



January 9, 2007, 11:49 am

Breaking Up . . . With the Nanny

Posted by Sara Schaefer Munoz

We've talked about hiring the nanny but what about firing the nanny?

Parents who swiftly replace subordinates at work may fret about letting a nanny go. A comment to the Juggle (blog on the Wall Street Journal online) from a blogger describes her recent nanny firing experience as a "break-up." A Chicago mother interviewed recently in an article on Chicagobusiness.com worried about giving several weeks notice when the nanny is still caring for her children.

A parent may also wonder what constitutes a firing offense. In the world of childcare, there often are no contracts that detail job expectations, and parents lacking management experience may poorly articulate their expectations. Sometimes it's clear: one woman posting on Yahoo Answers said she decided to fire her nanny for repeated tardiness and leaving her child alone in the car. But another mom on urbanbaby.com asks: "if you had a babysitter whom you liked and was doing a good job but you heard that a babysitter whom you know and love had become available, would you consider switching?"

Pat Cascio, president of the Houston-based [International Nanny Association](http://InternationalNannyAssociation.com), says that employers should take a hard look at their reasons for wanting to fire a nanny. Is the nanny really performing poorly in the job, or do problems stem from parents' guilt or jealousy?

She says many problems may be solved by writing down expectations and following up with clear communication. If the nanny really must go, Ms. Cascio recommends at least one week of severance, but says the nanny should probably leave that very same day. "I wouldn't leave my child with anyone who might be upset with me," she says.