

## Things to consider when choosing a caregiver

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Humanity has spent many years perfecting the inside of the home, which causes us to be sympathetic when most people want to continue living in their home for as long as they can. Sometimes this may only be possible with outside help, with long-term care and a personal assistant to aid in the daily routine of eating, dressing, and bathing.

Hiring a caregiver can help the individual stay in the comfort and safety of their own home longer, which tends to lend peace of mind to their families. Some people hire through a caregiver placement agency, but if that isn't for you, here are some easy steps to follow to make sure the experience is beneficial for everyone:

1. **Asses health care needs.** Evaluate the areas in which help is needed, health care, personal care, and household care. Determine if you need help with housecleaning, shopping, and running errands or if you need home health care, such as physical therapy or medication management.
2. **Write a job description.** Base the description on the help needed, for example, the ability to life the care recipient or the operation of special equipment. Include if driving is required, if a car or only valid drivers license is required, and the health care training needed. This should include the level and what type, for example, Certified Nursing Assistant, Licensed Practical Nurse, or Registered Nurse.
3. **Develop a job contract.** This should be based upon the job description and include thing such as wages (when and how payment will be made), hours of work, job description, unacceptable behaviour (smoking, abusive language, etc.), termination (reasons for termination without notice, how much notice, etc.), dated signatures of employee and employer, and the employee's social security number (for when you report wages paid to the caregiver).
4. **Prepare for the interview, interview applicants, and check references.** Prepare a list of questions to ask, if you're unsure over what questions to ask simply call a caregiver agency and they should be able to answer your questions, because you are a prospective customer. After you have screened applicants over the telephone, in-person interviews are essential. Invite a friend or family member to sit in on the interview to provide a second opinion. The most important thing to watch is the interaction between the worker and person to be receiving care. If going through an agency, ask to interview the caregivers yourself, as many look good on paper but may not be the right fit for you – just like dating. Check their references to make sure you're hiring someone who is dependable and reliable, as well as someone who is qualified.
5. **Hire thoughtfully and monitor the quality of service.** Try to hire someone who is licensed and a bonded, you want someone with experience in the

areas in which you need help. Once you have hired someone, set up a schedule to monitor the quality of service being provided. For family members, this is also a way to make a personal connection with the caregiver, which can result in reports from both the caregiver and agency.

Watch for signs of abuse, exploitation, and neglect and be sure to report suspicious activity to the agency and authorities.