanny's activities on her day off affect the household's flow?
- Will you cover moving expenses upon accepting and completing the position?

This is a comprehensive list but there are many other questions you may want to ask. If during the interview, anything the potential employers says is unclear, do not hesitate to ask for them to clarify or elaborate. Problems and resentments arise when assumptions are made. This list provides you a great jumping off point. Good luck!