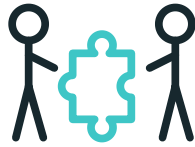


FREE GUIDE • THE GOLD STANDARD PROCESS



Hiring Your Nanny

The Family Needs Assessment & Interview Guide

Tammy Gold, LCSW

Author of Secrets of the Nanny Whisperer

Founder, Care Map Method™

MAP BEFORE YOU ACT.™

Hiring Your Nanny™

The Family Needs Assessment & Interview Guide

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PLEASE READ

This guide is for general educational and informational purposes. It is designed to help families define a caregiving role and evaluate candidates. It is not legal, tax, or employment advice. Wage and hour law, overtime rules, household employment tax, and workers' compensation requirements vary by state and change over time — consult a qualified attorney or accountant in your state before finalizing pay, classification, or a written agreement. Nothing here is a substitute for a background check or for your own judgment.

Portions adapt the Gold Standard Process from *Secrets of the Nanny Whisperer* (Avery / Penguin Random House).

Design and Care Map Method™ visual system: Care Map Method™ Brand Studio. First digital edition.

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BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Welcome

You are not hiring a babysitter. You are hiring the person who will shape your child's days.

Most families start a nanny search the same way: they post a job, collect résumés, meet a few people, and hope one of them feels right. Then, months later, something goes wrong — a schedule conflict, a missed instruction, a slow build of resentment nobody named — and they cannot work out where it started.

It usually started before anyone was hired. It started with a job that was never fully defined.

This guide walks you through the process I have used with families for twenty years, adapted from *Secrets of the Nanny Whisperer*. It will not find you a candidate. What it will do is make sure that when you meet one, you know exactly what you are looking at.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- Do Part One before you post anything. It is the part families skip and the part that decides everything after it.
- Write your answers down. A search held in your head turns into a search where you cannot remember which candidate said what.
- Share it with your partner, separately, then compare. Two people rarely define the same job.
- Print the worksheet pages. They are built to be filled in by hand.

CARE MAP INSIGHT™

You cannot match a candidate to a picture you have not drawn.

THE FRAMEWORK

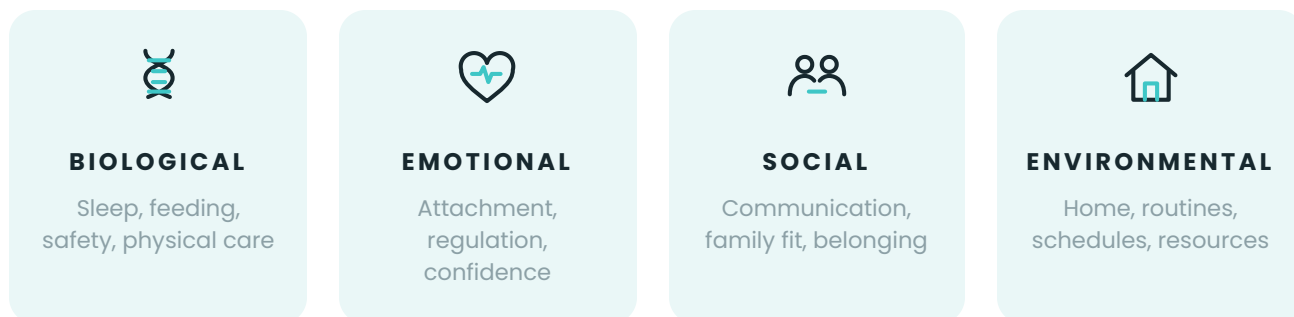
The Care Map Method™ in brief

Four stages, and four domains that every stage is checked against.

The Care Map Method™ was built to stop families from solving the wrong problem. Instead of asking "who is available?", it asks a different question first: what does this child, and this household, actually need?



Every caregiving situation runs across four connected domains at once. When one is overlooked, the arrangement built on top of it tends to break down — usually months later, and usually for reasons nobody connects back to the hire.



This guide covers all four stages, with the most detail on Map and Match — because that is where the decisions that matter get made.

PART ONE — MAP

Why families hire backwards

Almost every nanny problem I have been called in to mediate was introduced before the nanny was hired.

Parents tend to begin with the candidate. They look at profiles, they meet people they like, and they shape the job around whoever seems best. It feels efficient. It is the single most expensive mistake in this process.

When the job is defined after the person, three things happen. You lose your ability to compare candidates, because each one is being measured against a different picture. You discover your real requirements only when they are violated. And you end up negotiating things — hours, driving, housework, phone use — after someone has already started, which is the hardest possible time to raise them.

THE FOUR PARTS OF THE ASSESSMENT

- **Physical job description** — the logistics. Days, hours, live-in or live-out, driving, travel. The things that stay true no matter who you hire.
- **Job duties and responsibilities** — what the work actually is, hour by hour and task by task, including the parts nobody likes to write down.
- **Emotional job description** — the person. Temperament, energy, communication style, and how they need to fit your household.
- **Summing up** — turning all of it into your Musts, your Pluses, and your Deal-breakers.

A NOTE ON HONESTY

Be honest rather than reasonable. Write down what you actually want, including the things that feel petty or demanding. This form is for no one's eyes but yours, and a requirement you are embarrassed to name is still a requirement.

TOOL 1 • PAGE 1 OF 2

Family Needs Assessment™

Physical job description, and job duties.

Days needed — and be honest about the days you *want*, not the days a nanny job "should" be

Start time

End time

Live-in or live-out

Driving required?

Overlap time — the window where you and the nanny are both there, handing off information

Travel — how often, where, and what the expectations are

Job duties — write the day out hour by hour, for each child, including the household tasks

MOST MISSED

Housework. Decide now what share of cleaning, laundry, cooking and tidying belongs to this role, and say it out loud in the first conversation. It is the number one source of conflict I see, and it is entirely preventable.

TOOL 1 • PAGE 2 OF 2

The emotional job description

The part that decides whether this lasts three months or six years.

Describe your child. Temperament, what soothes them, what sets them off, what they need from an adult.

Describe your household on a hard day. Not your best day — a hard one.

What has worked with past caregivers?

What has not worked, and why?

Do you want a partner who shares the day with you, or someone who takes charge when you are gone? These are different people.

TOOL 2

Musts, Pluses & Deal-breakers

Everything in Tool 1 collapses into these three lists. If your Musts run to twelve items you have made a wish, not a decision — five is the honest number.

MUSTS — NON-NEGOTIABLE, OR THE JOB DOES NOT WORK

1

2

3

4

5

PLUSES — WOULD IMPROVE THE FIT, BUT YOU CAN LIVE WITHOUT

1

2

3

DEAL-BREAKERS — YOU WOULD END THE PROCESS OVER THESE

1

2

3

TOOL 3 • PAGE 1 OF 2

The Reference Check

Reference checks are the most under-used step in this process, and the one where a single question change transforms what you learn.

In therapy we use open-ended questions — ones beginning with *how* or *why* — because they require an explanation rather than a yes or no. Closed questions tell you about the reference's taste. Open ones tell you about the nanny.

Closed: "Did you like her?" — "Yes, we loved her."

But you and this family are different people.

Open: "How would you describe her?" — "An older woman who gave our children a calm, stable presence. But I don't think she'd have the stamina for a two-year-old."

PART 1 — CONFIRM THE FACTS

Only a past employer can verify these. Ask them first, in case the call gets cut short.

- 01 How did this candidate come to work for you initially?
- 02 How long did she work for you — can you verify the exact dates?
- 03 Was the position live-in or live-out? What were the exact days and hours?
- 04 How many children, and what were their ages when she started?
- 05 What were her exact duties?
- 06 What did you pay her, and how did that compare to her starting salary?
- 07 Why is she no longer with you? Did she give notice?
- 08 What were her greatest strengths? What needed improvement?
- 09 Was there ever a time when she was dishonest, or showed poor judgment?
- 10 Did her home life ever affect her work?

THE CATCH-ALL

Question nine is the one most families skip and the one that surfaces everything that fits no other category. Ask it exactly as written, then stay quiet.

TOOL 3 • PAGE 2 OF 2

Your job, and your scenarios

Parts 2 and 3 are where your Musts list earns its keep.

PART 2 — TEST AGAINST YOUR MUSTS

Open with: "Can I tell you about my job and what I'm looking for? I'd like to know whether, based on your experience with her, you think she'd be a good fit."

Then walk your Musts one at a time and ask the reference to react to each. Share your Deal-breakers too, and ask directly whether any of them would be a problem.

Write your three most important Musts here before you call:

1

2

3

PART 3 — RUN YOUR SCENARIOS

Open with: "Can I describe a couple of situations that come up in our household, and have you tell me how you think she'd respond?"

Use your worst-day scenario from Tool 1. Ask the reference to project. You will use the same scenarios again in the interview, which lets you compare what the reference predicted against what the candidate says.

Your worst-day scenario, in two sentences:

IF THE REFERENCE IS NEGATIVE

Anything negative only counts if they can say *why*. "She rubbed me the wrong way" is not information. Push for the specific incident. And consider the source — a family with unreasonable expectations produces unreasonable references.

PART TWO — MATCH

How to spot a fake reference

Some candidates list a friend. Occasionally they list someone they worked for without pay. These questions surface it in under a minute.

- **"How did she come to work for you?"** A real parent answers this instantly and without thinking. Someone inventing a story will stall, and if they say "through a friend," ask which friend.
- **Ask for the nitty-gritty.** Start date, exact hours, salary, what she did between nine and noon. A real employer remembers. A fake one cannot keep it straight.
- **Ask for examples — both kinds.** Every real parent can tell you something good and something frustrating. A reference with only superlatives is either lying or not a reference.
- **If the reference shares the candidate's accent,** press gently on whether money actually changed hands, how much, and what the hours were. Sometimes a friend is presented as an employer.

THE RULE

Any candidate who lists a fake reference is out of consideration. Not a conversation, not a second chance. If they fumbled the truth here, you cannot rely on anything else they told you.

IF A CANDIDATE HAS NO REFERENCES AT ALL

Someone new to the country, or new to nannying, may genuinely have none. Ask for any employment reference so you can learn how she was as an employee, run a thorough background check, and extend the trial period substantially so that your own observation does the work a reference normally would.

TOOL 4 • PAGE 1 OF 2

The Three-Part Interview

You tell your story. She matches it. Then you get to know her.

READ THIS FIRST

A great interview means almost nothing. Polished candidates can be poor with children, and quiet ones often transform the moment a child walks in. Many are nervous, or interviewing in a second language. She does not have to interview well — she has to be good with children. The interview decides exactly one thing: is she worth a trial in your home?

PART 1 — TELL YOUR STORY

Go through your Musts, Pluses and Deal-breakers out loud, even though you covered them in screening. Explain what worked and what did not with past caregivers. Name the hardest part of the job honestly — the crying afternoons, the two-children-at-once problem. Mention any pre-employment checks. Then ask her to be equally honest about how she works and what she likes, so that together you can decide whether this is a fit.

PART 2 — ASK HER TO MATCH IT

Open broadly: "Now that you know what we're looking for, can you tell us about anything in your experience that would make you right for this?" Then walk her through a previous job hour by hour — what did the day look like from arrival to leaving? Follow with specific questions drawn from your Musts, and your age-stage needs.

Children should not be in the interview. They are distracting, and this is the time for you and the candidate to talk. Do not use the interview to judge how she is with your child. That is what the trial is for.

TOOL 4 • PAGE 2 OF 2

Part 3 — Get to know her

The part most families rush, and the part that tells you whether this is someone you can talk to for the next five years.

A way in that works: tell your own story first, in four or five sentences — where you were born, what you studied, how you got here, what your family looks like now. Then ask for hers. It turns an interrogation into a conversation.

- 01 What made you want to be a nanny?
- 02 What is the best part of the work? What is the hardest?
- 03 What are you looking for in a family? What matters most to you?
- 04 What was the best part of working for your last family, and why?
- 05 What was the most difficult part, and why?
- 06 What did you do before nannying? Do you plan to return to it?

WHAT SHE IS ASKING HERSELF

Good nannies are interviewing you too, and they turn down families regularly. She is wondering whether your expectations are realistic, whether the household seems manageable, how you treat the caregiver you have now, and whether she could be happy walking through your door every morning. Greet her warmly. Set a relaxed tone. If you like her, you want the feeling to be mutual.

Anything she said that you want to test in the trial:

TOOL 5

Interview Assessment

Fill this in within an hour of each interview, while it is still sharp.

Candidate

Date

On time?

Did she come across as warm and genuinely interested in children? What did you see that told you so?

Could you picture speaking frankly to this person without bracing for the reaction?

Was she more focused on the pay and benefits than on the job itself?

Any red flags — a gruff response, an outsized reaction, something that did not fit the moment?

Pros

1

Cons

1

2

2

3

3

PART THREE — MERGE

Fixable cons vs. personality cons

Every candidate has a con. Eliminating everyone with a flaw means hiring nobody. The useful move is sorting them.

FIXABLE

A different approach to settling a baby. Screen and snack habits you would change. A routine done another family's way. Not being naturally proactive in a job where she was watching three children and cleaning a house. These are teachable, and you can test them directly in a trial.

PERSONALITY

Gruff, bossy, or rigid. A volume or manner that already grates on you in week one. A worldview that is the opposite of yours on something that matters. These will still be there in year three.

If a candidate has fixable cons but you liked her and she seemed open to direction, name the concern out loud and watch how she takes it: "Her reference said wonderful things, and mentioned one area — being proactive. We're both at work all day, so that matters here. Is that something you can do?" A good candidate explains the context. A defensive one tells you something too.

CARE MAP INSIGHT™

Test the fixable ones during the trial. Never hire hoping a personality will change. And do not look for perfection — look for a candidate whose pros are clearly stronger than her cons.

TOOL 6

Work Agreement Checklist

Every expectation you do not write down becomes something you hoped she would guess.

Use this as the agenda for the conversation, then put the result in writing and have both parties sign it. Have an attorney or accountant in your state review anything touching pay, classification, or taxes.

- ☐ Names, addresses, phone numbers and emails for both parties
- ☐ Agreed work days, and start and end times for each day
- ☐ Start date — and the annual employment anniversary you will revisit it on
- ☐ Weekly compensation and the number of hours it is based on
- ☐ Travel pay, and what happens when the family takes her on vacation
- ☐ Any other benefits or perks you are offering
- ☐ Sick and personal days — how many, and the policy for using them
- ☐ Vacation — how many weeks, and who chooses them
- ☐ Holidays, missed-day policy, leaving-early policy, snow-day policy
- ☐ An hour-by-hour daily schedule, for each child and for the household
- ☐ House rules regarding the children and the home
- ☐ Daily, weekly and monthly tasks, written out
- ☐ The date you will complete the family handbook by, and the date you will review it with her
- ☐ A section she fills in herself — what she needs from you
- ☐ Signatures and date, both parties

THE ONE MOST FAMILIES LEAVE OUT

The last section. A work agreement that only runs one direction is a set of orders. Ask her what she needs, write it down, and mean it.

PART FOUR — MANAGE

The six Nanny Speak™ rules

Politeness is the most common reason a request does not get done.

- **Never pose a direction as a question.** "Could you throw in a load of laundry?" offers a choice, and the answer can be no. "Please throw in a load of laundry before you leave" does not.
- **Never use "if."** "If you have a minute, the bins need to go back" introduces the one word that makes it optional.
- **Do not hint.** Talking around a subject, hoping she takes the meaning, is how parents end up silently furious about something they never actually asked for.
- **Do not attribute it to someone else.** "Our doctor says..." or "I read an article..." makes the request one step removed from you, the employer, and easy to discount. Own it.
- **Never give feedback or correction by text or email.** Tone and body language do not survive them, and criticism reads as harsher than you meant.
- **She is not a mind reader.** If you did not say it out loud, it may not happen — and that is not defiance.

tone

Calm and matter-of-fact, always. If you sound impatient or annoyed, she stops hearing what you are saying and starts processing how you are making her feel. Emotion in the delivery is what gets remembered instead of the request.

TOOL 7

The 1-2-3 Direction Formula

Strip out the emotion and the qualifiers, and say three things.

**1**

FOR YOUR KIDS

**2**

FROM YOUR NANNY

**3**

FOR YOURSELF

Instead of assuming, hinting, or snapping afterwards:

"We have class at 9:30. Please have the children dressed and ready with the bag packed, including water bottles and snacks [for your kids]. And please be changed and ready to come with us [from your nanny] — I need the extra hands, it's hard to manage all three on my own [for yourself]."

Be specific enough that no one could reasonably interpret it as something else. "Ready" is not an instruction. "Dressed, with the bag packed, including water bottles" is.

Practise: a direction you have been avoiding, written the 1-2-3 way

CARE MAP INSIGHT™

Clear is kinder than polite. Written is kinder than remembered.

BEFORE YOU GO

Your next step

You have the map. Here is what comes after it.

This guide covers the first two stages in depth — defining the job, and evaluating who fits it. The complete Care Map Method™ goes further: merging a new caregiver into your family's daily life without losing trust, and managing the relationship as your children, your schedule and your needs change.

WORK WITH ME DIRECTLY

One-on-one sessions for families in the middle of a search, an onboarding, or a situation that has stopped working. Interview preparation, reference strategy, work agreements, and the conversations that are hard to have alone.

KEEP READING

Secrets of the Nanny Whisperer (Avery / Penguin Random House) — the complete Gold Standard Process, with the full worksheets, scripts and case examples this guide is drawn from.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tammy Gold, LCSW is a Columbia-trained licensed clinical social worker, a national media expert on caregiving, and the founder of the Care Map Method™. She is the author of *Secrets of the Nanny Whisperer*, and has spent twenty years helping families make childcare and eldercare decisions with clarity instead of guilt or panic.

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