

Nanny interview questions

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What to expect

Nanny interviews are usually conducted by the parents directly, sometimes with an agency present, and focus less on formal qualifications than on trust, judgement and fit with the specific children and household routine.

- **Behavioural:** Questions about past experience handling real childcare situations, looking for evidence of patience and consistency.
- **Scenario/judgement:** Hypothetical situations, often involving safety or first aid, to see how you'd think and act under pressure.
- **Process:** Questions about how you'd structure a typical day, plan activities or manage meals across different ages.
- **Client-facing/communication:** Questions about how you report to parents and handle disagreements or difficult conversations about their child.
- **Safety and compliance:** Checks on your understanding of Working with Children Check obligations, first aid currency and household safety.

Expect an initial conversation about the family's routine and expectations, followed by specific questions on your experience and safety knowledge, and often a practical element such as a trial afternoon with the children before any offer.

1. Tell me about a time you managed a challenging behaviour or meltdown while caring for a child.

Why they ask

Parents want evidence you can stay calm and consistent when a child is distressed, since this happens regularly in home-based care.

How to structure your answer

Use STAR: describe the situation and the child's age, the specific behaviour, the action you took to de-escalate, and the result including how you followed up with the parents.

Example answer

"I was looking after a four-year-old who refused to leave the park and became upset when it was time to go. I gave her a two-minute warning before we left, let her choose which toy to carry home, and stayed calm rather than rushing her. She settled within a few minutes and we left on time for her sibling's school pick-up. That evening I mentioned it to her parents so they knew the warning system worked well for her."

2. A child in your care has a mild allergic reaction while you're alone with them. Walk me through what you'd do.

Why they ask

Tests practical first aid knowledge and judgement under pressure without a second adult present.

How to structure your answer

Set out immediate actions in order: assess the reaction, apply first aid or medication per the child's action plan, decide whether to call emergency services or the parent, and how you'd document it afterwards.

Example answer

"I'd first check the severity of the reaction against the child's allergy action plan, which I always confirm with parents before starting a placement. For a mild reaction I'd give any prescribed antihistamine, keep the child calm and monitor closely for escalation. If symptoms worsened I'd call 000 and then the parents. Afterwards I'd write down the time, symptoms and what I gave, so the parents have a clear record."

3. How do you plan a typical day's activities for the children you look after, across different ages?

Why they ask

Checks whether you can structure a day that balances routine, learning and play for children at different developmental stages.

How to structure your answer

Walk through your planning process step by step: how you set the routine, how you build in age-appropriate learning and play, and how you adjust on the day.

Example answer

"I start from the family's fixed points, like school pick-up and meal times, and build activities around those. For a toddler and a school-aged child, I'd plan quiet, hands-on activities like puzzles or drawing for the toddler while the older child does homework, then swap to active play together once homework is done. I keep a rough plan but stay flexible if the children are tired or want to extend something they're enjoying."

4. How do you communicate with parents about their child's day, especially when something didn't go well?

Why they ask

Parents want to know you'll be upfront and clear, not just report the good parts of the day.

How to structure your answer

Describe your normal reporting habit, then explain how you specifically raise a problem or incident, including tone and timing.

Example answer

"I usually send a short update through a family scheduling app at the end of each day covering meals, naps and activities. If something didn't go well, like a fall or a disagreement between siblings, I mention it as soon as the parents are available rather than waiting, and I explain what happened and what I did about it. I've found parents respond better to a direct, factual account than to me glossing over it."

5. What's your understanding of your obligations under a Working with Children Check, and what would you do if your certification lapsed?

Why they ask

Confirms you understand the legal requirements around working unsupervised with children, which is a non-negotiable for the role.

How to structure your answer

Give a straightforward knowledge check answer: state what the WWCC covers, then describe the practical step you'd take if it lapsed.

Example answer

"My Working with Children Check needs to stay current for the whole time I'm working with a family, and I'm required to notify the family if my status changes. If it lapsed I'd stop working with the children immediately, renew it through the state authority straight away, and let the family know clearly what happened and the timeframe for renewal."

6. Describe how you'd prepare a meal for a child with a food allergy while also managing siblings.

Why they ask

Tests practical food safety knowledge alongside the ability to manage multiple children at once.

How to structure your answer

Walk through the practical steps in order: how you check the allergy information, how you prevent cross-contamination, and how you keep other children occupied or fed at the same time.

Example answer

"I'd check the allergy list and any action plan before starting, use separate utensils and a clean bench area for the allergy-safe meal, and prepare that child's food first to avoid cross-contamination. While that's cooking I'd give the other children a simple task, like setting the table, so they're occupied and everyone eats around the same time."