

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nanny Background Screening is more than a Nanny Background

Charlotte, NC (October 15, 2014) – The nanny industry – nannies, nanny referral professionals, nanny background screeners and educators – share an overwhelming concern for the wellbeing of the children being cared for by a nanny in their home. We are all child care professionals. Sadly, there is yet another story making **the news rounds about a nanny hired from an online venue mistreating the children in her care**. The nanny was ‘caught’ on a nanny cam.

The International Nanny Association (INA) and the Alliance of Premier Nanny Agencies (APNA) want to inform parents that a computerized background check is quite simply insufficient ‘screening’ to evaluate a nanny applicant. The digital, criminal “background check” creates a false sense of security for families.

True nanny background screening also must include careful, probing interviews, and thorough reference checks. INA and APNA agency members are experts at nanny screening.

So what do families need to do to carefully screen a nanny applicant?

Verify Applicant Identity: It is only logical to first confirm that the individual applicant is who she says she is. Government issued photo identification should be reviewed at the beginning of any nanny interview. This can be a drivers’ license, passport, or a state-issued identification card.

Gather a Comprehensive Work History: INA member Daryl Camarillo, **Stanford Park Nannies**, recommends that families “Verify and interview **all** previous employers (even non-childcare related) and do a thorough accounting for all gaps in work history.”

Interview Carefully: A common mistake families make is using the interview to determine if the nanny is agreeable to hours, pay and scope of duties. This is totally insufficient to find out if this candidate will be a quality nanny. A good rule of thumb is if the interviewer is talking more than the person being interviewed, you are not asking the right questions. Behavioral interviewing is the gold standard.

INA member Marc Lenex, **Wee Care Nanny Agency**, states that “It is imperative to meet and get to know the potential nanny in person. Together you should go over a comprehensive employment application and zero in on gaps in work history, discuss previous jobs in detail and gauge responses to gently probing questions that will help with the vetting process.”

Australia’s **Placement Solutions’** Louise Dunham shares “Three techniques we use are 1) listen carefully for the pregnant pauses when questioning a referee ..the nervous schooled referees sometimes confess here; 2) asking an open ended question such as “Describe to me your typical day looking after a baby and a toddler” will soon show you whether they have actually spent a day doing that and whether they are proactive carers and 3) lastly a trick question ” under what circumstances would you smack a child?” The ONLY answer we want is ‘Never ‘.”

Sandra Costantino, **Neighborhood Nannies**, has more than 30 years experience matching nannies and families. She reports “So often we are told by our families about “gut reaction.” There is absolutely no substitute for that than in meeting a potential candidate in person and looking into their eyes and understanding their body language and their answer to questions asked and their comments in general. A wealth of knowledge is transferred without even knowing it. You cannot get that ‘online’.”

Verify References: HomeWork Solutions’ Kathleen Webb advises families to “Personally speak to all references. Verify how they know the applicant. Ask questions and wait for answers. Avoid giving verbal clues of agreement or disagreement.”

Fake references are a real problem for families hiring a nanny. Experienced nanny agency staff are highly skilled at detecting references that are simply “off.” When checking a work reference, you may want to ask questions such as “When did she work for you?” or “Tell me about your children – how old were they?” You will be surprised how often the person coached to give the reference trips up on the fine details.

When talking to a nanny’s references, experienced reference checkers often try to obtain a third party or ‘wild card’ reference. This would be someone else known by both the reference and the candidate whom you may use as an additional reference. Third party references are invaluable, as they have most likely not been cherry-picked by the candidate and have not been briefed on the reference check ahead of time.

Schedule a Second, Working Interview: Bring the candidate back at a time when you and the children are both present. Allow the applicant to observe your typical family rhythms, patterns, and interactions. After some orientation, step back and allow some time for the applicant to interact with the children independently (you observe). Of course you will pay the applicant for her time.

The International Nanny Association (INA) is dedicated to helping families find quality in-home childcare. The APNA is a regulated membership organization that establishes standards in the nanny and household staffing industry. Both organizations recognize that families are increasingly turning to online nanny recruiting venues when hiring. The INA and APNA feel strongly that the information above can assist a family to better screen their nanny job applicants. We further recommend that families who are not confident in their interview and screening skills, or simply do not have the time or talent to perform this thorough vetting, strongly consider engaging the services of a professional nanny referral agency. “Liking a nanny isn’t enough, we’d would argue your children deserve more,” advises Jami Denis, **ABC Nannies.**” Hiring a professional nanny agency to walk you through the screening, interviewing, hiring and employment process allows parents peace of mind when they need it most.” INA member agencies can be found in our online directory at www.nanny.org

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About INA

The International Nanny Association is the authority on in-home child care. INA, a non-profit organization, serves as the umbrella association for the in-home child care industry by providing information and education to the public and to industry professionals. INA is the only free-standing association that offers a credential exam for nannies. For more information, please visit our website: www.nanny.org or contact us by calling 1-888-878-1477.