**Is sharing a nanny a good option for you?**

We all want to leave our children in the best possible care while we’re at work, but paying $50,000 (or more) a year for a full-time nanny doesn’t always fit the family budget.

**Maria Concepcion**, from **Global Family & Home Care**, explains that for parents who don’t want to send kids to daycare, splitting the expense of a nanny with another family is one cost-effective solution. “Nanny Sharing” is when two families hire one nanny to care for their children together in one or both of the homes.

“The numbers make the shared care arrangements really attractive,” says [North Shore Nannies](http://www.northshorenannies.com/) President Kathy Murphy. “For $30,000 each, two families can get access to the upper end of the nanny market. You get more bang for your buck, and you can offer a very nice compensation package.”

Melissa Marchwick, executive vice president at Chicago-based [Sittercity](http://www.sittercity.com/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank), says nanny sharing can offer families the best of both worlds. The sitter-to-child ratio is more favorable than that of a daycare, which typically provides one caretaker for every four or five children, and nanny sharing also gives children opportunities for socialization that they wouldn’t normally get at home.

“Since your children will be spending their days with the children of another family, they will have the opportunity to socialize and develop relationships with other children, which facilitates learning to share and playing well with others,” Marchwick says.

Choosing a family to share a nanny with is as important as selecting the nanny. Parents who want to share a nanny will need to discuss, and agree on, all kinds of things from nutrition and napping to discipline and household rules. Even seemingly small issues, like television, can cause problems. If one set of parents only allows 30 minutes of TV per day and the other set is more lax, the families could clash.

“Nanny sharing works well when families have similar lifestyles and parenting philosophies,” says Monica Januskyte, placement director at [MoniCare Nannies and Household Staffing, Inc.](https://www.monicare.com/domestic-staffing-chicago-nanny-agency%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) “The most successful nanny-sharing arrangements we have seen were between families who were already close friends before entering into a nanny-sharing arrangement, as they knew each other well and had similar childcare expectations.”

Januskyte says families planning to share a nanny also should hash out logistics, like whose house will serve as home base for the nanny and the kids and how to pay for groceries for the children’s meals.

Marchwick says ongoing communication is the key to making nanny-share arrangements work. She recommends parents meet once a month to discuss any issues that have come up, before they become bigger problems.

**Maria Concepcion**, from **Global Family & Home Care**, recommends that families sharing a nanny do a common activity, or outing, once per quarter to observe the children’ interaction with the nanny and discuss any scheduling plans for the next few months. This interaction will keep open lines of communication and also maintain a very positive interaction between the sharing families and the nanny.