

BANANAS HANDOUT

Where and How to Look for a Caregiver to Work in Your Home

About BANANAS' Files

BANANAS has many adult and some teenage in-home caregivers on file. Adult caregivers come into the office for a short orientation, complete a simple application and give us the names of two parent references whom we contact by mail. Teenage caregivers complete an application and give us one reference. We consider this a minimal screening process. When parents come into BANANAS, they can get names of in-home caregivers to contact and can also post job announcements at our office. Remember that people who see your job announcement at BANANAS (or any other agency) may not have been through any type of screening process. We urge you to always obtain current references from anyone you consider hiring and to call the references yourself. Choosing a caregiver for your child is important work – give it the time and thoroughness it deserves.

Writing a Job Announcement

After deciding to hire a caregiver to work in your home, you need to determine the salary, what kind of person you want to hire, what the work entails and how long a commitment you desire (permanently, for the school year, etc.). When you get ready to interview or write a job announcement, include what the job is, what it pays, the hours of work, when the job will start, what qualifications you want the employee to have and the deadline for applying. If you are hiring a worker for a playgroup or share, please refer to BANANAS' booklets on these types of care for more tips on how to hire as a group. See page 2 of this handout for a sample job announcement. A sample work agreement is on page 4.

Interviewing

When prospective workers call you for interviews, ask a few questions to help you decide whether or not you want to schedule a time to meet with them for a more formal interview. If the callers do not have the minimum experience you want in a childcare worker or are lacking some other quality you want, do not consider them. Tell them politely that they are not quite what you are looking for. This saves time and energy. Another way to screen callers is to ask for a short resume. Tell applicants that you will call them back if you are going to consider them for the job. If you use this method, be sure to tell applicants when they can expect to hear from you, and follow through.

Interviewing strangers to care for your child or children can be stressful. While you want the applicant to feel comfortable, you still want to ask the important questions.

Interview Suggestions

1. Set up a time when you can give your full attention to the interview. For instance, don't have your children with you during the first interview.
2. Ask the applicant to bring a written list of past experiences, especially those in which they worked with children, and the names and phone numbers of references. Be sure to follow through by calling the references after the interview.
3. Make the applicant feel comfortable and explain briefly what the job will be like — hours, duties, pay, benefits, etc. Try not to do too much talking during the rest of the interview because you want to get an idea of what the applicant is like without giving a lot of "cues" as to what you might consider a "right" answer.
4. Ask some open-ended questions like, "What do you like to do with children?" "What are your feelings about discipline?" "What ages of children do you like best?" "Why do you do this kind of work?"

Write down some hypothetical questions beforehand to ask during the interview, such as, "What would you do if Sarah got into some poisonous liquid?" "How do you deal with a child who won't take a nap?" "What would you do if a child hit you?" "What would you do if a child had a sudden high fever and you couldn't reach the parent?"

5. Pay attention to your feelings while you are interviewing. Do you like this person? Would you trust this person to care for your child?
6. If you like the applicant and think you might hire them, ask the person to care for your child on a day when you are home but busy with other tasks. This will give you firsthand experience with the person's ability to relate to your child before you make a commitment to hire.
7. While you are making your decision, you may want to ask the caregiver to obtain a TB test and give you

a copy of their DMV records if the caregiver will be transporting your child.

- 8. It is polite to tell applicants if you don't want to hire them. You can do this at the end of the interview, by phone or by writing a short note or postcard.

Using TrustLine

TrustLine is a registry that offers background checks on in-home care providers to assure there are no criminal convictions or substantiated child-abuse reports against them. If the child care provider is registered, call 1-800-822-8490 with the provider's name and TrustLine I.D. number to verify that they are listed. Since this is not a

mandatory service, many in-home caregivers may not be registered or may not know about TrustLine. For those who are not registered, the one-time application fee will vary from \$124 to \$134, payable by either the parent or the child care provider. Applicants submit a completed TrustLine application, fingerprints (for a Department of Justice background check) and the fee. Applications and fingerprinting information are available from BANANAS or from www.trustline.org. It takes a couple of months for the background check to be completed. Providers with subsequent convictions or substantiated child-abuse allegations are removed from the registry. Registration is not permanent, so parents should call TrustLine periodically to verify that their caregiver is still listed.

Sample Job Announcement

Name of Parent:_____ Date Job Posted:_____

City & Area (for example, Oakland/Fruitvale):_____ Starting Date:_____

Brief Description of Duties:_____ Age of Children:_____

Qualifications:_____ Length of Commitment:_____

Hours:_____ Days:_____ Pay:_____ Deadline:_____

Phone:_____ Time to Phone:_____ Email:_____

Where To Look For Workers

There are a number of places to list your job announcement. Most agencies will take your announcement over the phone. You can mail, email, fax a copy, or go by in person to make sure the information is listed correctly. Some agencies have website listings – you may have to register first. For an occasional baby-sitter, post your information at local high schools. A newspaper ad is an option, but may result in a deluge of calls. We suggest you first try listing with the following agencies, most of which provide the service free of charge.

Alameda County One Stop Career Center
555 Atlantic Ave.
Alameda 94501
748-2208 (fax: 814-8302)

Holy Names College
3500 Mountain Blvd.
Oakland 94619
436-1580 (fax: 436-1217)
careerservices@hnu.edu

BANANAS
5232 Claremont Ave.
Oakland 94618
658-7353 (fax: 658-8354)

Laney College
900 Fallon St.
Oakland 94607
464-3124 (fax: 464-3559)
cgriffin@peralta.edu

Berkeley Parents Network
http://parents.berkeley.edu

Merritt College
12500 Campus Dr.
Oakland 94619
436-2445 (fax: 434-3825)

California College of the Arts (CCA)
5212 Broadway
Oakland 94618
email: student-affairs@cca.edu
www.collegecentral.com/cca

UC Berkeley Student Employment
Monster Jobs
800-999-8725 (\$30 listing fee)

Craigslist
www.craigslist.org

Mills College
5000 MacArthur Blvd.
Oakland 94613
430-2069 (fax: 430-3235)
career@mills.edu

EDD/Oakland Career Center East
675 Hegenberger Rd., 3rd Floor
Oakland 94621
563-5283 (fax: 563-5347)
www.caljobs.ca.gov



Sample Agreement For Parents And In-Home Caregivers

There are several reasons why an agreement helps both the parent and the in-home caregiver. Agreements assure that both parties know what to expect from each other. Agreements can also prevent problems because responsibilities are discussed and clarified before the in-home caregiver begins working – not when issues arise later. It is usually safer and clearer if you have a written agreement rather than an oral one.

To keep things simple but clear, the agreement should contain each of the following items:

1. The name of the parent who is hiring the worker and the name of the employee.
2. Time and place of employment: the date the employment begins, length of time of employment – including a probationary period if applicable – and the address where the employment will take place.
3. A work schedule listing days and hours.
4. Compensation (for example: \$10/hour) and payment schedule: whether the worker will be paid weekly, bi-weekly or monthly.
5. Duties of the child care worker: list the major responsibilities of the employee – be concise and specific. If the parent wants the employee to do light housekeeping, that should be part of the agreement.
6. Optional employee benefits should be spelled out completely: for example, one week of paid vacation each year, one paid sick day a month, etc.
7. A statement of how much notice will be given by either the parent or the worker when terminating employment.

If you have an agreement in writing, *you need to change it in writing*. For example, if the hours of care change or the number of children increases after the original agreement is signed, you should write an amended agreement including those changes. It should be signed by both the parent and the worker and attached to the original agreement.

There are several things you should know about such an agreement. *First*, both parties – the parent and the worker – must comply with the agreement for it to be effective. Employers can't expect workers to perform to the letter of an agreement unless employers are keeping up their end of the bargain; for example, by paying the agreed-upon rate. *Second*, an employee does have the right to refuse to perform duties that are substantially different from those agreed upon. For example, if a parent hired someone to care for his or her children, the employee cannot be expected to also clean the house and cook dinner unless that was spelled out in the agreement. *Third*, if a worker is fired, the employer must pay all wages earned and unpaid immediately upon firing the employee (California Labor Code, Sections 201 & 202).

The agreement on page 4 is only a sample. It includes the basics, but employers may want to state some other responsibilities or considerations important to them, such as asking the worker not to smoke around the children. Remember, however, to keep the agreement as simple as possible.

If two parents share an in-home caregiver, we recommend that each parent sign a separate agreement with the worker. This is because each family reports to the Federal government only those wages it pays the worker as an individual family. Obviously there should be some group discussion so the separate contracts are consistent in areas such as the duties of the worker.

For further information on in-home caregivers, these BANANAS' handouts are available at our office, by mail or from our website at www.bananasinc.org.

- *Financial Facts About Caregivers Who Work in Your Home* outlines your fiscal responsibilities as an employer of a domestic employee.
- *Your Rights and Responsibilities as an Employer of an In-Home Caregiver* spells out how to maintain a good working relationship with the caregiver. *Your Rights and Responsibilities as an In-Home Caregiver Employee* offers advice for caregivers on the same topic.
- *Employing A Limited-English Speaking In-Home Caregiver* gives ideas on hiring and retaining caregivers who are not fully proficient in English.

Sample Agreement

On _____, 20____, an agreement is made between _____
(Employer's full name)

and _____, Social Security Number of employee _____
(Employee's full name)

1. Employment shall begin on _____, 20____ and will last _____.
(Specify length of time – six months, until June 30, 2006, etc.)

2. The care will be given at: _____
(Address of the employer's house)

3. The hours of care will be: Mon: _____ Tues: _____ Wed: _____

Thurs: _____ Fri: _____ Sat: _____ Sun: _____
(Write in exact hours for each day that care is to be given.)

4. The Employee's major responsibilities will be: _____

5. The Employer agrees to pay the Employee: \$ _____ per _____
payable on: _____
(Specify time – every Friday, the 1st & 15th of the month, etc.)

6. The Employer agrees to offer the Employee the following benefits: _____

(Specify any additional benefits such as one or two weeks paid vacation per year and/or one paid sick day per month.)

7. The Employer and the Employee agree that there will be a probationary employment period of _____.
(Specify length of time)

During this period either party can terminate the agreement by giving _____ days' notice.

8. After the probationary period, either party can terminate the agreement by giving _____ weeks' notice.
(Specify time; usually a longer time frame than the probationary period)

(Employer's Signature)

(Employee's Signature)

(One copy of this agreement should be given to the employee and one copy should be retained by the employer. BANANAS also has Spanish- and Chinese-language versions of this contract.)