

## **The Different Childcare Options**

Finding the best childcare options for your family can be difficult and daunting task. Searching for the right candidate for you and your children can be a stressful. There a number of different options available but obviously it is looking at your family needs. Example

- How many children you have and ages?
- Are you doing school runs and pickups?
- Are both parent in full time employment?
- Budget (a nanny you need to become the employer)
- Hours (are you rushing home in the evening to collect children from crèche)
- What happens when your children are sick?
- Do you have outside family support network?
- Children's holidays – do you have cover?

### **Au Pair**

Au pairs are candidates from all over the world who have come to Ireland on an au pair exchange. They come to learn English, taking a break from their studies, travel, and experience a new culture and to earn a little pocket money. The au pair will live in with the family, they will need to fit in with your family life and be included in family activities.

The au pair helps you through your daily routine and is an extra pair of hands by providing childcare support. The au pair tidies up the children's rooms together with your children and can take care of the laundry and light housework. As a live-in part of the family, the au pair can provide babysitting evenings or weekends.

The au pair takes the children to school, picks them up from Montessori, prepares lunch and helps them with their homework. Playing with children, taking them to the park and activities, and reading stories. The au pair provides support for your children on a daily basis and at the same time introduces their culture and language into your family. The children may even learn a few words of another language. This will help to broaden their horizons and improve their knowledge of the wider world.

Having an au pair means that there is another adult in the house on a temporary basis, who helps you care for the children. In return, you offer the au pair accommodation and meals and take part in your family and your culture.

**What are the advantages of having au pairs?**

- Having that extra pair of hands, school drop off and pickups, homework etc.
- Inexpensive childcare
- Evening or weekend babysitting
- Light housework

**What are the disadvantages of having an Au pair?**

- You are having someone else live in your family home, which means there is a lack of privacy.
- You will have extra costs, food, heating, and phone
- No professional experience, qualifications and first aid.
- Language and communication barrier
- They generally don't stay longer than a year with a family.

There are advantages and disadvantages of having an Au Pair, it is getting the right candidate that fits in with your family. It is a big responsibility asking an Au Pair to care for your children when they don't have any professional qualifications or experience. There are no set Au Pair guide lines and working 50 hours a week is not realistic. The Au Pair should work 25 hours and be able to attend English classes.

**Nannies**

Nannies will have a minimum of 2 years full-time experience with a recognized childcare qualification as follows;

- FETAC Level 5 or 6 Childcare (0-12 years of age)
- Montessori Teaching Diploma in Child Care
- B.A. in Early Childhood Care and Education
- Primary School Teaching Degree

If no qualification is held they will have a minimum of 4 - 5 years of full time experience as a Nanny. Candidates all demonstrate a genuine love and interest for the children in their care and thus take their careers very seriously.

Nannies are capable of sole charge of a child (or children) and promote a happy, loving and stimulating environment. The nursery duties may include preparing the child's meals and keeping his or her room clean and tidy.

The Nanny will provide activities suitable for all age groups- including reading, arts and crafts, jigsaws, drawing etc., depending on your child's level at Playschool, Montessori or Primary School.

A full-time Nanny works between 10 - 12 hours per day and has two days off per week as well as 20 days paid holiday plus Bank holidays per year.

A “Nanny Share” service is also available and in recent times this has become a very popular option. In this situation two families, both with young children, employ one professional nanny and they share the salary and other costs between them. The families then agree as to which home the children will be based. Babysitting and extra hours are by prior arrangement between an employer and an employee.

If a nanny is to “live-in” the house, then she should be provided with her own bedroom and ideally a bathroom as well. Remember that when a Nanny has finished work she may wish to spend long periods of time in the privacy of the accommodation provided, so it should be made comfortable. “Live-in” Nannies are happy to travel with the family on holidays and short breaks if required.

In addition to full-time Nannies, a Part-Time Nanny can offer an ideal solution for families wishing to have more flexibility. A Part-Time Nanny typically works for a minimum of 20 hours per week up to 35-40 hours per week. Salary varies depending on experience/duties of the candidate and we are more than willing to discuss the appropriate childcare to suit your budget.

### **What are the advantages of having a Nanny?**

- The Nanny will have experience, qualification, reference, first aid and Garda vetted.
- Consistency and they will stay with a family for 2 to 5 years
- Having that extra pair of hands, school drop off and pickups, homework etc.
- Drivers so parent are not rushing home to collect children from after school activities
- They can provide both indoor and outdoor activities, nurse duties and cooking.
- One on one care for children
- Being sick less often

### **What are the disadvantages of having a Nanny?**

- The family become the Nanny’s employer so they will pay tax and PRSI
- Expensive

## **Childminder**

A childminder will offer to care for your child in their own home. Some but not all childminder will have experience or qualifications. The childminder will provide meal for your child as part of the service.

The childminder will be also looking after other children and this will allow your child to interact with other children and build on their social skills.

The childminder will provide educational activities that are fun and stimulating and also provide a place where your child can have a nap.

### **What are the advantages of having a Childminder?**

- Your child will be able to interact with other children in the childminders home.
- The childminder will be able to create a home environment for your child.

### **What are the disadvantages of having a Childminder?**

- The childminder may have no professional experience, qualifications and first aid.
- Your child will spend the day outside their home environment.

## **Crèche**

The crèche is an environment that is built especially for the care of children. All of the staff will have a childcare qualification and first aid. The crèche is normally divided up in to different room and this allows children to interact with children of their own age.

The baby room is for children from 3 months to 12 months, wobbler room 12 months to 2 years, the toddler room for children aged 2 to 3 years and a preschool room for children aged 3 to 5 years. In the crèche your child will be cared for in a supervised environment and they will be provided with healthy meals. Activities will be provided for your child that are both educational and fun.

### **What are the advantages of having your children in a Crèche?**

- Your child will be cared for in a supervised environment.
- Your child will be provided with healthy meals
- All staff will have a childcare qualification and first aid
- Your child will interact with other children daily
- Activities will be provided for your child that are both educational and fun

**What are the disadvantages of having your child in a Crèche?**

- Your child can get sick more often in the crèche environment and you will need to take time off if your child is sick and the crèche call you.
- The children are not outside as much in the crèche compared to having a Nanny or Childminder
- This is an expensive form of childcare

We hope this article gives you some helpful information and tips and if you need to contact us at Nanny Options we can find the right option for you and your family.