Family Care Resources

In-Home Care
Tip Sheets
Nanny Tax Compliance: What You Need to Know

By: Barbara Yudd

Household employers are required to withhold FICA taxes (made up of Social Security and Medicare) on employee wages. Federal and State Unemployment insurance contributions are also required as an employer liability; meaning they may not be withheld from employee’s wages. While Federal and State income tax is not required to be withheld, household employers are liable for these taxes and must file personal income tax returns. If employees do not opt to have the income taxes withheld from their paychecks, they should make Federal and State estimated tax payments throughout the year to cover this tax liability. If however, your employee requests that you withhold the income taxes from their wages, then you must do so and remit the taxes to the appropriate agencies.

Prior to the first day of work, employers should give the new employee official paperwork to complete consisting of the Form W-4, Employee’s Withholding Allowance Certificate and the Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification. These forms will ask for name, address, social security number, and additionally the I-9 will ask for identification proof. Employers should maintain fully documented personnel files for each household employee. This will come in handy if the employer were to encounter a payroll or tax audit. It is crucial for employers to be able to show proof that their employee’s eligibility to work was verified and documented at the time of hire. Records of any payroll, tax returns, and tax payments must also be maintained.

Household employees include more than nannies. Families may hire a housekeeper, gardener, butler, nurse and/or personal assistant to name a few. All of these would fall into the same category for household taxes as a nanny or childcare provider.

To obtain more information on household employment taxes, please visit www.payyournanny.com or contact Barbara Yudd directly at 703-819-9796 or via email byudd@payyournanny.com. Barbara Yudd is a professional accounting consultant with over 20 years experience specializing in payroll and tax compliance issues. Payyournanny.com is a nationwide payroll and tax service that has been assisting families in payroll tax compliance for more than 16 years.

PayYourNanny.com
We’re here to help families.

(703) 819-9796 phone • (703) 327-2264 fax
byudd@payyournanny.com
For Household Employers

- Register with federal and state taxing authorities to obtain Tax Identification Numbers.
- Maintain current employee file with completed documentation - Forms W-4 and I-9 with appropriate backup.
- Comply with state New Hire Reporting requirements.
- Choose pay cycle: weekly, bi-weekly, semi-monthly, or monthly.
- Withhold FICA taxes from household employees earning more than $1,700 in the current year.
- Match FICA tax withheld from household employee.
- Withhold federal and state income tax at the request of the employee. Note, it is not required to withhold federal and state taxes from household employees unless they request you to do so. However, household employees are liable for all federal and state income taxes.
- Domestic service by persons under the age of 18 is exempt from coverage unless it is the worker’s principal occupation.
- Remit state and federal unemployment insurance premiums quarterly or annually.
- Remit withholding taxes to proper authorities on a quarterly and/or annual basis.
- Adjust tax withholdings from personal wages or increase quarterly estimated tax payments to absorb the employment taxes owed as a result of hiring household employees.

Tax Calendar

**April 30th**
First Quarter state unemployment tax return
First Quarter state withholding tax return (if applicable)

**July 31st**
Second Quarter state unemployment tax return
Second Quarter state withholding tax return (if applicable)

**October 31st**
Third Quarter state unemployment tax return
Third Quarter state withholding tax return (if applicable)

**January 31st**
Fourth Quarter state unemployment tax return
Fourth Quarter state withholding tax return (if applicable)
Wages and Tax Statement - Form W-2
Annex 3 State Withholding Tax Reconciliation

**February 28th**
W-2 Transmitted - Form W-3

**April 15th**
Schedule H - to be filed with Form 1040
A List of E-Sources for Child Care

Quick Jobs/Career Center:
www.careercenter.umd.edu
1. Click Employers
2. Scroll down to "Recruiting at UM"
3. Click "Quick Jobs --- Domestic & Short Term Jobs"

Craig's List
http://washingtondc.craigslist.org

Association of DC Area Nannies:
www.dccarenannies.com

DC Urban Moms
www.dccurbanmoms.org

E Nanny Source
www.enannysource.com

www.Care.com

www.SitterCity.com

www.Babysitters.com

www.SitterCafe.com

www.PhoneABabysitter.com

www.MyNannyCalledInSick.com

www.4sitters.com

Note: Please be very careful when using these services. The above services may not be able to provide full time, long term care resources, reliability, credibility and responsible individuals. Do your own criminal records checks, reference checks and interviews before hiring anyone to work as your child care provider or babysitter or nanny.
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Below is a list of University Career Centers in the Metropolitan area that offer job placement services to students such as babysitting and nanny jobs.

U of MD ~ Quick Jobs
http://www.careercenter.umd.edu/form.cfm?form_id=6

American U
http://jobs.auag.org/

George Mason U
http://careers.gmu.edu/employers/posting/

Georgetown U
http://scc.georgetown.edu/students/career-services

George Washington U
http://gwired.gwu.edu/career/students/parttimejobs/

Howard Community College / Howard County
https://www.myinterface.com/howardccc/employer
OR Contact Counseling and Career Services
Phone: 4435181340
CCS@howardccc.edu

Howard University/ DC location
https://howard.csm.symplicity.com/employers/

Montgomery College
https://montgomerycollege-csm.symplicity.com/employers/

Northern Virginia Community College
https://nvcc-studentemployment.ngwebsolutions.com/Cmx_Content.aspx?cpId=8
List of Au Pair Services

Great Au Pair
http://www.greataupair.com/Hire/Au_Pair/Washington-DC.htm
- Free registration and job posting
- Free U.S. caregiver background checks
- Proprietary 30-point fraud prevention system
- Complete privacy control for your protection
- Thousands of qualified care providers and jobs worldwide
- Dedicated, knowledgeable telephone and email support team
- Full-service agency support available

Go Au Pair
http://www.gopaupair.com/Washington-DC
- Provides safe, reliable live-in child care and supervision of your children
- Offers a valuable cultural experience for your family
- Au Pairs work up to 45 hours per week and 10 hours per day which offers flexibility
- Au Pairs participate in your family life and activities creating a consistent, safe and loving environment

InterExchange Au Pair USA Agency
- Competitive Pricing – one of the most affordable au pair agencies and includes manageable payment plans at
- Superior Customer Service
- First Hand International Experience
- All au pairs study childhood development
- Au Pairs are trained in CPR and First Aid

Au Pair Foundation
www.aupairfoundation.org/
- Au Pair Foundation is a small agency that takes the time to speak with each individual participant and values the relationships developed with families and au pairs.
- Unlike many agencies, participants not only have contact information for their local community representative, but also for their Regional Director and the Au Pair Foundation office team.

Au Pair Care
http://www.aupaircare.com/
- One of the first au pair agencies designated by the United States Department of State to legally sponsor au pairs to come to the United States
- Created and run by working parents
- Carefully screened au pairs who are qualified, affordable and love working with children
- Has a longstanding relationship with the U.S. Department of State and embassies abroad and in the U.S.
- Has partnerships with and memberships in the following international education, exchange and au pair associations:

- Online matching technology which allows host families to search au pair profiles based on specific needs have been recognized with the following awards:
Au Pair in America
www.aupairinamerica.com/DC
- Au pairs are thoroughly screened and uniquely matched to fit your family
- Cost-effective: 45 hours of child care for $351 per week
- Enriching experience for your children
- Safety first through orientation and training
- The nation’s most trusted and experienced provider
- Support and guidance 24/7

CHI Au Pair USA
www.chiaupairusa.org
- 12 months of live-in childcare by an experienced and well trained au pair
- Up to 45 hours a week of one-on-one attention for your children
- Approximately $343 per week for a family with one or more children
- Staff dedicated to providing personalized support and assistance
- Review and selection from a diverse group of thoroughly screened au pair profiles
- Recognized by the U.S. Department of State and adheres to stringent government regulations

Ratings and Reviews of Au Pair Agencies can be found at:
http://aupairclearinghouse.com/Home
- Ratings and Reviews on customer service, costs, hidden fees, special programs, and more.
- Daily Updates on au pair agency discounts, new and innovative services, current news stories and press releases.
- Host Family Tips Expert Advice and Safety Tips on how to make your au pair experience the best it can be.
- Cultural Differences - Explore The Countries and Cultures Au Pairs Come From.
- Up-to-date U. S. Department of State Regulations
CONSIDERATIONS

There are many questions to consider when choosing an in-home provider. Keep these questions in mind when making your decision:

- What type of schedule are you needing care? What days of the week? What hours? (including travel time to and from work)

- Will you need care overnight or for business trips? (If so, live-in care may be more suitable)

- Are you willing to give up family privacy and living space in exchange for the flexible schedule of a live-in provider?

- How much are you willing to pay?

- Will you provide benefits? (insurance, mileage reimbursement, paid personal and sick leave, training tuition)

- Are you willing to take on the responsibilities of being an employer for your nanny or babysitter? (record keeping, taxes)

- Are you comfortable with someone being in your home when you are not present?

- What expectations do you have of your provider? (transporting children, cooking, cleaning, errands)

- How much training and experience would you prefer your child’s provider to have? Are you willing to pay for training for your caregiver?

- What type of personality would blend with your child’s temperament and your family’s environment?

- What are your philosophies of child rearing and discipline? How closely would you like your caregiver’s philosophies to resemble your own?

- How long will you need child care? Until your child begins preschool? Kindergarten? Junior High?
SAMPLE ADS TO HIRE A BABYSITTER/NANNY

Example #1

CHILD CARE NEEDED loving responsible person to care for happy 4 month old girl in Silver Spring. Weekdays 7:30-5:30 pm. References required. Non-smoking English speaking household.

Start September 1st. Call 301-__________

Example #2

NEED responsible part-time BABYSITTER for 3 interesting school age children.

Driver's license and references required.

Leave message: 301-__________

Example #3

HOUSEKEEPING: Single parent needs LIGHT housekeeping and child care for teenagers after school. 2-6:00 pm. Mon-Fri.

English speaking household; green card

Call after 6 pm. 301-__________
HOW TO CONDUCT A TELEPHONE INTERVIEW WITH A REFERENCE

Date of Telephone Call _____________________ Telephone No. ___________________
Name of Applicant____________________________ Address of Applicant________________________

1. Introduce yourself
2. Confirm identity of the reference ("Is this so and so?")
3. Ask the following questions:
   - How long did applicant work for you? Dates of employment?
   - If in capacity of child care, what ages were your children during that period?
   - What were reasons for termination?
   - What type of work was required? (Housework, child care, work hours, specific responsibilities, other responsibilities?)
   - How much did you pay?
   - What were the applicant's previous jobs?
   - Did you check for references?
   - What were the applicant's strong points?
   - Weak points?
   - Would you choose this person again?
   - What did you like most or least about this person?

4. Impressions: Did reference hesitate, sound at all cautious?

From: Guide for Parents with Careers. Rebecca Sager Arinery and Michele Beacon.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Child-care experience</th>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Rigid/At Ease</th>
<th>Salary requested</th>
<th>Interview Impression</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Own care</td>
<td>OK reference, not child care</td>
<td>Has 2 grown children, no child-care job</td>
<td>Articulate</td>
<td>At ease, warm, and friendly</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Bus, one line, reliable</td>
<td>Good child care reference</td>
<td>1 job 2 years ago, current job unrelated</td>
<td>Articulate</td>
<td>Stiff, reserved</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>OK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 buses</td>
<td>Excellent child-care reference</td>
<td>2 child care jobs, both long-term</td>
<td>Articulate</td>
<td>At ease, but cool</td>
<td>Barely affordable</td>
<td>Good</td>
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<td>Name of applicant</td>
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<td>References</td>
<td>Child-care experience</td>
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# Lists of Acceptable Documents

**List A**
Documents that Establish Basic Identity and Employment Authorization

| 1. | U.S. Passport or U.S. Passport Card |
| 2. | Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (Form I-551) |
| 3. | Foreign passport that contains a temporary I-551 stamp or temporary I-551 printed notation on a machine-readable immigrant visa |
| 4. | Employment Authorization Document that contains a photograph (Form I-766) |
| 5. | In the case of a nonimmigrant alien, the passport or Form I-94, or Form I-94A, bearing the same name as the passport and containing an endorsement of the alien's nonimmigrant status, as long as the period of endorsement has not yet expired and the proposed employment is not in conflict with any restrictions or limitations identified on the form |
| 6. | Passport from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) or the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) with Form I-94 or Form I-94A indicating nonimmigrant admission under the Compact of Free Association Between the United States and the FSM or RMI |

**List B**
Documents that Establish Identity

| 1. | Driver’s license or ID card issued by a State or territory of the United States provided it contains a photograph or information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address |
| 2. | ID card issued by federal, state, or local government agencies or entities, provided it contains a photograph or information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address |
| 3. | School ID card with a photograph |
| 4. | Voter’s registration card |
| 5. | U.S. Military card or draft record |
| 6. | Military dependent’s ID card |
| 7. | U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Card |
| 8. | Native American tribal document |
| 9. | Driver’s license issued by a Canadian government authority |
| 10. | For persons under age 18 who are unable to present a document listed above |
| 11. | School record or report card |
| 12. | Clinic, doctor, or hospital record |
| 13. | Day-care or nursery school record |

**List C**
Documents that Establish Employment Authorization

| 1. | Social Security Account Number card other than one that specifies on the face that the issuance of the card does not authorize employment in the United States |
| 2. | Certification of Birth Abroad issued by the Department of State (Form FS-545) |
| 3. | Certification of Report of Birth issued by the Department of State (Form DS-1350) |
| 4. | Original or certified copy of birth certificate issued by a State, county, municipal authority, or territory of the United States bearing an official seal |
| 5. | Native American tribal document |
| 6. | U.S. Citizen ID Card (Form I-197) |
| 7. | Identification Card for Use of Resident Citizen in the United States (Form I-179) |
| 8. | Employment authorization document issued by the Department of Homeland Security |

Illustrations of many of these documents appear in Part 8 of the Handbook for Employers (M-274)
Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification

Read instructions carefully before completing this form. The instructions must be available during completion of this form.

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE: It is illegal to discriminate against work-authorized individuals. Employers CANNOT specify which document(s) they will accept from an employee. The refusal to hire an individual because the documents have a future expiration date may also constitute illegal discrimination.

Section 1. Employee Information and Verification (To be completed and signed by employee at the time employment begins.)

Print Name: ___________________________ First: ___________________________

Middle Initial: ___________________________ Last Name: ___________________________

Address (Street Name and Number): ___________________________

City: ___________________________ State: ___________________________ Zip Code: ___________________________

Date of Birth: ___________________________ (Month/Day/Year)

Social Security #: ___________________________

I am aware that federal law provides for imprisonment and/or fines for false statements or use of false documents in connection with the completion of this form.

I swear, under penalty of perjury, that I am (check one of the following):

☐ A citizen of the United States
☐ A noncitizen national of the United States (see instructions)
☐ A lawful permanent resident (Alien #)
☐ An alien unauthorized to work (Alien # or Admission #)

Until: ___________________________ (Expiration date, if applicable - Month/Day/Year)

Employer's Signature: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________ (Month/Day/Year)

Preparer and/or Translator Certification (To be completed and signed if Section 1 is prepared by a person other than the employee.) I certify, under penalty of perjury, that I have assisted in the completion of this form and that to the best of my knowledge the information is true and correct.

Preparer's/Translator's Signature: ___________________________

Print Name: ___________________________

Address (Street Name and Number, City, State, Zip Code): ___________________________

Date: ___________________________ (Month/Day/Year)

Section 2. Employer Review and Verification (To be completed and signed by employer. Examine one document from List A OR examine one document from List B and one from List C, as listed on the reverse of this form, and record the title, number, and expiration date, if any, of the document(s).)

List A: OR List B: AND List C: ___________________________

Document title: ___________________________

Issuing authority: ___________________________

Document #: ___________________________

Expiration Date (if any): ___________________________

Document #: ___________________________

Expiration Date (if any): ___________________________

CERTIFICATION: I swear, under penalty of perjury, that I have examined the document(s) presented by the above-named employee, that the above-listed document(s) appear to be genuine and to relate to the employee named, that the employee began employment on ___________________________ (Month/Day/Year) and that to the best of my knowledge the employee is authorized to work in the United States. (State employment agencies may omit the date the employee began employment.)

Signature of Employer or Authorized Representative: ___________________________

Print Name: ___________________________

Employee's/Employer's Address (Street Name and Number): ___________________________

City: ___________________________ State: ___________________________ Zip Code: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________ (Month/Day/Year)

Section 3. Updating and Reverification (To be completed and signed by employer.)(To be completed and signed by employer.)

K. New Name (if applicable): ___________________________

Date of Reissue (if applicable - Month/Day/Year): ___________________________

C. If employee's previous grant of work authorization has expired, provide the information below for the document that establishes current employment authorization.

Document Title: ___________________________

Document #: ___________________________

Expiration Date (if any): ___________________________

I swear, under penalty of perjury, that to the best of my knowledge, this employee is authorized to work in the United States, and if the employee presented documents, the document(s) have a remaining expiration date and to relate to the individual.

Signature of Employer or Authorized Representative: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________ (Month/Day/Year)

Form I-9 (Rev. 09/18/2018) M Page 4
When You're the Boss

How good the care-giver you hire will be depends largely on how good a boss you will be.

BY KATE KELLY

When I finally hired the woman who was going to take care of my baby, I thought my troubles were over. I had someone knowledgeable about infants who was going to provide me with time to be a writer as well as a mother.

What I failed to anticipate was that selecting was only half the battle. As a new, inexperienced mother, I didn't know how to be a boss in my own home. I was hesitant to tell a "baby nurse" how I wanted things done, and we disputed just about everything from days off to when the baby should start solids. After several months, tensions built to the point that we parted company.

I'd like to tell you that this woman was a poor care-giver, that I'm better off without her, but in all honesty, I can't. I can say that I've since hired some who is working out beautifully. She's terrific, but the real difference is that I'm a better boss. Experience and sound advice from friends have taught me how to make this working relationship work.

The first piece of advice from experienced mothers is to give a careful outline of the job. The baby's schedule is a big part of this; include when he naps, eats and how he should spend his waking hours. You may feel comfortable giving the care-giver breaks during the baby's naps, or you may have chores you want her to do. Tell her what is expected. Also explain any family peculiarities. "I'm a neatness nut," reports one mother. "It's very important that anyone who is going to be part of my household know that I like to have everything returned to its place."

Fringe benefits should also be discussed. (Whether or not Veteran's Day was a holiday was the first disagreement I had with the woman I hired.) The holidays you give will probably be based on your own work schedule. For sick days, one paid sick day for each day of the week worked is typical; that is, if your employee works five days a week, she deserves five sick days per year. For vacation time, many people offer one week after one year of employment and two weeks thereafter.

Accurate record-keeping of paid days off is important when it comes to eliminating any future dispute. If you write it down (as you go) there's nothing to argue about.

The control you exert concerning the actual care of your child will likely depend on the qualifications and personality of the person you've hired. An enthusiastic but inexperienced young care-giver will probably welcome information and ideas, while someone with a great deal of experience probably will not.

"I stipulated 'no sweets' and that the stereo should be off limits to Bryan, and otherwise, I've left the day to my housekeeper's discretion," says Linda Joseph, who returned to work when her son was 18 months old. "I know she does things differently than I would, but that's okay. Bryan is doing fine."

(Continued on page 48)
BOSS
(Continued from page 43)

"Initially, I left out toys and books and also suggested specific outings," says Beth Green, a photo editor at a news magazine. "Now, they've established their own schedule, but if the weather looks bad, I'll remind them of going to the museum or something else that I think Austin might enjoy."

The major problem usually felt by employee and employee, says Susan Kurnit, who manages a course for caregivers at the 92nd Street Y Parenting Center in New York City, is a failure to communicate on a regular basis. "Sometimes resentment builds because the employer has established no opportunity for questions to be asked or problems to be worked out," she notes. "It's important to establish a regular time each week when you can take an extra few minutes to discuss how things are going."

Establishing a household schedule can minimize the time you need to discuss day-to-day items, freeing up your meeting for more important issues.

A second piece of advice Ms. Kurnit offers is that you take note of how changes in your child's sleep and activity levels affect your caregiver. "Taking care of a newborn is very different from being responsible for a toddler," she reminds us. "Caregivers in my course frequently remark that when the child becomes more active, there is no time for the chores they did when the baby slept most of the day. Often the caregivers are reluctant to request a change, but they simply may not have time to do everything well."

Perhaps because this person is going to be cuddling and feeding your baby, washing and wiping your dishes and occasionally catching you in your bathrobe, it's sometimes hard to remember that nevertheless, the only relationship you need have with her is professional. She should not have to endure any more inconvenience than an office worker, nor need you be her good friend.

"Mutual respect is extremely important," explains Susan Kurnit, continuing that even something as simple as how you address each other can help put the relationship on a better footing.

"At the outset, you might say, 'I'd like to be called Mrs. Smith. What would you like to be called?' That gives her the option of being called 'Mrs. Jones.' Ms. Kurnit also notes that...

or who frequently calls saying she's been delayed at the office and will be 15 minutes late getting home should think about how she would feel if her household help frequently arrived late: "Consideration should go both ways," she says.

In many cases, a caregiver is a true professional by experience if not by scholastic training, and you may find that sometimes she is your most valuable resource. She likely knows the softest, least expensive, brand of baby wipes; she may have a terrific system for toilet-training; you may want her opinion on whether your child's sore throat ought to be checked by the pediatrician. Both of you will benefit if you consult her on what she knows best.

No matter how carefully you nurture this working relationship, you will still need assurance that all is well; like any boss, you'll want to keep a watchful eye on the situation. Check with friends and neighbors who might have the opportunity to observe your caregiver and child together, occasionally come home a little earlier than you are expected.

One of the worst trap mothers can fall into is fearing that they may lose the caregiver. It's important not to be controlled by this. If you cancel anger over little things in order to keep peace, you may one day regret it. One woman kept ignoring small irritations, thinking that her child was happy. One day she received a call from her cleaning lady who reported that the caregiver had placed the child in his crib and left the house with no explanation. Sometimes small problems may be symptoms that in the long run, the relationship is not right for any of you.

What's more, if you found one kinning person to care for your child, you'll be able to find another.

"We were really crushed when our first employee left because her husband was transferred," says one mother. "The new person is quite different, we learned that 'difference' isn't bad. We're all crazy about her!"

And if you do have to look for replacement, remember that experience is the best teacher. The next time you'll find developing the relation you want easier all the way around.

-Kate Kelly is a New York-based free writer.
Fear of firing

Face it. Your caregiver is not working out. These suggestions can make a change easier on both of you.

By Jean Grasso Fitzpatrick

For over a year, Catherine had been trying to ignore doubts about the competence of her son’s caregiver, Anne. When she took two-year-old Joey—whose full-blown case of chicken pox—for a walk to the playground, Catherine blamed herself for not giving explicit instructions about keeping him indoors. When Anne presented Joey with a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle for his second birthday, Catherine told herself to stop being critical about the inappropriateness of the gift and to concentrate on the fact that Anne meant well. The bottom line, Catherine reassured herself, was that Joey was crazy about Anne.

But today was a different story. Catherine had come home early from the real-estate office to catch up on some paperwork, and had glanced out the window as Anne and Joey played in the backyard. Joey was proudly sitting in his new “big boy” swing, not the baby one with the strap, and Anne was pushing the swing higher and higher. Catherine’s hand was on the back door knob when she saw Joey shoot into the air like a missile and land face down in the mud.

“That’s it, Anne—you’re through!” Catherine spat out as she ran to Joey, whose face and arms were coated with the mud that had cushioned his fall. As Anne stalked off to collect her things, Catherine wiped her son’s face and gently dug the mud out of his mouth. When she heard the front door close behind Anne, Catherine felt drained but relieved.

But almost in the same instant, she realized her troubles were far from over. Not only did she have to find a new sitter—fast—but she wanted to make sure history didn’t repeat itself. And she would need to help Joey adjust, both to Anne’s abrupt departure and the arrival of the new caregiver.

Unfortunately, although most caregivers are loving and capable, the story of Catherine and Anne is far from unusual. It raises several questions about strategy:

When should you fire a caregiver?

Most of us try to avoid making this decision, mostly for fear of the Great Unknown. We make excuses. We keep putting it off, as Catherine did. Her fear that she was being “too picky” is typical, says Sally Ziegler, executive director of the Child Care Council of Westchester, New York, a nonprofit agency. “Parents always say, ‘I thought it was just me.’ Then they end up waiting, until something happens—like the swing incident—to get them to act.”

Although signs of emotional instability, abusive behavior or substance abuse by the caregiver are obvious causes for dismissal, Ziegler says that most cases involve problems that are less easily defined and do not necessarily involve assigning blame. Keep in mind that the sitter who was so loving and attentive to your child when he was an infant, for example, may have trouble disciplining a demanding five-year-old. The in-home care that worked so beautifully for your one-year-old is likely to be too lonely for a three-year-old; he may do better in group care. As your child grows, his needs—for cuddling, intellectual stimulation, social interaction and discipline—are changing rapidly; the type of child care that’s appropriate for him will probably change too.

But meanwhile, it’s important to take note of any sudden changes in your child. They can indicate unsatisfactory care, according to Loraine Rocissano, PhD, a New York child-development specialist who frequently consults with day care centers. Here are some signs to watch for:

* In an infant, fussiness or unusual clinginess may signal either that the baby is understimulated (sleeping all day,
for example) or hyperstimulated (exposed
to a barking TV for hours on end).

* A toddler may be anxious, fearful, with-
drawn or passive. He may withhold bowel-
movements, which could be a response to
harsh toilet-training.

* In a preschooler or school-age child,
look for indications of anxiety such as in-
ability to relax, nightmares, regressive
behavior (including loss of bladder or
bowed control) and eating disturbances
(sudden overeating or loss of appetite).

* A child who is diagnosed as develop-
mentally delayed—lagging behind peers in
language, fine-motor coordination or
gross-motor skills—may be suffering
from a lack of attention and stimulation.

If you observe one or more of these
signs in your child, says Roczisano, the
next step is to determine the cause and
try to work with the caregiver to correct
the problems. If you see no improvement,
firing is probably your only option.

In Catherine's case, it was not until she
finally switched caregivers that she be-
came fully aware of how tense she had
been. "I'd become so emotionally involved
in imagining Joey's trauma if I fired Anne
that I'd forgotten how wonderful a good
caregiver can be."

Is there a "fair" way to fire
someone?

Giving two weeks' notice is nice, but it's
not always easy. Once the firing is official,
many parents and caregivers prefer a
direct, open approach. At Anne's door, the
sitter may depart in anger. Or the parent may
suggest that, as one woman put it, "even though
it's probably not justified, I'm afraid our
sister would take it out on the kids if I let
her stay after I fired her." But you can
avoid a dramatic firing scene and minimize
the unpleasantness for yourself and your
sitter. Here are some suggestions to
keep in mind:

* If you have regularly scheduled evalua-
tions or appraisals of your caregiver's
performance, says Ziegler, you can use
the next meeting as an opportunity to ex-
press your dissatisfaction in a business-
lke way. Assuming you have already
unsuccessfully tried these discussions
to address the problems, you can now

a Keep in mind that the contract should
provide for regular performance appraisals
to ensure that you will have the oppor-
tunity to discuss problems openly, in-
stead of developing a slow burn.

How do you handle the
transition?

Firing a caregiver as Catherine did invari-
ably leads to a mad scramble for tempo-
rary coverage—you and your husband
Daddy have been thinking for quite a
while that it would be a good idea to
change babysitters."

* There is no need to notify the caregiver
or enumerate her defects, however.
"Handle it in a low-key way," Dr. Rocz-
sano advises. "The child has of necessity
formed some positive associations with
the caregiver and it is too young to under-
stand the seeming contradiction between
his own feelings and your firing her.

On the other hand, kids can surprise
us. Catherine's two-year-old Joey, for ex-
ample, seemed to consider his mother a
hero for her swift response to the swing
incident. "Anne was swinging me too
high," he told visitors for weeks afterward.
"And Mommy told her that wasn't
right. Mommy takes good care of me."

Firing a caregiver is bound to cause
emotional upset and logistical difficulties
for everyone involved, but there's no de-
nying that "taking good care" of our kids
sometimes means knowing when a care-
giver has to go.

Jean Groso Fitzpatrick, the author of
Two Young Children, is the author of The
Superbabies Syndrome (Harvard Bruce
Jewenovich).
When a caregiver quits

it's stressful for you and painful for your youngster. Here's how you can both ease through this tricky transition

By Susan H. Kueffner

The phone rang early Saturday morning. It was Penny, the family day care provider who had cared for our first child for four years, as well as for our second child when I recently went back to work. "I can't keep the girls anymore," Penny said, almost in tears. "My daughter has been in a car accident. I'm sorry."

I used to have nightmares about what I would do if Penny quit, but I never dreamed she'd be gone overnight. How was I going to find someone else? Worse, how was I going to tell four-year-old Emily? Allison was only a few months old, but Emily truly loved Penny, and would say things like "I'm really going to miss Penny when we go to Disneyland." Now they didn't even have a chance to say goodbye.

Much has been written on helping a child deal with the grief and anxiety caused by a move, a divorce or a death in the family. However, losing a caregiver may be your child's first experience with the loss of a loved one. How you handle it can ease the transition to the new caregiver and teach your youngster an important lesson in dealing with the inevitable separations we all face throughout life.

"Needless to say, changing caregivers is tough on parents, too. It's hard enough to leave your child with another person when you go to work," says Ellen Germain, co-president of the Families and Work Institute in New York City and author of The Preschool Years (Times Books). "If a caregiver quits, parents then feel doubly responsible for forcing their children to experience a painful separation or loss."

Parents also worry about the possible educational and emotional side effects of caregiver turnover. "Research conducted by Caroline Howes at the University of California at Los Angeles shows that children may be less competent on standardized tests when they have had too many caregivers as infants and they may turn off in relationships later in life," says Germain. "I don't mean that's going to happen if your child has had two or three caregivers as an infant, I'm talking about a revolving door."

Yet, a revolving door can be difficult to avoid. "Low status and low pay mean that the turnover rate in child care is high," says Germain.

"So what do you do? In life, it's not whether bad things happen to you," says Germain, "but how you cope with them that makes the biggest difference in mental health."

Here are positive steps you can take to help your child learn to cope.

Try to choose the proper time

Often parents have no control over when a caregiver quits. But if you know, for example, that yours is moving in three months, try to make the child care switch when your family is best able to cope.

Ask yourself when you can handle the change. "Your child will need you more than ever during the transition period, so if you've just had a new baby or recently changed jobs, it's not the best time," says Tamara Engel, CSW, psychological consultant for the AnPet/Beaumont USA Program, based in Washington, D.C., and a family therapist who specializes in family relationships with caregivers. "If possible, try to postpone changing caregivers until you become more accustomed to your new routine."

Ask yourself, too, when your child can best handle it. Try to avoid any changes during the period when your child is experiencing separation anxiety. "This is a normal developmental stage that can occur any time between the ages of five months and three years, but it is often strongest around eight to nine months," according to Janet Brown McCain, a consultant in early-childhood education and the author of So Many Good-
Saying goodbye

How you bid a beloved caregiver goodbye is something you and your family need to work out together.

Here are ways to include your child:

1. Exchange photos or videotapes. Judy David put together a small photograph album for her son with pictures of his parents and his former caregiver. Diane Hughes, a mother and a faculty member at New York University, made a videotape of her son at his caregiver’s house that he still watches.

2. Play games together. When Bobby McEwen, a family day care provider, decided to move, she played games with the children. She was terrified.

3. Have a goodbye party, if it seems appropriate. "To some children, having a party may seem like a denial of the sadness," says Tamara Engel. “So talk to your child and to your caregiver first. If everyone is enthusiastic about involving your child in the preparations. He can help plan the menu and prepare the food. Make the decorations and perhaps make or buy a gift for the caregiver.

4. Exchange phone numbers and addresses. Set up a specific time when you and your child can call or visit the caregiver after she leaves.

5. See the caregiver off. Accompanying a caregiver to the train or airport is an exciting experience and provides a sense of closure.

—E.K.R.
Permission for Emergency Care

Release form Parent/Nanny

Name of child__________________________________________________________

Address____________________________________________________________________

Telephone:__________________________________________________________________

Name of Parent__________________________________________________________

Address____________________________________________________________________

Telephone: Business_________________________ Home__________________________

Emergency Contact_________________________ Relationship____________________

Telephone: Business_________________________ Home__________________________

Medical Plan_________________________ ID Number___________________________

Name of Physician_________________________ Telephone_______________________

Allergic to Medication  Yes_____  No____  
If yes, please explain:_______________________________________________________

is the child under physician's care on a continuing basis?  Yes_____  No____  
If yes please comment:____________________________________________________

My nanny __________________________ has my permission in an emergency when I (or my physician) cannot be contacted, to take my child to the emergency room of the nearest hospital, and the hospital and its medical staff have my authorization to provide treatment which a physician deems necessary for the well being of my child.

The original of this release shall be readily accessible and taken to the hospital with my child.

______________________________
Signature of Parent

______________________________
Date
Contract

This contract establishes the policies and benefits for the provision of loving and responsible family care by _____________ hereinafter called the Nanny, for _____________ and _____________ in agreement with _____________ and _____________ hereinafter called the parents. In making this contract, the Nanny and the parents are committed to creating and maintaining a family setting for the children and for their mutual happiness and enjoyment in this relationship.

1.) Responsibilities and Duties

a. Meals) The preparation and serving of breakfast, lunch, and appropriate snacks to the children.

Formula is to be prepared as instructed by the parents. _____________ are to be fed on demand. All food items will be provided by the parents. The Nanny will identify her food and drink preferences for breakfast and/or lunch, as desired. The Nanny will prepare a list of needed food items for the following week to be presented to the parents each Thursday.

b. Dressing) To include changing diapers and hygiene.

The Nanny will ensure that the children are properly dressed for all activities, including appropriate dress for the weather when outside. The Nanny will also do her best to see that the children get their usual nap time(s) during each day. The Nanny will help the children learn about personal hygiene, as appropriate for their ages, to include potty training, brushing teeth after each meal, etc.

c. Recreation)

The Nanny will play with the children to encourage speech and personality development. On some occasions the children may have approved playmates visit them, in which case the Nanny will ensure that all play is supervised and occurs in appropriate play areas. The Nanny will ensure that the children are always under her direct supervision when they are awake and at play.
d. Learning Activities

The Nanny will strive to teach the children proper speech, the basics of counting their ABCs, courtesy, sharing, and neatness, as their development permits. The parents will discuss specific learning activities with the Nanny on a regular basis. Television use will be limited to allow a maximum amount of time for the children to engage in first hand learning activities.

e. Firm Guidance

The Nanny will ensure that the children understand that certain activities as prescribed by the parents are forbidden. The Nanny will be firm but loving with the children. The children are not to be spanked or hit under any circumstances for transgressions. The Nanny should discuss the need for behavior modification with the parents, and may recommend courses of action to the parents that she deems necessary and appropriate.

f. Transportation

The Nanny is responsible for her own transportation to and from the home site. Subject to the agreement of the parents, an automobile may be made available by the family for the transportation of the children while under the Nanny’s care, as described in this agreement.

g. General Household Maintenance

1.) Daily sweep and wide down of the kitchen area and high chairs.

2.) Daily picking-up of toys and putting away of children’s clothes including laundry.

3.) Filling and emptying if the dishwasher as needed.

4.) Vacuuming of children’s rooms and play areas as needed.

5.) At least weekly wet-mopping of the kitchen floor.

6.) General tidying of the house.

7.) General dusting and vacuuming of the house as needed.

8.) Other household cleaning as time permits.
2.) **Priorities**

The parents recognize that the care for three young children can be demanding, but the caring for and feeding of the children will always be the top priority.

3.) **Medicine**

The Nanny will not administer any medicine, including aspirin or other over-the-counter drugs, unless specifically directed by the parents.

4.) **Emergency Situations**

In the event of an emergency, the Nanny will contact the parents first, unless one of the parents cannot be reached or unless the emergency demands an immediate call for assistance to the 911 Operator. If the situation warrants immediate action or if the phones are inoperative, the Nanny may try to get assistance from the neighbors. A list of names and phone numbers will be posted for emergency use by the telephones. The Nanny agrees to attend a refresher course on CPR, at an appropriate and convenient time, which will be paid for by the parents.

5. **General House Rules**

The below listed rules must be followed. Variance from any of the rules requires verbal consent from one of the parents of the presence of any emergency situation.

1.) No visitors.

2.) No service or maintenance personnel inside the house unless prearranged and specifically approved by the parents.

3.) No long distance or collect phone calls unless using a personal calling card.

4.) Occasional, short personal phone calls are permissible. The phone must be available for the parents to call the Nanny at any time during the day to inquire about the children.

5.) No unapproved trips in any car.

6.) No trips outside of the house except for walks in the stroller around the neighborhood.
7.) The doors and windows are to be locked when leaving the house. Doors and windows are also to be locked when not open specifically to provide ventilation. (Screen doors should then be locked)

8.) Suspicious visitors or phone calls are to be reported immediately to the parents.

9.) Any falls or apparently slight injuries to the children or to the Nanny that draw blood or cause serious bruising are to be reported to the parents immediately.

10.) The Nanny must inform the parents when she is feeling ill.

11.) When answering the phone, use the phrase "_________ residence", and if asked, state that the parents are "not available at the moment" and take a message. Indicate that ___________ will return the call. Do not give any information about the household, always indicate that you and one other person, such as a neighbor, are together in the house, if absolutely necessary. The Nanny does not need to listen or engage in conversations with telephone solicitors, the call can be ended quickly and courteously.

12.) The children are not to be left unattended when awake and must be regularly checked when napping.

6. Transportation of Children

_________________________ may be transported in an automobile for the purpose of taking ____________________ to and from school and camp. No other stops are permitted without the consent of both sets of parents. The children are to be restrained with age appropriate car seats and harnesses, or seat belts. The children will never, under any circumstance, be left in the car without proper supervision.

7. Site and Times of Care

Childcare will take place Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 6:00 p.m. The primary home site will be the ____________ residence at _____________.

If ______________ do not require the Nanny’s services on a particular day, the Nanny will care for ______________ in the ______________ residence at

_________________________.
8. Pick-up of the Children

The children may only be picked up by or released to the care of their parents, or if notice is given, a designated family member of friend.

9. Vacation

a.) Five (5) days of vacation must coincide with the vacations of both families, to the extent possible.

b.) The additional five (5) paid vacation days (in 1994 and in subsequent years) are available to be taken whenever the Nanny wishes, but should not be taken if only one family is on vacation. Adequate notice to the parents for vacation is desired, preferably at least 30 days in advance but not less than two weeks before the planned vacation.

10. Paid Holidays

The following federal holidays are paid holidays:

- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- New Year’s Day
- Christmas Day
- Presidents Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Labor Day
Permission for Emergency Care
Release form Parent/Nanny

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Address ______________________________________________________________________________

Telephone: ___________________________________________________________________________

Name of Parent __________________________________________________________________________

Address ______________________________________________________________________________

Telephone: Business __________________ Home __________________

Emergency Contact __________________ Relationship __________________

Telephone: Business __________________ Home __________________

Medical Plan __________________ ID Number __________________

Name of Physician __________________ Telephone __________________

Allergic to Medication Yes____ No____
If yes, please explain: ___________________________________________________________________

Is the child under physician's care on a continuing basis? Yes____ No____
If yes please comment: ___________________________________________________________________

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Signature of Parent ______________________________

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