# Are Confinement Nannies Necessary? Should I Hire a Confinement Nanny or DIY?

## Description

Ever had a job where you had absolutely no experience, no training, other peopleâ??s lives were at stake, and you werenâ??t allowed to quit?

Thatâ??s parenting, when you have your firstborn.

Naturally, as first-time parents, we were generally anxious and pretty much clueless on what we should do. Throughout my entire pregnancy, I read up a lot, went for multiple pregnancy conferences (those were super useful, I highly recommend all expecting parents to go for them) and even attended a hands-on class with Thomson Parentcraft, but yet felt ill-prepared when our baby was born.

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The first few weeks are always the hardest. For a first-time mother, it is also common to suffer from post-natal depression â?? I was mostly optimistic throughout my pregnancy, but my sunny disposition completely took a 360 turn when I was discharged from the hospital after birth. Suddenly, I was hit with an unexplainable urge to cry all the time (I cried up to 10 times a day), sometimes for no reason at all.

It can get extremely overwhelming for a first-time mom.

So when I heard from my cousins (whose kids are much older now) and quite a few of my friends that they hired confinement nannies in order to cope in their first few months, I was intrigued by the idea and went to research further.




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## What are the benefits of hiring a confinement nanny?

**Roles and duties of a confinement nanny:**

- Take care of your newborn, including bathing and changing them
- Taking care of the mother during her confinement
- Preparing herbal baths and red dates tea
- Cook nourishing meals for the mother
- Do simple household chores such as laundry and cleaning
- Ensure that the mother gets ample rest during her confinement
- Help guide the mother and the family through confinement (especially for clueless couples like us!)
- Guide you on breastfeeding and latching techniques
- Help to teach the parents on how to handle the baby

**Cost**: $2,800 â?? $3,200 for 28 days
*(or more if youâ??re hiring a private nanny directly.)*
**Additional fees:**

- Groceries and herbs (anywhere from $800 â?? $2,000 depending on your confinement menu)
- Festive periods (especially during Chinese New Year) may come with hefty surcharges. My friend had to shell out close to $6k for his in February 2018!
- If you hire through an agency, you may be charged extra for certain preferences *(eg. if you have pets at home and need a nanny who isnâ??t afraid of animals, or if you stay in a two-storey house. Just make sure you declare all of these upfront so they can give you an accurate quote for you to consider. PEM didnâ??t quote extra for my friend who has dogs at home, but some other agencies do)*
- Cooking and doing laundry for any additional person at home other than the mother, father and the newborn
- A customary welcome and thank-you angpao

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We had originally assumed my mother-in-law would be able to help us during my confinement, but in the end after speaking to her, she wasnâ??t keen as she worried about having difficulties finding another job if she quits her current one. No one else is as knowledgable or experienced enough to help us either, so we had no choice but to look at hiring a confinement nanny.
Another perspective I would emphasize is that **if your mom or mother-in-law is helping to do your confinement for you, be prepared for potential conflicts and disagreements.** On the other hand, a confinement nanny is after all a hired help, so you get to â??breakâ?• the confinement rules you donâ??t believe in (such as not showering or washing your hair, wearing long sleeves and pants, etc). But if you disobey your mother-in-lawâ?¦good luck with later on!




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If you choose not to hire a confinement nanny, you should also probably think about how to get your confinement meals settled so that your body is fed with the right nutrients to recover and replenish itself. For instance, Tian Wei Signature offers confinement food catering right to your doorstep for $1,540 (28 days of lunch and dinner) if you book a month before your estimated delivery date. Prices across the various vendors are competitive, with most at $1,600+ for NannySOS, Richfood and The Natal Kitchen. If you want something from a hospital, Thomson Medical offers confinement food catering as well.

If youâ??re not sure which vendor to order with, Iâ??ve personally found baby fairs and seminars useful as there are usually samples for tasting if the vendor is one of the conference sponsors. Alternatively, you can also order trial meals prior to your delivery so you can figure out which is to your liking.

In terms of herbal soups and nourishment, PEM also offers pre-packed herbal boxes that are labelled by the 28 days of your confinement i.e. Week 1 Day 1, Week 2 Day 4, etc. That way, it is easier for either you, your mother / in-laws, or your domestic helper to prepare them accordingly. I found these quite fuss-free and recommended it to my friends who were doing their own confinement!

## Should you hire direct or via an agency?

This really depends.
In terms of costs, the prices for a private nanny and one hired through an agency does not differ too much, although if you go for the more popular or reputable private nannies, they could cost more. I got recommendations from my readers and friends, and so we approached over 12 private nannies to enquire, all of whom quoted us $3,000 to $3,500. PEM, on the other hand, quoted me a more affordable $2,800 â?? $3,000. It was also difficult to get a private one, as most of the ones we spoke to were already fully booked for our confinement period, despite us enquiring as early as in my third month of pregnancy!

*(Tip: another way to get a lower rate is to also book earlier in advance, or via baby fairs when there are promotions at times.)*

While an agency has more nannies for you to choose from, the quality of their nannies depend largely on their training methodologies, so do read up on reviews to discern for yourself. In contrast, private nannies rely purely on word-of-mouth referrals, but if anything goes wrong, there is no agency you can go to in the event of any dispute or misconduct.

It pays to ask questions to ensure you get a good fit! If youâ??re hiring a private nanny, see if you can meet them prior to confirming. If getting through an agency, let the agency know of your preference so they can arrange and match a suitable nanny to you, and also spend some time getting to know your nanny well on the first day.

Some agencies also allow you to switch nannies (this was something our PEM consultant told us) lest you do not â??clickâ?• with her, at no extra cost.

The other thing to look out for is that if you go with a private nanny, then in the event that theyâ??re unable to make it at the last minute, they may get their friend or kin to stand in for them instead and you may not have a say in that, since your non-refundable deposit would have already been paid anyway.

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While some may think private nannies will be better as they tend to come with word-of-mouth recommendations, this might not necessarily be the case all the time. My friend, for instance, â??firedâ?• her (private) nanny after just two weeks as her nanny did not treat her baby well and did so many things that was causing my friend to lose her sanity.

Your babyâ??s life and well-being is at stake, so please make sure you find someone who will care and love your baby so that you can focus on recuperating and getting your breastmilk supply up.

## Final thoughts

Soâ?¦are confinement nannies necessary? Are they worth spending one month of salary on? Weâ??ve decided that hiring a confinement lady is a MUST-HAVE for us, especially as first-time parents, and that it is worth every single cent so that Iâ??ll be able to focus on recuperating, while we learn how to care for our newborn from a more experienced hand as well. After all, the last time our parents took care of a newborn was over 25+ years ago, so we certainly wanted someone who has more experience and would be able to guide us as we become new parents. For folks who cannot afford the time (not to mention extra $$) to go for prenatal classes and learn how to care for a baby properly (including us), hiring a confinement nanny can help to take that stress off us since we can learn everything we need from her.

If you donâ??t have the time to individually call up numerous private nannies like we do, or if youâ??re too busy or tired to deal with all the paperwork and any issues, then an agency might be a better option, and two of my friends who are giving birth in the same month as me has opted to get their nanny through PEM as well largely due to the price and convenience.

Iâ??ll share about my own confinement journey and tips on how to DIY your own shortly, and will also do a review on my PEM nanny soon!

With love,

Budget Babe
**Category**

1. Family
2. Pregnancy

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