

> IN FOCUS

HIRING A FOREIGN DOMESTIC WORKER

Ms Shirley Ng, president of the Association of Employment Agencies (Singapore) (AEAS), and Ms Lim Hwee Er from the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) offer some tips on hiring a Foreign Domestic Worker (FDW).

It is important that an employer is clear about the reasons for hiring an FDW, says AEAS president Shirley Ng.

- Does she have to take care of children?
- Will she be the main caregiver for a disabled or elderly family member?

In addition, consider if the FDW will be under the supervision of a family member while you are at work.

If the FDW's main duty is to take care of children, she suggests that employers look for an FDW who is a mother herself.

"The FDW is likely to be more matured and capable of caring for young ones."

If your FDW has to look after a disabled family member, you should hire someone with experience as a caregiver.

"The FDW has to be willing to spend the extra effort in caring for a disabled family member. Physical strength is also necessary because she will probably need to assist him or her around the house," adds Ms Ng.

An FDW looking after the elderly or the disabled should not only possess a good attitude but good communication skills, shares Ms Lim Hwee Er from NCSS.

How does one match an FDW to the elderly or the disabled who requires their care? One way is to involve them in the selection of the caregiver, says Ms Lim.

There are also some general guidelines. "If she has past experience as a domestic worker, she will understand the demands and requirements of the job," says Ms Ng.



Ms Lim
Hwee Er,
NCSS



AEAS
president,
Shirley Ng

Have realistic expectations of your FDW and communicate your needs to the employment agency. This should narrow down your search and increase your chances of hiring a suitable FDW. If an agency does not have someone that matches your requirements, you should approach another agency.

Remember the FDW may be unfamiliar with your needs, so constant communication and support is important to make the relationship a harmonious one.

TIPS

A caregiver for children should...

- Possess patience and maturity to cope with the demands of caring for children. An FDW who has children back home is likely to be more mature.
- Have experience in baby care if you require the FDW to care for your baby.

A caregiver for the elderly or disabled should...

- Speak the same language as the person who requires their care.
- Have experience in caring for someone in a similar condition. For instance, if you have a wheelchair-bound family member, the FDW with such caregiving experience will be more familiar in helping them move about.
- Possess good attitude and communication skills such as a respectful tone, positive body language, even pace of speech and good eye contact.
- Possess initiative to cope with the changing needs of the elderly.

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