

Email Brief - Caregiver Visa Program - Waive Language and Education Requirements

I am a working mother of two young children. I work long hours and find it hard to give my full attention to both my young ones. I try my best to inculcate values in them as well as a sense of Pakistani culture and its language, Urdu. However, I believe I need a caregiver who can help me take care of my young kids while I work full-time. To that end, I have looked into sponsoring a caregiver from Pakistan.

However, the [Caregiver Visa Program](#) mandates that caregivers coming from overseas pass a language requirement (English or French) and have a minimum of 13 years of education starting from Grade 1. The English language requirement is usually proven by taking the IELTS General Exam and scoring a passing grade.

This is an onerous requirement for many reasons:

1. Many caregivers do not *need* to speak in English or French to do their job and help care for elders or children. I want to sponsor someone from Pakistan to live-in and provide care for my young children. I do not need the caregiver to know English or French since I will be able to communicate with the caregiver in Urdu.
2. In fact, I would prefer that the caregiver does not know English so that my kids can speak to her in Urdu and learn their mother tongue. While I try my best to speak in Urdu, I have not been successful in making my kids speak in Urdu. They will reply in English because they know I understand English. They only attempt to speak in Urdu when they realize the other person cannot understand English. I spent a few months in Pakistan recently with the said caregiver and she was single-handedly able to teach my kids Urdu!
3. When an employer sponsors a caregiver from a particular country, chances are that those caregivers will also have subsequent employment opportunities with other employers who speak the same language. Knowing another language will be an asset in increasing their marketability and job opportunities.
4. I have looked for years to find a caregiver who speaks in Urdu but I have not been able to find one successfully. Over the years, I have advertised in multiple groups on Facebook and WhatsApp along with posting ads on Kijiji and websites that are geared towards providing care (e.g., CanadianNanny and Care.com). I have also tried to spread the message through word of mouth. However, I have not been able to find a caregiver who can speak in Urdu, which is why I am looking into sponsoring one from Pakistan.
5. It is necessary for Canada to have a strong caregiving economy if women are to be retained in the workforce. Without suitable caregivers, women / mothers are often forced to choose between pursuing a career and taking care of loved ones.
6. If the language and education requirements have been inserted to ensure that caregivers have other suitable employment choices, then caregivers can enroll in English language classes once they are here. In any case, it will be easier to learn English once they are immersed in this culture.
7. Keeping a language and education requirement is an unnecessary hurdle that prevents Canadians from sponsoring suitable caregivers from different countries.

Please consider waiving this requirement so that it becomes easier to sponsor caregivers and to bolster our caregiving economy.

Warm Regards,

Sarah Nasrullah