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#### Family & Parenting

## Transitioning Into Life with a Nanny

Six tips for making your new caregiver feel at home

**Whitney Baker**



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You've completed the interview process, and you've found a nanny who seems to fit perfectly with your schedule, your lifestyle, and, most importantly, your family. Now what? How do you handle the next steps?

As unsure as you and your children may be about bringing a new sitter into your home, you can assume that the caregiver feels just as nervous about his or her new role. Regardless of how much time your nanny spends with your kids, the transitioning period—whether it be within the first few days or throughout the first month—sets the foundation for the relationship that will ultimately develop between your family and your caregiver. This statement is true for not only part-time or full-time nannies but also for your evening and weekend babysitters.

Although this interaction is primarily an employer/employee relationship, it should be an intimate one as well. It is important to make sure that your nanny feels at home and comfortable enough to come to you with questions or concerns. He or she must also be at ease around your kids, and likewise, your kids should enjoy spending time with the caregiver. Additionally, it is difficult for any babysitter to remain in control if they are viewed as an outsider rather than an authoritative figure.

Here are a few suggestions to bridge the gap between your family and new caregiver, making the initial stages a bit easier.

- **Prior to the start date, invite your new caregiver over and allow him or her to become acquainted with you and your children in your normal environment.** By joining your family in a relaxed setting, the nanny will gain a better sense of what kind of household you have and know the type of atmosphere to create while taking care of your children.
- **Discuss in advanced any particular rules or boundaries that you want to make sure are set.** All families are different, and it will take the caregiver a little bit of time to become in tune with how your family operates. Being up front and helping them with this process will allow for a quicker and smoother transition.
- **Be organized for your sitter's first day.** Make sure to leave an outlined schedule and useful numbers as a way to help the nanny adjust to your children's daily routine. There is nothing more unsettling for a caregiver than arriving unprepared and instantly feeling overwhelmed. You want to ensure that they are properly set up for success.
- **Sit down after the first week and recap together on how everything is going.** Taking the time early on in the relationship will give the sitter an opportunity to ask any new questions and help prevent future communication problems.
- **If it is close to a holiday, think about giving your nanny a small gift.** Even if you simply bake cookies with your kids, this gesture shows the caregiver how appreciative you are of his or her efforts. It also serves as an example of how your children should treat this new person in their life: if you treat the nanny with this respect, your kids will do the same.
- **Encourage your sitter to try out adventurous activities with your children.** By suggesting trips to the pool or afternoons at the park, you show the nanny that you trust him or her with your children and thus immediately pass along a sense of responsibility that will be acknowledged for both the caregiver and your children.

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This is great. I'd been both a live in and love out nanny and am now in a position where I've had to hire one. Nannies aren't your best friend by any means but they become part of the family and it very important to treat them that way. And, as a mom that works from home, it's important for me to let the nanny, and children, know that she's in charge when she's here. Defer to her, get here help, etc., etc., and that empowers her to take charge and be confident and comfortable. Thanks for posting this!

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