

Checking References for an In-Home Caregiver for your Child

An important part of hiring an in home caregiver is checking the caregiver's work experience before you hire him/her.

Even if you are considering a caregiver who is applying for her first care-giving position, you should ask each candidate for references before they begin the position.

The typical caregiver will have two references that have already agreed to serve as such in the hiring process. First time caregivers may use a parent or teacher, since they haven't yet had the chance to establish a relationship with an employer.

The caregiver should provide you with both the phone numbers and email addresses of references so that you can contact them easily. Although it might feel awkward calling a reference, a list of tips and questions follow which may provide assistance and help to make you more comfortable with this process.

The Phone Call: Introduction

Introduce yourself and tell the reference why you are calling. Don't forget to say that the caregiver referred you.

In some cases the reference might not be comfortable speaking with you or did not agree to be a reference. Make note that this is probably not a good sign. It is recommended that you remove this person from your potential caregiver list.

Questions for References

If the reference seems happy to speak with you, the following list of questions will help you gauge your potential caregiver's talents. As a courtesy, try to keep your questions brief.

How well do you know the caregiver?

In what capacity did he/she work for you?

How long did he/she work for you?

What were his/her best qualities?

What were his/her worst qualities?

How did your children like him/her?

Did he/she have a routine when working with your children?

On a scale from 1-5 how would you rate the following qualities? (use 5 as highest rating)

- Flexibility 1 2 3 4 5
- Maturity 1 2 3 4 5
- Patience 1 2 3 4 5
- Timeliness 1 2 3 4 5
- Energy 1 2 3 4 5

How much supervision did he/she need?

How did he/she follow directions?

In what areas could he/she improve?

Why did you stop working together?

What else did she/he do besides child care?

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Beyond the Basic Answers

When doing a phone reference check, you don't have a lot to go by other than the person's voice and assurance on the phone. So ask YOURSELF a few questions:

Did the reference sound nervous?

Did they answer right away to their name?

Does anything not feel quite right?

You can tell a lot simply from how a person's voice makes you feel, which is why we recommend the phone interview over exchanging emails. Take advantage of your own gut instinct, and take comfort knowing that each phone call takes you one step closer to priceless peace of mind.

