

[Glenda Propst will be one of our speakers at the 2006 TCPN Conference & Annual Meeting.
An interview with Glenda will be in our 2006 summer Nanny News issue.]

Communication Article By Glenda Propst

Good relationships must have a foundation. Communication is the foundation of a good employer/employee relationship. Communication begins with the first interview, and is an ongoing process between the nanny and the parents.

During the interview, expectations of both parties need to be clearly defined and understood.

- Guidelines regarding discipline must be established and agreed upon in the beginning, and they need to be refined and adjusted as the need arises.
- Consistency is crucial.
- Children need to know they can take you at your word.
- Children need limits. It is important for the nanny and the parents to present a united front. This means that if one of the parents has a problem with the way the nanny is disciplining, they will discuss it in private, not in front of the children.

Communication must be implemented into the daily schedule.

Some ways to do this:

- Notes
- Journals
- Conversation
- Phone calls throughout the day
- Short talks (come 10 minutes early, stay 10 minutes late)
- Dinner away from the house without the children (this is relaxing, non-threatening, neutral territory).
- Family meetings

Things to Remember:

- As nannies especially when we live in, we have a tendency to take everything personally. Try not to take everything personally. Sometimes your employer is in a bad

mood because he/she (or both) had a bad day, not because of something you did or did not do.

- Sometimes parents don't even realize that what they are doing is upsetting us.
- Don't assume your employer can read your mind.
- Say the words.
- Learn to stand up for yourself.

When you finally have the opportunity to sit and talk to the parents about a concern or a problem, here are some suggestions for making the most of the opportunity.

- Be Prepared
- Learn to distinguish between what is important – what is not important.
- Take time to prepare an agenda of what you want to talk about. Under each item make a list of the points you want to make.
- If you write it down, you will not forget anything. The other advantage to writing things down is that it sends a very clear message to your employers that this was important to you and you prepared for it.
- Try to balance the negative with the positive.
- Try to create win/win resolutions.
- If you present a problem, offer some solutions.
- Do not place blame.
- Keep in mind that if you have a concern or a problem it is not going to go away. You must learn to deal with it like an adult. (Isn't that one of the very important character traits you are trying to teach your charges?)

If you have a difficult time learning how to communicate effectively, take an assertiveness training class. It will be worth the time and money and it will benefit you in every area of your life for years to come.

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