
***What to know before hiring your own “Mary Poppins”***

**Things your nanny won't tell you**

As the number of families in which both parents work has grown, many have become more dependent on nannies. From 2008 to 2013, caregiving job site Care.com says, the number of families looking for a nanny on its site grew an average of 85% annually. And not only do more families need caregivers, but the kids are spending a lot of time with them. Seven in 10 nannies work full time, according to the International Nanny Association, often spending 40 or more hours a week with a single family, or even living with them (about one in 10 nannies lives with the family).

***Nannies are a feature of American life, and lots of couples depend on them to help raise their kids. But as Market Watch's Jim Jelter says, there are things your care-giver won't tell you.***

**1. “Your kid loves me more than you.”**

Because nannies spend so much time with the children, some kids become more attached to this caretaker than to their own parents, says Chicago-area psychologist Elizabeth Lombardo. “kids might associate the nanny with positive time, while many parents are working full time and trying to juggle child-rearing and work, which can leave them “harried,” she says.

**2. “You’re the worst part of my job.”**

While screaming kids, dirty diapers are no walk in the park, “it’s not the kids that nannies have trouble with; it’s the parents,” because in some instances, parents become jealous of the caretaker-child relationship and act out by yelling at the nanny. Sometimes they develop typical terrible-boss behaviors: asking the nanny to do tasks he or she didn’t sign on for, demanding lots of extra work hours, or become unpleasant to work with.

**3. “I can’t save your kid’s life (or treat his injuries).”**

If a child is injured — or worse, in a life-or-death situation — the child-care provider may or may not know what to do. Some 13% of nannies surveyed by the International Nanny Association admitted that they aren’t certified in CPR, and 20% reported that they don’t have a first aid certification. Most agencies won’t work with a nanny who doesn’t have pediatric CPR and first-aid certification; however, lots of nannies don’t work for agencies.

**4. “You’re not paying me enough.”**

While the median wage for a nanny is $16-$20 per hour, some make less than that. Many don’t get other financial benefits, like health care or a retirement plan. Among respondents to the International Nanny Association survey, which was largely limited to agencies, or INA-affiliated nannies, only 38% of nannies got a raise in 2011, 36% didn’t get overtime, and 34.4% didn’t get sick days. However, as care givers’ credentials increase, so is the demand for better benefits and working conditions for the nannies, and other home care specialist. A fiscal issue for families and nannies is the fact that many nannies are paid “under the table. The law currently requires employers to withhold and pay Social Security and Medicare taxes for any worker who earns $1,800 or more during the year. The issue for nannies, and other home care workers, is that they can’t get unemployment when they’re laid off if their wages haven’t been on the books.

**5. “I’m smarter than you are.”**

Child-care providers nowadays are often better educated than in previous decades. Among the nannies surveyed by the International Nanny Association, 85% have at least some college under their belt, 30% have a bachelor’s degree, and 6% have a master’s or Ph.D. Nannies have become “like a third parent”. This new role means that nannies need more skills than ever. The trend now is for well-educated people, who might have been teachers or counselors, turning to nannying.

**6. “Your secret’s not safe with me.”**

What happens in your home doesn’t always stay in your home. Nannies talk to each other, friends and family members. “If you think about anyone in their job, they talk to other people about it,” says psychologist Lombardo. “It’s no different with nannies. Nannies vent to one another about their jobs and employers, especially when they meet in the park. The concern, of course, is that nannies have the ability to air some very personal details about the client’s life, especially since so often they live in the client’s home.

**8. “I know about that nanny cam.”**

More and more parents are using nanny cams to “secretly” spy on their nannies: Brickhouse Security, a leading national security and surveillance firm, says it has seen a spike in both sales and searches for nanny cams on its site. The firm says that searches for that term doubled in the past 30 months. Most nannies say that it’s not surprising and that it doesn’t bother them because they know that nanny cams are out there.

**9. “You’d better do a thorough background check on me.”**

Unlike many other professions, like doctors and lawyers, there is no official license required to serve as a nanny; therefore, it is important for parents to thoroughly check a child caretaker’s background. If you hire through a reputable agency, that agency has probably done a background check for you. However, if you’re hiring a nanny on your own, consider using a professional [background-check service](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124286773775841705.html), like Sterlingbackcheck.com, NetDetective.com or USSearch.com. Be aware that even professional services have their drawbacks. For extra peace of mind, parents should check references, verify employment history and credentials, and run a Web search.