



HOME & FAMILY CARE

Interview guide

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Interview guide

Hiring the right child carer

Asking the right questions at the interview can be the key to finding a child carer who is best suited to fit in with your family structure.

Here are some questions that will provoke answers to aid your selection decision:

Employment history / Future goals

These questions should give you an idea of the carer's general background.

- What are your future goals?
- Describe your overall childcare experience.
- What is the best job you have ever had? What did you most enjoy about it?
- What did you like most and least about your previous positions?
- What do you think your previous employers would have to say about you?
- What do you find appealing about caring for children?
- What do you find to be the most challenging thing about working with children?
- What was the worst childcare experience you had? How did you handle it?

About yourself / Experience / Childcare philosophy questions

These questions should enlighten you as to more specific aspects of the carer's childcare beliefs and knowledge.

- What are the ages of the children you have cared for in the past? Do you have any specific experience with the age of our child/children?
- How many children have you cared for alone, at one time? Did you feel overwhelmed in any way?
- Have you cared for a child for the amount of hours per week that we require? And are you comfortable being in sole charge of a child's care for this amount of time?
- Have you ever been in an emergency situation? How did you handle it? If not, how do you think you would handle it?
- How do you handle an upset or crying child? How do you feel when a child cries?
- If the child has a temper tantrum, how would you handle it? Would you handle the situation differently in public?
- What discipline philosophy do you follow?
- How do you feel about routines and implementing boundaries?
- Would you be willing to follow my rules even if they differ from yours?
- What do you believe are the most critical factors in raising children?
- Tell us about your own childhood. As a child, how were you disciplined?
- Do you consider yourself organized/efficient/creative/resourceful/flexible?
- What types of things do you like to do in your free time?
- How would your closest friends describe you?
- What do you think children like best about you?

About the position you are seeking

These questions will depend on your individual household, the duties you require and on the ages of your child or children.

- When you last cared for a child, what types of activities did you engage the child in?
- What types of things would you initiate to resolve boredom?
- What educational activities would you do with my child?
- Would you be happy to take a child on outings? If so, what type of outings would you go on?
- Have you ever potty trained a child before? What was your approach? Did it work?
- What types of meals can you prepare for a child? How would you work with a child who is a fussy eater? If you are a vegetarian, will you be prepared to cook meat? Have you ever weaned a baby onto solid food before?
- Have you ever bathed a child? What safety measures would you take?
- For how long have you been driving and how frequently do you drive? What safety precautions would you take when driving with a child of my child's age? Have you ever been in an accident? If so, please discuss.
- What television programmes do you feel are appropriate for children of my child's age? How much television do you think is appropriate for a child of my child's age to watch?

- Would you be willing to supervise other children at my house, during play dates? Would you be willing to take my child to play dates with his/her friends?
- Are you comfortable with supervising and assisting with basic homework and/or test revision?
- Are you willing to help with child related household chores? How would you encourage a child to be conscientious about neatness and tidiness?
- How do you feel about the following our house rules? (Describe your rules such as fiends & boyfriends visiting, use of phone etc).
- Do you feel comfortable working with the pet in our home? Do you have any pets?
- If you smoke, how do you feel you would cope without smoking during working hours?
- Do you have any medical problems or allergies that would affect your work?

Interview tips

- Have your interview questions or an interview guide ready to use.
- Read the CV before the interview. Write down questions that you may have about their background, previous jobs and gaps in employment.
- Firstly, establish rapport by making “small talk”. Don’t jump straight into the most difficult questions, as the interviewee will need some time to feel comfortable and to shake off some nerves.
- Don’t do all of the talking. Let them talk 80% of the time.
- Don’t fill in pauses in conversation – let them do this, as it gives them the opportunity to elaborate.
- Ask questions objectively. Don’t “lead” an interviewee to a particular answer.
- Paraphrase answers back to them so they can fill in things that you/they may have missed.
- Don’t ask too many “Yes/No Questions”. Rather ask “What if” or “How would you” questions.
- Ask them for examples of situations relating to a question.
- Do they speak well of their previous employer/s? Do they breach confidentiality? They should show love and passion when they talk about previous jobs.
- Are they comfortable when they talk about previous work?
- Don’t let them be vague (Get dates, places and details). Push for answers by using closed questions: Say “Give me more background...”, “Then what happened?” and so on. Don’t let them get away with “I never/I always”. These are not specific examples.
- When asking about their previous employment – ask “How”, “Why”, “Describe” and “Compare” questions.
- Encourage them to ask questions. It is very important to ensure total compatibility!

Things to look out for

- Do they have favorable things to say about their last jobs? Previous employment should have been happy and successful.
- Do they have favorable things to say about their parents and about their upbringing? Although some child carers are able to recognize negative family traits and replace these with positive ones, some dysfunctional families pass down negative patterns, beliefs and parenting philosophies.
- Is their body language good? Do they lean forward, have good posture and make appropriate eye contact? Or do they rigidly cross arms and legs, lean back in their chair and stare/have no eye contact?
- Do they seem upbeat and genuinely interested in your children and about the prospective position?
- Do they bond naturally with your children and make an effort to talk and to interact with them?
- Do your children seem to be at ease with them?
- Do you feel relaxed and comfortable around them?
- Are they courteous throughout the interview and did they thank you for your time?

Good luck,

The Careway team

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