

July 2018

teach | play | love

# NANNY MAGAZINE



## The Siblings Issue

SUMMER IN YOUR CITY  
BALACING YOUR CAREER  
INTRODUCING NEW SIBLINGS  
MORE THAN NIGHTMARES?

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# Editor's Note

*And so with the  
sunshine and the  
great bursts of  
leaves growing  
on the trees, just  
as things grow  
in fast movies, I  
had that familiar  
conviction that  
life was beginning  
over again with  
the summer.*

*F. Scott Fitzgerald,  
The Great Gatsby*

What is it about summer that makes memories come flooding in? This time of year always takes me back to childhood, when school was out and the days seemed like they'd stretch ahead forever. It always came as such a surprise when late August rolled around with its quickened pace and that rush that comes with back-to-school shopping, the excitement over the endless possibilities of a fresh new Trapper Keeper. My siblings and I would pose for our parents in front of our little house, a shoe size bigger, a nice bronze glow. We held up placards to document what grades we would be starting that morning, heading back to a place that was at once familiar and yet somehow so foreign.

Our own childhoods can be like that as they slip away in the rearview mirror. Thinking back, it's easy to recognize it as distinctly your own, but it grows distant and the essence fades. Those memories I made with my siblings, building our own rickety "carnivals" in the back yard (in case my parents were ever wondering what happened to all our laundry baskets, they became "rides..." sorry), swimming in our pool, watching fireworks from the bed of Dad's truck, driving up to Maine to visit family, drinking Slush Puppies and waiting for the ice cream truck to come by, my sister bringing home stray animals from just about everywhere, the closeness... I miss those things now. In those days all I ever wanted was my own room, away from my younger sister. These days, my siblings and I live several states away and see each other only a few times a year. Isn't it funny how priorities shift?

This issue highlights siblings: what it means to be one, what it means to never be one, how to care for them, and how, in some ways, nannies are a lot like siblings. Also included, we have a special interview with Stephanie Felzenberg, tips for a perfect nature walk this summer, and Iris Gohn dishes about trendy stir-fried ice cream. Mr. Manny Matthew Lister helps us define personal brand, and our kids' health column features tips for keeping the littles safe outdoors this summer. We top it all off with our usual suspects, like our fun-filled data blitz, to make for a perfect poolside read whether you choose the print or online format.

Anyhoo, that's enough for now. Grab your favorite ice cream and pool float and read on for more!

Jennifer Kuhn  
NM's Publisher

# Kids' Health

Dr. Michael Warmoth,  
Pediatrician at Heal



Dear Dr. Warmoth,  
I nanny for three kids under 6, and all of them are significantly engaged in outdoor activities during the summer months. What are the precautions I should take to ensure that everyone has a fun-filled and safe summer? How much fluid intake is appropriate for children? Is it based on age, weight, physical exertion, outdoor temperature?

It is great to hear that you and the kids will be active this summer. Here are some tips:

This article does not constitute medical advice and should not be taken as such. Dr. Warmoth and Nanny Magazine Publication, LLC do not endorse this information as medical advice. Always use your best judgment and refer medical issues to your charge's parents and pediatricians. Always call 911 in an emergency.



Photo via Brianna Smith.

## SUN

If any of the children are younger than six months old, shade is your best option. A sunscreen with a SPF rating of 15 or higher is recommended if some amount of exposure is unavoidable. For kids over six months, a wide-brimmed hat or swim shirt in addition to sunscreen would be helpful. Remember that sunscreen should ideally be applied 20 minutes before sun exposure and reapplied after two hours, or sooner if just getting out of the water. Look for sunscreens with protection against UVA as well as UVB rays.

## HEAT

Common sense is important here. If you check the weather forecast and there is a heat advisory, plan some indoor or shaded activities. You are right about the need for hydration. For the ages you mentioned, water breaks every 20-30 minutes consisting of a couple ounces or more are recommended. Having breaks is crucial for their bodies as well, as it allows them to cool down a little from constant activity.

## WATER

Swimming is one of the best things about summer for kids. For children five and under, recommendations are to have them no more than an arm's-length away. Older children who are good swimmers can have a little more room to swim. Consider life jackets that are USCG-approved for those who are not strong swimmers. Bring some responsible friends if you're outnumbered to help watch the kids if you are heading to the beach. Swim where there are lifeguards (if possible) and obey flag warnings, swimming only on green flag days.

## BITING INSECTS

Mosquitoes and ticks can certainly put a damper on summer fun. For mosquitoes, avoid dawn and dusk outdoor activities, as these tend to be when the pests are most active. Long-sleeved shirts and pants can be your first line of defense. For additional protection, bug spray can be effective. DEET and Picaridin are perhaps the most effective in this regard. If using DEET, I recommend no more than 10% strength and reapplication after two hours. An alternative to these is bug repellents with oil of lemon eucalyptus or 2% soybean oil. If hiking or playing in a known "tick area," be sure the kids are checked before bedtime for any ticks on their skin.

Best of luck making wonderful summer memories with your charges!

Dear Stephanie,

My NannyFamily's neighbor kids don't have a nanny, but one or both of their parents are always home with them. They're roughly the same ages as my charges, so they are often getting together for play dates during the school year. Now that it's summer and school is out, the neighbor kids are over my NannyFamily's house all the time (almost every day, in fact, for several hours at a stretch). I know from some of the online nanny groups I'm part of that I should be asking for additional compensation for this, but the thing is, I actually just don't want to be in charge of these kids. The oldest girl seems to be a bad influence on my 9-year-old charge. Is this something I should address with my employers, or should I mention it directly to the neighbors?

-Not Their Nanny

## Dear Not Their Nanny,

This is a difficult situation because you need to stand up for yourself and the children left in your care, without seeming rude toward the members of the family living next door.

You should talk with your employers and ask them to help you brainstorm for solutions. List the specific issues you are having with the neighbor and how her behaviors are negatively influencing your 9-year-old charge.

Then, I suggest making clear rules that should be expected of all visitors to your NannyFamily's home while you are working. Let the children you care for, and all of their friends, know the behaviors that are expected when they are visiting the NannyFamily's house. For instance, if the neighbor's child is using offensive language, be specific and tell the child that using this language is against the rules.

Tell the neighbor child if she breaks the rules or behaves inappropriately that playtime will be over and the child will be sent home. If you need to send the child home you should tell her parents that she broke the household rules and that is why she needs to go home for the rest of the day.

The key is to be assertive by being kind and respectful while asking for what you need rather than being passive by letting them take advantage of you and your nanny kids any longer. Hopefully by opening up about your concerns, your employers will support you and back you up in enforcing the rules that children must follow while having play dates in their home.

Good luck!

-Stephanie Felzenberg

## Nannies Ask

Stephanie Felzenberg of Be the Best Nanny Newsletter talks rude neighbors in this issue.

# WE LOVE BLUEBERRIES

## AND YOU SHOULD TOO

Mark your calendar with a blueberry muffin. July is blueberry month. Who knew?! That said, here are some of our favorite things about these tiny little blobs of blue goodness.

### *Blueberries for Sal*

This classic children's book about a child, a mother, blueberries, and a bear never goes out of style.

The dusty coating on blueberries helps them stay fresher for longer.

A cup of blueberries contains only 85 calories, making for a nutritious snack that won't wreck your eating plan.

Blueberries prefer to grow in cooler climates. Maine is the #1 producer of blueberries in the world.

Blueberries can survive for up to 60 years given the right conditions. (But that doesn't include your refrigerator...)

Blueberry pancakes. 'Nuff said.

## INTERVIEW

Get to Know Nanny Extraordinaire

# STEPHANIE FELZENBERG

We're interviewing someone very special with this issue of NM: champion of the nannying industry Stephanie Felzenberg. You know her as the mastermind behind *Be the Best Nanny*, a go-to blog and Facebook page for nannies. Find out what this long-time friend of the magazine has to say on where she thinks the profession is heading.

**NANNY MAGAZINE:** *Tell us about the road toward *Be the Best Nanny*. How did you decide to start it? What was your process? What is the history of your project?*

**STEPHANIE FELZENBERG:** I enjoyed graphic design in college. I was the first editor at the university to use desktop publishing to lay out the yearbook personally without sending it to a publishing house. I shared the one Macintosh computer in the journalism lab for all the editors of student-run publications on campus.

I loved working as a nanny and found myself sharing ideas and resources with other nannies and parents in person. I found myself repeating the same information over and over to different people. I decided to use desktop publishing to create a newsletter to share the ideas more efficiently.

There weren't digital publications at that time. Printing and



collating the monthly newsletter was time consuming and expensive.

After many years of only offering a printed monthly publication, I was eventually able to publish a digital version of the newsletter. I created a PDF version that I sent to subscribers via email, which was offered for less money and increased subscrip-

tions substantially.

Several years ago I started sharing some of the articles on the "How to Be the Best Nanny blog." I continue the blog at my leisure. Nannies continue to send me questions to ask anonymously on social media for them.

**NM:** *What inspires you to this day to continue to working on this amazing resource?*

**SF:** When I do a fun science experiment with my nanny kids, learn something new from a childcare expert, find a great recipe that my NannyFamily loves, read an excellent book with the children, or if there is exciting news in the nanny industry, I still enjoy writing and sharing projects on my blog. Although I no longer make money publishing a newsletter, I do still make a little bit of pocket change each month publishing the blog.

**NM:** *What are some of the gaps*



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*you see in available resources for nannies?*

**SF:** More accredited nanny training courses and certification of nannies are needed. Certification and even licensing of nannies would give in-home childcare providers more professional credibility. And of course there is so much fake news online we have to discern if the resources we turn to are trustworthy.

Regulation of nanny agencies and nanny job listing websites would help the nanny industry. A huge problem for parents and nannies is that some of the most important resources we use to find nanny jobs don't all support the profession properly.

For example, there are some individuals that call their business a nanny agency without good knowledge of labor laws. These so-called "nanny agencies" and some nanny job listing websites post jobs that offer less than minimum wage and allow parents to offer jobs that pay cash, as opposed to being tax compliant.

**NM:** *Every day it seems like nannies approach you asking some really complicated, complex questions on your Facebook page. What is it about this field that you think makes it so unique and challenging?*

**SF:** It is very difficult for two parents who have different parenting styles, different hot buttons, and different expectations than their spouse to always agree on how to raise their children. When they hire a nanny there's a third personality

that has been raised by different parents and taught different values and discipline methods added to the mix. Essentially working as a third parent can be a tough job.

I get a lot of questions from nannies that feel they know how to raise the children left in their care better than the parents who hired them. I see a lot of in-home childcare providers struggle with following the parents' directives when they personally would not raise their own children in the same manner. But, even the most educated, experienced and confident nanny must still have humility. Nannies must always keep their attitude in check and support the parents in how they choose to raise their kids.

Due to the informal and casual nature of most nanny jobs, many in-home childcare providers forget that they are employees, not family members. When employees get too comfortable being a friend to their employer, I have seen nannies get their feelings hurt when the family requires them to respect professional boundaries.

A lot of resentment between nannies and parents could be avoided if all parties had properly negotiated job duties, salary, and benefits prior to starting the nanny job. Signing a work agreement with clear job expectations could help much of the acrimony I see expressed by nannies.

Another huge problem is when nannies forget to respect their employer's confidentiality — especially on social media.

**NM:** *What's the one piece of advice you received in life that has stuck with you the most?*

**SF:** A professor told me, "Do what you love and the money will follow."

**NM:** *Have you ever heard from one of your followers whose life your resource has impacted in a positive way?*

**SF:** I felt proudest when Judi Merlin of the nanny placement agency, "A Friend of the Family" in Atlanta, would praise the publication. She was a pioneer in the nanny industry and she helped bring dignity and professional wages to those who provide care for others. I felt it was a great honor that she strongly supported the newsletter and offered a subscription to any nanny that applied with her nanny agency. She begged me to continue publishing the newsletter. Sadly she passed away in February 2018.

Several nannies have personally expressed how difficult it is for them to negotiate their job duties, salary, and benefits of with new employers. They thanked me for making the process easier by using the negotiation chart I created with the help of a teacher's union leader.

Nannies still ask for archived issues and for homework charts, sample contracts, and daily log sheets. I truly appreciate their interest.

**NM:** *Tell us about the changes you've seen in this industry over the past 10, 15, 20 years.*

**SF:** The Internet has changed everything. The ease of using the Internet in nanny job searches can't be overlooked. Job seekers can apply to brick and mortar nanny placement agencies online.

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Caregivers can look for nanny jobs, and parents can look for job candidates, 24/7, wearing their pajamas using nanny websites.

Social media can help inform nannies of training events and provide support for isolated caregivers. Unfortunately, social media also brings its pitfalls of trolls and flammers, which can ruin the experience as well.

Nannypalooza and National Nanny Training Day have been developed since I started working as a nanny. Attending those training opportunities and attending the International Nanny Association conferences provide amazing learning and networking opportunities for nannies.

**NM:** *Do you think nannying is moving in the right direction?*

**SF:** Absolutely. Knowledge is power. With the Internet and social media access, nanny educators and professional nanny organizations can reach more nannies than ever before. Nannies can take college courses, nanny training courses, and newborn care specialist courses online. They can get some certifications online as well. Creative ideas and informative articles are now easier to find, simply using a smartphone or laptop. When used properly, the Internet allows us quick access to so many opportunities we didn't have 20 years ago.

**NM:** *What's next for BTBN?*

**SF:** I only publish a blog now but will continue to write articles for other publications and nanny blogs when asked.

**NM:** *From time to time we see*

*nasty comments pop up in nanny groups and pages on social media. What's your one piece of advice for someone who perpetuates this culture of cruelty?*

**SF:** How you act on social media shows your friends, family, and potential employers your true nature. When you are mean on social media, you are mean.

**NM:** *Tell us about yourself outside of BTBN.*

**SF:** I have worked as a nanny for 25 years. I have been at my current job for almost 11 years. I adopted a cat and live a mile from my job. I enjoy dating a man I actually met at work a few years ago. I'm lucky it is just a short drive to see my immediate family.

**NM:** *Why nannying?*

**SF:** As Harvey MacKay said, "Find something you love to do, and you'll never work a day in your life."

I love working as a nanny because my office is the kitchen, playroom, beach, pool, and playground. I love a newborn's innocence, vulnerability, and sweetness. I love the way their fingers and toes curl around my fingers. There is no better feeling than hugging and rocking a warm infant who is full of love. I love a toddler's wide-eyed curiosity to learn. I love when they mispronounce words and common phrases, that they celebrate every milestone with enthusiasm, and just praising them makes them feel so good about themselves. I enjoy seeing children mature and develop different interests as they grow older. I am beyond thrilled and proud of my

eldest current nanny kid, who just graduated high school and will start college this fall.

For me, there is simply nothing better than knowing I am making a positive influence in the lives of the children in my care.

**NM:** *What's your educational background?*

**SF:** I have a bachelor's degree in psychology from Rider University, and am a graduate of Newborn Care Solutions. I'm also CPR and First Aid certified.

**NM:** *Where will you be in 10 years?*

**SF:** In 10 years, I'll be working as a nanny and always continuing my education. For example, in the short-term I would love to take cooking classes, have doula training, and earn a Child Passenger Safety Technician certification. There is always more to learn.

**NM:** *What's your favorite kid-friendly joke?*

**SF:** I don't deliver jokes well so I find myself constantly telling the kids:

"Knock, Knock"

"Who's there?"

"Freddy."

"Freddy who?"

"Freddy or not, here I come!"

**NM thanks Stephanie for her dedication to the nanny industry, and for her time during this interview. You can keep up to speed with her work online via her Be the Best Nanny Facebook page.**

Siblings spend more time with one another than they do with anyone else! A study by Pennsylvania State University found that by the age of 11, siblings spend an average of 33% of their time together; that is more than they spend with friends, parents, teachers, or even by themselves! [cafemom.com](http://cafemom.com)

Bring out the fly swatters! Mosquitoes are most prevalent during summer months. Did you know mosquitoes have been on earth for more than 30 million years? [blog.vitalchek.com](http://blog.vitalchek.com)

Vacation time! In the U.S., the top five summer vacation destinations are: 1. Beach (45%), 2. A famous city (42%), 3. National Parks (21%), 4. A lake (17%), 5. A resort (14%). [factretriever.com](http://factretriever.com)

The summer heat causes the iron in France's Eiffel Tower to expand, causing the tower to grow more than 6 inches. [factretriever.com](http://factretriever.com)

The oldest public school in the U.S. is Boston's Latin School, which was founded in 1635. Some of its famous students include: Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, and Samuel Adams! [surfnetskids.com](http://surfnetskids.com)

It's not all in your head! Parents will deny they have a 'favorite' child, but research from the University of California says otherwise! 65% of mothers and 70% of fathers prefer one sibling over another. [msn.com](http://msn.com)

Back to school time! There are approximately 480,000 school buses on the road when school is in session, carrying 25 million children, making the school bus industry the largest form of mass transit in the U.S.! [americanschoolbuscouncil.org](http://americanschoolbuscouncil.org)

# DATA BLITZ

## SUMMER 2018

BY JILL CIGANEK

Photo via Unsplash.



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# NANNY MAGAZINE

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# Summer IN THE CITY 2018

By Jill Ciganek

Summer is here, nannies, and you know what that means? No school and family vacations! The days will be longer and full of sunshine and we'll all be looking for things to do with our charges, whether we're staying local or traveling. Good news! We've rounded up a selection of activities in cities from coast to coast across the US, so whether you're working in one of these locations or traveling with your NannyFamily, we've got you covered with plans that are sure to keep your charges entertained.



## WASHINGTON, DC

Our nation's capital is surprisingly child-friendly. DC is home to 17 Smithsonian museums and the National Zoo, which are not only educational and fun, but FREE. Score! For older children, a walk through the National Mall is a must where they can see monuments and landmarks they've only read about in History class, like the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials, as well as the Washington Monument. A visit to the White House is a great photo op too (and it always look smaller in person than you imagined!). Other fun ideas include paddle-boarding in the Tidal Basin or seeing how money is printed at the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing.

## BOSTON

If you're working or traveling around Boston this summer one thing you're sure to get a healthy dose of is history. With Boston's rich colonial history comes a host of educational and fun activities that let you and your charges step back in time. Check out the Freedom Trail, a 2.5-mile brick route that leads to 16 different historical sites throughout the city, like Faneuil Hall, the Paul Revere House, the USS Constitution, and so much more. Nearby Harvard University has a host of museums of all kinds as well if you want to continue the learning. Boston also has its own great Children's Museum. If you and your charges are more into wildlife, Boston is home to the Franklin Park Zoo and the New England Aquarium. And of course, for sports fans, any time of year is a great time to check out a Red Sox game at historic Fenway Park!

## NEW YORK CITY

If you're headed to NYC this summer, you will not want for things to do. You'd need weeks to experience everything the city has to offer, but make sure to hit some of the biggest attractions and landmarks while you're there. Your charges will never forget seeing the Statue of Liberty in person or standing atop the Empire State Building! New York is of course loaded with museums of every kind as well. Whether your charges are into art, history, science or anything else – there's a museum for that! NYC has got its shares of zoos as well. Check out the zoos in the Bronx, Queens, or the Central Park Zoo. You could spend hours playing, biking or having a picnic in Central Park, NYC's iconic green space. A subway or ferry ride would be fun for your charges, especially if they've never experienced public transport. A stroll through Times Square is sure to amaze children of all ages – there's so much to look at it! And, if your charges are being extra well behaved, why not treat them to a little something from famed Dylan's Candy Bar? Lastly, you probably don't think 'beach' when it comes to NYC, but many of the boroughs do have beaches with access to the Atlantic! They'll be crowded this time of year, but a trip to one like Coney Island and its accompanying boardwalk may be worth the trip. The possibilities in the city are endless but the big attractions will surely give your charges something to talk about when they head back to school.

A photograph of a roller coaster car on a track, set against a clear blue sky. The car is yellow and purple, with the number '14' and 'TEARS' visible on its side. The track is made of metal and curves upwards. The text 'East Coast' is written in a white, cursive font across the middle of the image.

East Coast

## Southeast

### ATLANTA

Heading to Hotlanta this summer? A perfect and fun spot to cool off with your charges are the fountains at Centennial Olympic Park, a site commemorating the 1996 Olympic games in the city. Zoo Atlanta is huge and home to over 1,000 animals, and the Georgia Aquarium is one of the world's largest. The Coca-Cola factory can get crowded at peak times, but it's a neat tour for older children and fun to sample Coke products from around the world. The city also has a great children's museum and is home to Legoland Discovery Center. Atlanta is an outdoorsy city with child-friendly attractions like Stone Mountain, the Botanical Gardens, and the Chattahoochee Nature Center. There are playgrounds and parks nearly everywhere if you're looking for free outdoor spaces for your charges to run off their energy, including iconic Piedmont Park downtown.

## Midwest

### CHICAGO

Ahh the Windy City. It's quite lovely in the summer. Chicago has a great mix of educational and entertainment options for children; its home to many world renowned museums of all types, like the Museum of Science and Industry, the largest science museum in the Western Hemisphere. Chicago also has its own aquarium and planetarium, while also being home to two separate zoos. If you and the (older) children are in for a little risk-taking (totally safe!) and aren't afraid of heights, check out Willis Tower Skydeck, where you can walk onto glass boxes seated 1,000 feet above the city! Other attractions not to miss include: a photo with 'The Bean' in Millennium Park, strolling along the Riverwalk, and riding the 200-foot Ferris wheel at Navy Pier.

## Southwest

### AUSTIN

You're headed out West, partner? Austin is almost sandwiched smack dab in the middle of some of Texas' biggest cities – namely Dallas, Houston and San Antonio – and they each offer unique attractions of their own. Austin itself offers its own zoo and aquarium, and for the more adventurous animal lovers out there, the Austin Bat Cave. Now there's something you don't encounter every day! For more outdoor fun, Austin has several farms open for touring and berry picking in the summer, and water parks for when your charges are ready to cool off. Just over an hour outside Austin, you'll hit San Antonio, where you can tour the historic Alamo, stroll along the Riverwalk, or maybe even book a ghost tour (if you and your charges dare!). If you're headed to Dallas, experience Texas history in Heritage Village, let your charges burn off steam in Klyde Warren Park, or climb the high ropes in Trinity Forest Adventure Park. Dallas also has its own aquarium and zoo. And if you're traveling to Houston while in the Lone Star state, the Space Center is sure to be a hit. Houston also has a children's museum, a butterfly center, and if you're really looking to beat the summer heat, you can try ice skating inside Houston's Galleria Mall!

## West

### DENVER

Colorado is known to be an outdoor lover's dream, so there's plenty of parks and hiking for your charges to enjoy (don't miss Red Rocks Amphitheatre), but there's much more. Dinosaur Ridge is sure to delight your little scientists, and there are also several museums in the area, including the Art museum, Children's museum, and Museum of Nature and Science. Denver has got its own zoo, aquarium, and Wild Animal Sanctuary. And here's a little bit of trivia to throw down at lunchtime: did you know the original Chipotle is located near the University of Denver? Wild! A photo there is sure to land tons of Instagram likes!



# West Coast

## PORTLAND & SEATTLE

If you're spending the summer in Portland, a stop at one of Washington Park's many attractions is a must with children. This area is home to the Oregon Zoo, Portland Children's Museum, an arboretum, a massive playground, and so much more. If you and your charges are in the mood for fun and games, visit Oaks Amusement Park, one of the oldest continuously operating amusement parks in the country. For something a bit out of the ordinary, why not ride the Portland Aerial Tram and experience the city from above? And if you and your charges are in the mood for a sugary treat, a stop at the infamous Voodoo Doughnut shop will surely rank you as World's Best Nanny for the day!

If you're headed even further north to Seattle, there's quite a lot to do there as well. It's summer so head to the beach... really! Green Lake Beach boasts the warmest water in the city during the summer. Score! Or cool off in the fountains at Seattle Center. If your charges are into transportation, take them for a ride on the Monorail and see the city from above. A walk through Pike Place Market offers all kinds of sights and shops. Your charges will also love the aquarium and the science center, while a ride on the giant Seattle Ferris Wheel on Pier 57 will surely be a big hit.

## SAN FRANCISCO

If you're going to SF, you've should go for a ride on the cable cars! There's also a free museum dedicated to their history. Pier 39 in Fisherman's Wharf has some great child-friendly attractions, including the Aquarium of the Bay, a carousel, sea lion watching, and a mirror maze. The Exploratorium is a mega art and science museum with over 500 exhibits sure to wow your charges (how about a sculpture made from 100,000 toothpicks!). The Bay Area Discovery Museum and Children's Creativity Museum are other notable stops for education and hands-on learning. If you and your charges are up for some exercise, why not walk a portion of the Golden Gate Bridge or hike through the giant redwoods in Muir Woods National Park. And of course, it's summer, so check out Ocean Beach! The wide expanse of sandy beach here is perfect for children. SF is also home to Ghiradelli chocolates, if you're feeling the need to indulge your sweet tooth. Just make sure you and your charges pack comfy walking shoes as the city is very hilly, especially if you're planning to walk the infamous zigzagged Lombard Street!

## LOS ANGELES

If you're vacationing in LA with children, chances are you'll be visiting Disneyland, but there's plenty more to do in town. Griffith Park houses many child-friendly attractions including the LA Zoo & Botanical Gardens and Griffith Observatory. Your charges can also ride the historic merry-go-round, or one of three trains in the park. Bigger children, or nannies, may want to hike to the Hollywood sign from here (photo op!), while the La Brea Tar Pits & Museum will excite little archaeologists in your group. The Aquarium of the Pacific houses over 11,000 animals, and LA also has its own zoo. For book lovers, check out the LA Public Library and The Last Bookstore. If you're feeling super touristy and want to brave throngs of summer crowds when you're out on your own, the Hollywood Walk of Fame and a visit to the Santa Monica Pier will probably top out your list. And maybe a walk down Rodeo Drive if you're looking to do some window shopping, or if you feel like channeling Julia Roberts!

And there you have it! From sea-to-shining sea, some of our nation's biggest cities and travel destinations are loaded with child-friendly sites! Excited for summer vacation yet, Nannies? We are! Safe travels!



# MR. MANNY

## DEFINING YOUR PERSONAL BRAND

By Matthew Lister

When you look at the brand of products in a store, you think “quality and trusted” or “not quality, and not trusted.” You think “buy or not buy.” A brand is a design, name, or other feature that will distinguish a product, company, or organization from all rivals in the eyes of the consumer. As nannies, we have to create a personal brand to make ourselves marketable, giving us the greatest employment opportunities in our field.

A personal brand is who you are and is what you are recognized for. It not only defines you as a nanny but makes you distinguished from all other nannies. It is a term, phrase, or few sentences that define you and your nanny career. A personal brand should be as specific as possible to ensure the consumer has the best opportunity to know you before initiating the contact.

“I am a special needs nanny with an education and focus on families of children with ASD,

ADHD, ODD, and/or problem behaviors. I help parents to address specific goals (problem behaviors, aggression, toileting, etc.) and work either short term or long term contracts. I’m here for the child and family as a whole.”

This is my personal brand and how I define it. Note how detailed and specific it is. That is what I have the education, training, and experience in, and what I am known for (well, that and my experience in toilet training). A consumer who reads that brand description will know immediately whether they could use my services or not.

Some have personal brands as a postpartum doula, sleep specialist, lactation specialist, and some as working with two household families (such as divorced parents). Others are special needs nannies, hotel nannies, and military family nannies. There are so many different personal brands, but surprisingly still very few have created their own personal brand.

Having a personal brand allows you credibility, name recognition, greater opportunities, and can even provide financial benefits. Having a personal brand allows you to become known for your expertise and understanding, allowing you to stand out when interviewing for a position. Being personally branded also allows you to find a better fit when seeking nanny positions because it allows you to have better control over your own career and destiny.

Think about those who have personal brands: Andrew and Mary from Sensory Swim, Jo Frost aka Supernanny, the nannies from Nanny 911, Rachel Ray, The Baby Guy, and so many more—what do they all have in common besides name recognition? They have a backstory (essentially a short narrative about who they are and what they specialize in) and they have a clean reputation that has a focus in their fields of cooking, child care or child gear. They have

been careful to carefully sculpt and protect their personal brand.

Marketing our personal branded self requires time and effort, and sometimes even money. It's about name recognition and credibility. Money is necessary to register for the continued education and career development courses, and money to get the word out via child care websites and other marketing tools. Time, education, and sometimes money are the key ingredients. It is also vital to become a part of the community in which you serve. If you are an infant sleep specialist, then it is vital to become a part of the infant care community. Special needs nannies (such as myself) need to remain involved in the special needs (or in my specialty) autism spectrum communities. It is vital to be in and help the community in which we serve.

Associate yourself with others who already have strong brands, but that does not necessarily mean other nannies- it could be national or international childcare professionals, educators, or those who you can learn from and can offer you great referrals through.

With personal branding, you have to be careful in what you put out there online: no using foul language or having arguments on your social media accounts. Things written online never disappear. Do not post photos of your charges (most parents do not appreciate that) nor post photos of yourself partying or engaging in adult activities. Remember, you are branding yourself as a professional in child care. What you do and who you do it with is vital to personal branding and can either make or break your branded career.

Personal brands are fragile. Find your niche so you are able to build and protect yours today!



Photos via Unsplash.

# Only Children: Being One, Nannying for One

BY JAMIE CHILTON AND SARAH ELAINE KENNEDY



*Being an only child comes with its own set of unique challenges and opportunities that children with siblings—and their caregivers—don't experience. Among the differences, a lack of a built-in playmate and future partner in family matters related to aging parents fill the top tier of concerns. It's no secret that what it takes to be an only child and raise an only child requires a special approach to relationship building and fostering development. Explore two perspectives from two nannies who both are only children themselves, and now use their first-hand appreciation of singleton status in their approach to raising their sole charges.*



## JAMIE CHILTON

Growing up as an only child had some major perks and some minor disadvantages. Yes, I had all of the attention, but I did miss having siblings around who would cater to my childlike whims more so than an adult could.

Being a nanny for an only child is a major responsibility but also a major honor. I know he will undoubtedly go through those same feelings and that's why I am here; to provide guidance so that he can grow up into a confident and brave human being, while navigating his way through life knowing how to be independent.

An only child can feel lonely at times and boredom often strikes. An active adult presence can help relieve those feelings and that is why I feel my job as his or her nanny is so very important. I am responsible for teaching him independence, but I am also here to help him figure out how to use their creativity. I am here to help encourage him how to ask others to play, as social interaction is important for only children.

My wish for him is that when he is older, he will look back fondly at his days of being an only child and realize that he grew in immense ways that can only help further his future. He will grow into a strong and successful person and I am truly flattered that I was chosen to be a part of his life.



## SARAH ELAINE KENNEDY

"So, how many siblings did you have growing up?"

"None! I am an only child."

As a nanny I answer this question at least once a week; it seems that people assume that because I am a childcare worker, I must have taken care of many younger siblings, when in fact I simply did a lot of babysitting as a teen.

Only children have different relationships with the adults and other children in their lives than many of their peers. They spend more time being the center of attention with the adults in their life and sometimes don't know the social rules of being with other children.

It is very important as a nanny for an only child to find opportunities for their charge to play with children their own age outside of school. Nannies of only children can explore allowing their charges to gain more socialization through extracurricular activities, playdates, or simply through unstructured play at the local park. This allows only children to see that there are social rules when playing with children, allowing them to learn how to take turns, share toys, and explore new ideas. This type of socialization also allows them to be a follower instead of a leader, the default role singletons often find themselves in simply by virtue of there not being anyone else there age nearby.

As a nanny to an only child, I find that they may too be bossy and demanding that it is their way or no way, especially when playing. It is your job as a nanny to remind them gently that it's okay to feel frustrated when things do not go their way, but it's also important they realize they can't control everything. Remain calm and allow them to express how they are feeling. They will eventually allow you to join in their games and you'll be surprised at how much they want to include you and share with you while playing.

# Nannying: The Art of Balance

By Nicola Manton

I started nannying because I'm naturally drawn to caring for little ones. I have never not been around small children, never not been changing diapers, or playing with and loving other people's children. My mom ran a day care from our family home, and with three siblings our house was always full to the brim with children. It was a natural choice for me to go into psychology at school and graduate with my bachelor's degree in psychology in education followed by gaining a master's in school counseling. As much as I loved being in schools in a teaching capacity and considered getting my license as a school counselor, there was never anything that appealed more to me than working one on one with a family; helping them learn how to navigate the somewhat tumultuous task of raising children.

When you're working in a school, you have clear boundaries of where your role as a teacher begins and ends, and where the parents and family step in. You can develop strong relationships with the children in this capacity of course, and this career path comes with its own stresses and responsibilities. However, it could never prepare you for going into a family's home and becoming immersed in their particular set of joys and challenges.



Just as consistency and routine are essential to children's development and daily happiness, I crave structure and routine in my job, and generally nannying gives me that. It can be a struggle to find that line between where my job ends and the parents take over. I've been lucky enough to work with families who respect my work and see that I am effective in how I discipline, play, engage, and facilitate their children's development. However, it can be a struggle sometimes to manage the feelings that come with these responsibilities. A lot of the time, as nannies, we run the family home as well as caring for the children; we buy the groceries, stock the pantry, set the schedules, communicate with teachers, book and attend doctors visits, and more. This is on top of the typical duties of facilitating development, maintaining a safe learning environment and generally ensuring the children are healthy and well cared for.

Over the years I've learned that it is important to take the time to take care of yourself, to take a step back and realize that no matter how much you love and care for this family and in particular the children, you can't invest all that you have into their needs alone. Yes, put your best into your role, and love those tiny humans with all your heart, but save a little for you too! Here are some tips to get you started in finding yourself again; to refocus on yourself and your needs:

- Plan to meet friends and family on your days off. Get out and do something not related to children with the adults in your life.
- Go on a trip. I find that even a night away from the mundane can really help to refocus and recharge my body and mind. Keep it simple, but go!
- Use your vacation time! This is a must. It's easy to get so invested in your NannyFamily that you can't bear the thought of leaving them to handle everything for a week without you. No matter how much nanny guilt you might feel, book that vacation! Give the family a good amount of notice to arrange cover and organize the time, but know that you are entitled to your vacation time as much as anyone (maybe more), and you need it in order to continue being your best nanny self.
- Meditate, exercise, read a book... Find something that is just for you that helps you to relax and recenter your thoughts. For me it's hitting the gym after work. I find that by doing this for myself a few times a week (okay, so I don't always make it that often), I'm able to remind myself that I'm important too; my health and wellbeing are made a priority and I'm so much better for it.
- Remind yourself that it's not all on you. One of my biggest flaws as a nanny is that I completely take over responsibility. If an issue comes up within the family unit (even if it's when I'm not on duty), I feel compelled to "fix" it. I put it all on my shoulders and I'm having to learn (slowly but surely) that I am not the only adult in the home; it's not even my home! I have to remind myself that it's ok to let the parents deal with certain things. I can offer my advice and share my experience, but they are the parents and need to also take on the responsibilities that shouldn't all fall on me.
- Communicate. Let your bosses know if you're feeling overwhelmed or if an issue comes up that you feel doesn't fall under your umbrella of responsibility. We are human, and raising children is not an easy job. Sharing your concerns with your bosses can help lift some of the burden and show you that you have more support than you may have thought.

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# Preparing a Firstborn for a New Sibling



BY CHELSEY BAHE PHOTO BY LORI KOBLANSKI

For a child who is about to become a big brother or big sister for the first time, this happy occasion can also come with challenges. Whether the family is growing through birth or through adoption, there are several ways a nanny can help prepare a singleton charge for the changes ahead.



Not sure where to start? Books are a great first step in helping the child explore what it means to have a younger sibling. The library is one resource for finding age-appropriate books that deal with new babies, families, and the adoption process. Reading stories is a simple way to start a conversation about what is soon to come. If the child has questions about the baby, Mom's pregnancy, or adoption, it is best to be honest, but keep explanations simple. Of course, a nanny should always check with the child's parents regarding how to word things.

A firstborn child may go through a wide range of emotions upon learning that a new sibling is on the way. The child may grieve the loss of their only-child status, and should be encouraged to express all of their feelings in a healthy manner. Sad or angry emotions should be honored,

just as happy and excited feelings would be. Nannies should meet their charge's worries with empathy. If the nanny cared for the child as an infant, showing pictures and sharing stories about what it was like to care for them as a baby can help the child relate to their new family member.

For a kid who lacks experience with babies, it can be helpful to visit other nanny friends who care for infants. This will give the child an idea of what to expect when their younger sibling arrives. It can come as a surprise that new babies sometimes cry and usually sleep a lot. They don't come out ready to play in the way that an older sibling may hope. By spending time with other little babies, the future big brother or big sister can start learning the ways in which they can interact with a new baby.

A preschool-aged child may benefit from having a special baby doll to play with. The child can play at holding, burping, changing, and caring for the doll. Play is the way that kids of all ages make sense of their world, so ensuring they have a plenty of opportunities to process through play is important.

Every child will go through some kind of transition period as they adjust to this major life change. Remind them that they still have an important role in the family, and reassure them that they'll always be loved. Talk about the ways in which things are different, but also point out the ways in which they are the same. Patience, understanding, and open communication between the child, the parents, and the nanny will help make the adjustment easier for everyone.

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# SIBLING RIVALRY:

## A Tale as Old as Time

BY NICOLE PANTELEAKOS

Sibling rivalry is a theme as old as... well... siblings! From Cain and Abel to King Lear's three daughters to the half-dozen K-name Kardashians, history is full of tales of brothers and sisters fighting for attention, fighting for dominance, and just plain fighting. As most nannies of siblings can attest, this is true of today's kids, too.

MRI scans have shown that sibling squabbles start as early as in the womb, and they often continue up through childhood and the teen years, much to the chagrin of many a parent and caregiver who often hope that having more than one child means built-in forever friends, not foes. This can pose particular challenges for nannies, but do not despair, there are a number of ways to avoid long summer days spent saying things like, "Stop hitting your brother with that stick!" and "Yes, your rendition of Chopsticks is just as good as your sister's."

Whether the children are identical twins or born a decade apart, one key way to avoid falling into the trap of rivalry is to give each child individual attention. Says Krickett Reynolds, a mother of two from Attawaugan, CT, "Make sure you plan out time for each child. Never compare one to another and never take one side over the other."

This is expert advice. When I was a young nanny of three little ones, ages 2, 4, and 6, I used to set aside certain times each day during which I'd play one on one with each child. Later during the day we'd all play together, with one child in charge of choosing the activity (taking turns). This meant, if my girl charge (6) wanted to play with dolls as a group for thirty minutes, that's what we would do, then if she wanted to play a board game during her solo time with me, we would also do that for half an hour. An added benefit of

this was that the other children then have that same amount of time during which they need to entertain themselves, which is also developmentally important. (Note, if the other children are too young for time alone, this is best scheduled during a regular nap or when they're out of the home with a parent.)

When fights inevitably break out, no matter the cause, listen objectively and be fair in your response. If the battle between two little ones is who will push the button on the elevator (something I've dealt with on numerous occasions with more than one New York City family), take turns or perhaps even create a standing rule: "When we go down, your brother always pushes the button. When we go up, your sister always pushes the button." As long as there is consistency, the children will learn and accept this, and you'll save everyone tears and headaches.



Photo via Pexels

Older children tend to have quite different battles, ones in which a solution is harder to come by. For example, fights over friends may erupt. Sometimes a neighborhood playmate will gravitate toward one of your charges or the other, and they will need help to play as a trio so that everyone is included. This is where talks about empathy and being a true friend may come into play.

Sometimes fights erupt between siblings with a bigger age difference. These are often the result of disproportionate attention. For instance, your twelve-year-old charge may be less needy than the two-year-old, thus she or he may feel lost or ignored. Find time to do more grown-up activities with the older child, and, if possible, create special privileges to help celebrate the fact that she or he is more mature rather than letting the older child feel passed over or burdened

by the younger one. Also, be sure to teach the little one to respect the space, possessions, and privacy of the elder. For example, sometimes you have to say, “No, you may not use her markers, they are for middle schoolers,” instead of, “Oh, can’t you just let him scribble with your markers?” While the older child should be expected to be more mature and understanding, it is also unfair to require him or her to regularly acquiesce to the younger one simply to stave off a toddler tantrum.

While it is key to never pit children against each other, healthy competition is fine. All kids need to learn to be good winners and good losers. One way to do this is to play a board game as a group. Everyone should congratulate the winner at the end, but not be unkind to the losers. But ultimately, the greatest way to avoid falling into the trap

of sibling rivalry is to highlight each child’s individual talents, while not placing one child’s talents above another’s. For example, if your older charge is an excellent bowler and your younger paints like Picasso, it’s important to recognize that these are both worthy of praise rather than dismissing one as less deserving of appreciation than the other.

Let children stand out as individuals and give them one-on-one attention, but also set aside time in which they can interact together as a group, both with and without you at the helm. Take care to never let one charge feel as though you care more about the welfare of the other. Siblings can be each other’s best friends, and you can help foster those friendships from babyhood through the teenage years, setting them up for a lifetime of having someone to lean on.

*SENSATIONAL SUMMER WRITING TIPS:*

# Keeping Kids Writing Through the Summer

BY SARAH ELAINE KENNEDY

It is quite possible when summer rolls around that writing assignments are one of the furthest things from children's minds. The summer is meant for playing outside, hitting the pools, going camping, exploring the nearest park, and play dates. While that is very true, it is also very important to keep those writing skills honed and sharp over the summer months. Here are some tips to keep those skills sharp for when school starts without missing out on summer fun and without making it a chore.



## Daily Journaling

Journaling is a great activity for kids of any age. Starting a daily (or maybe weekly) journal is a great way for children to document their summer through their own eyes. For some children, this will be very easy, and they will be able to just write about their days, while other children may need a little bit more help. A very simple format would be to have the child write about three things they enjoyed about the day and one thing they are looking forward to tomorrow.

For younger children, you can start this process by making a simple list of things they did throughout the day and they can add a drawing of their day. For older children, you can ask them to write a certain amount for each item and they can add photos or drawings of their day as well.

At the end of the summer, it's a great way to look back on everything they've done and a wonderful memento for parents or children themselves to look back on.

## Summer Storytelling

Summer allows children to have a little more freedom to let their imagination run wild and this is a great thing to capture and have children write down. They may have spent their day fighting the mud monster at the park or fleeing from dragons in the backyard.

When you see creative play that the child is involved in, jot it down on a piece of paper for them and when you have time (maybe a quiet afternoon or a rainy day) sit down together and have them pick one of their ideas from a jar and have them flesh it out in a story.

The younger the child, the more involved you may need to be, but for older children, this is a perfect time to let their imagination flow onto the paper. It could even work as a group storytelling process where all the children and yourself add to the storyline. You'll be amazed how much insight they already have into their story's world and you might even see their creative play grow too.

## Spelling on the Go

Another fun way to help build vocabulary and help children learn and spell new words is to play spelling games on the go. When you're on a walk or maybe out in the car, have children spell out what they are seeing (dog, tree, house for younger children, or highway, hospital, or playground for older children).

On the flip side, play a version of "I spy" by spelling out words and have children try and figure out what you are looking at. Say, "Hey, I see a yellow t-a-x-i." and see if they can figure out what you are looking for. While this isn't writing per se, it helps children think on their feet as well as increases their knowledge of what letters spell out what word; this can be a lot more fun to a child than doing lists of spelling words to keep their spelling sharp.

# Outdoor Exploration

Summer is all about exploring new things or old favorite spots, so on one of your adventures somewhere out in nature, pack some pencils and some paper. Find a comfortable spot and give each child the task of describing what they are experiencing right here in this spot. Encourage them to use new words and lots of adjectives.

A child might say, "The tree is big and the leaves are green." You may want to encourage synonyms for those words such as, "The tree was enormous and the leaves were emerald."

Encourage children of all ages to use their senses to describe what is around them (i.e., what they see, what hear, smell, and feel). However, maybe try encouraging them to save using what do they taste for describing their snack.

***Keeping up with writing throughout the summer can seem like a momentous task for the caregiver and the child but finding a way to do these activities can help encourage creativity, literacy, and good writing habits. And if all else fails, try doing the writing activities outside, because everything is more entertaining while sitting in the shade of a humongous tree.***



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# TAKE A HIKE

*or*

*a*

# *Nature Walk*

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY  
CHELSEY BAHE



*The benefits of spending time in nature are numerous. A nature walk is a simple way to get kids outdoors. Here are 8 tips for getting started.*

## BE PREPARED

Pack a backpack with plenty of snacks, water, sunscreen, bug spray, a small first aid kit, diapers, and wipes. Don't forget a carrier for babies or new walkers.

## LET THE CHILDREN TAKE THE LEAD

Kids are more excited about being outside when they get to make decisions about which way to go. Ensure that the route is safe and allow your charge to choose where the path leads.

## HAVE A GENERAL PLAN

But also be willing to go with the flow. Avoid setting expectations about time (such as "we must walk for an hour!") or distance.

## STOP AND SMELL THE ROSES

Or watch the worms. Or talk to the toads. Let the children observe and explore the things that catch their eye.

## PLAN AN ACTIVITY

Scavenger hunts or a camera can be fun for older or reluctant nature walkers. A "Let's see who can find the coolest thing" game can be fun. Everyone can find something cool, whether it's just a stick, or a rock.

## LEAVE NO TRACE

Strive to leave no trace (such as damaged plants or disturbed habitats), but realize that young children are curious. Model respectful interactions with the environment, and always take your trash with you.

## TICK CHECK

Do a tick check after each excursion in the woods, especially if you live in an area of the United States where Lyme disease is prevalent. Check hair, armpits, and even under sleeves.

## BE AMAZED

Bring your own sense of wonder, and try to see the world through the eyes of a child. From fireflies to flowers, everything can be magical with the right attitude.



# Collective Wisdom

We posted a question on our Facebook page, asking nannies to share their best expert advice on how to curb sibling rivalry. Find out what tips and tricks your peers swear by!

"I work a lot with younger children, and I have found that you can work on prevention of future sibling rivalry when they are still very little. I have toddlers and preschool-aged children draw pictures, make special cards, or write stories to encourage their brother or sister. It is so much easier when they are little to get siblings to appreciate one another as part of the same team, not as isolated parts."

-Eli Bell, Albuquerque, NM  
12 years as a nanny

"I'm the middle child of three girls and I can tell you, one-on-one time is key to curbing sibling rivalry. Every child wants to feel like they have their moment to shine and have their parents' attention. Make it a point to find something the child is really into and take them to do it with them sans siblings. Time is precious and they will thrive knowing you gave it to them. It will help the sibling relationship tremendously when they don't feel the need to compete all the time!"

-Valerie Weddle from Dayton, OH  
10 years as a nanny

"The method I like best is to address the rivalry as an argument occurs. Most of the time each sibling simply wants to be heard, so I let them speak their mind to each other in a calm manner and ask each to consider the other person's standpoint. The goal here is not to simply stop the fight, but to try to create an atmosphere of respect and love amongst siblings. Throughout the days and weeks, I try to encourage each one on an individual basis to love the other more deeply that day. Learning to love each other and focus on the betterment of the other is the answer to all sibling rivalries in my opinion!"

-Ashley Miller from Knoxville, TN  
7 years as a nanny

"Take a moment to teach the children how to empathize. Talk to them and then ask them to vocalize ways they can lift each other up, rather than tear each other down. Teach them that siblings share a special bond and are a constant in each other's lives."

-Chez Arruti Werner,  
Albuquerque, NM  
15 years as a nanny



*Is it Just a  
Night Fright  
or Something  
More?* By Lynn Poulos

Photo via Unsplash.

We went years without sleeping through the night. I'd hear the creak of my bedroom door opening and I knew what was coming. My adorable 7, 8, and then 9-year-old son (yes, it went on for years) would be at my bedside sobbing. "Mommy," he'd cry in between gasps for breath, tears streaming down his face while wiping his nose with his pajama sleeve, "I can't sleep. There are (gasp) scary people (gasp) in my room." Time after time, I responded the exact same way. "Oh honey, you're having a bad dream. It's just a night fright. Let me lie down with you."

And so, the bed hopping began for the night. He would come to my room, I would usher him back to his room, lie down with him until he fell asleep, and then stumble back to my bed. I hesitated to glance at the clock. Exhausting. Then there were the nights that he refused to go back to his bed. "I hate my room! I'm not going in there! There are scary people in my room!" "Oh honey, it will be fine," I would assure him. Many nights I was so tired that I'd just let him sleep in my bed. Some nights, I was so tired and knew I had a busy workday ahead that I just didn't care where I slept, as long as I slept.

I called the pediatrician. "My son has night frights," I'd share. I was told that it is very common, there really is nothing to do, they will pass, and he will outgrow them. Well, when? The frequency and intensity of my son's night terrors were troubling, and I learned from his dad that he experienced them at his house as well. An occasional bad dream I understood, but we had moved well beyond that.

What to do? I began with adhering to a healthy bedtime routine. I made sure he didn't have access to anything scary on TV, and, as much as possible, that all the stories and books he read had nothing to do with scary monsters. He had a regular bath time,

reading time, period for settling down. His room was uncluttered and was painted a soothing blue. He had his favorite stuffed animals and night light. He knew his older brother was in the room next door and that I was down the hall.

One night was particularly upsetting. He dragged his pillow and comforter off his bed into the hallway, and was curled in a ball screaming and sobbing, "Please make them go away! They're scary and ugly!" I was at a complete loss and began to worry about his mental health. On that particular night, I had him come into my room to calm down. As he settled onto his side of the king size bed he let out a deep sigh, "Your room is locked down, they don't come in here." I had no idea what he was talking about.

We seemed to live dual lives. During the day my son was upbeat, active, loved school, was outgoing, had friends, and was a good student. He was one of those kids that was a bright light with great compassion for other kids and people. He was a happy kid. Then, at night, he was inconsolable. It broke my heart to see him going through this and I felt I was failing him as a mother. I sought feedback from therapists.

When I look back on those years, I'm bothered that it took me so long to understand and fully accept what was going on with him. Today he is a vibrant, well-adjusted college freshman. We somehow made it through elementary, middle, and high school.

That said, it took me much longer than I'd wish for any parent or caregiver to understand and embrace that there was no mental health diagnosis nor were these simply bad dreams. My son was a highly sensitive child with a heightened ability to **see, hear, and sense the unseen world.**

Yes, in hindsight I was slow to figure things out. When he said there were scary people in his room, he was literally seeing departed spirits. It was once described to me that kids with this ability appear to the spirit realm like a bright light, shining in the night. Since he was not yet skilled in learning how to dim the light, so to speak, he attracted a lot of activity at night.

Admittedly, I was slow to understand what was going on as I struggled with my own belief system regarding his “ability.” I was skeptical and somewhat fearful. It was not until one very exhausting and rather bizarre night involving my departed father, that I was forced to start challenging my own belief system. My son had no insight into my father, who had passed when I was a teen, and who I rarely talked about. I’d like to say I became an overnight believer in the possibility that he was experiencing a different realm, but I can’t. What I can say is that as his mother, I was deeply committed to getting him the help he needed whether I fully believed it or understood it. As I started my outreach to learn more about these abilities, I kept hearing the same thing, “Kids who are like this struggle.” Every time I heard that, I took it as a bit of a challenge and thought, “Not my kid.” His well-being and learning how to integrate this aspect into the family unit, while balancing his brother’s needs, was my top priority. We needed resources that were beyond the traditional and mainstream health care community, and I set out to find them.

Fortunately, today there is greater awareness of psychic, highly intuitive, indigo, or crystal children. More has been written and there is greater openness toward these sensitives. Certainly, we see more children with a spectrum of special considerations whether it be ADHD, autism, or Asperger’s

syndrome. Interestingly, it is not uncommon for there to be overlap; for example, intuitive kids frequently have a diagnosis of ADHD.

#### **TRAITS OF INTUITIVE CHILDREN**

As with any talent or ability, traits vary dramatically, and no two children will seem the same. These are some of the more common behaviors shared by highly intuitive children:

- Empathetic, sensitive, and compassionate.
- Feels things deeply.
- Difficulty at bedtime; going to sleep and staying asleep.
- May experience frequent night-frights.
- Expresses that people are in his/her room at night.
- Has an imaginary friend.
- Frequently “tuned-in” to parents’, family members’, teachers’, and classmates’ well-being, moods, and stress.
- Can be prone to stomach aches, headaches.
- Overwhelmed, possibly agitated in crowds.
- May be sensitive to fabrics, clothing labels.
- Can be the one interpreting on behalf of younger siblings or family pet.
- Experiences stress during traumatic world events, even earthquakes or storms, even without hearing about them.
- Expresses insights that are advanced for his/her developmental age.
- Expresses feeling “different” from his/her peers.
- May talk about angels, past lives, and reincarnation.
- May be a child with ADD/ ADHD/ ASD.

### SUPPORT FOR AN INTUITIVE CHILD?

Ideally the nanny and the parents are aligned with a shared understanding of a child's nature. If you believe your charge is a psychic or highly intuitive child, here are a few suggestions based on my personal experience. Always share with parents and follow the request of the parents before proceeding with anything on your own.

- Create a safe place. Be open to what the child expresses. While it took me awhile to understand my son's abilities, after I did, I was careful to listen and not pass judgment. Discounting what a child shares, telling him not to say or talk about such things will only push the abilities underground and potentially create an isolating feeling for the child. My son once told me that he was grateful that I "got him." Isn't that what all children deserve?
- Teach the child how to ground his/her energy. Grounding is probably one of the most important things a sensitive child can learn how to do. Many of these intuitive kids can be hyper-active and their energy spirals up out of their bodies. Bringing it back into their body gives them a sense of power and helps them calm. There are a number of ways to ground. It may sound funny, but one of the simplest ways to do this is to hug a tree or walk barefoot on the earth. Another technique is to invite the child to give him/herself a hug, connect with their breath, and imagine themselves as a tree with roots traveling down into the core of the earth.
- Play outdoors and be in nature as much as possible.
- Teach them to "zip up" their energy fields. Children who are sensitive can inadvertently pick up other's energy when out in public. We practiced a visual of a zipping up, like a sleeping bag, from his toes to the top of his head.
- Practice "scraping off" energy at the end


of the day. Liken it to scraping off mud from his/her body and surrendering it back to earth. This also helps the child from taking on other's energy.

- Have a practice of using sage; in the home, the child's room, and around the child to clear energy frequently.
- Vet and network your support resources as if you are selecting a brain surgeon. I can't stress this enough. You as the guardian need to trust your own instincts to find the best intended resources for the child. I was fortunate to find highly ethical, knowledge-able, and heart-centered individuals to turn to. This is an "industry" where referrals are a must.
- Depending on the nature of your child's experiences, and your comfort level, it can feel quite isolating. Find a community. We were very discerning about what we shared with whom. That said, I was able to find a wonderful group of people that not only helped my son, but who were also a parenting support system for me.

Some of these children, these amazing old souls, may be chronologically young yet express profound wisdom that can be startling. Remember to stay balanced yourself. Having these heightened abilities are only one aspect of these children being fully integrated, well-adjusted children. Having chores, doing homework, and learning how to navigate this world is a big part of helping these children put their abilities in perspective, becoming well integrated children and young adults.

My son once said to me, "Mom, I'm glad I have these abilities, but I know they don't make me better than anyone else." Right on.

*The views expressed in this article are the author's alone, and do not reflect the views of Nanny Magazine.*



# *How in Love with Pets Are You, Anyway?*

BY ALEXARAYE VALLEJO

In the wonderful world of being a nanny, we wear many hats while we're on the clock. One minute you're playing personal chef to a toddler who's decided he absolutely detests corn (his favorite food yesterday!), and the next you may be signing for packages. We are lucky our profession allows us to give so much of our hearts and energy every day. And for a nanny who is also an animal lover, no other thing makes our hearts tick quite like cute pets and the kiddos we

find ourselves holding wherever we go.

Imagine this scenario.

You've just interviewed for a new nanny position. You're excited! The job responsibilities related to your future charges were clearly defined and manageable, your pay and health benefits have been negotiated to your satisfaction, and the kids and parents are lovely and friendly. Oh, and they have three cute dogs. How neat!

You get the job, then three

months later three dogs and two toddlers are becoming much more than you had may have anticipated or experienced before. The human in us can begrudgingly want to travel back in time to revisit the definition of nanny responsibilities with our NannyFamily.

To avoid the possible struggle outlined in this scenario, we have to venture back to before we even got the offer or started the job. I'm talking about the interview.



## MUST-ASK QUESTIONS

Set yourself up for success in your future job to the best of your abilities by asking the tough questions about care for pets before the end of your first interview.

Ask questions like:

How many pets are in the home?

What will be my level of responsibility for their care?

Is the pet known to bite or be aggressive in any way?

Will you be expected to walk the pet outdoors during inclement weather?

What is the pet's feeding or bathroom schedule?

If there are no pets present, that doesn't mean there may not be one in the near future. Always ask if you aren't sure, especially if you have allergies.

Setting aside the time to cultivate strong communication habits with your employers from the start helps you in the long run.

## FIRSTBORN PETS

In most of my experiences, the pets I've greeted as I walked in the home for the first time is usually the couple's "first child." This makes it much easier to approach the conversation of what pet responsibilities you will be responsible for in the home. They themselves understand the hard work of caring for a pet and adding the addition of their new sweet baby to the family.

Early in my career as a nanny, my NannyFamily showed me pictures of a super cute puppy and told me the Christmas secret that the pooch would be a present for the children that year. I was elated. I looked forward to having a work pet of my own, especially being an apartment dweller whose building didn't allow dogs.

## HE DOES THAT A LOT

Then Christmas came. The puppy and children met for the first time. I quickly realized this was not what I was anticipating. My employers gave the usual breakdown before grabbing their coffees and heading out the door to work. I started about my usual morning routine with the kids. As I am running to grab the brush in the bathroom, I feel a wetness underfoot. My sock was soaked. "Is that urine?" I asked. "Yup," says little B. "He does that a lot."

Cue the dramatic superzoom. Dun dun dun.

## EXTRA WORK

In a nanny's world, the complaint of extra work isn't always about the extra work itself. It's that our main job is now being compromised. My job no longer meant just letting the dog out a few times a day or feeding the fish a few flakes in the morning. I was now responsible for another life—the life of something that peed... everywhere! I found myself mopping up puddles while the children entertained themselves, too busy at times for the role of my primary job, caring for children.

As I peeled the wet sock off, I thought about how difficult it can be to strike that balance between being a team player and taking on extra responsibility without risking your main focus. I thought about how important it is to have a solid foundation of communication with your employer. Tailoring your job requirements and knowing your employers' expectations ahead of time is what keeps us motivated so that we can see around the next bend and anticipate our hurdles.

## LESSONS LEARNED

Thirteen years later, my lesson has been well learned. I now work in a home with three dogs, and I adore them all the more because I'm not the one cleaning their poop from the yard once a month—a paid service takes care of that detail. This has really given me the freedom to focus on the aspects of my career I am best at: caring and developing the young minds of our future.





# Let's Picnic!

BY CAROL SLAGER

Photo via Pexels.



The notion of a picnic brings to mind many scenes, all of them being outdoors. As I thought about the word "picnic," I wondered about its origin and found that it comes from the French "pique-nique," meaning eat outside.

One scene is that of the typical French picnic: a beautiful grassy spot nestled along the banks of the Seine, red and white checkered tablecloth, a large wicker basket containing baguettes, assorted fruits, cheeses, and Quiche Lorraine, paired with the perfect wine.

Real-life American picnic scenes range from peanut butter and jelly sandwiches at a city park, to barbecued ribs, potato salad, and corn-on-the-cob in the Midwest. And yes, ants and bees always seem to crash the party, especially when someone is highly allergic.

Is it possible to come up with a blend of ideas that make a picnic possible wherever you live, with food that will be sure to please? Of course!

## Food Safety

Coolers with ice packs offer a safe way to enjoy foods that need to be kept cold on a warm summer day. The general rule is that after sitting out for two hours, perishable foods should be discarded. When the temperature is 90 degrees Fahrenheit or above, food should not sit out longer than one hour.

Any food that has been kept cold is safe to make the trip home and be returned to the refrigerator; this is a good reason to only take out as much as you need at a time.

## Practical Picnics

Whether you are attending a summer barbecue or would like to imitate the French scene, here are some ideas to make your picnic tasty, nutritious and easy to pull together.

## Salads

Potato and macaroni salads are popular, even those with a mayonnaise base. For variety, try a quinoa salad. Cook one cup of quinoa in two cups of water according to package directions. Chop a variety of fresh vegetables, such as grape tomatoes, colored sweet peppers, cucumbers, zucchini, etc. Use whatever is plentiful, colorful, and in season. You could add a can of black or garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained, for more protein and fiber. Mix all of this with the cooked quinoa and toss with a dressing made from ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, juice from 2 lemons or limes, 1 teaspoon salt, 1-2 teaspoons cumin, and (optional) ½ teaspoon red pepper flakes. Add salt and pepper to taste, adjusting any seasonings according to what your family likes. Bottled or homemade Italian or balsamic vinegar dressing works too. This salad is very versatile because you can make it any way your creative heart desires. It is good chilled or at room temperature, which makes it picnic perfect, and is my go-to for gatherings and potlucks.

## Mainstays

When grilling meat (chicken, pork, etc.), keep it cold until you're ready to cook it and pack up any leftovers within the food safety guidelines. If using a marinade, marinate at home so it's ready for the grill.

## A Simple Picnic

Baguette or flavored flatbread sandwiches with assorted meats and cheeses, hardboiled eggs, roasted vegetables (think asparagus, green beans, Brussels sprouts, or any such assortment), fresh fruit, cucumber sandwiches, crackers, crudité with Greek yogurt (flavored with your favorite seasonings,) or hummus.

Sources: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/blog/2015/06/picnic.html>, <https://dairygood.org/content/2016/how-long-can-cheese-sit-out>, <https://www.inkwellcoaching.com/recipes/?treats> for Lemon Lovely recipe

## Desserts

Homemade trail mix with your favorite raw, unsalted nuts, dried fruit, and chocolate chips makes a fun snack. Dessert can be a variety of hard and soft cheeses with honey or jam on crackers, nuts, as well as dried or fresh fruits, such as apricots, grapes, peaches, or strawberries.

Banana or zucchini bread (presliced for picnic ease) or muffins, with soft goat cheese is another simple dessert. Sweet and tart is a flavorful combination.

All of these suggestions may be modified according to any food allergies or sensitivities.

Years ago, I was reading a cooking magazine that highlighted how to have a fabulous picnic while rafting somewhere out West. In the picture was a beautiful cake sitting on a pedestal plate. The menu and presentation were rather elaborate for a picnic. At the time, I had two young sons at home who thrived on peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. When I saw the cake on the pedestal with the rafts and rushing water in the background, I laughed aloud.

So, while the French may end their picnic with a lovely apple tart, we were, and are still, content with a chocolate chip cookie or a Lemon Lovely.

About those ants and bees, well, maybe they'll follow the folks with the cake.

# SIPPY CUP SLAM

BY MARIE CHIR

MARIE IS A NANNY WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR WE THINK YOU'LL RELATE TO. CRAWL INTO HER WORLD AND BE AMUSED BY JUST ANOTHER DAY IN THE LIFE, #NANNYLIFE STYLE.



I'm just going to come out and say it...

Sippy cups drive me insane! There's something about them that I simply despise. I'm fine with bottles (even though they can be a pain to clean). I'm even okay with water bottles, but there is something about sippy cups that make me want to scream.

I can't be the only one who cringes when the sippy cup slams onto the ground. It's a haunting sound. You hear the "tiiiimberrrr," then it's followed with the roll off the table that seems to happen in slow motion. You feel like you'll be able to reach it before it descends to the floor, but alas, you fail and the cup falls. Next, you hear the blood-curdling scream your charge issues because her cup fell. No matter what brand, they all eventually slam. With the slams come the busted lids and leaks.

Know what else really gets my goat about sippy cups? They're nowhere to found when you need them the most! Oh no, dear nanny, you search can search, yet you always end up back at Target to buy a fresh batch of sippy cups. Who created this horrific sippy cup vortex of doom? Did my charges open a portal in the playroom? That could very well be. Sometimes I feel like a pig sniffing out for truffles around the house on the endless quest to find the lost sippies. It's a scary job, but someone has to do it.

Can someone also explain to me why there are car seat cup holders for children, but for some mysterious reason every sippy cup ever invented ends up under my driver's seat for months on end? I swear I am a neat and tidy nanny, but, my goodness, I have found so many sippy cups underneath my seat. Can someone please invent a product that prevents sippy cups from becoming trapped under my driver's seat? Can it also keep the lids from disappearing and cracking? That would be amazing and a sure-fire way to earn millions. I'll look for it on Shark Tank.

I know there needs to be something for that in-between stage of bottles and regular cups. I just don't want to dry heave anymore when I discover a cup buried in the mound of stuffed animals in the playroom. Moldy milk isn't my jam.

# A Note-worthy dessert: stir-fried ice cream

WORDS AND PHOTO BY IRIS GOHN



The blistering rays of sunlight beat down upon the shining faces of both children and adults alike as the freedom of the summer months envelope us. The midafternoon snack desired before the scorching heat starts to subside, the lagging energy perk after a long day of work, or the last minute much needed pick-me-up most often reached for during the hotter months has traditionally been a sweet confection like ice cream, gelato, shaved ice, or even Boba Tea. While those classics remain go-to's in everyday life, in recent years, there has been a sweeping popularity of an incredibly inventive, delicious, and show stopping presentation of a new sweet confection known as "stir-fried ice cream."

Stir-fried ice cream, also referred to as rolled ice cream, originates from Thailand and is known in Thai as "ไอติมผัด" (pronounced "I-Tim-Pad"). This sweet confection is created in front of you in a dazzling show, with two razor sharp paint scraper shaped tools flashing, banging, and scraping together your choice of either a milk or soy milk base, flavorings, and add-ins such as fruit or whatever your heart desires to create a unique hand-crafted ice cream experience. This signature treat is handed to you in a cup filled with delicate little rolls of ice cream and topped with traditional fruits like lychee or mango, candies, cookies, or marshmallows. Though stir-fried ice cream was first popular in Thailand around 2009, it took a few years to gain popularity in different parts of Asia before becoming an overnight sensa-

tion, largely in part to viral videos demonstrating the mouth-watering treat being made.

Walking into one of the many shops cropping up in the U.S. devoted to stir-fried ice cream, the typical start to your experience is being welcomed by a board with a wide selection of choices and friendly employees to help guide you. The menu board will offer a selection of base flavors, from vanilla, chocolate, or coffee, to traditional popular Thai offerings such as lychee, matcha, or mango. Then, if you are so inclined, you select your add-ins which can vary from fresh fruit to flavor the base or concentrated, flavored syrups. The base is then poured onto an intensely cold flat-top (think -7 to -35 degrees Celsius), given roughly 30 seconds to a minute to start firming up, then scraped, flattened, and "chopped" repeatedly to both incorporate air and create its signature creamy texture. The fruit or flavorings are then added on top of the mixture when it is in a thin, wide sheet, and then scraped, mashed, and stirred again to thoroughly incorporate the ingredients to flavor the sweet treat.

Once the fruit and flavorings and other add-ins are incorporated into the base, the mixture is then flattened into a thin sheet again on the cold surface. The worker then scrapes the mixture up and away from them with gentle and firm pressure, creating a neat little spiral roll that looks akin to a skinny spiraled rose. These little ice cream rolls are then placed in a cup and topped with any-

thing your heart desires. If you are adventurous, try adding a mango flavored jelly or popping dragon fruit for texture, flavored boba pearls like lychee fruit to give it a different chewy experience than gummy bears, or if chocolate is your jam, go for mini cookies and candies with a drizzle of chocolate.

For an entertaining way to satisfy your sweet tooth to break through the haze of summer heat, stir-fried ice cream is a perfect little outing. From selecting exactly the concoction you want to sink your teeth into, the flashy Teppanyaki-style banging the tools beat out while the mixture gets frozen, to the delight of picking out exactly what textures and favorite toppings to decorate the pretty swirls of the ice cream, the entire experience is something not to be missed. After such a show, the light, cool ice cream is not quite as creamy as a traditional churned ice cream, but much smoother than a fruit sorbet and adds to the magical experience. No matter the reason for walking in to grab stir-fried ice cream, you walk out having experienced something unique, with a customized, completely delicious, and beautiful little treat for about the price of a cup of fancy coffee. Who wouldn't want THAT in the midst of a summer heat wave?!

*Iris is a classically trained soprano who loves food. She blogs at The Intrepid Cookie where her original recipes, photography, and journey of life after vision loss are chronicled. Check out her creations at [www.theintrepidcookie.net](http://www.theintrepidcookie.net).*

# Refreshing, Fun... and Healthy Summertime Treats

WORDS AND PHOTOS  
BY KATIE MULLIGAN MS, RDN.



*Katie is a Rhode Island-based registered dietitian nutritionist and mom of two girls. In her business, WellFamily Nutrition Coaching, Katie helps families navigate the ins and outs of childhood feeding and nutrition. Connect with Katie on Facebook @KatieMulliganNutritionCoaching and Instagram @katieswellfamilynutrition*

Popsicles are a popular summertime treat, especially for little ones. Not much else is as simple, delicious, and nutritious... when done right. Unfortunately, some of the store-bought pops can give a hefty dose of high fructose corn syrup, artificial flavoring, blue 1, and red 40 dyes, among other controversial ingredients. Not exactly the ideal refreshment for young children. You can always pour some orange juice into a paper cup and add a wooden stick if you want, but where is the fun in that? If neither of those options conjure up the nourishing treats you want dripping down the chins of your charges on sweltering summer days, then give these fresh popsicles a try. The three flavors each had a fan during taste testing, so they all made the cut.

Making popsicles with fresh fruit is a fun and healthy activity to do with children of all ages. The children can infuse creativity into their recipes by adding any kind of fruit to the juice base and drop in chopped fruit, granola, mini chocolate chips, or yogurt chips to the molds for a surprise inside each popsicle. These treats have a touch of extra sweetness from either granulated sugar or honey, making the amount of added sugar minimal. Fresh fruit popsicles provide important vitamins, minerals, and hydration in a fun, refreshing way and they are the perfect amount of sweetness for little ones whose diets are already low in added sugar.



## CANTALOUPE STRAWBERRY

provide Vitamins A and C, 4-6 ounces of water (depending on the size of the popsicle)

Makes about 8 popsicles

- ½ cup water
- 2 tbsp sugar
- ½ medium cantaloupe, cubed
- 1 cup ripe strawberries
- 1 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon

### Directions

Add water and sugar to a small saucepan over medium heat. Bring to a simmer and cook until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat.

Allow sugar water to cool to room temperature.

Add cubed cantaloupe and strawberries to a blender and blend until smooth. Add the sugar water to the blender and blend.

Pour the mixture into the popsicle molds. Freeze for 3 to 4 hours.

## PINEAPPLE COCONUT

provides Vitamin C, manganese, 4-6 ounces of water

Makes about 6 popsicles

- 2 cups fresh or frozen pineapple
- ½ cup full fat unsweetened coconut milk
- 2 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- ¼ cup unsweetened coconut flakes (optional)

### Directions

Add the pineapple, coconut milk, honey, lemon juice, and flaked coconut (if using) to a blender. Blend until smooth.

Pour the mixture into the popsicle molds. Freeze 3 to 4 hours.

## CHERRY

provides Vitamin C, potassium, 4-6 ounces of water

Makes about 8 popsicles

- 2 cups of frozen dark cherries, no sugar added
- 1 cup water or 100% white grape juice (grape juice will add more natural sugar, but will give a sweeter popsicle)
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

### Directions

Add cherries, water (or grape juice), honey, and lemon juice to a blender. Blend until liquefied.

Pour juice into popsicle molds.

Note: This would be a good recipe to add mini chocolate chips or yogurt chips.

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