



Ten Tips:

## Why Nannies Quit

Families often wonder, "What can we do to get more stability in our childcare situation?" Why do some families seem to have one nanny after another, while a different family might have the same nanny for five or more years? HomeWork Solutions' Kathleen Webb worked with a nationwide group of professional nannies and they developed this David Letterman-style list.

### 10. ISOLATION

Occasionally a family outright forbids the nanny to leave the home with the child. Nannies look forward to taking a walk with the baby on a nice day, perhaps walking with another neighborhood nanny or at-home mom, chatting, enjoying the interaction. Toddlers look forward to spending an hour exploring the local playground. Webb observes, "Criminals get sentenced to house arrest - please don't do this to your child's caregiver!"

A live in nanny, especially one who has relocated for the job, must have the opportunity and means (transportation) to establish a social life outside the home. Generally a live in nanny who does not have reliable access to a vehicle in the evenings and weekends will not stay long.

### 9. LACK OF RECOGNITION

Nanny spends long hours with your children, with little interaction with other adults. Parents who are so preoccupied with the demands of their own careers and lives that they forget to express appreciation for the nanny often find themselves without a nanny unexpectedly. **Words really do matter.**

### 8. FAMILY DYSFUNCTION

Substance abuse, physical abuse, marital wars, emotional instability... any and all of these in a household can cause a nanny to quit.

### 7. MICRO MANAGEMENT

(SAHM and WAHM) When one or both parents spend a considerable amount of time at home while nanny is on duty problems often develop unless steps are taken up front to establish boundaries. Once established, consistently reinforce and respect these boundaries.

### 6. EXPENSES

Nannies who are asked to run family errands - whether groceries, dry cleaning, or party gifts - should be left adequate funds in advance. When nanny is required to provide transportation in her personal vehicle, adequate mileage reimbursement should occur.

*"I could do this myself but HomeWork Solutions is so easy to work with. Dealing with seniors every day, I know the assurance that required paperwork is completed accurately, reliably and on time for senior care is invaluable"*

*- Stacy C., Attorney, Washington D.C.*

*"Please renew my annual service. I did find a new nanny, Mary Poppins to be exact ;-), and I will be needing your services again. Thanks for a great service!"*

*- Janine M., Mother, Cary, NC*

## 5. TAXES

Employers, take the time to discuss wage and tax issues SPECIFICALLY at the very beginning and memorialize this in your [Work Agreement](#). Consider giving the nanny a breakdown of the tax deductions from her paycheck with her first payment, and any time there is a change to her compensation. In many states, this is the law! Consult a [nanny tax specialist](#) for assistance when needed.

## 4. POOR COMMUNICATION

The employer must make the time to establish regular communication with the nanny. Find 15 minutes once a week to just sit down and talk over the relationship and how things are going. Consider requiring a Nanny Log and actually look at it every 24 hours, jotting a note to nanny every few days with recognition, suggestions, or just the information that you might be a few minutes late on Thursday.

## 3. NON-COMPETITIVE COMPENSATION

New nannies especially are often eager to accept the nanny job and do not investigate local wages or costs. When nannies find out that \$350 per week for a 50 hour week is NOT the norm, they will leave for a better paying job, often without notice. Remember, nannies are covered by Federal and state minimum wage statues and are legally defined as hourly employees.

## 2. DUTIES ADDED ONE BY ONE

Sometimes referred to as job creep, the family adds duties (housekeeping, cooking, shopping, watching your neighbor's son after school) without appropriate compensation.

## 1. SCHEDULES THAT GROW, GROW, GROW

Careful! Abusing the nanny's schedule with unplanned overtime can cost you your nanny! Just as an employer will fire a chronically late employee, a nanny will quit on a chronically late parent. And remember, always compensate for overtime. You don't want a disgruntled employee filing a wage and hour grievance against you!

### Other Helpful Hints

- Make sure you start your nanny's employment by documenting a [written work agreement](#).
- Always state your nanny's wage in HOURLY rate terms. This insures FLSA compliance and facilitates [overtime](#) calculations.
- Regularly find the time – 10 minutes will do – to chat with your nanny about her job. How is she doing? Are there any issues? Can you help?

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I've spoken to thousands of nannies from across the USA in the last 30 years. Nannies have many reasons for quitting a job, and the list at left includes the most frequently heard complaints.

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