

Beat the high cost of childcare with a nanny share.

For families who want the personal quality care of a nanny on a “day care” budget, a Nanny Share is a wonderful solution. This is a fast growing childcare option and especially popular with dual-career families.

Here’s how it works: Two families join together and hire one nanny to care for their children (one child from each family). Typically the children are the same age and are cared for in one or both family’s home on an alternating schedule.

Nanny Share vs. Day Care: A Host of Advantages

While it is often the reasonable cost that first gets the attention of families evaluating nanny shares, many families report that they end up valuing even more the other benefits a share provides.

Cost: There is a big gap between the cost of a private nanny (\$17-\$22/hour) and the cost of daycare (\$8-\$12/hour). Yet when two families share the cost of a nanny, the rate drops to \$10-\$12/hour: on par with daycare.

Attention: At most day care centers, there is one care provider for every four children. With nanny shares, the ratio changes to 2:1, giving your child far more undivided attention (and exposure to fewer germs and viruses).

Convenience: In-home care lets parents side-step the stress and rush of a “pack up” and “drop off” routine, often letting children sleep in longer in the morning. Many families keep an extra portable crib and high-chair at home so that the visiting child has “his” or “her” gear always there.

Socialization: Day care centers often mix children of varying ages together. Through a nanny share, your child has a playmate the same age, letting both kids enjoy developmentally appropriate activities and forge friendships they won’t “outgrow.”

Support: Many young families live far from extended family. The families in the share relationship help fill this void, becoming a source of trusted support and a reliable “back-up” in the event of illness or other daily challenges.

Tips for Creating a Lasting Share that Works for Your Family

By outlining the details of the nanny share up-front, all three parties (both families and the nanny) are more likely to be – and stay – satisfied with the arrangement. This increases the likelihood of a share that lasts, providing valuable continuity for your child. Some things to consider include:

Location: Clearly spell out whether one family's home will be used for care or if families will alternate homes on a weekly, bi-weekly or monthly basis. Stay in regular touch as your child grows, ensuring that both homes are childproofed at the appropriate time.

Nanny Expectations: Create a stable work environment by drafting a nanny "contract" that lists the agreed upon schedule, salary, vacation and holidays, and taxes. As in any domestic employment arrangement, tax withholdings are required ([read more about that here.](#))

Family Expectations: Make sure to spell out house rules for both homes and to create an illness policy for children and nannies participating in the share. Set-up both homes in advance of the first day, ensuring that both children have a comfortable place to nap, a double-stroller for walks, bottles labeled by name, and an extra high-chair.

With the right planning and communication, your nanny share could be the beginning of a lifelong friendship with another family and with a beloved childcare provider.

*Daryl Camarillo is the founder and co-owner of Stanford Park Nannies in Menlo Park, CA, which has been "finding care beyond compare" since 1990. Like many of the parents she assists, Daryl balances career life with her role as wife and mother, as well as serving as a board member of the Association of Premier Nanny Agencies.
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