

NANNY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2024

**COMMON PITFALLS OF
NANNY
AND FAMILY
RELATIONSHIPS**

**MYTHS ABOUT NANNY
BACKGROUND
CHECKS**

**ACTIVELY ENGAGING
INFANTS TO BOOST
DEVELOPMENT**

**THE IMPACT OF
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
ON HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYEES**

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SPRING 2024



NM

EDITOR IN CHIEF
Michelle LaRowe

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Elizabeth Agrapidis, Jennifer Rose Aronson, Deanna Baboi, Erin Carroll-Manning, Rachel Charlupski, Annie Clark, Brittany Joy Drew, Louise Dunham, Stephanie Felzenberg, Deniz Hansen, Lindsay Heller, Michelle Kelsey, Michelle LaRowe, Rachael Lubin, Ferrai Pickett, and Sarah Carlisle Stewart.

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PUBLISHER

Nanny Magazine, a division of Longhorn Leads, LLC

FOUNDER

Jennifer Kuhn, MPS

ADVISORY BOARD

Daniel Butcher, Louise Dunham, Angela Johnson, Michelle LaRowe, Cate Matijevich, Tonya Sakowicz, and Stella Reid.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Michelle LaRowe

Happy Spring!

As the blossoms bloom and the air fills with the promise of warmer days, I welcome you to the Spring 2024 edition of *Nanny Magazine*.

In this issue, we delve into a spectrum of topics designed to enrich the lives of both nannies and the children they care for.

From navigating the pitfalls of nanny and family relationships, to understanding how domestic violence impacts household employees, our aim is to provide you with insights, tips, and resources to thrive in your role.

As we emerge from the winter months and embrace the spirit of renewal, I encourage you to take a moment to reconnect with the joys of your profession. Whether it's through fostering meaningful connections with other professionals at industry events, or increasing your nanny knowledge base, remember that your dedication to professional growth makes a profound impact on the lives of those in your care.



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EVENTS

Nannypreneur Magazine will hold a training day on July 20, 2024, in Jersey City, New Jersey. Visit <https://nannypreneurmag.net/tickets/> to learn more.

Nanny Camp by Adventure Nannies and Playful Acre will be held in 2024. To learn more, visit <https://adventurenannies.typeform.com/W56ZmxaE/>.

Ask the Nanny will hold various retreats through 2024 across the United States. To learn more, visit <https://atnanny.com/ask-the-nanny-events/>.



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INDUSTRY CALENDAR

International Nanny Training Day will be held on April 13, 2024, with events held across the globe. National Nanny Training Day is held to recognize the needs of young children and to raise awareness of the positive correlation between nanny training and quality care. This national initiative is part of Week of the Young Child, an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. On Saturday, April 13, nannies from all over the globe will gather virtually to learn, be supported, and be inspired. Visit <https://nannypalooza.com/nntd.html/> to learn more.

NannyCon will be held on April 27 and 28, 2024, in London, England. NannyCon is a weekend of learning, self-care, professional development, networking, and connecting with others in a supportive and positive atmosphere. NannyCon is an international childcare and wellness professional development conference focusing on high-quality childcare professional development, self-care, wellness, and fun for nannies and childcare professionals. Visit <https://nannycon.net/> to learn more.

The International Nanny Association (INA) Annual Conference will be held May 16-19, 2024, in Portland, Oregon. The INA is the umbrella association for the nanny industry, with the mission to elevate and nurture the quality of childcare throughout the world by establishing standards, increasing awareness, promoting information, and providing support. Visit <https://nanny.org/2024-events-pricing-and-deadlines/> to learn more.

The Newborn Care Solutions Enrichment Conference will be held from May 30-June 2, 2024, in Tucson, Arizona. With a focus on developing newborn care specialists, this is an event not to be missed. To learn more visit <https://newborncaresolutions.com/nscsn/>.

National Nanny Recognition Week (NNRW) will be held September 22-28, 2024. NNRW is a week during which families, businesses, and the media will be encouraged to focus on the positive aspects of the nanny profession, the important role nannies play in the lives of families, and the wonderful contributions they make in the lives of the children they care for. Local events are happening in cities across the world, including the United States, Europe, Australia, and Switzerland. From a neighborhood brunch to a mail campaign by nannies for nannies, NNRW's reach is far and wide. To learn more visit <https://nnrw.org/>.

Nannypalooza East will be held September 27-29, 2024, in Raleigh/Durham, North Carolina. Nannypalooza West will be held October 18-20, 2024, in Phoenix, Arizona. Nannypalooza offers nannies a great way to learn new things, recharge their batteries, and network with others in their profession. Visit <https://nannypalooza.com/the-conference.html/> to learn more.

The Great British Nanny Conference will be held on October 5, 2024. The Great British Nanny Conference provides high-quality training, support, and the opportunity to network with sponsors, vendors, and like-minded nannies. To learn more visit <https://uknanny.org/our-events/>.

The Association of Premiere Nanny Agencies (APNA) Annual Conference will be held October 23-25, 2024, in Oceanside, California. Once a year, agency owners and staff from across the globe gather for one weekend to recharge, connect, and energize. APNA's annual conference provides an opportunity for agencies to immerse themselves in new knowledge, learn new skills and techniques, connect with like-minded business owners, and take away immediate plans they can implement to succeed in the private service industry. Visit <https://theapna.org/> to learn more.

The US Nanny Association will hold its annual virtual conference in 2024. For nannies who are seeking to learn on their own time, the virtual event is a great opportunity for nanny-g geared training. Visit <https://usnanny.org/conference/> to learn more.

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ASK THE NANNY

Dear Stephanie,

I accepted a job through an agency, and I am having cold feet. Though I am not supposed to start for a month, the family has been contacting me daily, and I get the sense they are severe micromanagers. I already know I can't do it. How can I get out of it and maintain my credibility and reputation?

Sincerely,
Having Cold Feet

Dear Having Cold Feet,

Typically I would recommend that you discuss your concerns of being micromanaged with the new employer to see if you could work things out.

But since you have already decided not to follow through and work for this family, you must be honest and apologetic as soon as possible. Tell the agency immediately and be up front about your reasons for changing your mind. Time is of the essence. The parents need time to find your replacement.

Undoubtedly, this is an inconvenience for the parents and the nanny placement agency. They are both going to be disappointed. The nanny placement agency might not be willing to work



with you to help find a new job moving forward. But I don't see how this one mistake will ruin your reputation and credibility with the job references you already have.

From what you have described it looks like you dodged a bullet and are making the right decision for yourself. In the future, just follow your gut instincts prior to accepting a position. I doubt your credibility and reputation will be ruined with former employers who are your job references because of this one decision.

Best of luck,
Stephanie Felzenberg



Stephanie Felzenberg has worked as a nanny and family assistant for thirty-one years. She was the International Nanny Association newsletter editor for four years, is the newsletter editor for the US Nanny Association, has been the Nanny Advice columnist for *Nanny Magazine* since 2013, and publishes a nanny blog, Be the Best Nanny, at <https://bethebestnanny.com/>. Submit your Ask the Nanny questions to Stephanie by emailing info@NannyMag.com.

AGENCY ADVICE

I got a job through a reputable agency, and I feel like it's a complete bait and switch. The job description presented was what I was looking for, the interview went well, and I thought we connected, and I was looking forward to starting. I am two weeks in, and the job is nothing like presented. The house is full of tension and fighting, the things they ask me to do are well outside of what I agreed to, they don't come home on time, and there is zero discipline for the children. It's like the job was a dream of how they wished their family was. I have a good relationship with the agency and want to maintain it, but I am not sure what to do. Any advice?

I'm sorry to hear about your situation. It sounds quite challenging and not what you were hired to do. Navigating a situation where the reality of a job differs from what was expected can be tricky, especially as a nanny. Here are some steps you might try to address the issue while maintaining a positive relationship with the agency:

Document Your Experiences

Start by keeping a detailed record of your daily duties, the issues you encounter (such as the tension and fighting, the tasks outside your agreed responsibilities, and any issues related to scheduling and discipline of the children), and any conversations or attempts you make to address these issues directly with the family. This documentation can be helpful for your understanding and any discussions with the agency or the family.

Communicate with the Family

If you haven't already, try to have an open and honest conversation with the family about your concerns. It's possible they may not be fully aware of the impact their actions (or inactions) are having on you. Approach the conversation with a focus on seeking solutions that could make the situation workable for you and them.

Reach Out to the Agency

If you have a good relationship with the agency, reach out to them to discuss what is happening. Be honest but professional, explaining what is happening and presenting your documentation. Explain that while you were excited about the opportunity, the job has been very different from what was described, and it's affecting your ability to perform your job effectively. The agency's reputation is on the line as much as your happiness in the job, so it's in their interest to address the situation.

Seek a Resolution

Work with the agency to explore possible resolutions. This could include additional training for you or the family, a revised job description that more accurately reflects the reality of the position, additional support from the agency, or even reassignment to a different position that matches your original expectations.

Know Your Boundaries

It's important to know your limits and communicate them clearly to the agency and the family. If the job continues to demand things of you that are outside your agreed responsibilities, you need to be prepared to reinforce these boundaries.

Consider Your Options

Ultimately, if the situation doesn't improve and continues to be different from what was agreed upon, you may need to consider whether this job is the right fit for you. While finding a new position might not be your first choice, your well-being is the most important thing.

Maintaining professionalism and open communication in your job is very important. The goal is to find a solution that respects your needs and the needs of the family, while also keeping your relationship with the agency. Remember, reputable agencies will want to make sure that their families and nannies are happy with the job placement, so they should work with you every step of the way.



Michelle Kelsey founded Nannies on Call in 2001, when her daughters were just two and four years old. As a working mother, she was struggling to find reliable, high-end childcare for her own two children and immediately saw a business opportunity. Michelle holds a bachelor of arts in history and was originally planning on being a teacher, but coming from a family of entrepreneurs, she also knew that starting her own business someday was inevitable. Twenty-three years later, Nannies on Call has grown to include the Nanny Solution and continues to ensure parents have access to safe, flexible, and quality childcare. Michelle lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, and loves spending as much time outdoors as possible. She enjoys hiking, camping, and walking in the woods for hours, which is where she gets all of her new business ideas.

CAREER NANNY AND NEWBORN CARE PROVIDER

DEANNA BABOI



Deanna Baboi is a career nanny in Portland, Oregon. She holds a bachelor of science in education, is a Newborn Care Certified provider, and has over fifteen years of experience caring for children from birth to age 10. She describes herself as a warm and nurturing nanny with a genuine love for children. She resides with her husband, Alex, and their kitten, Lido. They love hosting dinners for their neighbors and being active in their community.

Before You Leave for Work

Before I leave for work you will most likely find me in the gym. I love to go to 6:00 a.m. spin, barre, or Alpha Strength class. Getting my heart pumping in the morning sets me up for a spectacular day. After my workout, I head home for some coffee and breakfast before throwing on some dress pants and a button-up top to head to my work family.

While You Are Working

When I arrive at work, most times the kids are finishing breakfast. I start my day by relieving the parents so they can finish getting ready for their workday. I sit at the table to be present with the children and engage them in conversation during breakfast. After breakfast, I tidy up and get the kids ready for us to head out the door on our adventure. Mornings are my favorite. In the nanny field, it seems like morning time is when we embark on our favorite adventures. We love going to local parks, finding fun play spaces, hanging out in the front yard, and drawing with the sidewalk chalk.

On slow days, we do toddler-led walks where the kids lead and I just follow. During the summer, my favorite place to be is beside the pool. If we planned a long adventure, we set out the picnic blanket and have lunch before heading home. Picnics are another one of my favorites. When we are done, there is no cleanup, and we can simply pack up the bento boxes and fling the crumbs into nature.

When we get home, it's time for naps. I am a huge advocate for reading, so we always read three books before singing songs and going to sleep. During nap time, I finish up any chores or tasks that I have yet to complete. Then it's time for me to recharge, and I usually read, work on designing spaces, or catch up with friends

and emails. When the kids wake up, my day is nearly over. Usually we end the day with a snack and some individual playtime until the parents get home, and then I am done for the day.

I take immense pride in fostering creativity, curiosity, and kindness in the children I care for. Whether it's organizing outdoor adventures, introducing nutritious solids, or facilitating positive caregiver interactions, I am committed to ensuring that each child under my care feels loved, supported, and valued.

What You Do After

After I complete my workday, I head home in time to beat the heavy traffic. Once I get home, I start dinner for my husband and me, and we enjoy the rest of the evening together.

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INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

BACKGROUND CHECK MYTHS

By Michelle LaRowe

Background checks are an essential part of the prescreening hiring process for nannies. Gathering as much information as legally possible on a candidate allows parents to make educated and informed decisions about whom they choose to leave their children with. Yet when it comes to background checks, parents and nannies are often misinformed about what they are and what they mean. Clearly communicating what a background check is and isn't can ensure parents are empowered to make the right hiring decisions for their family.

Myth: All background checks are created equally.

Reality: Background checks can encompass nationwide database searches, county court records searches, motor vehicle driving records reports, statewide searches, civil court record searches, social security traces, educational and credential verification, credit reports, and more. Understanding what the background check you are ordering or reviewing on a candidate includes is essential to evaluating the information reported.

Myth: There are no industry standards on background checks.

Reality: Different nanny agencies may run different background checks. Some may be part of their pre-employment screening package, and others may be available to add on as an additional purchase.

According to the Association of Premier Nanny Agencies (APNA), at minimum, all APNA agencies must conduct the following background checks on every nanny candidate placed:

- Social Security Number verification for identity authentication and to obtain former names and addresses
- Statewide and/or county felony and misdemeanor checks in the location where the candidate currently lives
- National Sex Offender Registry search
- Driving record check.



In addition to the required basic background components listed above, APNA's recommended practice includes the following:

- Felony and misdemeanor checks in every jurisdiction where the candidate has worked and lived during the past seven years
- Criminal checks of every name used by the candidate during the past seven years
- Annual updates to existing background checks on temporary nannies or babysitters
- Protecting candidates from identity theft by utilizing background screening companies that do not engage in the offshoring of candidates' Social Security Numbers, dates of birth, or driver's license numbers for the processing of background checks.

Myth: You only should conduct a background check once, before hiring a candidate.

Reality: Conducting annual background checks ensures you have updated information on an employee. If a nanny transports the children for work, for example, it would be important to know if the nanny has had any motor vehicle violations that would require a reevaluation of her performance in that area. Background checks should be conducted periodically, especially if the nanny's responsibilities change or if there are any concerns or suspicions that arise during their employment.

Myth: You don't need permission from a candidate to run a background check for employment-screening purposes.

Reality: There are federal and state laws that dictate rules about employee screening. You should be familiar with the laws that apply to you. Compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act, a law that requires accuracy, fairness, and protection of personal information, and all other applicable local, state, and federal laws is required as is obtaining consent from the candidate whom you are screening.



Michelle LaRowe is the editor of *Nanny Magazine*. An award-winning nanny and published author with over thirty years of nanny industry experience, Michelle manages a portfolio of nanny related companies including NannyTraining.com, GlobalNannyTraining.com, eNannySource.com and Morningside Nannies, Houston's award-winning nanny referral agency. Michelle has served as past executive director of the International Nanny Association and serves as a board member of the Massachusetts Alliance for Families. She resides on Cape Cod, Massachusetts with her husband and their five children, three of whom were adopted from foster care.

Myth: Background checks are only needed on full-time nannies.

Reality: Background checks are essential for any individual who will be responsible for the care of your child, whether full time, part time, or occasional babysitting. The safety and well-being of your child should always be a priority.

Myth: Nanny background checks are too expensive.

Reality: The cost of a background check can vary depending on the depth of the check and the service provider. However, considering the safety and security of your child, the cost is usually minimal compared to the peace of mind it provides.

Myth: Nanny agencies always conduct thorough background checks so parents don't need to worry.

Reality: While reputable nanny agencies often conduct background checks on their nannies, it's still essential for parents to verify the information and to understand which checks are completed and how they are completed. Parents should ask for copies of background check reports and any other relevant documentation to ensure thoroughness. They also may wish to inquire as to if any additional searches are offered for purchase.

Myth: Nanny background checks are foolproof.

Reality: While background checks are an important tool for screening potential nannies, they are not infallible. They report data points based on the information provided. It's essential for parents to also trust their instincts, conduct interviews, check references, and communicate openly with the nanny to ensure a safe and positive childcare experience.

By dispelling these myths and understanding what a background check is, and isn't, and how important they are, parents can make more informed decisions when hiring a nanny and better ensure the safety and well-being of their children.

Nanny Magazine is the premiere trade publication for the in-home childcare industry. Nanny Magazine's readers are nannies who care for children ranging in age from newborn through age 18 and industry related professionals.

Nanny Magazine will cover:

- Current nanny industry trends, issues, and events
- Industry related news
- Hot topics affecting the nannies and children
- Useful products and resources that are of benefit to nannies
- Practical advice by industry professionals
- Nanny and industry leader profiles
- Advertisements geared towards professionals in the nanny industry.

The magazine covers everything from a nanny's relationship with their charges to their complex relationship with the parents. The magazine offers provoking features on hot topics, advice for nannies who are experiencing ethical dilemmas on the job, and relevant information about tax laws and legally binding contracts.

Deadlines are as follows for the digital publication:

- Deadline: September 15 for January 1 Winter Issue
- Deadline: December 15 for April 1 Spring Issue
- Deadline: March 15 for July 1 Summer Issue
- Deadline: June 15 for October 1 Fall Issue

Website and print submissions are accepted on an ongoing basis.

Nanny Magazine is published quarterly as a digital publication. A digital subscription is \$21 per year and includes access to all back issues.



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STAND UP TO HATE

Ferrai Pickett, a career nanny based in Chicago, Illinois, created a novel one-off event in response to a racist letter the family Pickett worked for received. "Seven years ago, a racist letter was mailed to the family I worked for. This incident garnered new attention, leading us to create a play date to help bring the community together."

The event, Stand Up to Hate, was such a success that Pickett decided to continue hosting an annual gathering. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she spent her time planning her next event, finding ways to incorporate learning opportunities for families into it.

It was during this next event that Pickett caught the attention of a local park district supervisor, Shandrel Starks, who invited Pickett to collaborate with Commercial Park. Shortly after this collaboration, Pickett was empowered to turn her once-one-time event into a nonprofit organization, Stand Up to Hate.

"Stand Up to Hate is a compassionate and dedicated nonprofit organization that takes pride in hosting community events aimed at promoting social, emotional, and mental wellness among children and their families," shared Pickett.

The organization now hosts two annual events, the Stand Up to Hate playdate and a Juneteenth celebration. These events, which are free to the public, offer an array of activities, food, entertainment, and educational sessions. Pickett also makes sure to collaborate with other like-minded organizations, such as Earth Remedies, another Chicago-based nonprofit founded by her sister.

In addition to hosting a community event, the Stand Up to Hate playdate offers resources to foster diversity and inclusion in adults and children. With multiple stations throughout Commercial Park, including cultural food offerings, sessions that support social and emotional development in families, and a book table that features people and people groups from various communities, this event is designed to educate and empower families and caregivers to embrace wellness and the inclusion of all.

Its second annual event, a Juneteenth celebration, is an educational event that showcases Black-owned local businesses. "While many Juneteenth events are private, my event welcomes people from all walks of life who want to learn and make change," noted Pickett. "We provide resources, samples, Black-owned-and-led yoga, food, storytime, and opportunities for discussion."

Stand Up to Hate events are free and welcome all. The dates for this summer's events are June 15, 2024, and August 10, 2024.



Ferrai Pickett is a career nanny based in Chicago, Illinois and the founder of Stand Up to Hate. To learn more about the movement, please visit <https://standuptohateplaydate.godaddysites.com/>.

THE IMPACT OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

ON HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYEES

This article discusses domestic violence. This article was submitted anonymously and shares one nanny's personal experience and perspective. The information in this article does not constitute legal advice or guidance. Seek professional help should you find yourself impacted by domestic violence. In the United States, the National Domestic Violence Hotline is 800-799-7233.

Nannies are especially vulnerable to being exposed to domestic violence because of our professional proximity to families. Due to the integral role that household staff play in family dynamics, it becomes quite challenging or nearly impossible for household staff members to separate themselves from the inner workings of the family by whom they are employed. Nannies, unfortunately, can become caught up in the crossfires of domestic violence and the eventual falling out that occurs.

Domestic violence is a pervasive issue that can affect any household, regardless of socioeconomic status, race, or religion. As caregivers entrusted with the well-being of children, nannies play a crucial role in recognizing and addressing signs of domestic violence in the home. Understanding the dynamics of domestic violence and knowing how to respond appropriately can make a significant difference in ensuring the safety and welfare of themselves and the children in their care.

Here is my story.

Several years ago, I interviewed with a potential employer who, unbeknownst to me, was involved in a contentious divorce and domestic violence situation. I was young, naive, and wanted to help. I was also desperately seeking employment, and the pay rate that was offered to me was enticing. At the time, I didn't know the questions to ask that would help me properly vet the employer and determine whether this was the right job for me.

Several days after meeting the potential employer, I found myself in court as a character advocate and witness for her, as she was seeking joint custody of her child.

I had no idea what this situation was that I was walking into, and I was not professionally or emotionally prepared to give domestic and parental support or testify in a court of law.

Once in court, reality set in, and the shock of what I had become a part of began to wear off. I knew I had to find a way to make the best out of the potentially dangerous situation I found myself in. I took time to observe and listen to the details of the case that were presented. I made note of the body language of both parties.

After the hearing was over, the mother and I were making our way to the exit when her ex-husband moved toward her. She immediately flinched and quickly moved away. An officer noticed what happened and stepped in, directing her ex-husband away from her, and we left the building.

Looking back now, I am grateful that the full scope of the situation was revealed to me in court before I agreed to accept the position.

Other nannies have not been so lucky. In 1974, nanny Sandra Rivett, was murdered by Lord Lucan, who'd mistaken her for his estranged wife, Veronica, with whom he was locked in a bitter custody battle. Knowing that I am not alone, I share my story and resources to help raise awareness about domestic violence and the impact it can have on nannies and household staff.

It's essential, that nannies and other additional household staff familiarize themselves with the various signs and tactics to look out for and also have an immediate contingency emergency plan for how to safely exit from a domestic violence situation.

Recognizing the Signs

Domestic violence can manifest in various forms, including physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and financial abuse. As a nanny, being aware of the signs of domestic violence is essential for providing support and intervention when necessary. Some common indicators of domestic violence may include:

- Physical injuries—unexplained bruises, cuts, or injuries that are inconsistent with explanations given by family members.
- Emotional distress. Children displaying signs of anxiety, depression, or behavioral problems may indicate exposure to emotional or psychological abuse.
- Isolation. A family member who is isolated from social interactions, including limited contact with friends or family members, may be experiencing controlling behavior from their partner.
- Financial control—one partner having limited access to financial resources or being denied financial autonomy by the other partner.
- Manipulative behavior, such as instances of manipulation, coercion, or intimidation within the household.
- Fearful behavior—children or adults displaying fear or apprehension around a particular family member.

Creating a Safe Environment

As a nanny, creating a safe and supportive environment for children is paramount. It's essential to foster open communication and trust so that children feel comfortable discussing any concerns they may have. Establishing a safe space where children feel heard and validated can empower them to speak up about their experiences, including witnessing or experiencing domestic violence.

Responding Appropriately

When confronted with signs of domestic violence in the home, nannies should respond with sensitivity, compassion, and a commitment to the safety and well-being of all family members.

A plan should also be prepared for how to protect yourself and the children within your care should there be an active domestic violence situation in the home.

Here are some steps nannies can take:

- Document observations. Keep a detailed record of any observations or incidents related to domestic violence, including dates, times, and descriptions of behavior.
- Express concern. Express concerns about observed behaviors or injuries to the appropriate authorities or support organizations, such as child protective services or domestic violence hotlines.
- Provide support. Offer emotional support and reassurance to children who may be experiencing distress due to domestic violence. Let them know they are not alone and that help is available.
- Encourage seeking help. Encourage adult victims of domestic violence to seek support from local resources, such as shelters, counseling services, or legal assistance.
- Ensure safety. If the situation poses an immediate threat to the safety of children or adults, take steps to ensure their safety, including contacting law enforcement or facilitating their removal from the home if necessary.

Seeking Support

Nannies should not hesitate to seek support and guidance from relevant professionals or organizations when dealing with domestic violence in the home. Nannies should also not wait for a situation to escalate or possibly change for the better before taking appropriate action. The nanny's work agreement should reflect clauses and terms to protect her from domestic disputes and litigation, and the nanny should not be forced to take part in domestic disputes and issues.

Many communities offer resources and support services specifically for victims of domestic violence, including counseling, legal assistance, and shelter options. By collaborating with these organizations, nannies can access the necessary support to navigate challenging situations effectively.

Domestic violence is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to address effectively. As caregivers entrusted with the well-being of children, nannies play a crucial role in recognizing, responding to, and supporting victims of domestic violence in the home. By staying informed, creating a safe environment, and responding appropriately to signs of domestic violence, nannies can help ensure the safety and well-being of all family members under their care.

Domestic violence awareness and mandated reporter training should be a part of every nanny's general personal and professional knowledge. If you are in a situation and unsure of what to do, please seek out appropriate resources. This is especially important when developing any safety plans that may involve a minor in your care.

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EXPERT TIPS

FIVE WAYS TO BOOST INFANT DEVELOPMENT

Elizabeth Agrapidis, PT, MS, MPT, C/NDT
AbiliFit Pediatric Development Specialists

When it comes to providing quality childcare during the first year, many nannies are unaware of how their time with the infant should be spent. If you're looking for ways to boost infant development during your time together, consider these five strategies.

Use Responsive Interaction . . . At the Right Times

When you attend to an infant's needs in the moment, you are providing responsive care. Responding to an infant's cues, gestures, and sounds with appropriate interactions supports healthy development by building strong emotional bonds and laying the foundation for language and social development.

We use responsive interactions by not forcing good things onto infants just because we read it is something that we should do or something that could be good for them. Whether it's playing, singing, reading, talking, massaging, or initiating other positive interactions, these things are better done when done intentionally and lovingly and when the infant is receptive.

When infants are in a receptive state, they are most open to input, and the interactions will make the most impact on brain connections. Infants are typically receptive when they are rested, clean, and not in distress. It is important that you are calm as well, as your emotions will be transferred into the words, expressions, and activities you engage in.

It's also important to remember to engage in activities that are developmentally appropriate for the baby's age and ability. Engaging in activities that are developmentally above their level can be detrimental. For example, encouraging standing for a two-to-three-month-old is not the best interaction. The same goes for placing babies in equipment like bouncers, exersaucers, and walkers. At this age and stage, an infant is best served by being on the floor.

Provide Opportunities for Movement

Movement is life and learning. If a baby can't move and experience their body and environment, their learning is limited. We often think of movement as crawling or walking, but the movement we are speaking of includes moving each part of the body, such as the mouth, trunk, and eyes.

There are two kinds of movement that foster development: self-guided movement and adult-guided movement.

Encouraging free, self-guided movement practice and exploration in a safe place is necessary for all systems of development. This does not mean leaving the child in a space and walking away; rather, you should be near and attentive, observing the child independently exploring the environment that you have provided.

Playful and intentional adult-guided movement is also important. Adult-guided movement can be playing patty cake with a baby's hands and feet, moving the baby's legs in a bicycle-pedaling pattern, moving the baby's arms and legs across their midline, playing peekaboo, encouraging full-range motion of the neck, arms, and legs, playing in a side-lying position, and rolling the baby to and from tummy positioning.

When you observe something isn't moving symmetrically or easily, engage it to help promote the missing pieces. If an infant resists tummy time, encouraging them to spend time on their tummy is important. Encouraging supervised tummy time starting from early infancy can help strengthen neck, shoulder, and arm muscles, preparing them for crawling and eventually walking. Tummy time also provides opportunities for sensory exploration, visual development, and vestibular input as infants learn to lift their heads and explore their surroundings. Problem-solving tummy time is crucial to future success.

Encourage Self-Play and Quiet Play Time

Self-play and quiet play time allows for a baby to integrate all they have experienced that day. Provide an appropriately stimulating environment for an infant by offering age-appropriate toys, such as rattles, soft toys, and textured objects. These toys help in developing fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and sensory exploration. Include different toys regularly and move them to different positions around the infant to keep their interest and provide a variety of opportunities. Avoid having the television on in the background, as this can create an overstimulating environment.

Supply Healthy Nutrition

Ensuring an infant receives proper nutrition promotes optimal development. Breastfeeding is recommended, as it provides essential nutrients and antibodies that support immune system development. If breastfeeding is not possible, consult with a pediatrician to choose an appropriate formula. You'll also want to understand the pediatrician's recommendations around starting solid foods and expanding the child's pallet as appropriate. Remember, the whole child is developing. None of the systems can work properly without the others being nourished as well.

Promote Healthy Sleep Patterns and Routines

Establishing a consistent and nurturing bedtime routine promotes healthy sleep patterns. Infants require adequate sleep for brain development and overall growth. Create a calming bedtime routine that may include activities such as a warm bath, a gentle massage of the feet, legs, and even face, and reading a bedtime story. Ensure the sleep environment is safe, comfortable, and free from distractions.

Remember, as a baby learns new skills, he or she will want to practice them. This practice may happen while your baby is in their sleep space. Now, this may not be when we would want them to practice their new skill, but ultimately this is normal development, and although inconvenient temporarily, the alternative of not moving or not learning new things is the opposite of what we desire.

By incorporating these practices into the daily routine of a child during the first year, you will help support and enhance an infant's development of all systems during this crucial stage of growth. This will guide them to be the toddler, child, and adult they are meant to be and set the foundations for them to achieve their greatest potential.

As a childcare professional, you are in a unique position to educate and communicate to new parents what a baby needs to reach their greatest potential. Not realizing the impact that you can have on a child's development is limiting to the child and the family.



Elizabeth Agrapidis, PT, MS, MPT, C/NDT is an accomplished educator, pediatric physical therapist, teacher, neurodevelopment treatment-certified practitioner, author, toy inventor, wife, and a mom of two. She puts the puzzle pieces of whole child development together for nannies, caregivers, and professionals through a home-based certification program and specially offered seminars.

As a physical education teacher, adaptive physical education teacher for children with special needs, and as a pediatric physical therapist, she noticed early on in her career that something was missing in fostering child development.

To help nannies, caregivers, and families be better equipped to guide children's physical, mental, and emotional development and to assist babies in reaching their greatest potential, she combined her knowledge, experience, and tools to launch her educational program. Elizabeth's program supports the abilities of the body, mind, and spirit for professionals, babies, and their families.

Through AbiliFit Baby Development Specialists, a growing movement that features the Develop Connect Nurture Method and Certification Program, Elizabeth is building a community to support children, nannies, and families by optimizing baby development and movement patterns and eliminating problems before they start.

If you would like support or guidance on any of these principles, please visit <https://abilifit.org/>, email Elizabeth at elizabeth@abilifit.org, or message her on Facebook or Instagram @abilifit_pedidev.



AbiliFit

Pediatric Development Specialists



People Profile

Rachael Lubin

Rachael Lubin is a Houston based International Nanny Association Credentialed Nanny and Certified Professional Governess. Rachael has served on INA's Board of Directors, co-founded Nanny Relief Fund, and co-founded HTX Nannies, Houston's leading nanny support group. She is passionate about investing in nanny communities and is always looking for the next best way to be of service. Outside of the nanny world, she enjoys traveling, trying new-and-unusual foods, searching for the perfect gift for that hard-to-buy-for person, and supporting the LGBTQ community.

How did you get involved in the nanny industry, and what is your current role?

After earning a bachelor's degree in geography, I knew I didn't want to go into public school teaching right away. I spent a year working for Big Brothers Big Sisters doing recruiting, and I loved matching potential Bigs with the Littles who needed a mentor and friend. But office work just wasn't filling my cup, so I decided to go teach English abroad to see more of the world and gain a little bit of classroom experience. I taught English in China for a year and a half at a university in a small village. It was a wonderfully hard learning experience filled with more challenges (and therefore more rewards) than I'd ever experienced at once. Yet still I realized I wasn't ready for a life committed to a single classroom. In 2012, I attended the English Nanny and Governess School (ENGS) to become a Certified Professional Governess. I started working in childcare immediately after that.

After twelve years of nannying in two countries(which accounts for over twenty-three children!), I finally found a family I've settled nicely with. I've been in my current role in Houston, Texas, for five-and-a-half years.

When you relocated a few years back, you started a nanny support group. Can you share about that experience?

After living and working in places with great nanny communities (Brooklyn, New York; Detroit, Michigan; Indianapolis, Indiana; Dallas, Texas; and more), I quickly realized that Houston didn't have that kind of support.

I'd been attending nanny conferences and serving on the Board of Directors for the International Nanny Association for many years, and I knew the value of local nanny education and camaraderie. I'd been told that several people had tried to make a group happen, but the sheer vastness of Houston's size made it difficult. The pockets of wealth (and nanny employment areas) are spread far apart, so to be honest, I waited. I met several nannies who had a regular playgroup in the West University area of Houston. They held holiday parties for the children in their care and were quite organized as a crew! After the pandemic, when life was starting to bloom again, I chatted with some of the playgroup organizers about making things more official, and HTX Nannies was born! We advertised and gained a following of nannies who didn't have many nanny friends. We still aren't able to reach the nannies living in the furthest suburbs, but we're slowly building the organization to have events in various parts of the city. We held our first International Nanny Training Day event in 2023 (Houston's first one in at least five years!), introduced local nannies to the national nanny scene, celebrated National Nanny Recognition Week, and provided education on nanny wages, rights, and contracts. And we're just getting started! Houston is the fourth-largest metro area in the US, and we're aiming to support and educate all nannies within our reach!

Curated social media images are cute, but in-person nanny community is life affirming.

-Rachael Lubin



What is your best advice for nannies who are new to an area?

First, the basics: Go on Instagram, Facebook, Tiktok, Reddit, etc., and search hashtags like #yourcity+nanny and follow both nannies and groups you think are relevant.

Second, reach out. This is so hard for some nannies! Send the people and groups a message. Tell them you want to meet and get involved. Ask what their values are.

Third, go. Go to that event, that lunch, that playdate. That's why nanny support groups exist! For you to find community and not be so alone in this important profession.

How do you hope to bring the industry together, and how have you been working toward that?

One of the things I immediately noticed was missing from the nanny community in March 2020 was a safety net. Nannies don't have a built-in village. I knew we needed to make our own. With the help of other industry leaders, we launched the Nanny Relief Fund just three weeks after the lockdowns started. We raised and gave away over \$100,000 in the first twelve months and have continued to financially help nannies for the past four years.

Nannies need the education to know what they are worth, the support to ask for what they need, and the help of their nanny village when times are tough. Nannies are better together. Our output is better for the children and families, and our hearts and minds are enriched with the help of others.

How has professional development and connecting with other nannies impacted your career?

I consider myself super lucky that I started my nanny career with a high-level education from ENGS. My first year of nanning, I went with new nanny friends to both Nannypalooza and the International Nanny Association Annual Conference. Both were financial sacrifices the first many years, but I realized they paid off very quickly.

I learned enough so that with each new job I started, I was in a better position to ask and receive better wages and more benefits. Some of my closest and most trusted friends are nannies I met at professional development events.

What do you think is the biggest misconception about nannies? How can we change that?

The biggest misconception is that nanning is easy work. We see it on job postings all the time. After nannies challenge low rates, the employer will say something like, "I'm a [insert fancy job title], and I don't make that much! Maybe I should quit and become a nanny!" I always mentally am sassy with them and think both, "Well, maybe you should if your fancy job pays so little," and, "If you can't handle a challenging conversation online, you definitely can't handle a challenging child in real life!" Nanning is much harder, both physically and mentally, than my previous office jobs and teaching position. The days are longer, the breaks are fewer, and the stakes are so much higher.

What should parents know when hiring a nanny?

There's too much to say in a single paragraph, but parents need to know that when they hire someone to come work in their home, they've now become "the boss," and their home has become someone else's workplace. It's an understandably tough balance to make a home a workplace, and vice versa. People who have never been managers or leaders in their own right may have trouble managing and leading the person who's taking daily care of their precious children. Important conversations require both firmness in their expectations and delicacy in their delivery. Not everyone who wants or needs a nanny is ready to become an employer that people want to work for.

What is the same thing you hear nannies talk about over and over and what do you tell them?

In some way, shape, or form, either their working agreement or contract wasn't thorough enough, or the employer deliberately decided to break contact and expect the nanny to be okay with it.

There are always communication issues (as with every kind of relationship) that can often be solved with an open, honest, calm conversation. But most of the deal-breakers come from a nanny not mandating a very thorough contract from day 1 or the contract not being adhered to. For the most part, once a nanny starts to see disrespect from an employer, it's time to find an exit. Again, many people aren't ready or equipped to employ a nanny—someone to come alongside them and be a parenting partner.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

It might be surprising to some, but I'm not a long-term goal setter. I followed the rigid academic dreams of the average middle-class American child and found myself burned out and unsatisfied. Now I try to keep an open mind about what can come, and I have the space to move (literally and figuratively) when new opportunities arise. I hope I can continue to be a respected thought leader and community developer. I hope the Nanny Relief Fund can be at a point where it's a well-oiled machine for nannies to use when they need it.

What is the biggest challenge nannies face and how do we solve it?

The average American nanny is a brown female immigrant. She likely speaks English as a second language and may possibly not have legal status to work in this country. Her employers may be in a position to make change: politically, financially, and socially. But it generally behooves the wealthy and ruling class to keep "the help" in a space that's not as easily scalable. Nannies with some semblance of power or privilege must work at pulling up other women who may not look or sound like them. We can advocate for better wages and working conditions all we want, but if the vast majority of nannies are left out of the discussion, the whole industry will be kept from reaching its full potential.



10 THINGS



**NANNY
AGENCY OWNERS
AND STAFF**

WANT YOU TO KNOW

Working with a reputable nanny agency has many benefits. Parents who source nannies through an agency are typically serious about finding a quality childcare provider—and willing to pay market rate for customized care. As such, it should be no surprise that agencies engage with many nannies and only choose to represent a select few applicants.

But when it comes to working with a reputable agency, what do agencies wish nannies would know? *Nanny Magazine* asked nanny referral agencies across the globe what they wish nannies knew. Here's what they had to say.

While our process to get a nanny onboarded to the agency is long and intense, it is this way to benefit both the nanny and family! The more we know about you as a nanny, the better we can match you up with a family so you are excited to go to work. Qualifications and experience only go so far. Personality is a large factor too! —Brittany Joy Drew, interStellar Nannies

While parents are our paying clients, we wouldn't be in business without great nannies. We strive to have good relationships with our nannies, ensure fair and legal pay with industry-standard benefits for our nannies, and work to educate parents on their responsibilities as household employers. We want our nannies to be successful, and we want to make good matches, the first time. —Michelle LaRowe, executive director of Morningside Nannies

Understand the value of a professional cover letter and resume. A good cover letter, coming from the heart and showcasing who the candidate is, what they bring to the table, and what they value as a caregiver, sets the stage for great interviews and even better pairings. —Erin Carroll-Manning, CEO/founder of Gentle Giraffes

Be nice to us. We are humans here too. We work hard to get you placed with a great family that respects you by paying you legally and to a professional nanny job description. And if we run professional development for you, please attend. We put a lot of thought into what is pertinent for nannies, and they are run free or at low cost. —Louise Dunham, Placement Solutions

Be mindful of realistic wage expectations. Do not set a high rate beyond your experience. Twenty-seven years of experience does count for more than three years. —Louise Dunham, Placement Solutions

Our agency is dedicated to facilitating connections that go beyond meeting basic job requirements. As a result, our nannies can begin their positions with confidence, knowing that they are entering into a role that aligns with their skills, values, and career aspirations. —Deniz Hanson, Trusted Nanny Match

The interview starts before the interview actually starts. Applicants should be professional, as shown through their email address and voicemail, how they present themselves on social media, and not texting while they are driving if they are running late to the interview. Our agency and clients look at all of this to see if they are going to be a good role model for the children and how they handle different situations. Just being great on paper just doesn't cut it. —Rachel Charlupski, the Babysitting Company

We are on your side! Our primary focus is to support you in your job search, and we can assure you that we're doing everything we can on our end to help you succeed! —Annie Clark, director of recruiting at Westside Nannies

A great agency will be there for you, no matter what and no matter how long after you've been employed. They are your liaison, your Google for all scenarios that could possibly arise. If you feel uncomfortable with talking to your principal house manager or supervisor about your salary and benefits, or if there's an incident that occurs and you don't feel safe bringing it directly to the head of staff, this is what your agency and recruiters are here for. All the best agencies want you to succeed. They want you to be happy, and they care about you and your well-being. —Jennifer Rose Aronson, Head of Domestic Recruiting Riveter Consulting Group

Feedback is a two-way street. Agencies want nannies to understand the power of both giving and receiving feedback. Constructive feedback helps everyone improve. It's just as important for nannies to share their experiences with agencies. If something isn't working well, speaking up allows us to make changes. —Michelle Kelsey, founder of Nannies on Call and the Nanny Solution



NANNY KNOWS BEST

COMMON PITFALLS OF NANNY AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

(AND HOW TO AVOID THEM)

Nanny-family relationships can be incredibly rewarding, but they can also come with challenges and pitfalls. Unlike in most professions, nannies work in private homes where the environment is intimate and the relationships complex. By being aware of common issues that arise in the nanny-family relationship, nannies and parents can build better relationships and avoid potential pitfalls.

Communication Issues

Poor communication between the nanny and the family can lead to misunderstandings, frustration, and resentment. It's essential for both parties to communicate openly, honestly, and respectfully about expectations, schedules, rules, and any concerns that may arise. Having a written agreement, regularly scheduled meetings and annual performance reviews can help to ensure that both the nanny and family are on the same page.

Boundary Setting

Establishing clear boundaries can be difficult but is crucial in maintaining a healthy nanny and family relationship. This includes boundaries around work hours, responsibilities, discipline, and personal space. Failure to set and respect boundaries can lead to job creep and feelings of overstepping or being taken advantage of.

Mismatched Expectations

Sometimes, there can be a disconnect between the expectations of the family and the nanny. This could be related to duties, responsibilities, discipline styles, or even cultural differences. It's important for both parties to discuss and align their expectations early on to avoid misunderstandings later. When questions or concerns arise, they should discuss them as soon as possible.

Lack of Appreciation

Nannies often put a lot of effort and care into their work, but they may not always feel appreciated by the family. This can lead to feelings of undervaluation and dissatisfaction. It's important for families to show appreciation for their nanny's hard work and dedication through words, gestures, and fair compensation.

Professionalism vs. Personal Relationship

Striking the right balance between maintaining a professional relationship and building a personal connection can be challenging. While it's important to have a good rapport, crossing boundaries into overly personal territory can blur lines and create discomfort. It's also important to match with a family or nanny who has the same expectations regarding the role the nanny will play in the family. Some want their relationship to be like extended family members, and others want a strict employer-employee relationship. Nannies should also be cautious about oversharing and about what they divulge on social media and other internet-based platforms that are easily accessible to all.

Conflict Resolution

Conflicts are inevitable in any relationship, and nanny-family relationships are no exception. However, if conflicts are not addressed and resolved promptly and constructively, they can escalate and damage the relationship. Both parties should be willing to communicate openly, listen to each other's perspectives, and find mutually acceptable solutions. It's best to have a weekly check-in time that provides natural opportunities for connection and ensures there's not a lot of time for negative feelings to build up before addressing an issue.

Job Insecurity

Nannies may feel insecure about their job stability, especially if there's uncertainty about the family's long-term plans or if they feel easily replaceable. Job insecurity can pop up around a nanny's desire to take vacation time or sick days, or when having

to communicate a work-related issue. Families should strive to provide reassurance and clarity regarding the nanny's role and tenure to avoid unnecessary stress and insecurity and should not penalize the nanny for taking time off that she is entitled to.

Legal and Financial Matters

Clear agreements regarding pay, benefits, taxes, and other legal and financial matters are essential to avoid misunderstandings and disputes. Families should ensure they comply with employment laws and regulations and provide fair compensation and benefits to their nanny. Many nannies and families are new to understanding tax and payroll responsibilities. When all parties know better, they can do better, so it's essential for both parents and nannies to understand the business side of nannying.

Navigating these pitfalls requires open communication, mutual respect, and a willingness to address issues as they arise. With patience, understanding, and effort from nannies and parents can create healthy, long-term relationships that will outlive the employer-employee relationship.

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INSIGHTS FROM THE NANNY DOCTOR

NANNY SUPPORT

Support. We all need it. Life is hard. Being a nanny has so many rewards, but it also is a role that comes with unique, complex challenges that only other nannies and those in the nanny industry can understand.

As a nanny, you are placed in a private home environment, right in the epicenter of a family and all the joys and issues that it brings. One of the most difficult dynamics nannies and families need to navigate is healthy and appropriate boundaries. When one side or both aren't able to maintain healthy boundaries, a host of issues will arise. These boundary issues cause stress and can snowball into even bigger issues.

Parents also, in general, don't know how to be employers. They may have run successful companies and hired and fired there, but the uniqueness of the nanny position is one that they are often uninformed about. Parents aren't always aware of industry standards or about what is legal and what is acceptable and what is not. This too causes a lot of issues.

Communication can be another big issue for the nanny-family relationship. There automatically is a power dynamic of employer-employee, and a nanny can have a difficult time bringing up their concerns with their employer due to a fear of being let go. Additionally, nannies are not always knowledgeable about what is acceptable and what their rights are, so being in a support group can help them become more educated about appropriate standards.

Unless you work in a fully staffed household, being a nanny can sometimes be a very isolating job. Becoming a member of a nanny support group can go far in providing support for a nanny.

Additional benefits of being a member of a nanny support group include having the opportunity to hear tricks, tips, and strategies from other nannies. Usually groups include nannies of varying experience levels, so there is a lot to learn from each other! Also, amazing and lifelong friendships can be found in a great nanny support group.

If a nanny is planning to continue on a trajectory of being a professional career nanny, it is highly recommended they become a part of a nanny support group or online community. The benefits of the group also extend to professional development opportunities and education about nanny industry standards.

Nanny support groups can come in the form of in-person groups, online virtual groups, or online communities such as nanny Facebook groups. What is most important when choosing a group is a sense of community, emotional safety, and respect. That is why it is so important to have a facilitator or monitor in the group, as well as group rules.



Joining a nanny support group offers professional and personal growth. In addition to practical tips and emotional support, these groups provide a platform for nannies to thrive in their roles, fostering a nurturing and collaborative community that ultimately benefits the well-being of both caregivers and the children they look after.



The Nanny Doctor, Lindsay Heller, is a professional nanny consultant based out of Beverly Hills, California, where she works with nannies and families all over the world to solve issues with managing the nanny family relationship. She is a former nanny of ten years, mother of two daughters, and a former nanny employer. She provides individual consultations for nannies and families. She can be found on Instagram @thenannydoctor and on Facebook (The Nanny Doctor). Lindsay runs an ongoing virtual nanny support group. DM her for details!





THE MODERN NANNY

Sarah Carlisle Stewart, known as The Modern Nanny, is a Nanny Culture and Career Coach passionate about sharing information and fostering connections in a traditionally coworkerless career. Sarah created The Modern Nanny in 2020, amassing 14.8K followers on Instagram and launched the Biannual Nanny Census Report, a nanny salary and benefits survey, in 2022.

You started the nanny census. What is it, why did you start it and what does it mean to you?

The Biannual Nanny Census Report (BNCR) surveys this vastly unregulated industry on its standards and practices, becoming a useful resource to inform nannies and educate parents on wages, benefits, job satisfaction, and more. I created the BNCR in 2022 to fill the information gap from the pause of the historically used Salary & Benefits surveys provided by the International Nanny Association.

Care.com releases an annual Cost of Care Report surveying 2,000 families that many parents utilize, but reported nanny wages are generally considered low by industry leaders. For this round of the BNCR, we achieved a comparable 2,151 participants. To say I'm blown away is an understatement. Each one of those numbers is a person working hard, showing up, and who deserves accurate information to advocate for themselves in the workplace.

How did you become involved with the nanny industry? What's your story?

I've always been involved in childcare, domestic work, and supporting families in some way or another. I'm an older sister. I've been a babysitter, camp counselor, respite provider, housecleaner, and temporary nanny. Looking back even further into my life story, my grandma was a nanny and I was the little girl who tagged along with their caregiver at work. Nannying is very personal to me, but was never my intended life's pursuit.

I went to college for psychology and became a play-based behavioral therapist. My goal was to earn a doctorate degree and I needed more research experience, so I became a research assistant (that's where my research and reporting comes from!) while also being promoted to a parent consultant position. It was during this season, I felt I was just slightly out of reach of the level of support and care I could provide to families. I felt disillusioned by the bureaucratic systems in both worlds. For many families, I felt like if they just had a person professionally dedicated to supporting that family's unique needs, then... nannying became obvious as a way to do that and utilize my unique, specialized skillset.

How did you go from being a nanny to serving nannies? How did you identify the need and what made you step up to be of service to the community?

I am an Enneagram 3w2 which basically means I'm a high achiever and I like helping others; this proved an unexpected challenge for me when I started working for the busy and overwhelmed high net worth families in the Silicon Valley. Eager to please and quick to overextend, I burnt out and felt incredibly isolated. Setting boundaries when caregiving is deeply tied to your identity. Doing so for me was hard and doing it alone, impossible. In 2020, I started my Instagram as a way to connect with others, coincidentally just when we would need an online community most... and it took off. It proved that I was not alone— and neither is any one of the hundreds of thousands of domestic workers out there.

What are you most proud of in your career thus far?

Just recently I surpassed 14.8K followers on Instagram. I am so incredibly proud. Not because of the number as a vain metric, but



because that's tens of thousands of nannies who are feeling seen, sometimes for the first time ever, in their career. I vividly remember when I surpassed 10K while on an out of state trip with my mom and younger sister. I think crossing state lines tripped something in the algorithm, but that quick uptick in followers made me realize my platform was so much bigger than I could have ever anticipated. I thought I was making traction where I was, but I have so much further to go. When you think about how many states there are, how many counties, cities, neighborhoods, individual homes— nannies are everywhere and this is just the beginning.

What do you hope to bring to the industry and how have you been working towards that?

In this industry, we don't have the traditional coworkers to ask perspective of, vent to, and commiserate with. We have no soundboards. And as coworker and personal friend Amber of the A Nanny's Life podcast coined many moons ago, nannies need nanny friends. In a recent collaboration merch drop, one design that resonates for me is "your friendly neighborhood nanny friend". My hope is to continue to grow to a point that the caregiving coworker is such the culture of the nanny industry that my work actually becomes obsolete.

What do you think is the biggest takeaway from the census each year?

My biggest takeaway from the census is the story it tells of our industry. While it's taken us decades to achieve domestic worker rights and competitive compensation, we've also had some incredible advancements in recent years. Things like contracts, paid time off, and guaranteed hours are becoming more commonplace and that information readily available is power for nannies to advocate for themselves moving forward.

What do you think is the biggest misconception about nannies? How can we change that?

The biggest misconception is that nannying is unskilled or unspecialized work. Our work has a lower barrier to entry which gives this incorrect impression that our work is easy. When people think this, they're often very naive to the amount of work that goes with invisible labor and the soft skills that only come with experience in this field. We have to start making that invisible work visible, talking about the work and the value it brings, and our experiences and expertise as legitimate knowledge.

How can nannies use the census in their careers?

One of the strengths of the domestic work industry is the freedom from stringent rules, labels, and conventions that allow families and providers alike the ability to find the individualized and specific fit for their needs. Unfortunately, this can simultaneously limit the industry with few standardizations for wage increases, industry



standards and benefits— and there are very few locations to access this data to inform compensation decisions or to get an accurate pulse on the profession. With the census, there is real, tangible data to back up one's impressions of the market, negotiations for new jobs, and even compensation adjustments with current roles.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

Some see an agency in the future... That's a maybe. I could also see organizing a sort of nanny retreat, camp, tour, or conference. I really want to scale The Modern Nanny as a childcare journalism media entertainment... like Barstool Sports a la nanny.

And personally, with my supportive husband, to become parents ourselves.

What is the biggest challenge nannies face and how do we solve it?

While the most recent census confirms many nannies are making competitive wages, higher than past averages, it also includes the real words and perspectives of nannies confirming that the marketplace itself is bleak. With the looming childcare crisis, nannies have become a more accessible option than daycare for many, but they are not the more affordable one. I don't believe the answer is dialing back the momentum of wage increases that nannies have gained, but I think nannies need to be a part of the conversation for childcare funding. Because the reason why some parents are resorting to a nanny is because the affordable and accessible childcare option isn't actually affordable and accessible.

What is your best piece of advice for nannies?

Redefine your empathy and your compassion so that it includes yourself. We're givers, compassionate, selfless in many ways... we deserve it reciprocated, in the very least, once in a while.

*If a family
doesn't respect
your need to care
for yourself as a
human being, it's
not an employer
you want.*

*-Sarah Carlisle
Stewart*



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