

Calm Parent

Ideas for Ground Rules for Childcare Provider

Set a daily routine.

To avoid confusion for your child, be clear on a consistent routine with all childcare providers and caregivers, including parents and grandparents. Having your nanny complete a detailed daily activities chart is a great way for you to see what your child is up to when you are not around. This includes meal and snack times (types of food and drinks and how much) and when your child has nap or quiet time, indoor playtime and outings at the park, play group or sports/music programs, etc. It will also make it easier to see where your nanny has free time in a day to take a breather or perform household tasks like tidying up, cleaning, grocery shopping, laundry and meal prep. Check out our [free customizable daily activities charts here](#). These are so helpful especially so you know what your child has been up to when you're not around.

Put strict limits on television and the use of other electronic devices.

Televisions and other electronics can distract children for hours at a time. The only way you will really know if your nanny is adhering to your rules is if your child tells you or if you have a hidden nanny cam. One tactic is to say that you're comfortable with less time than you are actually okay with (i.e., saying your child is allowed to watch 15 minutes or half an hour of television maximum each day even if you are actually okay with up to one hour). You may also want to make it abundantly clear that no adult television is permitted (unless your child is napping).

Decide on appropriate break times.

Talk to your nanny about breaks and when it is appropriate for them to use their phone – this may only be okay when your child is napping but it is difficult to regulate unless you are paying their phone bill each month. Also be clear on if and when they are allowed to smoke on your property.

Set parameters around picture/video taking and uploading to social media outlets.

Be clear on whether or not your nanny is permitted to take pictures and videos of your child and where they can be sent or posted. If you do permit picture taking a good rule of thumb is that they can only be sent to you and then they must be permanently deleted. Consider including this in your nanny contract.

Be clear about who has access to your child and where they can go for outings.

Nannies tend to hang out with other nannies during the day. This means that if you don't let your nanny know what the rules are your child may be taken to other homes for play dates or random locales such as shopping malls and coffee shops. Clearly outline when your nanny must ask permission to take your child out of the home and what mode of transportation is acceptable. For example, your nanny may only be allowed to go for walks around your neighbourhood or to the park with your child without asking for your permission. Your nanny may only be permitted to drive or take public transportation with your child to and from school and extra-curricular activities that you have scheduled for them. You will also want to be clear on who is permitted to be in your home when you are not there.

Ensure effective discipline and potty training techniques.

To avoid confusion for your child, make sure your nanny's tactics are consistent with your ideas and values when it comes to things like discipline, quiet time and potty training. For example, let them know if you prefer timeouts (rather than spankings for instance) when they discipline your child and how long your child should be put in timeout for. Explain everything in detail to help ensure there is no confusion, especially if there's concern with language and translation.

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Ensure a consistent bedtime routine.

To avoid confusion for your child, be clear on a consistent bedtime routine with all childcare providers and caregivers, including parents and grandparents. This could mean the difference between full nights of uninterrupted sleep for your family vs sleep training for years to come. See our [Calm Baby Sleep resources](#) for more tips on sleep.

Don't forget to provide your nanny with your contact information and emergency contacts. Your nanny should be able to reach you or an emergency contact at all times. You may also want to ask your nanny for their emergency contact's name and number just in case. Depending on your specific situation there may be other important ground rules to set with your nanny, especially if you are nanny sharing with another family. When you perform a reference check on your nanny, the feedback you receive from former employers may help you with setting appropriate ground rules.

Set ground rules asap

The sooner you set clear ground rules the better, to avoid confusion for everyone. It can also be difficult to enforce stricter rules, or change established practices or habits later on.

*Please share your list of ground rules with us on our site or by email.
We hope to hear from you soon!*