



Heartland clients cherish our trustworthy, loving, and efficient live-in nannies. Over the years, our nannies have shared suggestions to help make our clients' experience more positive and rewarding. Here are our favorite recommendations to hire and retain exceptional nannies.

1. Welcoming your nanny The first two weeks can be crucial to your nanny's decision to stay with your family. Take time to show your nanny around town and introduce him or her to your friends and neighbors. If possible, do not put your new nanny to work on the first day. Instead, make it a celebration! Allow your new nanny to spend plenty of one-on-one time with your children. Remember, it takes time to bond. Also, you must ensure the children treat your nanny with respect. They should know the new nanny has your full support.

2. Housekeeping support Most families need to employ a regular cleaning service. Your nanny may help to load the dishwasher, take out the garbage, and keep the common areas neat. However, the nanny's primary job is to care for the children – not to clean the house. Employers who expect the nanny to provide full housekeeping need to communicate this before hiring a nanny, and you should expect to pay more for this service.

3. Accommodations The nanny's quarters should be thoroughly cleaned and contain no family personal items. Clean out the closet and dresser drawers, and furnish the room with a comfortable bed. You want your nanny to truly feel comfortable in his or her personal space. The entire family should respect the nanny's privacy and time off and never enter the room without permission.

4. The entire package Plan to provide a variety of benefits to your nannies, including health insurance. Some insurance companies specialize in health insurance for nannies and offer low rates for short-term policies. Most families who employ live-in nannies provide a car for the nanny's exclusive use. You can place mileage restrictions on the car, but your nanny should have the right to drive the vehicle during his or her free time. Also, be sure to have proper insurance coverage. In addition, provide a cell phone, so you can contact your nanny at all times.

5. Incentives Nannies thrive if they feel salary raises are possible. Plus, an end-of-the year bonus helps to ensure a positive, long-term relationship.

6. Balance Since this is a salaried position, it can be tempting to heap on the hours without providing additional pay. The salary you pay your nanny should reflect no more than 50 hours of work a week. Any additional hours should be compensated with extra pay or extra time off. Be sure the workload does not distract from your nanny's primary responsibility: the proper and safe care of your children. Your children will thrive with the creative energy of a nanny who is not exhausted from domestic chores.

7. Sensitivity No one is exempt from the occasional bad day. A good working relationship between you and your nanny, like any professional relationship, requires occasional tact on everyone's part. A little sensitivity on those days can help maintain a harmonious, productive, long-term relationship. In addition, ask yourself if the workload is realistic or if family and lifestyle changes are burdening your nanny. If so, work with your nanny to ease the burden.

8. Work Load If your nanny is working long hours every day to cover the time you're at work and commuting, schedule other child care for the nights and weekends. This can help keep your nanny from experiencing burn out – and ensure a healthy, long-term relationship.

9. Flexibility The best employer/nanny relationships blend professionalism, friendliness, and respect of privacy. We encourage nannies to be flexible with their employers regarding hours of work (often, parents' careers are demanding). However, employers should understand a nanny's need to interact with peers during off hours and trust that his or her plans for free time will be respected. Trust your nanny with the alarm code and communicate the household security protocol. (Do not impose a curfew unless absolutely necessary.)

10. Communication The very best relationships develop when people take time to communicate. Encourage your nanny to discuss any concerns regarding the children or working conditions with you. We recommend regular staff meetings, so you can both communicate ideas and suggestions; schedule these meetings when there will be no interruptions.

Many nannies and families form a bond that lasts a lifetime. With a foundation of respect and open communication, your children can have an exceptional nanny as they grow and mature. And you can make your nanny's job a delightful, rewarding experience.