

## Who are you looking for?

First things first, work out exactly what type of childcare you need. Is it 7am until 7pm and sole charge? Or are you looking for part-time help or after-school and holiday care? Here are your options:

- **Nanny** Experienced and/or trained in caring for babies/children on a sole or shared charge basis. Live-in or out.
- **Mother's Help** Tend to be younger and less experienced. As the name suggests they will help out with childcare and around the house.
- **Nanny Housekeeper** Great if you have older children and need help around the house too. Live-in or live-out.
- **Au Pair** Usually aged 18–27, often coming to learn English on a cultural exchange to live as part of a family. In exchange they will help with childcare/light housework.
- **After-school/Holiday Help** Will collect from school, supervise homework, cook tea etc. or look after in the holidays.

## Nanny v Nursery

One of the key benefits of home help is flexibility. A nanny will work the hours you need and normally take half of their holidays (usually 28 days including bank holidays) at the same time as you. If your child is sick your nanny will still look after him/her. (Though nannies are only human and get sick too!) Nannies are more expensive but comparative costs reduce if you have more than one child. Nurseries are sometimes seen as a way of developing a child's social skills but a nanny should ensure your child is out socialising at playgroups and in the park as well.

## Holidays

Most nannies will expect to have 28 days holiday, including all bank holidays. Generally, you can choose half the dates and the nanny will choose the balance.



## Live-in

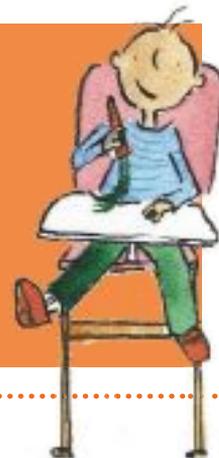
Having live-in help can be extremely handy but be realistic. Do you have enough space and can you cope with someone sharing your home? "You will be judged by what you can provide. If you're only offering a single room with a shared bathroom it's not going to appeal as much as someone who is able to offer a self-contained studio flat," says Kerry Dempsey, senior recruitment consultant with Greycoat Lumleys. A live-in nanny will also babysit for two nights a week.



# CHILDCARE @ HOME

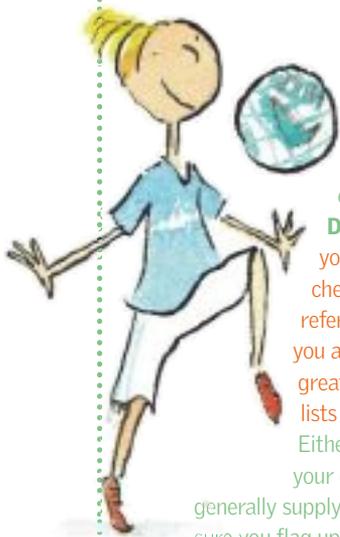
## Au Pairs

An au pair can provide affordable live-in childcare and a mutually beneficial cultural exchange, says Tuuli Liiskmaa, owner of Smart Au Pairs agency. An au pair is not an employee however and unlike a nanny is not qualified in childcare. Think of them as "an extra pair of hands," says Tuuli. An au pair can provide up to 30 hours a week, including two evenings of babysitting Monday–Friday. No sole care for children under two and a max 4 hours/day of sole care for pre-school children.



## The Cost

Childcare doesn't come cheaply in London. Most nannies will talk net salaries so you have to add on and pay tax, National Insurance and pension contributions. You will also be responsible for sick and maternity pay. Unless you are a trained accountant or love a spreadsheet, it's best to use a pay-roll company to issue payslips and sort out the tax etc. Try **Nanny Tax**. The cost of a nanny will vary on experience and the hours they work. The figures shown are gross annual salaries based on a five-day week (Monday–Friday) usually 50–55 hours. Live-in nannies work up to a 60-hour week plus two nights' babysitting.



## Recruitment

**USING AN AGENCY** An agency will save you time by filtering through potential candidates, taking references and conducting police checks. A good agency will also be able to give lots of advice on what type of nanny might suit you plus guide you on work and salary expectations.

**DIY** Be very specific about the hours/days and make sure you see copies of DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) police checks (ideally less than 12 months old), qualifications and references. It is well worth having a trial morning to see how you all get on with each other. Try [childcare.co.uk](http://childcare.co.uk) which is great for part-time nannies and [yuppies.co.uk](http://yuppies.co.uk), which also lists housekeepers, tutors and pet sitting.

Either way, make sure you have a written contract with your chosen candidate. An agency or a payroll company will generally supply a standard form but read it through carefully and make sure you flag up anything you are not sure about.

## Qualifications & Experience

The Cache Level 3 in Childcare has replaced the NNEB (National Nursery Examination Board) qualification. Some will have a BTEC or NVQ in Nursery Nursing and many would-be nannies take a 3-year BA in Early Years Development or Early Childhood Education and Care. Prestigious nanny training school, Norland, has switched to the BA and Chiltern College no longer offers nanny courses. You may also find candidates who have Montessori qualifications.

## Part-time Help

Finding help after-school can be tricky. "Parents think that their childcare problems are over once the kids go to school but most children get 13 weeks holiday a year while working parents get just 5," says Rachel Carrell founder of **Koru Kids**, which specialises in after school childcare. Koru Kids find non-traditional nannies such as university students or older adults happy to work afternoons. Sophie Lake who runs the part-time Creative Childcare arm of agency **Role Models**, matches your child with someone who shares their passion whether it's music, sport, acting, art etc. "The idea is to inspire children and ensure every child feels valued and supported but, most important, is having serious fun in the process," says Sophie.

In the second part of her **Childcare** series, mum of four **Suzie Skipper**, looks at home options, from professional nannies to mother's helps and au pairs.

Illustrations by Charlotte Cleveland.



## Be Clear

Whether you are employing an experienced nanny or a young au pair, be clear and open on what you want and what their duties are. I was very up front at the outset that I needed a degree of flexibility on my working days and that for this reason my nanny could leave earlier on Fridays.

Be practical too: "If you know your child doesn't sleep during the day don't ask your nanny to do too many extra tasks such as ironing and tidying," says Sabine Hook director of SH Nursery Consultancy.

## Choosing the best candidate

Don't get hung up on the number of years' experience and training; it is far better to focus on personality and parenting style compatibility, says Zarja, mum and founder of childcare matchmaking site, **myTamarin**. "You can learn skills but you can't learn attitude and it is important that your nanny is happy to do things your way with your children," says Zarja. Like with most things in life, it is best to go with your gut feel; whether it's for a sole-charge nanny or a young au pair.



Live-out nanny £37,000-£45,000 p/a

Live-in nanny £26,000-£35,000 p/a

Live-in nanny/housekeeper £26,000-£33,500 p/a

Live-out nanny/housekeeper £33,500-£41,00 p/a

Live-in junior nanny £18,000-£26,000 p/a  
and live-out £33,500+ p/a

Part-time/After School nannies usually charge between £12-15 per hour net

Au Pair weekly pocket money £85-90 for 25 hours p/w, or £100-£105 for 30 hours p/w plus £5-7/hour for extra hours



## Nanny Share

Sharing the cost of a nanny with another family can be a perfect solution. Make sure you iron out exactly what you both want before you look for a nanny. Perhaps you both need full-time help and will split the care between both homes. Or maybe you plan to split the week between you. Most nannies will expect to earn a little extra for looking after two families.