



NANNY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2021

10 WAYS NANNIES AND AGENCIES
BUILD LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS

BREAKING THE BARRIERS TO LEGAL PAY
HOW TO MAKE LASTING CHANGE

**WHAT YOU
NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT KEEPING
COMMUNICATION
GOING**

LIVING IN THE WORLD OF THE ELITE
IS IT AS GLAMOROUS AS YOU THINK?

CARING THROUGH COVID
A NANNY SHARES HER EXPERIENCE

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INSIDE

YOUR GUIDE TO SPRING 2021

7

LIVING IN THE WORD OF THE ELITE
BY LUCY M SKY

15

BABY SIGNS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
BY KRIS SMOOKE

21

KEEPING COMMUNICATION GOING
BY SUE DOWNEY AND KELLIE GERES

30

BARRIERS TO LEGAL PAY
BY MICHELLE LAROWE

SPRING 2021





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EDITOR'S NOTE

Michelle LaRowe

It is hard to believe that the one-year anniversary of the global pandemic has come and gone.

I believe that if we have learned anything about ourselves during this crisis, it has been the importance of our interpersonal relationships.

As we have shared the struggles that this pandemic has brought, we have learned who is in our corner and perhaps, who is not.

We've seen individuals and organizations rise up within the industry to offer tangible and emotional support to nannies, and we've seen nannies stand beside their work families as they have faced challenges that no one should ever have to face alone.

From highlighting the ways nannies and agencies build long-term relationships, to learning the secrets of how one nanny made a 20 plus year job with one family last, in this issue you are going to find stories, tips, and tricks for starting and maintaining healthy relationships with those in our industry.

I hope you enjoy this issue as much as I have putting it together. It's been a great reminder of how we truly are an industry that's like family.

Keep taking care of yourself and keep taking care of each other. Children around the world are watching.



Michelle



Caring Through COVID: Coping with Suddenly Work-from-Home Parents

6



10 Questions with Surinder Singh Rawat of Nav Chetna

26



People Profile: Chronicles of Nanny's Martha Tyler

28

IN EACH ISSUE

Each issue of *Nanny Magazine* will feature columns from the following departments.

All issues may not feature all columns.

Visit NannyMag.com to learn how to get published.

5 INDUSTRY NEWS

5/6 READER SUBMISSIONS

Mindy Werth: Career Reflections

Jessica Berry: Caring through COVID

9 ASK THE NANNY

Stephanie Felzenberg: How to Be the Best Nanny

10 AGENCY ADVICE

Lindsey Bell: The Bell Family Company

11 FINDING YOUR NICHE

Adele Perry: A Nanny Abroad

13 EXPERT TIPS

Meg Stolt Johannessen : Water Safety

17 NANNY KNOWLEDGE

Danielle Bujnak: ABCs of Respectful Care

19 10 WAYS

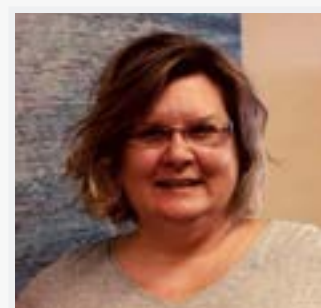
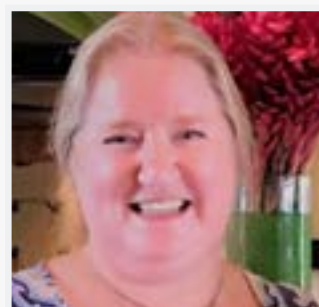
Laura Wallace: Nannies and Agencies Build Long-Term Relationships

24 NANNY KNOWS BEST

Becky Kavanagh: In For the Long Haul: It Is Possible?

26 10 QUESTIONS

Surinder Singh Rawat: Nav Chetna



28 PEOPLE PROFILE

Martha Tyler: Chronicles of Nannya

30 INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

Barriers to Legal Pay: Michelle LaRowe

SPRING 2021

NM

INDUSTRY NEWS

April 17, 2021 is interNational Nanny Training Day!

This year, instead of local events, there will be one large online event. Sponsored by HomeWork Solutions, there will be workshops, interviews, and unique content from nannies and experts around the globe. to learn more visit <http://www.nannypalooza.com/nntd.html>

NannyTraining.com, the global leader in nanny education, is pleased to announce a partnership with CareKeepers, an Ecuador based company, to bring nanny training to the Latin American market.

The new course, launched under this partnership, is entitled "Children's Safety, Health and Nutrition for Nannies" and will be available in English and Spanish. The course will cover what childcare providers need to know regarding children's safety, health, and nutrition while working in private homes.

"Up until now, most nannies in Ecuador have not had access to formal training for nannies," said Erica Fondevila, co-founder of CareKeepers, industrial engineer, and mom of a baby girl. "As working mothers, we saw a need for education that could improve the quality-of-care that children receive while being cared for at home, and we are proud to partner with a globally recognized brand to bring this training to nannies."

READER SUBMISSION: CAREER REFLECTIONS



For over 30 years, Mindy Werth, also known as Aunty Mindy, has been a companion to families, partnering with them on their journey through fertility, pregnancy, birth, and the postpartum period and beyond. Residing in Southern California, Mindy continues to build her knowledgebase through professional development in the areas of pregnancy and infant loss, maternal health, and trauma-informed care. As a Certified Lactation Consultant, Mindy also offers guidance to the breast/chest feeding dyad.

As National Nanny Recognition Week 2020 was approaching, it felt like the perfect time to reflect upon the gratitude that I have for the career that has brought me a great deal of joy and endless rewards. It has been my privilege to watch so many children grow

and flourish and to be a companion to families on their path from new parenthood through adolescence. Some of the new parents I know are children I cared for when they were infants and toddlers. How extremely fortunate I have been to be a part of families transitioning from a family of one or two to a family of three or more.

In the summer of 2019, after being a nanny for more than 24 years, I began to wonder how to expand my knowledge and experience as a veteran nanny while still caring for families. I reached a point of still loving being a parent-partner while feeling as though it was time for a subtle change. I knew I still wanted to support families on their parenting journey, but I wanted to aid them in different capacities. It got me thinking, what's next? Three years earlier, I had taken a newborn care specialist (NCS) class, but I did not pursue that career path. Perhaps it was time to revisit that opportunity.

Searching for more classes led me to finding a postpartum doula class, a certified lactation counselor class, as well as a certified lactation educator class, and more. Attending these classes helped me revisit familiar topics while opening the door for new, wonderful avenues that had me thirsting to learn more.

This past year, through classes and networking, I have met the most amazing colleagues who I am also lucky enough to call friends. As you are growing in your career, these connections are invaluable. Building a community of caring, respectful professionals will make you a better provider. Taking classes and attending webinars that resonate with you on a deeper level than "just" taking a training because it will look good on your resume can help to develop new knowledge and passions. Learning from one another makes you improve, challenges your thinking, and invigorates your caregiving—and, in turn, the children and families benefit.

Where are you on your career path? Are you just starting out, in the middle, or a veteran? How do you keep current on best practices and industry trends? Remember, we are not babysitters, we are the glue that holds a family together. We are in a position of tremendous responsibility, and we succeed by being tender, respectful, fun, loving, and discreet. How fortunate we are to share the intimate relationship with a family, to be a liaison through many transformations, to be a confidante not only to the children, but to the parents as well?

As my career continues to unfold, I am reminded of the children's book, *Ignus*, by Gina Wilson, which is about a dragon who cannot find his fire. Ignus's grandmother, ever faithful that his fire will arrive when it is meant to be, states, "All in good time, all in good time." This lovely, patient view reminds me of a baby's time to crawl, a toddler's time to walk, a family's timing in finding a solution to the matter at hand. "All in good time, all in good time." How do you gently guide a family to find their fire?

Continued on page 14



CARING THROUGH COVID: COPING WITH SUDDENLY WORK-FROM-HOME PARENTS

BY JESS BERRY

Late fall of 2018 found me assistant teaching in the infant class of a respected local childcare center. I enjoy working with infants, but in that setting, I was quickly approaching burnout. In not quite two-and-a-half years, I had worked under three directors, and the resulting disorganization made it a hard place to do one's best work. Still, I continued. I received my CDA credential and prepared to take over as lead teacher the next year. I didn't realize it, but big changes were around the corner.

It was November. I hadn't bothered to cancel my previous membership with Care.com. I got the occasional message there, but none to seriously consider, until one night I got an unexpected message from someone extremely interested in hiring me as a nanny. We chatted back and forth, and it turned out to be a mother who I had worked for in the past, though neither of us realized that at first. Things went quickly after that point and I started as soon as possible. The third day of December was my first day caring for their two-year-old and seven-month-old boys. I am still there, and the boys are now four and two.

This job is perfect for me in so many ways. The rules and standards don't constantly change because, obviously, I have the same two bosses. The workload is less taxing caring for two children than up to five on my own. I truly can provide the love and attention both boys need, as opposed to rushing back and forth trying to forge connections with sixteen children, while always having a diaper, feeding, or walk to get to. The parents are fantastic, and we present a united front in caring for their boys.


Last year, however, brought challenges that none of us could foresee. In mid-April, both of my employers switched abruptly to working from home, where they have been for the past seven-plus months. The bedrooms double as office spaces, and I try to keep the boys quiet when we have to be nearby. Suddenly I never feel like I am truly left alone to do my job, though the parents do try to make things easy. I am less spontaneous and silly when I know they are in the next room or could pop up at any time. The boys ask for their parents more and run after them when they leave their

workspaces. This interrupts up any game, reading, cleaning, or learning task we are working on. Their routine has also been pushed forward by half-an-hour or more since April, and naps are later and less consistent. As any nanny could guess, the interruptions in routine and multiple caregivers present at once have meant behavior problems we weren't seeing as much of before.

Even with these challenges, I still enjoy my job and have much to be thankful for. My charges have consistent, positive care even during an incredibly stressful time for, really, the whole world. They are growing and learning joyfully. The youngest has potty trained during this time, so I haven't had to change a diaper in ages! Even with them home, I continue to text both parents pictures during the day and say what fun project or games we are doing. This has been cheering for the parents in the midst of what seems like ever-increasing conference calls and work hours. I have missed a few days here and there, whereas at the daycare I would have missed potentially months of work. Despite multiple acquaintances catching the virus, my work family and I have remained healthy. I have also gotten more creative with entertaining the children in their home and yard, as those are our only options. At times when I just can't think of one more new game or activity, ideas off the internet and rotating out a new stack of books have saved the day! Beyond entertaining their kids, this has been a pleasant time of getting to know my bosses better and having an adult conversation I wouldn't usually get during the workday.

COVID is an experience I would gladly have done without, but I hope to find myself a better nanny and more thankful person after having gone through it. When the worst of the cases have passed and my bosses return to their long-abandoned offices, I will still be here to care for their children and ease the transition back out of the home. Oh, and to send cute pictures of their sweet boys!

Jessica Berry is a nanny who lives in Ohio. She has 13 years of childcare experience in different settings. She currently cares for two preschool aged boys.



***The wealthy
want
devotion
and loyalty,
even at the
expense of
your
personal
life.***

LIVING IN THE WORLD OF THE ELITE

BY LUCY M SKY

Lucy Sky is the creator and author of nannyinheels.com. Her blog focuses on her experiences as a nanny, as well as fashion and travel. She has worked in the childcare field for 15 years. Writing is her passion, and she hopes to bring people together through storytelling and our collective experience.

The high-flying life of a nanny working for the elite sounds incredibly glamorous, doesn't it? Jet-setting around the globe, staying in ritzy hotels, and chasing kiddos around a fully staffed multi-million-dollar estate. It's easy to romanticize and gloss over the difficult and sometimes nerve-racking part of the job that no one ever sees. It's not all fancy vacations and five-star restaurants your friends would be jealous of. There's serious work involved with a lot of pressure to keep the kids and the parents happy. Even though their world may look different from the majority of us, kids are kids no matter what their income bracket. Every nanny job has its highs and lows, but they are extreme when you work for the one percent. The expectations are enormous. Things you would never have to do or think about as a nanny previously, you are suddenly responsible for. That nice Porsche you can use on the job? It is now your responsibility. You must keep it in pristine condition, without a scratch on it, while keeping up with the maintenance and repairs. This doesn't seem that difficult except for the double stroller you have to take in and out of multiple times a day. Not only that, but caring for the household is on your shoulders, as is being able to foresee what needs to be done. Constantly thinking ten steps ahead is now a part of your job description. This includes making sure every room is organized and looking perfect. And if it's not, you must communicate this with the other staff.

You will also be doing everything for the kids. And I mean everything. Not just organizing activities and putting them to bed every night, but also scheduling doctor's appointments and taking them by yourself, without the parents. You'll have to answer questions about their medical history that you may not know anything about. This usually falls on the parents' shoulders, but as the nanny for the wealthy, you must schedule their routine check-ups as well as last-minute visits. I once worked for a family who thought their children may have come down with strep throat and told me to make an appointment with their primary care physician. The only available opening was the next morning when I was off duty. When I told the mother this, she texted me, "The appointment should be during your hours." I definitely had to bite my tongue and just find a way to schedule it when I was working.

Biting my tongue is a regular occurrence because I've noticed that the upper class does not want to be told what they should and shouldn't do. Be careful how opinionated you are about their parenting style or how they choose to run their household. If you see things that would get the "Worst Parent of the Year Award," it's best to keep it to yourself (unless, of course, the children could be in danger). Like when a mother I worked for told me she pours bleach in the water of the children's bath every night because she heard it helps their skin. While it is true that bleach baths are a thing and can be used in moderation for specific skin ailment, she insisted this happen every night. That is when I felt compelled to tell her it is not safe to do on a daily basis and that I didn't feel comfortable with it. But speaking up about anything can be nerve-racking because your job might be in jeopardy if you voice your feelings too much. The family might start to think that you're not invested enough and aren't committed to their family.

The wealthy want devotion and loyalty, even at the expense of your personal life. Flexibility is a must. Working evenings and weekends with no set schedule is the norm. Expect last-minute changes to the schedule, as well as vacations that come up out of the blue. So you better clear your calendar quickly because you're headed to Malibu for the weekend. Oh, and those Friday night dinner plans you made with friends won't happen because the parents asked you to stay until midnight. (They aren't so much asking as they are telling you.) You will constantly be switching gears between chasing after the kids and casually mingling with their social circle. You will be toeing the line between nanny and friend, between being the help and being an acquaintance. While going to parties and nice restaurants with the family, it isn't out of the question to be offered wine. One evening, the mother I worked for insisted I have a glass of wine. I agreed, and when she insisted I have another, I politely turned it down since my primary responsibility was still the children, and I was the one who was going to have to make sure they got to bed. Enjoy the perks, but don't get too comfortable.

Be prepared for having to replicate the food from those fancy restaurants you frequent. These kids don't eat frozen chicken nuggets and PB&Js. No, their meals must be gourmet. Every meal must be made with only the freshest ingredients, and you better cook like you're the next Emeril Lagasse. This means shrimp fettuccine alfredo, made from scratch, not from a jar. Or homemade chicken nuggets that you have to somehow find the time to make in between play dates and naps. And if the kids refuse to eat something, you don't save it for later; you throw it away and make them something fresh. Nothing is ever re-heated. While you're doing all this cooking and keeping the children alive and happy, your wardrobe must remain clean and put together. It is not okay to wear the same skirt or pants more than once in a week. Nothing with stains. Nothing too baggy. You are representing the family. Some of them may even request that their nanny not wear a certain color because they hate it. One mother I worked for said I couldn't wear maroon and my nail polish could only be a bright color. You will get used to dealing with strange requests, such as mingling at a kid's birthday party and being told to chat with one of the parents to try and get information from them about their summer vacation plans and who they would be bringing with them. Or picking out a dress online for the mother with the specific instructions of it making her "look ten years younger."

The pressure is enormous working for the elite. It is a world that few people get a glimpse into, and those of us who have don't always like what we see. But if you don't mind trading your social life and free time to devote to someone else's, the benefits may just outweigh the drawbacks. The fact is, no family is perfect, and no nanny position is perfect. There will always be 'omg' moments and laugh-out-loud ones because you're in someone else's world and must do things their way, even if you don't agree with it.

ASK THE NANNY

Dear Stephanie,

I once worked for a family that had two dogs and they constantly barked all day long without stopping! They made the baby jump all the time while sleeping, and they were also allowed to poop and pee inside since they were puppies, so it did not matter if I let them in and out or not, they still used the bathroom indoors.

Can you please advise me on how to bring this up during an interview? I don't want to badmouth my previous family, nor do I want to lose a job opportunity for asking in the wrong way, but I am sure I don't want to end up in the same situation again.

To be clear, I like dogs and I am happy to work with families who have them, I just can't work for a family that has this kind of a problem again.

Thank you.

The Interviewing Nanny

Dear Interviewing Nanny,

You don't need to bad mouth a former employer while interviewing for a new nanny job. Know your wants and needs prior to interviewing for a new job and be prepared to share them. Simply let nanny job recruiters and potential employers know what you require without mentioning previous jobs or experiences.

You can simply say, "I am willing to work in a home with pets as long as the animals are house-broken and well-trained. I am not willing to train puppies or clean up after their messes."

If the parents admit that their pets are not house-broken or trained, then politely decline the position and continue looking for a nanny job that is a better fit.

Good luck finding a nanny job that is a great fit, whether they have pets in the home or not.

Stephanie Felzenberg

Stephanie Felzenberg

Stephanie has worked as a professional nanny, family assistant, and household manager since 1993. She was the newsletter editor of the International Nanny Association for four years; she is currently the newsletter editor for the US Nanny Association and has been the advice columnist for Nanny Magazine since 2013. See her nanny blog at www.bethebestnanny.com.

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Stephanie

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AGENCY ADVICE

FROM LINDSEY BELL

I currently have a nanny job but I want to find something new. I don't want to give notice until I have something lined up, because I am afraid they may terminate me first. How do I handle this when an agency asks for my current employer as a reference?



Be as transparent as possible about your situation with your agency. It's completely acceptable to move on from your current family if it's not working out. However, it's important to discuss the situation in detail with your agency so they have a clear picture to share with the new family. Remaining honest and clear is always best. Remember that you are part of a team and you don't want your agency or family finding information that should have been shared in a professional manner. After communicating with your agency, they will understand and take the lead in explaining why you are not

able to provide a current reference to a new family.

As long as you have other viable childcare references, that should be enough. In some cases, nannies will ask someone else who has seen their work with children to serve as a character reference. For example, an ideal character reference would be a teacher that has seen you work with the child. With this said, our agency will never ask the nanny to give notice to a current job if they do not have another job lined up. In general, agencies understand that most nannies cannot afford to be put in that position.

LINDSEY BELL

Lindsay Bell is the founder and owner of the New York-based Bell Family Company, a women-run company with an established reputation for quality, excellence, and care. Since 2009, the Bell Family Company has been helping families managing all things childcare. Prior to opening her first agency, Lindsay worked with the Radio City Rockettes where she most notably executed the production of the 75th Celebration Edition of the Radio City Spectacular Book and coordinated The Rockettes in The Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, all while babysitting for a handful of families on Manhattan's Upper East Side. Lindsay is married and has two young sons. <https://www.bellfamilycompany.com/>

FINDING YOUR NICHE

WORKING AS A NANNY ABROAD

ADELE PERRY



I am a New Zealand-born nanny to an almost-three-year-old boy and a seven-month-old boy in Vancouver, Canada. I started with this family when their first baby was three months old. The parents and I have established clear expectations and open communication, which has led to a great professional relationship. Starting with a young infant means that our schedule is changing regularly and evolving to meet their growing needs. We have also had to adapt to mom on maternity leave, welcoming a new baby brother, and mom returning to work during our time together thus far. It is essential to have the ability to be flexible and adaptable to support a growing family.

Before You Leave For Work

It's 6:20 am and 40 minutes before I'm due at work. I roll out of bed, brush my teeth, and get dressed. After this, I head to the kitchen to pack my lunch and, most importantly, make myself two travel-mug coffees. I enjoy lattes, so that's what I make. Coffee is an essential ritual of my day. When my coffees are made, with one packed in my bag, and one in my hand, I plug in my headphones and walk out the door. On my walking commute to work, I listen to a few songs that get me energized for the day while sipping my first cup of coffee. It takes approximately ten minutes to walk to work.

While You Are There

It's just before 7 am and I'm walking in the door to work. I put my bag down on the table and proceed to unpack my lunch and extra coffee for the day. My lunch gets put in the fridge and then I wash my hands. The kitchen is adjacent to the playroom, so whilst I'm doing this, I say hi to the kids (if they're awake) and their mom.

We chat about their night (or the weekend, if it's Monday) and expectations for the day. The toddler is a momma's boy, so he basically ignores me (giving me curt smiles) until mom leaves for work, which is usually within 15-30 minutes of my arrival. The baby always greets me with a big full body smile, and I give him a big morning cuddle, which he adores every second of.

Once mom leaves for work, we race to the table and have breakfast together, usually oatmeal or toast, I let the toddler decide. The baby will either join us or he may be down for his first nap. I'm efficient with my time and do my best to limit the amount of time spent in the kitchen, so I can focus on the kids. During breakfast, I manage to get that day's (as well as the next day's) lunch, dinner, and snacks prepared. I'm pretty lucky that there are usually leftovers, so it keeps meal prep to a minimum. However, if veggies need to be prepped or it's time to top up the freezer, I get what I can ready during this time and finish prep at nap time.

I usually go a few weeks before making a few new dishes to freeze. I often make nutritious things like quiches, pancakes, meatballs, and muffins to freeze. This will change as the baby begins to have more solids.

After breakfast, we clean up and get ready for the day while the baby is still napping. Getting ready involves packing the stroller with lunch and other essentials, changing the configuration of the stroller depending on what we are doing, getting toddler dressed, and prepping the first bottle. After the baby's first bottle and first nap, we are off on our daily adventure. We leave the house around 9 am and stay out till 12 pm, which includes transit time and activity time.

While we're out, the baby either sleeps in the stroller or carrier depending on where we go and the timing of the nap, or he'll enjoy some awake time at our activity (usually a combination of both).

After our activity, it is almost time to head home, but first, we have lunch. We often have lunch with our friends at the activity. When we get home, it's time to get ready for a nap. Toddler will change his clothes, give me a big hug, and then it's time to be tucked in for nap time. I'll then put the baby down, or sometimes it's the other way around.

Nap time is usually pretty glorious. I often get the kids to have a synced nap time for at least 30 minutes, if not the entire nap. My priority then is to take my lunch and take a few moments to myself, if it's possible. Once I have had my lunch, I then tidy up, finish meal prep, look up additional classes or meals for the kids, or throw in a load of laundry. When this is all done, any time left is my own. If it's a long nap day, I usually use this time for professional development courses or catching up on emails and life admin.

My “break time” can vary from anywhere from zero minutes to two-and-a-half hours, and if the kids really want to surprise me, it can even extend to more than three hours, which usually has me questioning what they are buttering me up for! Ha ha. “Break time” generally averages about an hour on the daily, however. After the nap, we have a big snuggle and then have our afternoon snack. Often, it’s fresh fruit and yogurt, or sometimes some kid-friendly cookies.

I let the toddler choose our afternoon activity, which usually involves a craft, backyard play, free play with his toys, or a combination of all these. Baby may need another bottle or a nap during this time, as his schedule is constantly changing.

About 5-10 minutes before I’m done for the day, Dad will appear for the handover. This involves chatting about the kid’s day, telling him what to expect for the evening based on moods and sleep, and sharing anything else of importance.

The boys give me a big hug and it’s time to say goodbye for the evening.

That is a quick rundown of my ten-hour workday. While the activities referred to above vary day by day, we typically have a schedule but allow for flexibility.

Some of the activities we participate in include play dates (a group of us nannies take turns hosting) or going to the park, heading to the local library for story time, going to a family drop-in for play, exploring science world, or going to classes. We try out one new class a term. Classes usually alternate between music, soccer, or gymnastics.

My day has a lot of moving parts to it. I spend a large portion of the day multi-tasking. Some of these tasks include supervising the children while cleaning up, getting the baby and toddler ready for an outing, and or juggling the needs of a toddler who has just finished pooping on the potty and needs his bum wiped at the exact same time a crying baby has just woken from a nap and is overdue a feed.

I work as a team with the parents and it’s essential we are on the same page in regard to childcare philosophies. I follow up with any behavior concerns they have and vice versa. We do our best to be proactive, and having open and consistent communication helps us stay on top of any issues. We also talk about the great behavior the boys are showing, too.



I spend the day teaching skills the children need to not only meet their developmentally appropriate milestones, but also skills they need for life. I teach them how to be independent where possible and appropriate. I always follow the child’s lead and teach them in a way that interests them and what they are ready to learn.

The days are also spent consoling and supporting the kids through emotional outbursts, putting Band-Aids on boo-boos, changing dirty diapers, potty training, encouraging healthy sleep habits, teaching and encouraging manners and appropriate behaviors, and dealing with the transitions that come with moving to a new house, just to name a few things.

A large part of our day is also spent playing. Children learn best through play, and it’s important to allow them this time to play and learn through toys and activities that interest them.

What You Do After

It’s 5 pm and I’m walking out the door. I plug in my headphones and put on an uplifting playlist to listen to on my walk home. I do my best to process how the day went so that I can leave work at work.

When I get home, I put my bag down and head to my room to get changed into my workout gear. My workouts vary, but I typically run three times a week and do a workout from an app that involves thirty minutes or so of a strength workout or yoga. I alternate between these activities. This is one way I recharge and ensure a good night’s rest.

After my workout, I clean up and have dinner. I also tend to my indoor garden. I may listen to an audiobook, binge a show, or call family and friends.

Some evenings you might find me out to dinner or having a quick drink with friends, and always home at a decent hour to ensure a good night’s rest for my health.



EXPERT TIPS

WATER SAFETY AROUND THE POOL

By Meg Stolt Johannessen



Meg Stolt Johannessen

Meg Stolt Johannessen has served as a lifeguard for 38 years and swim instructor for 35. She currently resides and teaches in Houston, TX. In addition to teaching LTS, Meg owns and coaches both the OtterTriTeam and Pink Otters, youth and women's tri teams. She is available for backyard pool swim lessons, private coaching and public speaking. To learn more, visit: <https://msjathletics.com>.

Most children are drawn to water. As a lifeguard, I see it all the time. The toddler makes the dash to the pool's edge to touch the water. Not to mention puddles after the rain. I completely understand. Water has that wow-factor. Water shimmers. It is sparkly. It creates ripples. Things float in it. And it splashes. Because that child does not understand the depth of the water, that attempt to touch it can turn deadly.

Water Safety is not only about keeping children safe in and around a pool. Water Safety encompasses safety in and around any body of water, including bathrooms, waterfronts and beaches, catchment ponds, drainage ditches, and runoff areas in your neighborhood. All of these can be a hazard.

The statistics on childhood drownings are grim. Drowning is the leading cause of injury-related death in children, especially those younger than four. Both the World Health Organization and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention state that drowning is a major public health problem worldwide. Every day, about ten people die from unintentional drowning. Of these drownings, two are of children aged 14 and under. Drowning ranks fifth among the leading causes of unintentional injury death in the United States. Three-hundred-and-fifty children under the age five drown in pools nationwide. The majority of these deaths occur in June, July, and August. Most occur in backyard pools. Drowning is not dramatic like portrayed on television. The victim is generally silent and slips underwater quickly.

The American Red Cross further states that most who die in home pools:

- Did not intend to be in or near the water during non-swim time
- Were last seen in the home
- Had been out of sight for less than five minutes
- Were in the care of one or both parents or caregiver at the time

The statistics seem overwhelming, but it is possible to be proactive and prepare and prevent a drowning or water incident in your home. Become proactive by teaching yourself and your children how to be prudent around the water. Through Water Safety for Parents and Caregivers class, the American Red Cross discusses how to prevent an injury and provide care in the event of an emergency. This course is complementary and can be taken on-line. This course can change your perspective on water safety, and can potentially help you save a life. (For more information or to register visit: redcross.org).

The American Red Cross recommends “close and constant attention to the children you are supervising.” In other words, the adult should be actively engaged with a child who is swimming regardless of the child’s ability to swim and whether a lifeguard is present. Pools are not good babysitters. Lifeguards are responsible for ALL the patrons of the pool. Many pools require the adult be an arms-length from the child while swimming in the water. Others may require multiple participating adults for small groups of children. Private lifeguard services are available for the home pool-parties and can provide extra eyes on the pool.

The Red Cross also recommends installing physical barriers around the pool and other water sources. Have a fence around the pool with a gate that locks. Cover the toilet. Take the necessary steps to prevent contact with water unless actively supervised.

Children can start participating in swim lessons as early as six months, or when they can hold their heads up. Parent-tot classes are excellent to not only teach basic skills and build comfort in the water, but also to teach parents how to hold the child in the water. There are other drowning-prevention children’s classes, in which a child will learn to float on his/her back after surfacing. Children as young as three can participate in LTS lessons, independent of a parent or guardian.

When I teach backyard swim lessons, I focus on lifesaving skills germane to the environment at hand. These include entering and exiting the water, getting back to the wall after jumping or falling in, back floats and rolling over on the back. These skills can help the child protect themselves should they fall in.

Coast Guard-approved life jackets are a good idea for the swimmer who is still building confidence in skills or is still learning to swim. The life jacket does not replace parental supervision.

If possible, it’s always a good idea to swim near a lifeguard. Lifeguards are trained professionals who sometimes see and recognize things you do not. The swimmer who slipped quietly underwater. The child who fell off the noodle that was providing support and cannot get back to the wall. The lifeguard also supervises the activity at the pool, encouraging behaviors that will keep everyone safe. Lifeguards aid but do not replace personal supervision. There are many lifeguard-for-hire services for your private pool parties.

Despite all the preparation, things can still go wrong. In an emergency:

- Recognize the signs of trouble
- Rescue and Remove without putting yourself in further danger
- Call EMS
- Begin CPR/Rescue Breathing
- AED (if available)

Water Safety is a household affair. Everyone should be actively engaged in ensuring safety around the pool and waterfront.

Continued from page 5

All in good time, I have reached a point in my career of wanting to be a companion to families in new yet familiar ways. “Be the consistent and unassuming force in the room. Their compass may be swirling in circles, but your compass points to calm” (Companioning at a Time of Perinatal Loss; Huestis, RN and Jenkins, RN; p.71). These two sentences tie so much together for me as my new chapter is being written. When we are a companion to a family, they need our calm, steady presence—especially now in today’s busy world.

Being a companion to families, I look to be a reassuring voice, an open heart, and gentle hands. I hope to help families slow down their world, treasure the moments, and turn down the noise. When a family needs help at the start of their journey, I will be there as their fertility coach or during the unfathomable time of perinatal loss. Perhaps a family already has a baby and needs help with lactation. Possibly the children in my care are older, and a family will need guidance with a specific behavior or with potty guiding. I will be there, by their side, a constant companion.

What other talents do you have to offer to families? Are you a hybrid caregiver like me? Do you enjoy learning about other topics that might directly benefit your families? I love learning about non-toxic products and staying up to date on the safest alternatives to mainstream products. The more you have to offer a family, the more likely you will be their next parenting partner.

My approach to being a companion to families is to be consistent, caring, and calm. Coming into what might be a stressful situation will require patience and compassion. Hopefully, we will be coming into serene environments where we can be available for families to celebrate the little and big things. In any role I am in, I hope that what I bring to families will leave a lasting impression. Try your best to light their fire while being the calm.





BABY SIGNS

BY KRIS SMOOKE

Kris Smooke owns and operates Tiny Hands Learning, a fast-growing baby sign language business based outside of Charlotte, NC. She now offers an online course where families can access her teachings. She graduated in the field of Interpreting (ASL). She is the mother of two and became passionate about baby signs as soon as she began reaping the benefits of baby signs with her own children. In the past five years, she has worked with hundreds of Charlotte families and the response has been nothing but positive. Common feedback includes empowerment of babies being understood and the simplicity of following THL's program. To learn more visit www.tinyhandslearning.com.



Wouldn't it be great if you had a window into your baby's thoughts and growing personality? Actually, you do! Open up the lines of communication with your baby using signs that they can use to communicate before they can talk.

Why Sign?

Research suggests that using baby signs has significant and long-term benefits for your child's growing brain.

- Teaching a baby to sign has remarkable emotional and social benefits, including reducing tears, tantrums, and frustrations.
- Teaching sign language will promote fine motor skills as they practice signing back to you.
- Getting down on your baby's level and actively engaging with them in this way is a great bonding experience for you both.
- Bilingual families can utilize signs to tie spoken languages together.
- Language is processed in the left side of our brains while visual stimuli are processed in the right side. Using signs while using spoken language engages both sides of the brain simultaneously. Studies show that boosting a baby's brain development in this way can result in:
 - a. Earlier reading and larger reading vocabulary
 - b. Better grades in school
 - c. 12+ IQ point advantage
 - d. Larger speaking vocabulary and ability to form longer sentences
- Signing with your baby gives them a taste of communication and encourages them to talk. Signing babies are generally early talkers.

When to Begin

Babies begin learning about language from the very beginning. Some parents choose to start signing with their babies right from Day 1, while others prefer to wait until their baby is closer to a year old and desperate for language. Babies start recognizing signs as a communication form around four months of age and generally wait to start signing back until two months after they have been exposed to the signs. Babies develop enough dexterity and coordination to start producing signs themselves between six-to-eight months of age, but all babies develop differently and do things on their own terms so you might have to be patient. Children don't master their vocal cords until nearly three years of age, so you will have plenty of time to practice signing with your little one(s). It will be worth the wait.

Did You Know?

American Sign Language (ASL) is a complex language with its own set of grammar and syntax. It has been used by the Deaf community in the US and parts of Canada since the 1800s. Over 10% of Americans have some degree of hearing loss and ASL is said to be the 4th most commonly used language in the United States today. Knowing a few signs can give your child the confidence to engage and interact with a deaf child. This promotes cultural awareness which leads to cultural acceptance.

Helpful Tips

Begin with just a few signs and then add more signs as your baby begins doing new things and you feel more comfortable using signs in your daily vocabulary.



Stay patient. Pay attention to your baby's gestures and sounds. Respond appropriately when you think they may be attempting to communicate. For example, if your baby is in their high chair and clapping, they may be trying to make the sign for MORE. Run with it. Respond with excitement and say, "Are you signing MORE!?" and proceed to give them another bite.

Incorporate the signs into whatever activity you are doing with your baby. Context is extremely important as babies live in the here-and-now. Signing during the activity (i.e., eating, bathing, diapering) provides appropriate contextual support.

Engage in eye contact whenever possible.

Say the words slowly and clearly as you make the signs and give added vocal emphasis to the word you are signing.

Practice signing to your baby often and ask other caregivers to sign to them as well. Repetition and consistency are the keys to success.





THE ABCS OF RESPECTFUL CARE

BY DANIELLE BUJNAK

Editor's Note: This is part five of the series entitled The ABCs of Respectful Care. Read all installments in the 2020 issues of Nanny Magazine at NannyMag.com

The Respectful™ Approach to Human Development, Education and Care is a multi-disciplinary and open-ended approach that combines elements from classic teaching methods and current research in the neuroscience of human development. The goal is to deliver a level of care that meets the genuine needs of all of the individuals involved in the care experience.

M IS FOR MOTIVATION & MORAL DECISION-MAKING

When we look at our decisions throughout our lives, which ones do we consider to be our most important? Are they the decisions that we made in response to outside requirements, or the decision that came from our innermost self? When we are really struggling with a challenge and we somehow find the strength to pull it off, is it usually something that was imposed on us from outside, or something that we felt internally motivated and personally desired to accomplish, so we persevered and powered through the challenge? The answer is internal motivation is very, very powerful, and it keeps us going even when the going gets tough.

It's not easy to get up many times a night to care for a newborn infant or a sick child, and yet we do it without question. Note that I did not say "we do it without complaining," because complaining is a natural response and does not prevent us from getting up and doing it again the next night. Yet we don't question the fact that we must do it—we just do it, because as mammals, we have a powerful internal motivation to preserve the lives of offspring (even when they aren't our own biological offspring) and so we overcome the critically important and powerful drive for sleep in order to tend to offspring who are in need.

When we consider our moral decisions, in particular, which moral code is more powerful? The internal moral compass, or the external moral code as expressed in our laws and social rules? That's an easy one: everyone knows that people very often exceed the speed limit or run a stop sign at a deserted intersection (which are based on an externally-motivated system), whereas we tend to drive more carefully in wet or icy conditions (which is a decision based on an internally-motivated desire for personal safety and survival).

Children absorb what we model for them, and a curated environment that encourages the child to enter into dialogue and connection as a valued individual, based on a thoughtful image of the child, allows the child to develop a strong internal sense of self and an internally-motivated moral awareness. Controlling or dominating the child to manage their behavior (which is the dominant technique in our society) teaches the child that the externally-rooted moral code that is enforced by power is of primary importance.

In contrast to the power dynamic, when their Someone supports and encourages the development of a strong sense of personal agency (seeing oneself as one of the possible solutions to a problematic situation) in the child (as well as empathy through Respectful Care™ techniques), this allows the child to choose their own actions based on an internally-motivated system and a healthy concern for others, rather than from fear of punishment – or even simply “consequences” to themselves.

N IS FOR NARRATING

When we are listening and observing and interpreting an infant’s or child’s communication, we can enrich their understanding of their own experience by narrating or “sportscasting” what we are observing. For example, when watching an infant play, their Someone could say, “I see that you are holding the red block. You put the red block down. Now you are holding the blue block. It’s blue.” This aspect of the curated environment provides rich spoken language exposure for the infant, and of course, it allows them to feel noticed and acknowledged. It also works in conflict situations, providing acknowledgement and reassurance while also explaining the realities of the situation and holding loving limits that the child needs to have held for them. “It sounds like you feel angry. I won’t let you hit me, because it hurts me. It’s ok to feel angry, and it’s not ok to hit me, even when you feel angry.”

It’s still important to allow time for fully independent play without any narration or intervention from the Someone, but infants and children (and adults!) enjoy feeling heard and seen and acknowledged, and narration is a warm and friendly way to re-connect with them for a moment, even when they are across the room or the playground. Narration is not for giving instructions or passing judgment (positive or negative), but only for mirroring what the Someone is observing.

Infants and children often invite narration by making eye contact with their Someone, or even holding up an object or calling out “watch me!” These are clear cues that narration would be an appropriate response to the child at that time.

When the child is intently focused on a task and it looks like their attention is fully engaged, there is no need to interrupt their activity to offer narration. If the child senses they want some feedback, we can count on them to ask for it, either through words, gestures, or other behavioral cues. There can always be an opportunity to revisit the events of the day during calm moments of connection in the child’s daily routine (especially during mealtimes and before bedtime). This is a good opportunity if there was something you wanted to point out to the child while the child was “in the zone” and it didn’t feel appropriate to inject your thoughts into that moment.

O IS FOR OPEN-ENDED

The golden moments of childhood are often the least prescribed and most open-ended experiences: playing in the sand and/or water (whether at the beach or in a table in a classroom), building a tree fort, digging in the dirt, or any other ongoing process of play which has no discernible purpose or goal, yet is immensely enjoyable for as long as it lasts. Art experiences can likewise be open-ended when many options are presented and no specific directives are provided and playing with “loose parts” is an activity every child delights in undertaking.

I still remember the joy of opening my grandmother’s button box and playing aimlessly with the hundreds of small, brightly colored pieces inside. I neither sought nor received any instructions or ideas on what to do or how to proceed – no, not even suggestions of sorting or counting! The button box was an excitingly open-ended activity for expressing my internally inspired mental creativity, not an excuse to inject adult-inspired curriculum content into my play. There is nothing wrong with suggesting to count or sort materials, but that suggestion automatically transforms the activity from “open-ended” and child-initiated into an adult-led activity.

Note that safety and tidiness are always reasonable expectations and reminding and holding limits on these ideas does not impede the open-endedness of a creative play experience. Children can understand that their creativity is nonetheless genuine while also circumscribed in many ways—for example, the ever-present laws of gravity and momentum, and also the expectations to maintain a reasonably safe and tidy space. Messy play is lots of fun, but it can also be contained in an appropriate space and be cleaned up after the open-ended fun has run its natural course. Also, sometimes the occasion of cleanup can inspire a new cycle of open-ended play in the water ... as long as the previous cleanup task has been completed! It’s usually pretty easy to inspire a child to a speedy and effective cleanup when they are already motivated to play with the water afterwards.

DANIELLE BUJNAK

Danielle Bujnak is an experienced Early Childhood Educator with more than two decades of experience guiding and caring for infants, children, and their families in a wide variety of settings. Danielle has been a nanny, governess, and Master Newborn Care Specialist, as well as a teacher for children of all ages. She has supported families in private family residences, through homeschooling, daycare, preschools, and Montessori and Waldorf-based early childhood programs. Her California Child Development Permit qualifies her at the “Master Teacher” and “Site Supervisor” levels, licensing her to run a multi-classroom preschool or daycare for infants and children, and to guide and mentor other teachers in best practices. After completing a graduate-level certificate in Early Childhood Education, Danielle is currently completing an MSc in children’s mental health and special education, following the Constructivist approach.





10 WAYS NANNIES BUILD LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIPS WITH AGENCIES

BY LAURA WALLACE

Over the course of a nanny's career, it is not uncommon for nannies to develop close relationships with agencies they've worked with to secure nanny positions. Oftentimes, a nanny will end up developing a long-term relationship with a specific agency, and she will return to that agency for representation time and time again before trying any other avenues for job searches. What makes nannies and agencies continue to work together over the course of a career? Read on to find out.

1. Demonstrating Loyalty

If a family tries to bend the rules regarding your hire, like reporting that you have worked fewer hours than you really did or failing to report your hire to avoid an agency fee, remember the benefits that come with remaining loyal to your preferred agency. As a nanny, you become part of a team that has your back. If something does not work out with a family, the agency will work hard to understand what went wrong and help you to find a solution. Sometimes, they will even serve as a reference if a job goes south when it is totally outside of your control. Beyond the basics of ensuring that their jobs are legitimate positions with legitimate families, an agency can act as your support system in the very personal world of caring for someone else's child. You also get access to jobs you otherwise may not have known about. Badmouthing your agency or collaborating with a family to cheat them out of fees earned is never a good idea when trying to build a lasting relationship that will span your career. When an agency knows you are loyal, they value the relationship you have built.

2. Responsive Communication

Learning how to communicate quickly with both agencies and families is a game-changer. If you reply quickly to your agency, they will know you are responsive, organized, and ready to work. If you reply quickly to the family, you will become a star in the eyes of tired parents who need a trusting and responsible hand. Placement agents can become frustrated when they are trying to reach nannies for interviews or to staff a job and they cannot. Strive to return all calls, texts, or emails promptly. An agency is likely to gauge how you will respond to their clients by how you respond to them, so you will want to be sure to be responsive, professional, and prompt will all agency-related communications.

3. Transparency Without Oversharing

A great relationship between nanny and agency begins with transparency. Agencies and families want to work with nannies who they can trust to tell the truth and present an accurate picture of themselves and their work experience. They also want to get to know the nannies they represent and the jobs they have had, without knowing the intimate details and drama that comes along with it. Agencies want to know what you loved about your last job, but they don't want every response to start with a story of how your last family handled the situation.

From outlining what you are seeking in your next job to taking accountability for when you fell short of expectations, being clear with your interactions is essential for building a lasting relationship with an agency.

4. Showing Appreciation

Letting your agency know that you appreciate their efforts to find you the right job is a sure way to be a nanny they remember. While the parents are the agency's client, reputable agencies know they have no business without quality nannies. Acknowledge the work they are doing to find you the right job during your search and remember to be courteous of their time so that they can accomplish their work in a timely manner. You'll find that when a great job comes along, you'll be the first one they think of.

5. Giving a Heads Up

If something comes up in your life that affects your ability to work with children, it is important to notify the agency right away. If your job search parameters have changed or if you are interviewing for a job outside of the agency, that's okay—just let the agency know. If a family member has died and you need to put your work life on hold, that's understandable. Giving the agency a heads up will help them assist you when you are ready to return to your search.

6. Being an Ambassador

If you are having a great experience with an agency, share that with both nannies seeking work and families seeking childcare! The act of being an ambassador for your agency means that more nannies and families hear about the great job they do, and when it is time for you to search for your next nanny job, the agency's reputation and job pool will have grown. Being a positive voice for your agency costs you nothing, but can benefit everyone.

7. Providing Feedback

If the agency could do something better, tell them! If a family has gone off the rails, let them know. Before you post negative feedback on social media or share what the agency could have done better in a public review, share your feedback and experience with the agency directly. No one knows a nanny's job better than a nanny! Something that is a big deal to you may not even be on the radar of the agency. Most agencies are grateful for this type of feedback and often incorporate changes



Laura Wallace has been a long-time babysitter with Bell Family Company since 2011. Over time, her experience with over 50 families caring for children from newborn to teens has given her invaluable insight into the childcare industry. Whether it's prepping bottles, changing diapers, picking up from school, or helping with homework, Laura can handle any task you need. She resides in New York City with her husband.

and become better because of it.

8. Exceeding Agency Expectations

Each agency will have their own set of expectations for nannies. From calling after an interview to report how it goes to attending quarterly trainings or meetings, your agency will have specific things they expect from the nannies they represent. Be sure you understand what is expected of you and do your part to exceed their expectations.

9. Being of Service

Sometimes potential clients and applicants want to know what it is like to work with the agency, from someone who has used them before. Sometimes the local newspaper will call to do a story and they want to interview a nanny as part of their media request. Sometimes an agency gets a nanny a job who is new to the area and could use a new nanny friend. If you are able, be of service to your agency. Be the nanny they can call on when they need to put a nanny face to their name.

10. Staying Front of Mind

I've been known to send the occasional box of cupcakes to my agency – just because. I adore the people who have helped shape my career and find me work. They have always worked hard to find happy work with happy children, and sometimes I just want to send a little happiness in return. And they always remember me – and my cupcakes – when I return.



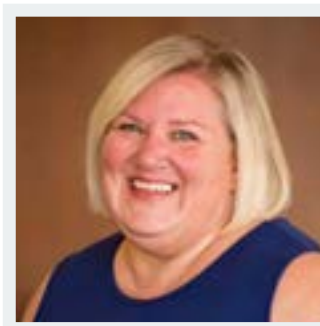
KEEPING COMMUNICATION GOING

BY SUE DOWNEY AND KELLIE GERES

When it comes to long-term nanny and family relationships, it's no secret that communication is the foundation of success.

Being able to communicate wants, needs, observations, and concerns keeps nannies and families on the same page as they share in the responsibility of caring for the children. From reporting on what foods are eaten to changes in schedules, there are many details that must be conveyed successfully for day-to-day life to go on without a hitch.

But keeping the lines of communication open isn't always easy. Given the intimate nature of the nanny's workplace, it should be no surprise that emotions between nannies and parents can run high. When emotions drive communication, the relationship can be negatively impacted. While it's only natural to occasionally get upset when something happens at work (like when you come into work after a long weekend to find the kitchen sink overfilled with dishes), if emotions aren't kept in check and words aren't chosen carefully, damage can be



done to the relationship that will need to be repaired. Being mindful about when and how you communicate can prevent fixable issues from becoming relationship busters.

Finding the balance of communication is also important. Deciding how often to communicate regular updates or how frequently to have regularly scheduled check-ins is also important. For one mom, having hourly calls may seem perfect. For another, daily check-ins may almost seem like too much. Balancing opportunities for natural communication with regularly scheduled check-ins ensures that everyone has the opportunity to be heard and prevents smaller issues from turning into bigger ones. The more time that goes by without the opportunity for communication, the more anxiety can build surrounding it.

For each family a nanny works with, having a written work agreement can help clarify the expectations for communication. Determining early in your nanny/parent relationship when check-ins will occur and what tools will be used to communicate can eliminate future stress. Worrying if your boss will be mad if you call her at work will be a non-issue if you've already set the expectation that phone calls are reserved for emergencies and the daily logbook or email is reserved for non-urgent matters. With many parents working from home during COVID, how nannies communicate may change, but trying to stay consistent with what you've done prior typically makes the most sense unless you've discussed this directly. Additional information, including a Medical Release Form/Authorization to Treat a Minor or important home information (like how to shut off the water or electricity to the home) should also be included in your onboarding information when starting a new nanny job.

Having the right tools in place can help foster ongoing communication that works for everyone. Online tools like Google Docs and Google Calendar provide opportunities for shared communication in real-time. With a click of the mouse, parents and nannies can get a general overview of what is going on in the children's day. For parents who are connected to email, these types of tools are lifesavers as they can manage notifications that will alert them to when schedule changes are made.

Creating a separate email address for work can also be helpful for nannies, as they can sort and store important work-related information. Mobile applications like Baby Connect are especially helpful for nannies and families of younger children who like to keep a closer eye on the details of the day. Knowing when the baby last ate and how much was eaten will help facilitate transitions at the start and end of each day. For nannies and parents who embrace organization and record-keeping, Our Nanny Diary is the perfect solution. Templates for daily logs, checklists of items to-do, and space to write notes back and forth make this a favorite choice among both parents and nannies. While no single tool may be the right fit for every nanny and family, a combination of these tools can help ensure timely and accurate communication is shared in a format that works for everyone.

While tools can be helpful for facilitating communication, some things are best communicated face-to-face. Tough topics surrounding the children should always be discussed in person. Even with the most cleverly crafted email or text, too often tone can be mistaken and the message can be misunderstood. When the need arises to discuss concerns about a child's development, behavior, or changes to the way you've been doing something, schedule a time to sit down and discuss this with the parents without the children around. It can help to jot down a few bullet points that you want to share with the parents prior to your meeting so that you don't forget anything important you want to discuss. Keep in mind you'll want to give the parents an opportunity to respond, and you'll want to be open to compromise when it comes to finding a solution. Once something is discussed in person, an email or text follow-up can be good practice, but the in-person step should not be avoided.

Speaking of things to avoid, there's one more thing that you should always steer clear of: using the children as messengers. When nannies and parents communicate, assumptions inevitably are made, something is not shared, or messages get lost in translation. When this happens, address the issue directly with your employers. Whether it's writing a note in your journal or sending an email from your designated work email address, communicate the issue directly with your employer.

Key Things Nannies and Families Should Communicate

Child-Related Topics

- New Health Developments
- Medication Usage
- Daily Schedule
- Deviations from Normal Routine
- Changes in Behavior
- Concerns About Development
- Foods Eaten
- Bathroom Habits
- Outings
- Playdates
- Educational Goals
- Behavioral Goals
- Concerns About Child

Employment-Related Topics

- Changes to Schedule
- Hours Worked
- Time-Off Requests
- Reimbursement
- Petty Cash

House Information

- Emergency Contacts
- Important Numbers
- Important Dates
- Pantry Needs
- Grocery List
- Nursery List

During Weekly Check-Ins

- Schedule
- Issues
- Upcoming
- Deadlines
- Projects
- Due
- Celebrations
- Changes to Schedule
- Feedback
- Concerns

During Monthly Check-Ins

- Goal
- Setting
- Progress
- Towards Goals
- Changes in Job Duties
- Feedback
- Concerns



The way you communicate and what you communicate with your work family will change over time. When you start a new position, communicating weekly about routine tasks makes sense. As you successfully complete these tasks and they become part of what you do, you'll only talk about those tasks if they need to be changed. When the children are small, information like when they last had a bowel movement is essential. When they are in middle school, not so much. As you and your employers become comfortable, it can be tempting not to communicate as often or not to include everyone in the communication. Making the continual effort to include all parties for special projects, appointments, and items needed demonstrates respect and the professionalism necessary for long-term relationships.

As with any relationship, there are ebbs and flows. In times of frustration, you may feel cracks in the communication structure. That is why it is important to establish clear systems and honest feedback in the early days. Establishing healthy communication habits, communicating consistently, and finding communication methods and tools that work for all will go a long way in fostering long-term nanny and family relationships.

5 WAYS JOURNALING ELIMINATES ON-THE-JOB ISSUES

- 1. Eliminates confusion over employment related-matters.** Documenting employment-related matters, like scheduled days off, ensures no one is forced to rely on their memories and avoids last-minute calls asking why you haven't arrived for work.
- 2. Minimizes the need for off-hours communication.** When you've notated what time a child had medications or how long the baby napped, you're less likely to get a call or text asking for this information.
- 3. Provides a reference tool.** When you documented when the baby last had a wet diaper, or the child began complaining of a headache, that information is easily accessible should things progress when you're not on the clock. When the doctor asks how long something has been going on, the information is easy to find.
- 4. Creates a record keeper.** Notifying the parents that a child came home from school with a bruise next to his eye and documenting that in your journal provides a record of observations and notifications.
- 5. Serves as a milestone tracker.** Wondering when the baby took his first steps? Or what his first word was? Flip back and the information is there, recorded for the parents to transfer to their baby journal or milestone keepsake.

SUE DOWNEY AND KELLIE GERES

Sue Downey and Kellie Geres have over 50 years of combined nanny industry experience. Both are actively involved in the industry and are committed to investing in the nanny community. Together, they launched Our Nanny Diary, a nanny specific journal that promotes effective communication between parents and nannies. Learn more at <https://www.ournannydiary.com/>.



NANNY KNOWS BEST IN FOR THE LONG HAUL: IT IS POSSIBLE?

—— BY BECKY KAVANAGH

Becky was a nanny for almost 30 years, recently retiring to serve nannies in other capacities and to develop other interests. Her placement of over 21 years with a single employer family puts her in a very small group of nannies with long-term placements. Becky was a childcare center assistant director and teacher before entering the nanny field. She served on the INA Board of Directors for many years as well as part of local nanny group leadership. In 1998, she was honored by Parents Magazine with an outstanding childcare award, and in 2006, she was named INA's Nanny of the Year. She continues to mentor nannies, write, and speak at nanny industry events.

What's the secret? Is it really possible? How did you do it?

These are just some of the questions I have gotten over the years asking about my 21+ years as a nanny for one family. Yes, you read that correctly. One placement for over 21 years. Seeing children through from birth to high school graduation and everything in between. It is an experience that few nannies have enjoyed.

Honestly, when I took the position, I did not really expect that I'd be there for so many milestones in their lives. Even when the parents said things like, "Won't you stay forever," I did not count on it. However, a combination of communication, mindset, flexibility, adaptability, and compromise made all the difference. Add to that understanding yourself and your boundaries, and these are the ingredients to a long-term placement and a lengthy nanny career.

Communication

It's no secret that communication is essential in successful any long-term situation. Being able to talk about little things, fun things, light things, and important things make it easier to talk about hard things. Starting from the beginning with good communication strategies is essential. Be an active and thoughtful listener. Find ways that the whole team can express themselves. We used a journal to record general information like feeding/meals, activity, mood, sleep, and the like. It was also a fun place to document special moments and charming quotes from the children. Today there are so many options for journaling to communicate these life moments of the children. However, a journal or digital diary or log cannot take the place of face-to-face conversation. Texts, emails, and messages may be fine for small things, but not for more significant issues. So, making sure to have regular face-to-face communication with employers helps the whole team function for the wellbeing of the children.

Mindset

The right mindset makes all the difference. Thinking of your nanny position as a job is different from thinking of it as a profession or a calling. Awareness that you are part of a team effort is much different than seeing yourself as "just" an employee. Notice I did not say being part of the family. Many employers will say this, and many nannies enjoy this distinction - I certainly did, but don't count on that coming to fruition.

Being part of a team requires clear expectations, strong communication, and follow-through. And now I'm going to mention something that sometimes makes people cringe but hang with me - the nanny profession is a service industry. Nannies provide quality childcare often along with some household duties to families. Being in a service industry does not equate to being a servant. Nannies are professionals with experience and unique knowledge that families seek. We have no tangible products, but we do have many intangible outcomes to the service provided. Our value is in our expertise, experience, training, and the ability to partner with parents for the wellbeing of the children in our care. When your mindset is on being a professional who is a team member or partner serving families and children, you are in the right place to have a long career and potentially a lengthy placement.

Flexible and Adaptable

Your ability to be flexible and adaptable moves you forward. In truth, we are all in a state of change and transition that never stops. Most of the changes we go through are so small we don't see the adjustments we make. As nannies, we see the more expansive transitions and changes that children experience. For example, the newborn-to-toddler span is a huge leap full of changes and transitions. Caring for a child from newborn to toddlerhood requires the ability to be ready to flex, adjust, and adapt almost daily. Your ability to be adept at caring for the preschooler or the elementary-aged child or the preteen or the teen is critical to extending your employment with a family. Along with that, you may need to be able to shift to doing other tasks that help the family. Maybe it is household management or organization, managing errands or shopping, or other non-child-related items. If those additional tasks are not something you are willing or able to provide, then you need to be able to communicate that to your employer. Coming to your employer with suggestions and ideas before they ask illustrates the benefit of your knowledge and experience. Being proactive is a highly valued quality. Remember, you are a professional who can see what is needed and anticipate changes. You are flexible and adaptable.

Compromise

No relationship of any kind is without compromise. Let that sink in a bit. We do it so often you may not even label it as a

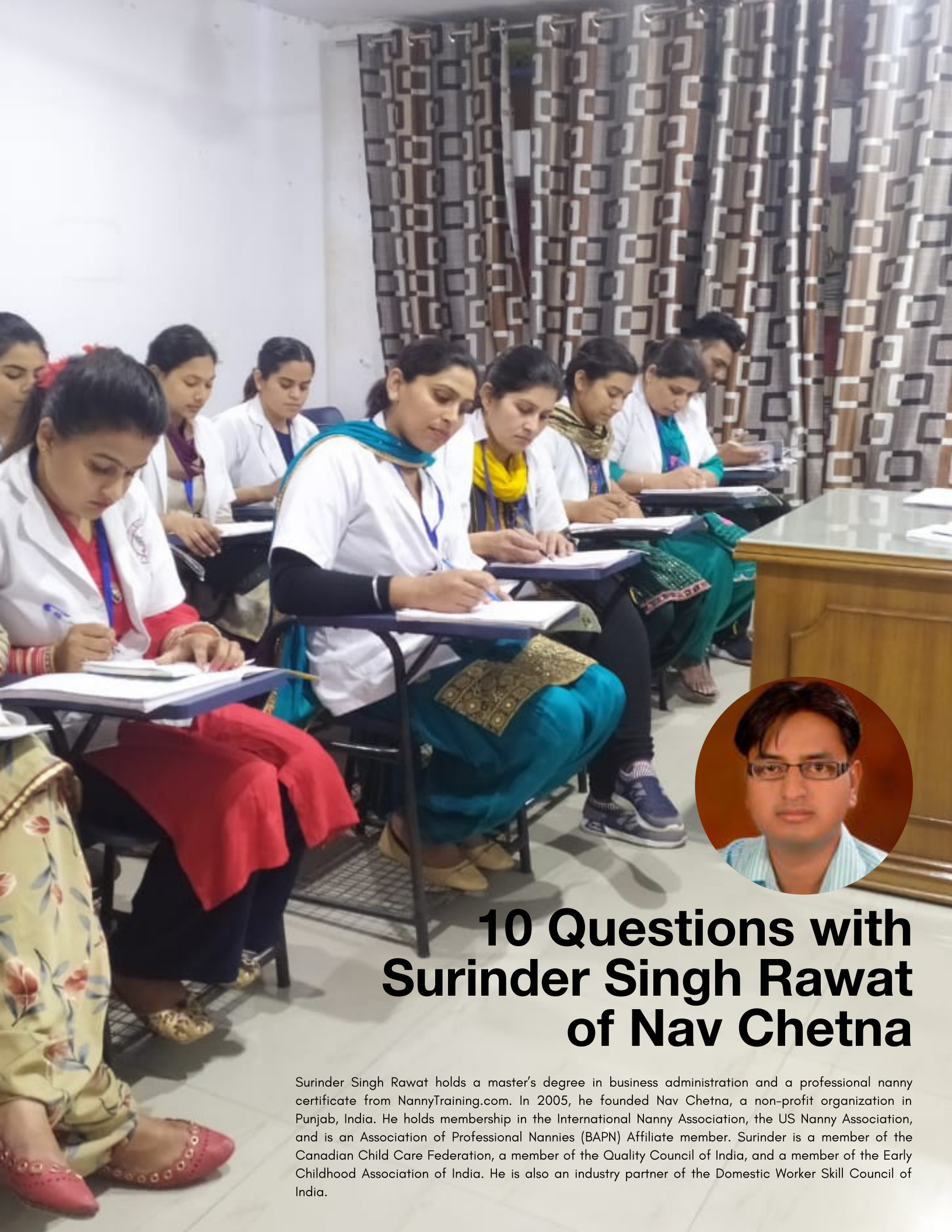


compromise, but it is. When we adjust, accommodate, or look for a win-win outcome, we are compromising. It's part of being flexible, of looking at something in a different way, and of transitioning through changes. Life is change, so there are plenty of compromises to be made. Nannies who have had a long career and long-term placements all agree that they have made compromises.

Knowing where you will not or cannot compromise is just as important. This is especially true when considering a position with a family and developing your work agreement, or when you are working with an agency. Understanding where you are flexible and where you can compromise along with where you set your limits is vital for success.

Boundaries and Limits

Without boundaries or limits, we are adrift. We need to be grounded in fundamental values and standards. Understanding yourself as a professional nanny is a place to start. Knowing not only your professional boundaries but limits on what you will and won't do in a position is significant. Your boundaries provide a structure in your search for a position, through the interview process, in developing or accepting an appropriate work agreement, and throughout your employment with a family. There are times when these borders will be tested, so you need to be prepared. It almost always means speaking up to communicate and clarify where you stand. This can be done in a respectful and gracious manner. Setting boundaries and speaking up for ourselves can be challenging but it can be the reason that you enjoy many years with an employer and many years as a professional nanny.



10 Questions with Surinder Singh Rawat of Nav Chetna

Surinder Singh Rawat holds a master's degree in business administration and a professional nanny certificate from NannyTraining.com. In 2005, he founded Nav Chetna, a non-profit organization in Punjab, India. He holds membership in the International Nanny Association, the US Nanny Association, and is an Association of Professional Nannies (BAPN) Affiliate member. Surinder is a member of the Canadian Child Care Federation, a member of the Quality Council of India, and a member of the Early Childhood Association of India. He is also an industry partner of the Domestic Worker Skill Council of India.

1. How did you become interested in the nanny industry?

In 2008, I learned of the news story where Sandra Samuels, a brave Indian nanny, saved an Israeli child, Moshe Holtzberg, during a terror attack. This is when I first learned about nannies. I continued to learn more about the nanny world through social media and the news. As I came to learn more, I realized that many migrants go overseas to study, but they are unfamiliar with the au pair program and shortage of qualified caregivers abroad.

In response, I helped found the Indian Nanny Association in May 2019, and in June 2019, a Canadian pilot project gained popularity among the Punjab community where women could travel to Canada to work as a nanny.

Through my association with Nav Chetna, a non-profit association that is working for the welfare of women and children, we began empowering women by providing vocational education that can lead to employment. We specifically offer training in early childhood and education.

2. What is the nanny market like in India?

After the announcement of the pilot project announced by the Canadian government, people became interested in working as a nanny abroad. This created a demand for nanny training, and right now, there are about 200 nanny training institutes in Punjab, India. That number continues to increase. Of these 200, approximately 55 are working under the recommended practices of the International Nanny Association. There are currently more than 150 nanny placement agencies in our area as well. These agencies and training programs partner with immigration consultants to help with nanny visa applications for nannies who desire to work abroad. While many of the agencies in the metro areas are performing well, there is a lot of work to be done in the areas of professional development and industry standards. Nannies are unregistered and agencies are unregulated.

3. What is Nav Chetna?

In Hindi, Nav Chetna means new consciousness. Nav Chetna is a nonprofit non-governmental organization that serves as an educational and welfare society providing various vocational training for women and children that leads to employment. Nav Chetna also supports the important work that the Indian Nanny Association is doing.

4. What are you doing to promote the nanny profession?

In India, the nanny profession is in its infancy and lots of work remains to be done to unite the industry and develop standards. Through my work with Nav Chetna, we operate several nanny training programs, including New British Nannies Academy and Real Care International Nanny Institute. We also offer a free job board, so nannies can find work and gain experience. We are also planning to offer an eLearning solution for continuous professional development and are trying to shift the frame from nannies being viewed as maids to childcare providers. We also support the Regulation Matters campaign and would love to see a similar campaign launched here in India.

5. What is the life of a nanny like in India?

Like in many other parts of the world, domestic workers are looked down upon. Workers are unorganized, and they are struggling to find fair pay and respect. There is a preference for white-collar jobs and many people believe this profession requires no formal training or certification and has no opportunities for networking or living wages. Many women are not encouraged to work as a nanny because they are living with other family members who have input into what they do for work. Their career path is often chosen by parents or family members.

6. What are the duties of a typical nanny job in India?

- Work in a private home providing childcare, supervising children, keeping children entertained, and upholding family rules.
- Ensure children's health and safety and care for children with illnesses.
- Transport children to and from school, play dates, and activities.
- Prepare children's meals, clean up after the children, do some of the family's shopping, and perform light housekeeping.

7. What is the outlook for nanny jobs in India?

Traditional jobs like teaching, nursing, and banking are very much in demand and preferred by women as options for marriage and career. To work in the home care setting is looked down upon. People always pay in cash and never provide written verification of a nanny's work experience. The pay scale is not formal. There are no formal work agreements and there is lots of exploitation in the industry. In India, the nanny industry is not regulated. Anyone can open the nanny agency and anyone can be a nanny because there are no formal qualifications or certifications required to do so. Nanny agencies are providing nannies who are academically as good as the status of the family seeking a nanny, so many nannies are unable to get good work.

8. Is the industry regulated in India?

The industry is not regulated in India. Anyone can become a nanny and, generally, people think that no formal education or training is required. Because many generations of family live together, people believe they already know how to provide care, and as such, they do not want to spend money on professional development. In India, nannies do not believe that getting education and training will increase their wages.

9. How are you reaching nannies in India?

We are an industry partner of the Domestic Work Skill Council of India and raising awareness about work opportunities for nannies. Our job board provides a good way to reach nannies and parents. We also offer CPR and First Aid training to nannies. We are also trying to bring agencies and training institutes together and offer awards to recognize people and programs who are making a difference.

10. What else do you want people to know?

It is our hope that agencies, nannies, and families see the value of training and professional development. We want people to recognize that nannies are not maids and should not be treated as such. Providing affordable training opportunities can help to raise the standards of care for children and the level of professional practice for nannies.

Mission of the Indian Nanny Association

To unite the nanny industry and provide support for nannies, caregivers, nannies, babysitters, nanny employers, au pairs and demi pairs, educators, families, and agencies that are working within the industry.

To encourage the government to provide rebates to families who employ a nanny for pediatric or geriatric care, and to encourage multinational companies and private companies to give allowances to working women for childcare or eldercare.



People Profile

Martha Tyler

Martha Tyler, host of Chronicles of Nannya (a nanny resource podcast), has been a nanny and teaching artist in Chicago for over eight years. She loves working with children and is both grateful and excited to blend her love of theater, education, and compassionate caregiving into her day job.

How did you get into the industry?

When I first moved to Chicago, I was looking for any job. A family friend needed a notetaker for a business dinner, and I grabbed up the opportunity. Before dinner was served, I asked if there were nuts in anything because I am allergic and the family friend said, "My kids are also allergic to tree nuts; do you babysit?" I started working for them and went from babysitter to their nanny quickly, and I've never looked back!

What do you love most about your work?

I love watching kids discover and be curious about the world. I love watching something "click" in a child's brain for the very first time! I recently showed a nanny kid that $2+2=4$ with some counting bears and it blew her mind. She sat there in awe for a good five minutes.

What is your best advice for someone starting out in the industry?

Approach your job with as much curiosity as you can. We're in peoples' homes, and that can stir up a lot within us. If something gets riled up in you and it makes you feel angry or sad, be curious about it instead of reactive. Also, kids are all doing their best. All the time.

How do you give back to the nanny community?

I host a nanny resource podcast called Chronicles of Nannya. I get to talk to experts in our industry and pick their brains! It's so rewarding and, I hope, helpful for many nannies out there!

What makes you most successful in your work?

I think my curiosity is a key to my success. I am at my best when I am able to not assign value judgments to behaviors and, instead, ponder why a child or parent is doing something that may feel off to me. I also have never lost my playfulness! I love making a child giggle by engaging in play with them on their level.

What made you start the podcast? Tell us more about it.

I was posting pictures of my nanny adventures with the hashtag #ChroniclesofNannya and I got really great responses. People would say things like "you should start a blog about these adventures!" A blog felt daunting and a bit isolating to me. I really enjoy talking to people and I love podcasts, so I decided to start a podcast! The podcast provides me a creative outlet and has allowed me to talk to some fascinating humans as well as some titans in our industry.

Who has been your favorite guest or favorite episode?

I love every time Cady Andersson (previously Leinicke) is a guest! She and I are dear friends, and she is a wealth of information. I love the "Alternatives to Time-Out" episode in particular because I think it provides some great options for nannies who want to move away from using time-outs but aren't sure how to do it! It's episode 42 for anyone looking for it!

How did you get to where you are today?

I have gotten all but one nanny job from recommendations from my first-ever nanny job! I honestly think my curiosity led me to where I am today. When I come up against a problem, I get curious about it instead of judging it. I look at obstacles as opportunities to learn, and as cheesy as that sounds, it hasn't led me astray yet!

Where do you see yourself in five years?

I would like to continue to help families. I am currently in school to become a family counselor and so I plan to move away from nannying and to a more therapy-based method of helping families. My passion remains the same, however. I want families to better communicate and I want children to feel safe, seen, and supported inside their homes!

What do you think nannies want to talk about most?

Sometimes I think nannies want to talk about best practices or changes in the industry. And sometimes, I think nannies want any adult talk at all! I know when I am hanging out with other nannies for fun, we crave talking about our personal lives and even what we're watching on TV at the moment. Nannying can be so isolating.

What do you like least?

I do not like finding new families! The first few weeks in a new position are exhausting, and I also miss my former nanny kids very much in those first few weeks. Change is always hard, but it's also a key part of our job.

What is your educational background?

I have my Master's in Secondary English Education and I'm currently getting a second Master's in Family Counseling.

Biggest nanny industry myth?

That there is one "right way" to do...well, anything. In therapy, we talk about how the relationship between therapist and client is more important than any particular therapeutic theory. I think the same is true of nannies with their nanny kids. If your nanny kid feels safe, seen, and loved by you, their nanny, that's more important than exact techniques or theories.

Anything else you want us to know?

I really love chatting with nannies! Please email me at chroniclesofnannya@gmail.com even just to say hi! I love getting to know nannies in the community and I want to hear from you!





BREAKING THE BARRIERS TO LEGAL PAY

BY MICHELLE LAROWE

Michelle LaRowe has more than 20 years of nanny industry experience. As an International Nanny Association credentialed nanny and Nanny of the Year™ award recipient, Michelle has authored several parenting books including Nanny to the Rescue!, Nanny to the Rescue Again! and Working Mom's 411. Michelle has served as executive director of the International Nanny Association, executive director of Morningside Nannies, editor in chief of eNannySource.com, and as an expert content contributor, product reviewer, and consultant for a variety of major brands. To educate the next generation of nannies, Michelle launched NannyTraining.com where she serves as lead educator and educates nannies in over 30 countries. Her formative course, offered exclusively in partnership with Nanny Stella, Inc., is the only US Based CACHE Endorsed Customized Qualification for nannies. Michelle is also the editor of the industry's premiere trade publication, Nanny Magazine.

In the United States, nannies are classified as employees of the families for whom they work.

Each year, federal law sets an annual wage threshold for domestic employees. For 2021, the threshold was set at \$2,300. Once that threshold is met, the employee's earnings are taxable.

Employers have tax obligations, too. These obligations include Social Security, Medicare, and state and federal Unemployment Insurance contributions, commonly referred to as "nanny taxes." Social Security and Medicare contributions are required by both the family and the employee, though it is permissible for the employer to pay their employee's share rather than withhold the share from their employee's pay.

For a single nanny in Texas who earns a gross wage of \$800 per week, after income taxes, Social Security taxes, and Medicare taxes, the nanny's net or take-home wage comes to \$675 per week. For the family paying the same nanny \$800 gross per week above, their total weekly employer expense will be \$887.

For many nannies and families, **the cost of compliance** alone serves as enough of a barrier to paying their nanny legally. For some nannies, the substantial reduction in cash on hand when comparing gross to net wages can mean the difference between earning a living wage and not, especially when you consider the need for health insurance, which most nanny employers do not provide. For many nannies, they simply cannot fathom how they can afford to take home less, and for many families, they cannot fathom how they can afford to pay more.

When confronted with this barrier, many nannies and families simply choose to be non-compliant, mistakenly believing that they indeed have a choice. A lack of education surrounding the legal obligations for families and nannies fosters the misunderstanding that there is an option to agree to an "under the table" arrangement.

A lack of understanding also extends to the risks of non-compliance and benefits of compliance to both nannies and employers. According to Guy Maddalone, Founder & CEO of GTM Payroll Services, "All too often we see nannies who are paid under-the-table unable to get a mortgage, credit, or car loan because they don't have a verifiable income or legal employment history." He cautions nannies to think twice about



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- Focus on Education and Development
- Children's Laundry
- Child Related Clean-Up
- Cleaning Bottles

NANNY NEEDED

QUALIFICATIONS DESIRED

- Background in Early Childhood
- CPR and First Aid Preferred

taking a job with a family that is willing to commit tax evasion and deny their employees the benefits of legal pay. “In-home caregivers are employees like those in the traditional workforce and need to be treated as such so they can enjoy the benefits of legal pay like paid sick leave, unemployment insurance, Social Security and Medicare, workers’ compensation, and more. Families too are at tremendous risk if they caught paying illegally with fines, penalties, and payment of back wages easily reaching tens of thousands of dollars. It seems like a big gamble when compared to the relatively small amount they would owe in employment taxes.”

Even when the risks of non-compliance are understood, **monitoring and enforcement of current laws do not seem to be enough** of a deterrent to foster compliance among employers. Sadie Kelly, a nanny from Chico, California, summed it up. “We all know the consequences of failing to pay nanny taxes, from back pay, professional license revocation, and tax fraud fines. How often do employers who pay illegally actually get caught? When they speak to fellow household employers, they hear more of ‘we just pay cash’ and less ‘did you hear about the lawyer that lost her practice because she didn’t pay nanny taxes? When paying under-the-table is as enforced as jaywalking, many people will not care to pay legally.”

For families who do understand their responsibilities and are committed to doing things right, **the path to compliance is a complex one**. From obtaining an employer identification number, to tracking and submitting withholdings, to issuing a W-2 at the end of the year, managing payroll responsibilities takes time and energy, something that many nanny employers simply do not have. “There needs to be more and easier ways to use a payroll service. Families do not want to spend the time to do the work. They are already busy enough,” shared Janna Jenkins, a nanny based in Atlanta, Georgia.

But given the **informal appearance of the employer/employee relationship**, many employers question if all this work is necessary given that they are an employer of one and that the workplace is their private home.

According to the International Labor Organization’s publication Formalizing Domestic Work, direct employment, such as that between a nanny and a family, can mask the employment relationship if it is not formally recognized. Having a written work agreement that specifically addresses tax and payroll responsibilities can help to clarify the employment relationship and the tax and payroll responsibilities of each party.

Like many reputable nanny referral agencies, Jennifer Hasset, owner of A Perfect Fit nanny agency, understands employers are busy. As such, she takes her responsibility of educating families and nannies and simplifying the path to compliance seriously. “We ask families on our application how they plan to pay their nanny and use their response as an opportunity to educate them on the importance of legal pay. We also connect them to a payroll company that we know will take great care of them and their nanny.”

As a payroll company CEO, Mr. Maddalone understands the value that agencies like Hasset’s bring to the table for both nannies and families. “Nannies will find better, more fulfilling jobs going through a reputable placement agency that partners with a payroll services firm to help educate families on their tax responsibilities and make it easy for them to comply with the law. These agencies – many are members of INA and APNA – advocate for ‘on the books’ employment to help caregivers realize the benefits of being paid on the books. They are committed to promoting the advantages of legal pay and risks of non-compliance to their families and nannies.”

Unfortunately, **not all agencies are committed to educating parents and nannies on legal pay** or only representing clients that are willing to be compliant. “I think one of the best ways to stop under-the-table illegal jobs is making it a requirement for all agency owners to only work with clients who pay nannies as W2 employees and follow all household employer laws,” says Ryan Jordan, who has been doing exactly this since 2013 when she opened her agency, Educated Nannies in Los Angeles, California. “We have educated thousands of parents. You can only do better when you know better.”

Louise Dunham of Placement Solutions, a nanny agency based in Melbourne, Australia, agrees. “Agencies need to be totally upfront and educate clients and not accept either clients who intend to pay ‘off the books’ or nannies who will accept these jobs.” In addition to not accepting jobs that only pay “off the books,” and nannies who will accept them, Leigh Aberle, CEO of Family First Household Staffing Agency based in Charlotte, North Carolina, believes nannies need to be educated as they may not even be aware of what their rights and responsibilities are.

But when families and nannies seek their perfect match independently—through online recruiting sites, social media, word of mouth, or nanny groups—education only becomes more of a challenge. Bayly Silverman of Your Happy Nest Agency in Atlanta, Georgia encourages those who know better and do better to educate others. She suggests that when there is a job posted that is paying below a fair rate or paying illegally, nannies should provide links to reputable sources (like those from nanny tax and payroll firms) to let them know what they need to do to be compliant.

But the buck does not stop with the employers. While it is the employer’s responsibility to be compliant, nannies have a role to play, too. Erin Jones, a professional nanny and household manager from Colorado, suggests that “one of the most effective ways to stop under-the-table jobs is for nannies to demonstrate professionalism, direct communication, and clarity around what they deserve as valid employees in the industry. If nannies stop accepting under-the-table pay as an option, this can stop.”





Rachel Lawrence, agency partner with HomeWork Solutions, Inc., agrees. "I would say the best thing nannies can do to help curb under-the-table jobs is to educate themselves and other nannies in their community about going to interviews prepared to talk in gross numbers. When a nanny arrives at an interview with a firm grasp of what gross (before tax) pay she is looking for, it sends a message to the family that she expects to be paid over the table and have her taxes withheld. When each nanny they interview shows up with gross pay figures, it sends a community message that the nanny industry as a whole will accept nothing less than fair and legal pay for the work our profession provides."

The International Labor Organization states in its publication *Formalizing Domestic Work* that "there remain many practical challenges to ensure compliance and formalizing jobs, including (i) setting up appropriate mechanisms to implement, monitor compliance with, and enforce the law; (ii) designing efficient systems to register domestic workers; (iii) training government staff in new mandates and (iv) fostering a commitment among the target population to comply with the new standards." This suggests that removing barriers to the formalizing of jobs, strengthening the benefits and incentives of formal jobs, and reducing the cost of formalization can help ensure compliance.

But those in the industry believe that it is the commitment of all stakeholders to fostering a culture of compliance in our community that will lead to lasting change. According to Sue Downey, career nanny and organizer of Nannypalooza, it is not up to the agencies, the nannies, or the parents to solve this problem. It is up to everyone. Each person in the equation must be educated on their responsibilities and stop breaking the law.

"I talk about guaranteed hours and payroll taxes in the first interview so it's on the table from the start. I have had a section about legal pay and what that entails in my work agreement since 1990. When I e-mail a family my work agreement, I also provide a link to a payroll company. I have had under-the-table job offers a few times and I have responded that I'm not willing to work illegally, as what would that say about my honesty in other areas. In one case, I really liked the family and offered to reduce my hourly rate by 50 cents to start as my yearly contribution towards the expenses of being paid legally. At 55 hours weekly, that was \$1,430. The dad said that showed how important it was to me and they paid legally without reducing my rate."

MaryAnn X. Meddish
2009 NOTY

"INA feels strongly that all employees in the nanny industry should be paid legally. Our position was made clear in a press release in May, 2018, and stands today. So crucial do we find this argument that legal pay information is included in the recommended practices for each of our membership categories. Nannies and other in-home childcare providers must be paid in the US via a W2, not a 1099, as they do not set their own hours, bring their own equipment, or otherwise meet the criteria for an independent contractor. It is only through legal pay that nannies will be protected and respected as every other professional early childhood educator."

Laura Schroeder
INA President

The discussion about nanny tax compliance may seem like a simple one, but this is not always the case. There is also a misconception that nannies who take under-the-table jobs are mainly immigrant workers. It is my belief that families, nannies, placement agencies, and payroll companies are equally responsible for ensuring compliance and for educating the public about these matters.

Throughout my career, I have known plenty of nannies from various backgrounds – not necessarily immigrants – who would choose to take an under-the-table position at any given time. I have also known many nannies who do not know the benefits and risks associated with non-compliance or how to go about being paid legally as an employee. Some have simply lacked the confidence to assert their employment terms. Finally, there are the immigrant nannies who may not know they can be paid "on the books" and what that entails.

When I first started nannying, I didn't know I could be put on payroll because I was on a student visa; however, like millions of immigrants in this country, I still paid my taxes – and a lot of it – even without having the guarantee I'd get any of those tax benefits back, such as Social Security, for example, later in life. I wanted to become a US citizen and I wanted to make sure I had a "good record," and paying taxes, in my view, was the right thing to do. For tax purposes, immigrants are viewed as residents, so they are allowed – and expected to – pay their income taxes. This is what I did for a few years before I learned that I could have been paid on the books, through a payroll company all along, and not have had to pay my taxes as an independent contractor.

Thaty Oliveira
Educator, advocate, and NDWA board member

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