



# Ten Tips: An Insider's Guide to Hiring the Right Care Professional For Your Family

By Susan Asay, Host Mom, CEO & Founder of Apex PROcare



Dear Parent,

If someone asked you to name your greatest accomplishment in life, you would immediately think about your children. Right? No matter how prestigious your career might be, your children are and always will be the best thing you have ever achieved. Unfortunately, your “greatest achievement” doesn’t magically free you from other responsibilities. No matter how much you love your children (and as a parent, I know you can’t even quantify that amount), it’s a fact of life that their arrival makes life more chaotic and complicated.

Now, like millions of other parents, you’ve found yourself trying to juggle your career, life demands, and the well-being of your children. And, you’re searching desperately for the perfect childcare solution. Hiring a care professional – bringing someone into your home that can offer your child consistent, loving care – seems like a potentially great solution.

Hiring full time live-in childcare is not as simple as finding a babysitter for a weekend date. This is a life-changing experience and one that can positively influence you and your children’s lives for years to come. Finding the right person with the right experience and personality takes time, research, and a good understanding of your family’s needs. I know – I’ve been in your shoes and learned the hard way!

My first child, Klaus, was born in 2005 and started me on my journey towards becoming “the expert” in finding and hiring childcare providers. We did not have family living close by and qualified caregivers were hard to find. Daycare did not work because we needed flexible hours. Ultimately, I was not comfortable leaving my baby in the hands of strangers – yet, becoming a stay-at-home-mom was not an option. We cycled through all our available childcare alternatives before learning what worked best for our family, which was live-in support.

My own search for safe, reliable and skilled live-in childcare helped me to realize how challenging the caregiver hiring process can be – and how unprepared most families are when they start. It also taught me the importance of finding a caregiver with the right background and training to provide excellent care, and that drove me towards identifying care professionals trained in nursing, early education and other fields such as occupational, physical, speech and behavioral therapy.

The goal of this guide is to help prepare you to find the right care professional candidate for your family and help you avoid the mistakes that many first-time live-in caregiver families make.

Warm Regards,



CEO and Founder

# Understand your Options for Hiring a Caregiver for your Children

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Not all childcare options are created equal. It's important to understand the differences in hiring a caregiver so you can make the best choice for your family.



### **Hiring on Your Own**

You can choose to hire a caregiver on your own and if you go this route, you can find many online job sites and resources available to help you. You'll want to plan on investing considerable time and energy into the process including posting a job, interviewing and screening candidates, getting background checks and references and setting up necessary payroll taxes, contracts, and insurance. This option can work well for families that have the time available and may already have a strong nanny referral from a friend or coworker.

### **Using a Caregiver Agency**

The benefit of using a reputable placement agency in your search is that the agency will source candidates for you and present you with pre-screened and vetted caregivers that match your needs. These agencies will take the time to get to know your family and your unique needs so that they can present the best candidates to you.

When researching a caregiver agency, it's important to understand their specialty which may include live-in and live-out care and temporary and permanent placement options. Many agencies charge a placement fee for their services and you as the family become the direct employer of your caregiver, leaving you responsible to figure out payroll, insurance and HR administration responsibilities.

# Understand your Options for Hiring a Caregiver for your Children, Cont.

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### **Choosing Apex PROcare to match with an Apex Care Professional**

While the benefits of hiring a live-in American care professional are great, this child care option also brings the extra responsibilities and challenges of becoming a domestic employer. If you are like many busy parents who are already juggling full schedules, it can be overwhelming to think about taking on taxes, payroll and HR administration.

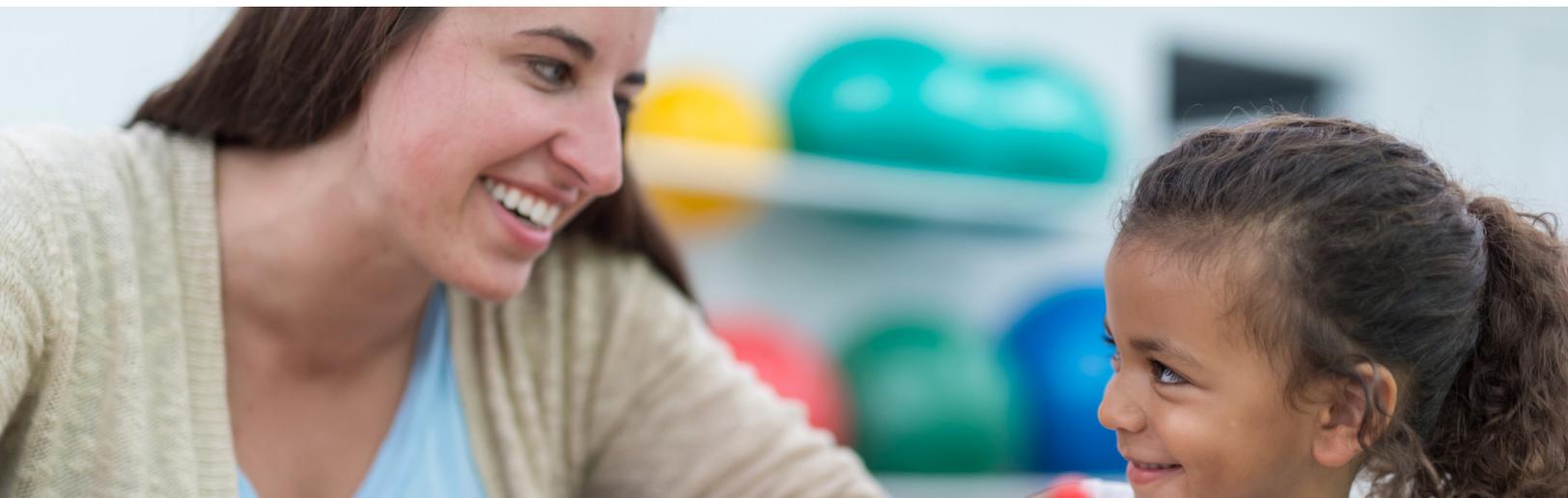
At Apex PROcare, we offer two models in order to best support you. In the first, we follow the roadmap of our international professional au pair business, PROaupair, where we recruit, screen, refer, match and support the candidate for you, yet you are the direct employer and will be responsible to comply with and pay your caregiver according to your local domestic labor laws.

Apex PROcare also offers a second model where we handle all the important aspects of employment including payroll, taxes, insurance, and compliance with all domestic labor laws. We offer the caregiver access to competitive employee benefits including comprehensive health care and a 401K retirement plan. By taking care of the employer responsibilities, we free you up to focus on what matters most – time with your family. You'll have peace of mind knowing that your employee obligations are met and that your caregiver is safe and secure. Whichever model you choose, we remain engaged with your care professional, including them in our global Apex Social Community for ongoing support, education & training, career development and more. This community is a big reason why Apex care professionals choose to work with us and how we attract top talent for your family.

### **Support for You and Your Caregiver**

Be sure to research what ongoing level of support your agency will provide to both you and your caregiver. If problems arise, what level of support is available? Does your agency offer ongoing coaching and support to your caregiver to help keep her happy and engaged? What options are available for your caregiver's professional development to keep her growing in her career? At Apex PROcare, we work closely with our families and care professionals to help create successful relationships and assist if problems come up. We believe that by creating opportunities for personal and professional growth, our care professionals will experience greater job satisfaction, leading to successful long-term placements with their families.

Want to learn more about how Apex PROcare might be a fit for your family? Please visit us at [apexprocare.com](https://apexprocare.com).



# Be Informed: Your Responsibilities as an Employer

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As you consider options for hiring a caregiver, it's important to educate yourself about your employer obligations. Here's a sample of what these will include:

- **Compensation** - You'll want to research minimum wage in your local area and make sure that you are compensating at or above the legal minimum wage plus any overtime pay.
- **Paid Time Off and Sick Leave** - Sick leave regulations can vary by city and state. You'll want to be sure you are in compliance with the laws in your area.
- **Workers Compensation Insurance** - We highly encourage you to have workers compensation insurance to protect your caregiver and your family from any accidents that happen on the job. In addition, workers compensation insurance may be required by your state.
- **Taxes** - [IRS Publication 926](#), Household Employer's Tax Guide outlines the taxes that families employing a caregiver are responsible for. They include:
  - + Taxes withheld from the employee: Social Security and Medicare taxes as well as federal and state income taxes.
  - + Taxes paid by the employer: Social Security and Medicare taxes as well as federal and state unemployment insurance.
- **Medical Insurance** - To attract the highest qualified caregivers, you'll want to consider offering medical insurance.

There are reputable companies like [HomePay](#) to help manage the caregiver employment process for you. You can also choose an agency like Apex PROcare who can also be the care professional employer, handling all taxes, administrative and HR concerns, and freeing you to focus on what matters most - your family. Visit us at [apexprocare.com](http://apexprocare.com) to find out more about how we can help.

# Be Aware that Special Needs Requires Specialized Care

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Does your family require specialized care for your child(ren)? Maybe you have an infant or multiples or perhaps one of your children has developmental delays or some other form of special needs? In these instances you are most likely looking for a caregiver who has extra training that can help with your unique circumstances.

Care professionals are ideal for any family who require a higher level of support. Look for people who have a degree in fields related to teaching, special needs education and/or healthcare and who view being a caregiver as a professional job - a continuation of their career and an opportunity to add valuable work experience to their resume. Care professionals can be elementary school teachers, special needs care educators, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech therapists or other healthcare students or graduates.



Below are some suggestions to help you determine what type of training your care professional should have:

### **Infants and Multiples:**

For infants and multiples, look for an agency that offers candidates who have extensive infant care experience and hold a degree in pediatric nursing, early childhood development or other educational degrees related to working with children.

### **Special Needs:**

Children who have special needs (including ADD, ADHD, Asperger syndrome, Autism, Down syndrome, Epilepsy, developmental delays, physical disabilities, and Diabetes) often require additional care, special understanding, and someone who really knows your child and what he or she needs. The best caregiver will be someone who already has some experience and who is specifically interested and motivated to care for children with special needs. They should

have degrees in programs such as education, special needs education, occupational therapy, physical therapy and pediatric nursing and have direct experience working with children with special needs.

If you've identified that your family would benefit from a caregiver who has specific training working with children with special needs, it's a good idea to start looking for your care professional as early as possible. For some real life examples of care professionals working with families with special needs or families with infants and multiples, please visit our Family Stories at [ApexPROcare.com](https://www.apexprocare.com). We specialize in serving families with children with special needs and are passionate about connecting care professionals with families for life-changing experiences.

# Be Clear About Your Family's Childcare Needs

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Every family is unique. What works for you may not work for your friend's family - particularly when it comes to childcare. That's why it's vital to understand your family's specific childcare needs before hiring a caregiver.

Take a minute and think of what is important to you in hiring a caregiver. What are 10 questions you would ask yourself about your childcare needs? Write them down.

Now - take a look at the questions below. How many of them came to mind? We invite you to incorporate these questions with yours to create a list that will be unique to your family.



### Questions to Consider When Hiring a Live-In Caregiver:

- Do you have a comfortable spare bedroom for a live-in caregiver?
- What level of driving experience do you require?
- Do your children have special dietary considerations?
- Do your children have any special needs that require specific training or experience?
- Do you need someone who is a strong swimmer?
- What is your family's schedule and when do you need the most help?
- What are your children's personalities and what kind of caregiver will be most compatible with them?
- What is your family style? Are you loud and boisterous or quiet and serene or maybe somewhere in between? What personality type would work best with your family dynamics?

Understanding your answers will help you in the interview process so that you can ask the right questions and find a caregiver that will complement your family.

Hiring a live-in care professional not only adds a valued employee to your home but you'll also welcome a new family member. Since your care professional is coming to your home to help you, it's imperative to be very specific in what you are looking for. Creating a detailed job description can also help you identify what's important to your family. Our host family [application](#) is designed to help you answer questions so that candidates will have a good understanding of your family and your childcare needs.

### Plan Your Childcare for the Atypical Day

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Childcare can make or break a working parent's career. If you are concerned about your child's well being, it can be tough to focus on your job. Being confident that your child is in a safe, loving and stimulating environment frees your mind so you can excel in the workplace.

No environment is more secure than home, which is why a live-in childcare solution is appealing to so many parents. Live-in childcare, like you would receive from a care professional, provides you with flexibility, reliability and most importantly, peace of mind. In short, it allows for the 'atypical' day.

When evaluating your childcare options, don't just think about the average day. There are many childcare solutions that work well on the average day, when the alarm clock goes off at the right time, traffic is light, the weather is good, there are no special events, and no one is sick. So instead, we encourage you to think about an atypical day. Your boss asks you to stay late unexpectedly, or your pediatrician appointment is at the same time as a new business meeting, or your child gets sick and needs to be picked up from school immediately.

How comfortable are you with your childcare options for an atypical day?

A live-in care professional provides families with the flexibility to cope with whatever arises. Knowing your children are in good hands - not just on a typical day but on an atypical day too, allows you to divide your time effectively.



# Ask your Placement Agency the Right Questions

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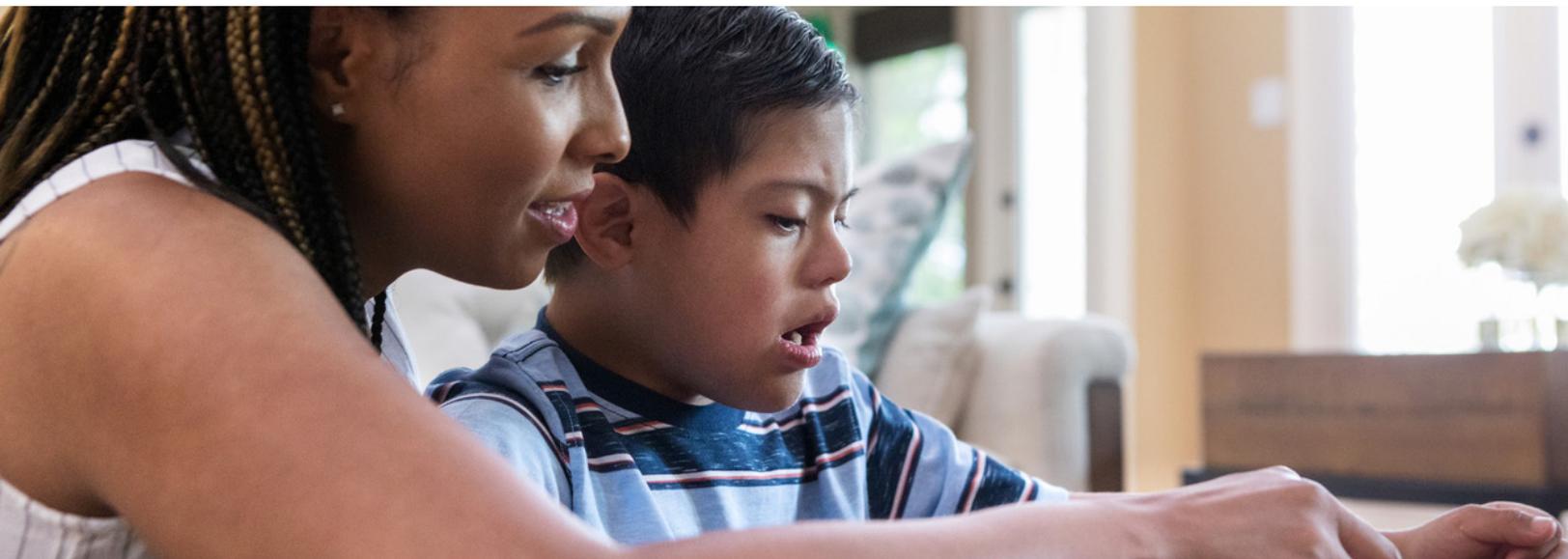
When it comes to finding a professional caregiver for your family, there are numerous agencies to choose from. How do you know which one is right for you?

When vetting a placement agency, it's important to consider two main things: (1) your family's needs and (2) how the agency runs its business. We've already addressed the first point in Tip #4. For the second point, we've compiled a list of suggested questions that will help you to better understand your prospective agency and determine if you want to move ahead.

### Questions to Ask When Vetting a Domestic Placement Agency:

- How long have you been in business?
- How many placements have you made?
- How do you recruit and screen your candidates?
- What educational background do your candidates have?
- Do your caregivers have experience working with children with special needs?
- How much childcare experience do your caregivers have?
- How do you charge for your services?
- What specific services do you offer for that fee?
- What interview and selection support do you offer?
- Can I talk to any of your current families to hear about their experiences?
- What protocol is in place if there is a problem?
- What types of support do you offer after a caregiver has been placed with me?

The above questions will get you started on your search for an agency that is the right fit for you. If we can help with your search, please contact us at [ApexPROcare.com](https://www.apexPROcare.com).



### Consider the Needs of your Care Professional

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A care professional is more than an employee - s/he is an addition to the family. If you choose a live-in caregiver, you'll want to consider the special dynamics to creating a successful relationship in your home.

While your care professional will be living with you 24/7, s/he won't be working the entire time. It will be important to communicate a schedule so that your care professional will be able to plan and spend her/his free time in the community and develop a life outside of your home.

A good practice is to ask care professionals what they are looking to gain from their time at your home, outside of the specific work with your family. For some, it may be continuing to take coursework

towards an advanced degree. For others, it's experiencing life in a different part of the U.S. and gaining new experiences and friends. If you can understand their motivation, you can help to support them in accomplishing their goals.

At Apex PROcare, we provide our care professionals with support and tools to help them thrive in your home. We encourage experiential learning and offer them close support through a network of field staff, a personal Success Coach and access to a global network of other care professionals and events.

As a family, the more you can do to acclimate your care professional to his/her new home, the happier everyone will be!



#### Tips to welcome your care professional to your home:

- Create a welcome basket with a local coffee shop gift card, water bottle, photo frame, etc.
- Find out his/her favorite foods and snacks and stock the fridge in advance of arrival.
- Have the children create welcome cards or a welcome banner.
- Host a welcome family dinner.
- Hang a bulletin board in his/her room so she can personalize her space.
- Have her make a "bucket list" of everything she wants to do and see in your community and talk about it together.
- Introduce her to family and friends.

By taking the time to warmly welcome your care professional into your home, you'll be on your way to creating a successful relationship.

## Use Science to Confirm Personality Assumptions

Have you ever met someone, felt like you really connected, and then, after a time, discovered that you don't understand that person? It's not that your initial impression was wrong, it's just a few habits that started to drive you crazy.

The same is true when choosing a care professional. Let's be realistic about this...when you first connect, and even for the first few weeks, you're on your very best behavior. And so are they! But what happens when you reach a certain comfort level and the "real" you and the "real" them emerges?

If you've done your homework well, things should just get better. Once the familiarity sets in, your care professional becomes a member of the family. And, that is what you want! But, how can you avoid making the wrong decision? Instead of leaving it up to chance and gut instinct, why not add a layer of scientific analysis?

Understanding your own personality, and the personality of your prospective caregiver, helps to ensure a good, high quality match. Many people tend to navigate toward people like them. In some cases, this might be a good match, but not in others.

Apex PROcare offers an in-depth personality analysis as part of our matching process. We have long used Dr. Hartman's Personality Assessment, known as the Color Code, and found that it can be valuable in helping families find a compatible caregiver. You can take a free version of the test [here](#). It will provide you a taste of what you can expect from the broader report.



### COLORCODE

Personality science.

#### Red (Power)

Reds are the power wielders and getting things done is what motivates them. They are responsible, decisive, and proactive.

#### Blue (Intimacy)

Blues are the do-gooders and creating quality relationships and having purpose is what motivates them. They are loyal, sincere, and thoughtful.

#### White (Peace)

Whites are the peacekeepers and staying calm and balanced in a crisis is what motivates them. They are kind, adaptable and good listeners.

#### Yellow (Fun)

Yellows are the fun lovers and living life in the moment is what motivates them. They are charismatic, spontaneous and sociable.

### Hire the Right Experience for Your Family

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Choosing the right care professional for your family is one of the biggest decisions you'll make. And, the most important issue to determine is if the caregiver has the right experience for the job.

Every stage of your child's life brings with it new experiences and new lessons to be learned. Parents move from worrying about how to hold an infant, to how to introduce solid foods, to potty training, to how to balance growing independence, and the list continues. As a parent, these lessons are a normal part of raising a child. But, when hiring a care professional, you want someone who knows what they are doing and has relevant experience.

At Apex PROcare, care professionals are required to complete a comprehensive application and undergo a stringent screening process in order to be considered for our program. Our application process is designed to elicit detailed information about the applicant's professional and educational background, personality and character. We then present candidates that are the best fit for your needs so that you can thoroughly review their applications. Like reviewing a resume, this will give you helpful insights on items to discuss during the interview.



**Below are some important things to consider when evaluating caregiver candidates:**

- Have they worked with children in your age group before?
- Do they have special education and training that will benefit your child(ren) and whatever special needs they have?
- Will they be an asset to you and your family, proactively bringing their own experience to the table - or will they only follow your lead?

By asking the right questions and finding a care professional with both age-appropriate experience and specific skills and training that will benefit your child, you'll not only feel more confident in his or her child rearing capabilities, but you'll also benefit from her expertise.

# Make the Most of the Interview

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The interview is one of the most important parts of selecting your caregiver. Yet some families don't take the interview as seriously as they should or neglect to ask important questions. The interview is a defining moment in the care professional matching process - and as such - requires preparation and the following best practices in order to ensure a good match.

### Connect in person or by video conference

If you aren't able to connect in person, the next best thing is to meet via a video conferencing service like Skype, Facetime or Zoom. By doing a video interview, you'll be able to see your candidate's reactions and mannerisms while also getting a better sense of his/her personality. Is she shy and reserved or does she appear more outgoing? Is his/her personality serious or light hearted? These characteristics are important when you consider that you will be investing in a long-term, close partnership together.

### Prepare Questions

It's important to prepare your questions ahead of the interview. This is not a good time to be spontaneous. The actual interview will bring up additional questions you'll want to ask, but it's important that you understand the core information you want to get out of the interview before it starts. Ask open-ended questions ("What age group do you enjoy working with the most?") rather than guiding the caregiver in the direction you'd like her to go ("Do you like working with toddlers?"). This ensures that whatever answers the candidate provides are indicative of his/her true personality and feelings.

### Dig Deeper

Dig deep into areas that are of importance to you. For example, if your care professional will be driving on busy city highways, don't just ask how long she has been driving. Dig deeper. How frequently does she drive? What is her experience driving children? Ask her to describe her driving experience in city traffic. Has she ever had an accident? Perhaps the ability to prepare a wide variety of nutritious meals is important to you. Instead of asking if she has experience cooking, ask her to describe a favorite meal she has prepared for children or to give you an idea of what she would prepare for a nutritious breakfast, lunch and dinner for a six year old.

### Answer Honestly

Give the candidate sufficient time to ask her own questions and provide straightforward, honest answers. Just as you are looking for a good fit for your family, the care professional is looking for a good fit, too. The more honest you are, the better the candidate can judge if your family is the right fit for them. Also, you can often learn a lot about a person based on the questions they ask you. For example, if a care professional asks a lot of questions about the children's routines, this might indicate a personal preference for structured bedtimes, bath times and other activities.

The above tips are just a starting point for the care professional interview. If you'd like to learn more about successfully interviewing candidates, please call (949) 344-2690 and speak to one of our placement experts. We would love to hear from you!

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555 N. El Camino Real, Suite A-435  
San Clemente, CA 92672

(949) 344-2690  
[info@apexprocare.com](mailto:info@apexprocare.com)  
[www.apexprocare.com](http://www.apexprocare.com)

