



Interviewing your au pair or nanny

Best questions for interviewing
your next childcare provider

A thorough, thoughtful interview is a must when hiring your childcare provider. Although interviewing candidates can be time-consuming, it is the most important step you can take as a parent to ensure your children are in the hands of a capable, responsible person, whose interests and personality aligns well with your own. When it comes time to sit down with your au pair or nanny candidate—either for a phone, Zoom, or in-person discussion—we recommend using the following list of questions as a guide.

We've included questions related to:

- **An applicant's general childcare experience**
- **Their expectations with relation to your family's needs**
- **Their personality, maturity level and interests**
- **Specific ages and needs of your children (infant, toddler, school-aged child, special needs child)**

Before the interview begins, mark the questions that are relevant to your family's situation, and note that questions marked with an asterisk (*) should be reserved for candidates whose English competency is more advanced. We wish you luck during the interview process and hope it leads you to a caregiver you feel confident and excited about!



Questions about a candidate's general childcare experience

What were the ages of the children under your care?

What were your specific responsibilities? (Refer to each childcare experience separately.)

What was the most difficult part of that job? What did you like most about that job?

What do you like most about taking care of children?

What do you find most challenging about caring for children?

How many hours at a time are you used to caring for a child? What would be the maximum number of hours you could care for a child before needing a break?*

How would you discipline a child who misbehaves?

How would you comfort a child who is upset?

What do you think children most need from an au pair/nanny?

Have you been in an emergency situation with a child in your care? If so, what happened and how did you respond?

Questions that relate to your family's needs

What would your ideal host family/employer be like?

If you disagreed with something that your host parents/employer said or did, how would you handle it?*

Are you okay with our family's schedule? (Talk in detail about your family's typical schedule; will you expect her to work early mornings? Evenings? Weekends? A 9–5, Monday—Friday schedule? Setting expectations during the interview process is critical for a successful match.)

How flexible are you on a scale of 1–10? (1 being very rigid and 10 being extremely flexible)

What additional household responsibilities are you comfortable taking on as our au pair/nanny? (Talk about your specific household needs related to the children; for example: meal prep, laundry, light cleaning, setting up appointments, etc.)

How neat are you on a scale of 1–10? (1 being a slob and 10 being extremely neat)

How long have you been driving? How often do you drive? Where do you drive? Would you be comfortable driving the children to school and lessons every day? (Adapt the question to your own needs, vehicle and driving expectations, i.e., local vs. highway driving.)

Questions that relate to a candidate's personality, maturity level and interests

Why did you decide to become an au pair/nanny?

What will your priorities be during your year/contract with our family?

How do you think your friends and family would describe your personality?

If you are comfortable doing so, could you share a little bit about your childhood and your relationship with your family?

What do you like to do in your free time?

What is your favorite sport?

Favorite television shows?

Favorite books?

Favorite type of music/favorite bands?

Have you ever lived on your own? Traveled on your own? If not, do you like the idea of living and traveling on your own?

Do you do your own laundry? Cook your own meals? Clean your own room/apartment/home?

How independent would you say you are on a scale of 1–10? (1 being not at all independent and 10 being extremely independent)

What are three things you've accomplished that you are proud of?

Do you smoke cigarettes? If yes, how often?

Do you drink alcohol? If yes, how often?

Questions that relate to the care of an infant (3 months–1 year):

What do you like about caring for babies?

Are there things you find challenging caring for babies?

How would you try to bond with my baby?

What activities might you do with my baby?

How would you soothe my crying baby?

What would you do if my baby just won't stop crying?*

What potential safety hazards might exist in the house for my baby? What about safety hazards outside of the home? What steps would you take to make sure my baby was safe?*

Questions that relate to the care of a toddler (1–3 years):

What do you like about caring for toddlers?

Are there things you find challenging caring for toddlers?

What indoor and outdoor activities might you do with my toddler?

How would you comfort my toddler if he/she was upset?

How would you handle it if my child was having a temper tantrum?

How would you discipline my toddler if she/he was misbehaving?

What potential safety hazards might exist in the house for my toddler? What about safety hazards outside of the home? What steps would you take to make sure my toddler was safe?*

Questions that relate to the care of a pre-school or school-aged child (4+ years):

What do you like about caring for pre-school and school-aged children?

Are there things you find challenging caring for pre-school and school-aged children?

What indoor and activities would you do with my child?

What kinds of things would you like to teach my child?

How would you comfort my child if he/she was upset?

How would you discipline my child if she/he was misbehaving?

What would you do if my child would not listen to you? Or refused to do what you said?

Would you be willing and able to help with my child's homework?

Are you interested in helping my child learn words and phrases in another language?

What potential safety hazards might exist in the house for my pre-school/school-aged child? What about safety hazards outside of the home? What steps would you take to make sure my child was safe?*



QUESTIONS THAT RELATE TO THE CARE OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS:

Can you describe your experience with children with special needs?

What have been the joys and challenges of caring for children with special needs?

(Describe the responsibilities inherent in caring for your special needs child.) Would you be comfortable with these tasks?

Childcare quiz: which childcare solution is right for you?

1. What is your weekly budget for childcare?

- A. Based on where I live, a daycare center or family daycare would be the best financial solution
- B. Based on where I live, an au pair, or nanny share would be more affordable than daycare

2. Which is more important to you?

- A. Socialization for my child
- B. One-on-one attention and the ability to choose a specific caregiver

3. How much flexibility do you need?

- A. Little to none; my family's schedule doesn't change much
- B. The option to schedule coverage outside of traditional work hours would be a big benefit

4. How important is convenience?

- A. Not very—I'm not concerned about it
- B. Convenience is important to me

5. Could you use some help around the house? Or an extra driver? Or someone to help with homework?

- A. I don't really need any extra help
- B. A little bit of help with household chores would be beneficial

6. How soon do you need childcare?

- A. I've got plenty of time to figure it out
- B. I need someone in the next couple of months or less

7. How much control do you want over your child's environment?

- A. I'm happy leaving the daily activities and environment to someone else to worry about
- B. I prefer having more control over where my children are and what they're doing all day

8. Are you interested in cultural exchange?

- A. I could take it or leave it
- B. Yes, I would love to expose my children to a different culture

9. Would live-in care be an acceptable option for you?

- A. No. I don't have the room and/or a live-in just isn't for me.
- B. Yes, I would consider a live-in caregiver

10. How willing are you to invest time into a relationship with your caregiver?

- A. Not very; I don't have it in me to invest time and energy into another relationship in my life
- B. I would be willing to nurture a relationship with my caregiver if I thought it would benefit my family

If you scored mostly:

As

you are best suited to:

CENTER-BASED OR FAMILY DAYCARE

Your answers indicate that your family would benefit from securing childcare with a traditional center-based daycare or family daycare. Good luck finding a daycare solution that works well for you!

As & Bs

you are best suited to:

NANNY OR NANNY SHARE

Your answers indicate that your family would benefit from hiring a nanny or nanny share. Good luck finding the perfect nanny candidate for your family!

Bs

you are best suited to:

AU PAIR OR FAMILY COVERAGE

Your answers indicate that your family would benefit from inviting an au pair or family member to care for your children. To find out more about au pair childcare, visit: [culturalcare.com](https://www.culturalcare.com). Good luck finding the perfect au pair or family member to welcome into your home!