

Would you employ a NannY?

Nannies have been the subject of many a fun film, book and story. From *Mary Poppins* to *Mrs Doubtfire*, and *Nanny McPhee*, children everywhere dream of having such a carer. But in real life it has been Supernanny Jo Frost of Channel 4 fame who has revolutionized the role of the nanny. So are more people opting for the nanny option of childcare? Child magazine asked Tinies, the local agency for childcare and child carers.



Photograph courtesy of Channel 4

Nannies are now a force to be reckoned with - and gone is the image of day time baby sitter. The Channel 4 series which sees Jo Frost in her Supernanny role has given nannies a whole new power and reputation as a professional who - more often than not - know more about taking care of children than the parents. So has it encouraged more families to opt for a nanny?

"The role of the nanny is becoming more popular with many families and it is also helped by the government voucher system that is now available to nannies as well as nurseries," said Leanne Jackson of Tinies Childcare, Northampton.

"If a nanny is qualified, CRB police checked and the holder of a first aid certificate they can apply to be an approved child carer. Their employer can then receive help from the voucher system to pay their salary."

Leanne added that for many families having somebody to take care of the children in their own home offered them the peace of mind, flexibility and convenience they need for a stress-free childcare solution.

"Every nanny role is different because every child and every family is different,"

added Leanne. "If you find a good nanny who fits in with your family and your needs then it works brilliantly."

Nannies can live in or live out, and Leanne says in Northamptonshire it is mostly live-out positions that they place.

But she adds that families should take great care when appointing a nanny. Anyone employing a nanny should make sure that the person they employ is qualified, CRB police checked, and happy to fulfill the needs of the family.

"There has to be flexibility and a great deal of trust between the family and the nanny," said Leanne.

So how does a modern day nanny compare to other forms of childcare? Well the main difference is that a nanny comes to your home, so child is cared for in their own familiar environment. A nanny will also be responsible for many of the day to day practical needs of the child.

"A nanny will take over the care of the child - and that may include getting the children's breakfast, getting them up and dressed, planning and preparing their meals, laundry, keeping their bedrooms in order and entertaining and stimulating them," said Leanne.

"Most nannies like to be busy and will

want to take the children to clubs where they will do activities or learn new things. A nanny will work under her own initiative, and the care of children is what she is qualified for, and it is her career."

In the UK most nannies are female, although there are some men now going into childcare as a profession.

"It is also worth mentioning that all nannies are not young and newly qualified," added Leanne. "We have many mature nannies on our books who have a lot of experience and have stayed in the profession."

The starting rate for a full time nanny is £250-£300 per week (net), or between £6-£8 per hour (net), for a part time nanny. Employers also have to pay tax and NI for their nanny so that is a small additional cost.

Also available are specialist nannies including maternity nannies trained for new born babies, doulas to help the mother through the whole process of childbirth and a proxy parent who moves into the house to take care of the children if parents need to - or want to - go away.

To find out more contact Tinies childcare agency on 01604 709636 or 0781 806 7758.