

# Who's Your Nanny?

By Alan Payton

You recently had your first child. After an always too brief maternity leave, it's time to return to work. You want your child to have the attention he or she deserves as an infant, so you look for a nanny to come into your home and provide one-on-one care.

You surf the web, then place an ad in the local classifieds and a number of prospective nannies apply. Is one of them your Mary Poppins? When many have similar resumes, a parent should use a two-part process when determining the nanny to hire: a proper interview and a thorough background investigation. All interviews should have the following category of questions:

**Icebreaker** – Tell me about yourself? How long in childcare? What do you like most about it?

**Family/Upbringing** – How would you describe your childhood? What disciplinary methods did your parents use? Tell me about your family?

**Education** – Tell me about high school? Any college, if so what major? What was your favorite subject and teacher? Have you had childcare classes?

**Safety questions** – Do you have certifications in CPR, First Responder, and first aid? Have you ever had a child who was injured? What would you do if a child bumped their head?

**Age specific** – What do you do to quiet a baby? What activities stimulate a child's mind? Have you ever potty trained a child? How would you teach a toddler good eating habits?

Many resumes may contain lies or half-truths. Some applicants omit a fact that could be key to your child's well being, as well as the safety of your home and assets. How do you check the facts? Typically, through a background check.

**A nanny background investigation should include the following:**

**General questions** – What are your strongest qualities? Are you willing to drive the children? How is your driving record? Any arrests? Where have you lived the past ten years and for how long? Do you have references?

**Residential History** – Does this person have roots in the area, and local referrals that can vouch for them? Are there large amounts of time spent elsewhere?

**Criminal History** including Federal, State and County records



**Are they sex offenders or sexual predators?** Receiving a call from a Probation Officer regarding a nanny you recently hired, can leave you in an uncomfortable and costly position.

**Drivers License History** – With a report detailing traffic violations and accidents, you will know if an applicant can be trusted traveling with your child.

**Social Security Number Validation** A fake can easily be identified. Check the date and state issued. In some cases, an applicant will use the Social Security number of a deceased or previous child cared for.

**Liens and Judgments** – Outstanding liens and judgments can provide a snapshot on one's accountability. If they can't manage their own life, can they help with yours?

Professional licenses including State child-care certifications.

Research through relevant media sources can detail past dealings that were below the radar.

Employment/education verifications

After a Nanny is hired, a parent should continue to monitor the safety of the child.

**The following is a list of signs of a good nanny:**

Your child lights up at the first sight of her.

Your kids can't stop talking about all the wonderful things she says or does.

She comes up with creative solutions to problems and works with you to provide the best possible case for your child.

She arrives on time.

She makes an effort to stay connected.

Your child volunteers new songs and words, and shows off his many projects.

Your child's room is clean, and so is your child.

Accidents are infrequent.

Parents should consult experts when hiring a nanny. Investigators will assist a parent in the hiring process. Investigators will provide the parent with a detailed nanny questionnaire, complete an extensive background investigation, and, if necessary, help with the installation of nanny cams in the house.

Alan Payton is President of the Investigative Support Group, Inc., a full service Investigative Agency serving the entire state of Florida.