Domestic Help (DH) Value Addition Programme

Every home has its own individuality and specifics but there are some rules and duties that a Domestic Help (DH) needs to know. These programmes are an attempt to help the Lady of the House train her DH as well as highlight those issues that are pertinent to the DH, while keeping in mind some of the intricate details we normally don’t seem to keep track of.

In the following pages we have attempted to list some of the basic points to be kept in mind, when initiating the training of a new DH. The list as laid down below, is not comprehensive and it may also not be uniformly applicable, but it is an indication of the direction the training should take if the transaction is to be comfortable for both parties in the long term.

1. The Basics
2. When Meeting Prospective Employer
3. Training (Daily Household activities)
4. Care of children & Senior Citizens
5. Safety / Security & Fire
6. Social Responsibility
7. First Aid

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The Basics

Hygiene
A bath everyday & clothes washed.
Hands to be washed with soap before cooking / after using the toilet / bathroom.

Etiquette and Manners

Answering the telephone:
How to receive and make telephone calls.
Take messages – name of the caller, for who the call is, caller’s phone number, approximate time of call,
Take a written message if she/ he knows how to write.

Guests:
If known - How to seat them / greet them – namaste or any language spoken/ known by the DH.
Serve water when guests come.
Offer them tea / coffee / something cold if the employer isn’t at home or is going to be late. Serve them some namkeen / chips / sweets.

If unknown – door not to be opened but caller to be addressed with the door chain latched or through the mesh door.
DH not to reveal any information to the stranger like the phone numbers of the members of the house / if they are out of station or any other such information.
In case of couriers, bill collectors and LPG suppliers, the DH must have the phone numbers of the members of the house so that she / he can call up and ask permission to accept the same. In such a situation the DH must talk to the stranger through the mesh door or with the safety latch on and while calling up the concerned person, should lock the door from inside.
Meeting Prospective Employer

Greeting
a: Namaste
b: Good morning / Good evening
c: in any other regional language (optional)

The Interview
Listen to what the employer has to say:
Employer will quiz the DH on her / his previous job, reasons for leaving the previous job, period of work experience, knowledge of work.
Answers to be given honestly to all of the above.

DH to clarify the kind of work expected of her / him and salary.
If a live-in, the accommodation that will be provided and whether or not a weekly holiday will be allowed.
DH should be frank about the kind of work she / he is already acquainted or not acquainted with.

Showing initiative
Once satisfied, the DH is to ask the employer for instructions on how the employer would like the work to be done: eg. cleaning of the house - which room first & which cleaning agent is to be used (if any) when mopping, dusting of furniture / curios etc.
Whether bed tea would have to be provided to the inmates in the morning, timings for breakfast / lunch & dinner.
In the initial stage itself, the DH should be subtly informed as to which electronic gadgets (like the PC or the Microwave) or any other gadgets/ particular areas of the house not to be handled/ out of bounds for her/ him.
Training

Making of beds
Method to be adopted (day and night service DH are to be trained here by the lady of the house on bed making). DH should also be informed as to the frequency of linen change and also the segregation of linen for house inmates and guests.

Cleaning
Lady of the house to train on cleaning methods and what cleaning agent is to be used to clean-
Kitchen: utensils (wash, wipe dry & stack)
Bathrooms: (toilet bowl, wash basin, bath tub & shower curtain) bath mat, etc.

Knowledge of the various kinds of cleaning material/agents that can be used (lady of the house to train the DH)
DH to see that all the required cleaning material are available in the house. If not, then the DH is to request the lady of the house to purchase them for better maintenance of the house.

DH must be taught to use the cleaning material (or for that matter any other material) sparingly and not be lavish so that the employer is also aware that the DH is careful & not wasteful.

Setting & Clearing the table:
How to set the table
What is to be kept on the table (table mats, plates, crockery, cutlery)
When & how to clear (first the plates and then the food bowls etc with the help of a tray)

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Using Gadgets
Procedure to use & clean equipment & their purpose in detail.
Details regarding refrigeration & microwaving of food - types of utensils / bowls to be used in the oven / microwave. DO’S AND DONT’S.

Gas Burner
Do’s -
Always switch on the cylinder first and then the burner. When cooking is finished, always switch off the cylinder first and then the burner. Always wipe the gas burner with a cleaner. Change the gas pipe twice a year. Keep the holes of the burner clear and clean to avoid leakage.

Dont’s
Never switch on any electrical switch if you detect leaking of gas. Never leave the cylinder switch ON throughout the night. Never change the cylinders with the valve open.

Microwave / Oven
Do’s -
Clean the inside of the oven right after each use with a mild detergent solution, but let the oven cool before cleaning, in order to avoid injury. Always use oven gloves when removing dishes from the oven. Always keep the power cable or plug away from water and heated surfaces.

Dont’s
Never use metallic cookware, either to heat or cook in a microwave oven. Do not heat airtight or vacuum-sealed bottles, jars, containers. Do not operate the microwave oven when it is empty. Stand at arms length from the oven when opening the door. Liquids and other foods must not be heated in sealed containers since they are liable to explode.
Training – Some Do’s & Don’ts

Refrigerator
Do’s -
De-frost the refrigerator every alternate weekend.
Wrap the vegetables either in newspaper or vegetable pouches and keep the vegetables and fruits separately.
While cleaning the freezer use a soft detergent and soft cloth to wipe it clean.

Don’ts -
Never put in hot foodstuff
Don’t clean the refrigerator with the switch on.
Never use a sharp/hard instrument while clearing the ice formed on the freezer. If necessary let the ice melt by switching off the refrigerator/freezer. This is not applicable in frost-free refrigerators.

Washing Machine
Do’s -
Keep the machine away from the reach of children.
Keep the machine shutter closed when not in use.
Always close the mouth of the drain pipe when not in use to prevent insects and other pests from entering the machine.
Always check pockets for any items before putting them to wash.

Don’ts -
Avoid putting in clothes with metal buttons.
Never overload the machine with clothes.
Avoid mixing coloured and white clothes together.
Avoid putting in plastic toys for washing.

Vacuum Cleaner
Do’s -
Always keep the collection bag inside the machine clean.
Keep the machine away from the reach of children.

Don’ts -
Never use the machine where there are pieces of scattered metals.
Never let the pipe get entangled with the other body parts of the machine to prevent damage.

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Clothes Iron
Do’s
Wipe thoroughly with a damp cloth or sponge only with the power mains off.
Never use abrasives, heavy-duty cleaners, vinegar or scouring pads.
Always ensure that the cord set is not left lying on the floor, as it could trip people. Also the cord set should be routed carefully in order to avoid touching the hot soleplate.

Don’ts
Do not use metal scouring pads since they will scratch the soleplate.
Avoid ironing over zippers, rivets on jeans, etc., as they will scratch the soleplate.
Do not use appliance in the presence of explosives or flammable material.
Do not use the appliance near heat sources or directly under cabinets.

Washing / drying & folding, ironing of clothes
Person responsible for the washing of clothes – Part time / DH / washing machine.
Where the clothes are to be dried / folding the washed clothes & putting them back in their respective cupboards.
Ironing - clothes to be ironed (how to iron different types of cloth) or if they are to be given to the local press-wala.
Training

Food & food preference
Storing of provisions – perishable & non-perishable. DH to check with the lady of the house regarding preparation of food - freshly prepared before every meal or once in the day, and when. Also the DH should be taught about the concepts of storage and disposal.

- Cooking preferences & type of preparation - spicy / non spicy, oily, etc.
- Tea/ coffee preference: Ready made / set in a tray- tea pot, milk pot, sugar pot or simply poured in mugs - with sugar- mixed or in a sugar pot or sugar free.

Disposal of garbage
Where to dispose the garbage.
When to dispose the garbage – whether once or twice a day.
If twice whether it should be once in the morning & second in the evening/ night
Method of disposal – in a disposable bag or with a dustbin.
Segregation of organic and inorganic waste – Lady of the House can put up a green dustbin for wet garbage and a blue dustbin for dry garbage
Never mix used batteries either with dry or wet garbage, if possible try returning them back to the company.
How? Ask your local shopkeeper if he has the take back policy or try locating one.

Spring-cleaning
Cleaning of the doors / windows / bathroom tiles once a week & the kitchen once in two months.
Materials to be used in the process.

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Care of children & Senior Citizens

- Strict routine to be followed.
- Food & drink to be prepared as per instructions, and given at the correct time.
- Medicines to be given at the prescribed time.
- Care to be taken to see that the bathrooms are always kept dry so that the possibility of slipping is diminished.
- Babies/toddlers and the old need to be taken for a walk – in such cases they should be made to walk near the curb in the direction opposite to that of the traffic. Hygiene to be maintained – bath to be given regularly (in the case of Senior citizens the bath water to be kept ready – as per their liking)
- In case of senior citizens who can walk but cannot run, make sure they carry a bright coloured walking stick while crossing the road so that drivers are careful and slow down. (Delhi Traffic Police – Road Safety Rules)
- Children to be watched if taken to the playpen.
Knowing the person:
The DH must be verified by the police/Resident Welfare Association. The owners of the house must have the following information about the DH: Full name and permanent address, occupational background.

Knowing the household:
The DH must know the name of the employer(s) entire household so that mails and messages can be taken for the right person. He/she must know the mobile numbers of the employers to be able to contact them in case of emergency!! Must know which neighbor to go to in case of a problem/emergency.

House
Entry points to the house: Doors - If there is more than one entry point, which one is to be kept locked at all times. Windows closed/opened (as per the preference of the employer). Till fully acquainted – ask for identification before opening the door/check from the peephole.
The DH must take the responsibility of checking that all the latches and hooks for every door and window have been properly bolted every night.
Safety & Security

Answering the door bell
a) When the person is not known to the family – Call the lady of the house and confirm & only then allow entry to the house (if no one at home).  
b) Sales person / others – The employer’s whereabouts not to be informed or any other information regarding the family / house. Put the door chain and then talk to the stranger! Shut the door before going to get water for them or to ask the employers, if at home, what is to be done.

Part timers
He / she must keep a tab on the activities of the part timers. Whether they would be allowed access to the entire house, if not, which are the restricted areas. MUST KNOW: The garbage man, milkman, cable wala, newspaper wala & car cleaner, etc.

Fire & Emergencies
DH must be trained in the different categories of fires:
Category A: Ordinary combustible materials such as paper wood, trash and cloth, etc. (Action – Water, Water-CO2, CO2, DCP)
Category B: Flammable liquids & Chemicals, Paints, Varnishes and Solvents (Action – Foam, CO2, DCP)
Category C: Flammable and Combustible Gases : LPG/ CNG
Action - CO2, DCP
Category C: Electrical / Electronic Equipment / Appliances (CO2-- Carbon dioxide, DCP--Dry chemical powder : Source - Safety handout of M aurya)
Social Responsibility

Literacy
In case the lady of the house has free time, she can encourage the maid to learn to read and write, to the extent of opening & operating her / his own bank account. It can be carried out in two ways:
1. Dotted lines - The lady of the house can write down the name of the maid as a dotted line and the maid can draw over them, once in a day so that she can write her name when needed for the bank functionalities.
2. Total literacy - If the maid is interested the lady of the house or for that matter any fully literate person on the house can take out time according to convenience and start teaching her from the grass-root level.

Water Conservation
The lady of the House must train the DH how to conserve water, in the following areas:
1. Shutting taps tightly to prevent dripping.
2. Making sure that the tap is not running needlessly while washing dishes.
3. Using a bucket sprinkler, instead of a hosepipe while watering the flowers, washing car, driveway, or pet animals.
4. Using a bucket and a mug instead of a shower while taking a bath.
Accidents can happen anytime to anybody. Being prepared to meet them can make all the difference, which is why the knowledge of First-Aid is so important. This is also why Johnson & Johnson have prepared this First-Aid Guide.

Surface Wounds
1. Cleanse the wound and the surrounding area gently with mild soap and water; rinse. Bolt dry with sterile pad or clean dressing.
2. Treat the wound to protect against contamination. Savlon antiseptic liquid can be used for both cleaning and treating the wound.
3. Cover the wound to absorb fluids and protect wound from further contamination. (Handle only the edges of sterile pads or dressings.)
4. Medicated dressings like Band-Aid are very convenient for small wounds as it protects the wounds from dirt while the antiseptic helps the wound heal faster.
5. For larger wounds cover with sterile pads or gauze and tape to secure the pad and keep it in place. Adhesive tape like Johnsonplast is ideal for this purpose.

Deep Wounds & Serious Burns
Should be cleansed by professional medical personnel. Treat for bleeding and shock.
Caution: Be alert for signs of infection such as hot, painful reddening around wound, swelling, chills or fever. Call a doctor immediately.
Be sure your family is immunized against tetanus every 5 years. Any wound is tetanus-prone. Check with doctor to see if an injection is needed.
Bandaging

Emergency bandages can be devised from clean handkerchiefs, scarves, sheets, belts, socks or stockings. Bandages should be snug but not tight enough to interfere with circulation:
1. Always leave victim’s fingertips or toes exposed when a splint or bandage is applied to arms or legs.
2. Loosen bandage if swelling, discoloration or a cold, numb or tingling sensation occurs in fingers or toes.
   Never apply a tight bandage to the victim’s neck.

Nosebleed

Signs to look for: Bleeding from one or both nostrils.
What to do:
1. Loosen clothing around neck. Tell person to sit down with head bent forward or to lie down with head and shoulders raised.
2. Tell person to breathe through mouth.
3. If bleeding is from front of nose:
   a. Pinch nostrils together for five minutes.
   b. Place cold, wet towels or clothes over nose and face.
   c. If bleeding continues, insert a small sterile pad in one or both the nostrils. (DO NOT use cotton or anything with loose fibers).
   Be sure pad is extending from the nostril. Pinch nostril together.
   If bleeding persists, call a doctor.
4. If bleeding is from back of nose, take person to hospital or call a doctor immediately.
5. Ice cube to be placed on the bridge of the nose.
Burns

Burns may be classified according to the degree of seriousness:

1. **First Degree Burns** – involving superficial layers of skin and characterised by redness or discolouration, mild swelling and pain.

   What to do:
   
   A. Apply a cool, wet cloth or immerse in cold water. Do not use ice.
   B. Gently dab the affected area with a clean cloth, and then cover it with a dry, non-stick sterile pad or clean cloth if necessary.
   C. Usually medical treatment is not necessary. However if severe symptoms are present, consult a doctor immediately. Be alert for signs of shock.

2. **Second Degree Burns** are characterized by a red or spotted appearance, blisters, deep burns, considerable pain and swelling and a wet appearance on the surface of the skin.

   What to do:
   
   A. Same as that for first degree burns. If the arms and legs are affected keep them raised above heart level.
   B. Medical treatment may be necessary depending on the location and extent of the burn.
   C. Second-degree burns may be deep and serious. Be alert for signs of shock and infection.

3. **Third Degree Burns** are characterized by deep tissue destruction with a white or charred appearance, (complete loss of all layers of skin), no pain.

   What to do:
   
   A. Treat for shock if necessary.
   B. Do not touch or cough over burnt area. If the face is burnt, keep the person sitting so that he can breathe easily. Person should be kept under continuous observation for breathing difficulties.
   C. If arms or legs are affected keep them raised above heart level.
   D. Apply a cold pack ONLY to the face, hands or feet.
   E. Cover burns with a non-stick sterile pad or a clean cloth.
   F. Move person to hospital immediately.
(Contd.)

Remember:
Do not clean, brush or break blisters.
Do not remove any clothing that sticks to burns.
Do not apply grease, ointment or any medication to a severe burn.
Do not use cotton or a cloth with loose fibers to cover burns.

Heat Exhaustion
Signs to look for:
Fatigue, irritability, headache, feeling of faintness, cold, clammy skin and a lot of perspiration.

What to do:
A. Person should be made to lie down in a cool, shaded area or an air-conditioned room. Raise feet.
B. Massage legs towards heart
C. Give cold salt water (½ teaspoon to ½ glass of water) or cool sweetened drinks, especially iced tea and coffee, every 15 minutes until person recovers.
D. Do not let person sit up, even after feeling recovered. Person should rest for a little while longer.

Sun Stroke (Heat Stroke)
Signs to look for:
Extremely high body temperature (104 F or higher); hot, red, dry skin, absence of sweating; rapid pulse; convulsions; unconsciousness.

Caution: Sunstroke is a life-threatening emergency.
What to do:
A. Get a doctor immediately.
B. Lower body temperature quickly by placing person in partially filled up tub of cool, not cold water. (Avoid overcooling). Briskly sponge person’s body until temperature is reduced.
Disability, which may be temporary, permanent or progressive in nature, interferes with a person’s ability to perform some or most activities of everyday living. In today’s world, people with disabilities are increasingly desirous of living independently, with dignity. Consequently, there is an ample job opportunity for persons who can provide personal care to the disabled, separate from any domestic help they may need.

Any willing person with a happy constitution can easily learn how to perform all the activities of personal care though there is a certain level of sensitivity that is essential. Such persons should necessarily have respect for the rights of people with disability and should not think of taking advantage of their disability.

Naturally, the kind of assistance required varies depending on the type or degree of disability. The following list presents an indication of the kind of assistance that a disabled person may require:

- Assistance in sitting, walking or putting them in bed at the right position
- Assistance in bathing and grooming activities
- Assistance at the toilet
- Accompany them when going out and support, if required, in walking, etc.
- Assistance in feeding if required
- Assistance in some passive daily exercise
- Maintaining hygiene and cleanliness
- Give medication on time
- Checking regularly for bedsores or other wounds; keep in touch with the family or whoever is responsible and take care of them
- Assistance in activities like, reaching for plugging gadgets in sockets, lifting things from floor and high shelves, etc.

Disclaimer: The aforesaid details are for your information, education and training only. We hope the details will be valuable and useful to you. All information in these pages provided are without any warranty of its accuracy, completeness, fitness for a practical purpose. We shall not be liable for any damage you may sustain by using the information, whether direct, indirect, special, incidental or consequential. The details provided are to be solely used as basic guidelines in order to systematize the daily household chores.
Form to be filled by DH

FIRST NAME: [ ]
SURNAME: [ ]
DATE OF BIRTH: [ ]
PLACE OF BIRTH: [ ]
SEX: [ ]
MARRIED / UNMARRIED: [ ]
NO. OF DEPENDENTS: [ ]
PERMANENT ADDRESS: [ ]

PRESENT ADDRESS: [ ]

PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT: [ ]
(Give name of person worked for)

ADDRESS & TELEPHONE No. OF PREVIOUS EMPLOYER: [ ]

EDUCATION: [ ]

NAME OF SCHOOL: [ ]

SCHOOL DROP OUT: YES / NO

LEVEL OF EDUCATION: [ ]
( Specify up to which class )
Form to be filled by DH

REFERENCE:

CONTACT TELEPHONE NO.:

POLICE VERIFICATION DONE: YES / NO

SKILLS: (Please specify)

COOKING:

BAKING:

ANY OTHER:

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