



Babysitter's Arrest Highlights Background Check Confusion **“Nationwide” Computer Checks NOT What They Seem**

APNA raises this issue in light of this week's news that two Glendale, California brothers may have been sexually molested by a 19-year-old babysitter. Investigators say the suspect may have communicated with more than 100 families using online childcare sites.

(December 1, 2011) – “Online babysitting sites give families a *false sense of security* by stating things such as the applicants are ‘mom approved’ or have gone through a nationwide background check, “says Daryl Camarillo of Menlo Park, California’s *Stanford Park Nannies* and president of the *Association of Premier Nanny Agencies – A Household Staffing Alliance (APNA)*. “Most online services are just electronic bulletin boards and the computerized background checks they suggest are not enough to ensure a family’s safety.”

“What most parents don’t know is that the quick and inexpensive computer background searches offered online can easily miss a problem,” adds Judi Merlin, owner of the Atlanta, Georgia nanny placement agency *A Friend of the Family* and an APNA board member.

“I’ve found that most nanny candidates with criminal records have committed misdemeanors which rarely show up on the low-cost, nationwide computer searches that are offered online. Felonies are more likely to be listed. So, the nationwide computer check sounds good, but it probably won’t find a person’s minor run-ins with the law which can tell you a good deal about their past and their character,” says APNA sponsor member Lynn Peterson whose Oakland, California company, *PFC Information Services*, offers comprehensive background checks.

“Because of the danger to families, APNA has worked for years to try to educate the public about the effectiveness of different types of background checks,” says Camarillo. “Hiring a professional background check company is the safest way.” While the cost is higher (hundreds of dollars typically), it is just one of the ways APNA agencies screen candidates before referring them to work in a home environment with young children.

Among the issues that can arise with an online background check:

1.) It might not cover every state (some post disclaimers listing the exempted states).

Top notch nanny agencies will require that applicants’ social security numbers are traced to identify every state in which they have lived. That information is used to check records in those states.

2.) Misdemeanor records that are supposed to be forwarded to state or national databases are not sent, get lost or misfiled.

A record search of each county where the person has lived is more likely to find them

3.) No personal screening

Professional household staffing agencies meet with each job candidate in person and know how to analyze resumes for red flags and ask the right questions during a reference check.

Concludes Camarillo, “After screening, my agency chooses to represent only about 15 percent of the people who come through our door looking for work. Most online sites will represent anyone who can fill out the form.”

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•Go to www.theAPNA.org to find an APNA agency in your community and valuable information for families and people seeking household employment

APNA is a self-regulating organization that helps set the bar for industry standards and practices. APNA member agencies have their contracts, applications and business practices scrutinized by peers to ensure they know and follow all applicable laws. You are dealing with a quality household staffing service when you see the APNA seal.

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