

NANNY MAGAZINE

WINTER 2024

IN DEFENSE OF
HIGH QUALITY
CARE

ALL ABOUT
PERFORMANCE
REVIEWS
FOR NANNIES

ENSURING
SAFETY
WHEN TRAVELING
WITH FAMILIES

WHEN YOU
DIDN'T GET
THE GIFT
YOU WANTED

10
INDUSTRY
EVENTS
YOU DON'T
WANT TO MISS

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WINTER 2024



NM

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Michelle LaRowe

Happy New Year!

A new year brings new opportunities.

In a world so divided, our industry manages to unite around what really counts:

Ensuring that children cared for by nannies receive high quality care,

Ensuring nannies caring for children receive fair and legal pay along with industry standard benefits, and

Ensuring those who serve our industry operate under best industry practices and with transparency in regards to the services they offer and the fees they charge.

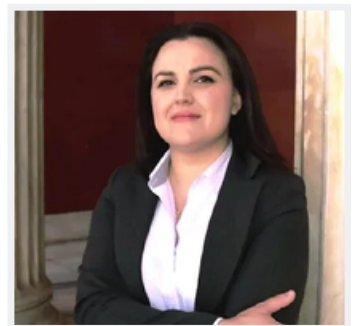
While we may differ on our world views, lifestyle choices, political views, childrearing practices, how we do business, industry priorities, and more, we put that all aside to focus on raising the bar within an industry we love.

This year, find time to gather with others in our industry to learn, share, and play. This issue features ten (plus a few more) opportunities that you just won't want to miss.

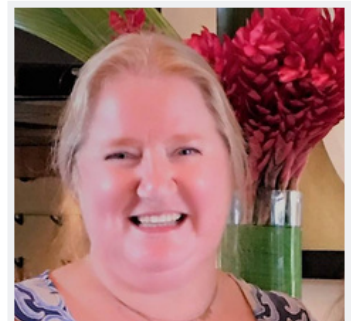
Wishing you peace and prosperity in all you do this year,



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NORLAND NEWS



Norland Awarded Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Gold for a Third Time for Its Outstanding Student Experience and Student Outcomes

Norland has received a Gold award—the highest standard possible—in the latest national assessment of undergraduate teaching in the UK. Despite being one of the smallest degree-awarding providers in the UK, Norland is one of only twenty-six providers to achieve Gold in all categories in the TEF 2023, putting it in the top 11% nationally.

The 2023 award is the third consecutive TEF Gold rating for Norland in the government's national assessment of undergraduate teaching excellence in UK higher education.

To find out more about TEF and the Norland award, visit <https://norland.ac.uk/tef-gold/>.

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INDUSTRY NEWS

The US Department of Labor has published a sample work agreement for domestic workers.

Here is the statement from the Department of Labor website:

In April 2023, President Biden issued the Executive Order on Increasing Access to High-Quality Care and Supporting Caregivers, which directed federal agencies to undertake the most comprehensive set of executive actions ever issued to improve care for hard-working families while supporting care workers and family caregivers. The Executive Order called on the Secretary of Labor to develop compliance assistance and best practices for domestic care workers and their employers to promote fair workplaces and ensure the parties know their rights and responsibilities.

To support this effort, the US Department of Labor developed sample employment agreements, for illustrative purposes, for cleaners, home care workers, and nannies. They are a tool that both employers and domestic workers can choose to use as a helpful starting point to facilitate an open discussion about and create a shared understanding of the terms of employment. The provisions in these sample agreements are only provided as examples of the types of terms and conditions of employment that employers and employees may want to address in their own private contracts."

To view a sample agreement and to learn more, visit <https://dol.gov/agencies/wb/domestic-workers/>.



US Nanny Tax Threshold Increases for 2024

The Social Security Administration recently released next year's employment coverage threshold for household employees. The 2024 nanny tax threshold increases by \$100 to \$2,700. This is the fifth consecutive year that this threshold has increased.

If a nanny or other household employee (e.g., housekeeper, private teacher, or in-home senior caregiver) earns \$2,700 or more in cash wages in 2024, Social Security and Medicare taxes, commonly called FICA taxes or "nanny taxes," must be paid by the family and the employee. Earnings below this threshold aren't taxable under Social Security.

For most industries, there is no employment coverage threshold, so every dollar of wages is covered by Social Security and taxable.

Household employment is one of the industries with an employment coverage threshold. This amount is set every year by the Internal Revenue Service. For household employees, it changes with the national average wage index.

As you can tell, it's easy for even a temporary or seasonal worker to exceed that threshold and trigger nanny tax compliance. Summer and after-school nannies, as well as temporary senior caregivers, could reach the employment coverage threshold.

The nanny tax threshold does not apply to wages paid to a spouse, a child under the age of twenty-one, a parent, or any employee under the age of eighteen.

Social Security and Medicare taxes are 15.3% of an employee's cash wages. The employer (family) pays 7.65% (Social Security at 6.2% and Medicare at 1.45%), while the same amount can be withheld from the employee's pay, or the family can pay their worker's share and not withhold.

Families who hire household help may also owe federal and state unemployment taxes. If an employee is paid \$1,000 or more in any calendar quarter, the family needs to contribute federal unemployment taxes of 6% on the first \$7,000 in wages. State unemployment tax rates vary. Don't count wages paid to a spouse, child under the age of twenty-one, or parent.

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ASK THE NANNY

Dear Stephanie,

My nanny family has asked me to travel with them out of state with five children. They have never hired a nanny to travel with them before and are having trouble defining what my role will be while traveling. How should I start a conversation with them about my work schedule, compensation, and clear responsibilities and expectations while traveling?

Thank you,
Traveling Nanny

Dear Traveling Nanny,

Ask the parents if you can sit down to discuss the travel plans and create a job description before you go. Explain that you would like to have a separate travel nanny work agreement to ensure both parties are clear about expectations and will be happy when traveling.

Just like when you negotiate with parents before starting a new nanny job, you can negotiate compensation, hours, and job duties for the new job of traveling with the family. Although you want to be flexible when traveling while working, don't agree to anything you won't be comfortable doing.

For example, you could ask if you can keep your general work schedule the same as it would be on a typical work week. If the parents want to go on a date one evening alone, ask that they let you know well in

Stephanie Felzenberg

Stephanie Felzenberg has worked as a nanny and family assistant for thirty years. She has been the Nanny Advice Column for Nanny Magazine since 2013. She is the newsletter editor for the US Nanny Association. Stephanie publishes a nanny blog at bethebestnanny.com.



advance and allow you more time off during the day so you can babysit while they go out that evening. Knowing and agreeing to the change of hours ahead of time reduces stress for the caregiver.

Be sure to include in the travel nanny work agreement that your employers will cover all of your travel expenses, including airfare, gas mileage, meals, and lodging. They should provide you with your own bedroom so you don't have to share a room with the children. You should be paid for the traveling time as well. Many travel nannies are also paid an extra overnight fee for each night they spend away from home due to work.

I recommend telling your employers you would like to sit down to discuss the upcoming trip and create a travel nanny work agreement to ensure both you and the parents will know what to expect and reduce the chance of resentment while traveling. It will make both of your lives easier if the schedule and job expectations are made clear before traveling.

Enjoy your trip!
Stephanie Felzenberg



Stephanie

Submit Your Questions to Stephanie
info@NannyMag.com

AGENCY ADVICE

FROM CHLOE WILLETT
OWNER OF HARMONY AT HOME
ESSEX SOUTH BRANCH

I am a nanny thinking of starting an agency. How do I know if doing so is right for me?

As a passionate nanny myself, I knew that running my own agency would be a great step for me in my career. My varied career as a Norland Nanny brings with it a huge amount of experience, which I use to make only the very best matches for my clients and candidates alike.

For me, I was looking for a more flexible lifestyle that would fit my new role as a mother, and I can honestly say it's the best decision I have ever made. It has not only allowed me to work with some amazing people but also spend time with my family. I have loved building strong relationships with clients and candidates to ensure the best possible match. The highlight for me has to be the gratitude from both clients and candidates.

I would say that if you are thinking of running an agency, then ensure you are happy to step back from working with children on a daily basis. While you will feel that you are working within the same sector, the day-to-day lifestyle is very different, and therefore you need to be ready to enjoy a more office-based role, working with clients and candidates over phone and email and being responsible for creating your own revenue stream.

I loved being a nanny and saw firsthand how it benefits both the nanny and the child to work within a home setting. I was (and am) passionate about childcare and knew I wanted to help ensure the safety of children in a nanny's care. I knew that by joining Harmony at Home as a franchisee, I was guaranteed to do so because of their Gold Standard Nanny Vetting Process.

I would say that if you have ever thought about running an agency, then it is a great move away from nannying, as you have the perfect perspective of both your candidates and clients. Recruitment is not always easy, but provided you are a go-getter and willing to put the effort in, it is a very rewarding role, and I haven't looked back.

Running my own business has given me the opportunity to work from home. I can now be flexible around my little boy and other personal commitments, and I have a much better balance at home that suits my family. I enjoy the flexibility this role has provided me. I can be available for nursery drop-offs and pickups and make time for important dates, such as nativities and sports days. I love the interactions I have with nannies and clients and the fact that every day is different. Filling roles for families can be a challenge, but it is hugely rewarding. In order to carry out this role well, it is important that you are a motivated person as well as a great communicator who is passionate about childcare.

Harmony at Home gave me the opportunity to move forward with running my own business quickly and easily, with the peace of mind that the safety of my candidates and the children in their care was paramount. For anyone thinking of starting an agency, I would say go for it, but find a reputable agency that you can franchise with or gain insight from. I was able to have in-depth training and was provided a "business in a box" that supported me in laying the foundations of my business. This enabled me to start making those all-important placements straight away.

My goal is to create an outstanding customer experience for each family and candidate throughout the entire hiring process. My personal approach puts families and candidates at ease, and my bespoke service ensures that I have a full understanding of what my clients and candidates want. I love what I do and would highly recommend it to anyone considering taking the leap!

Growing up, **Chloe Willett** always knew that she wanted to work with children. This led her to pursue a degree in childcare from the world-renowned Norland College. After completing the Norland diploma and degree programs, Chloe began her career as a nanny. Chloe started nannying in rural Berkshire before heading to London as a live-in nanny for an ultra-high-net-worth family who traveled around the world. After having her own child, Chloe wanted to work from home, so she purchased the South Essex Franchise of Harmony at Home. This now makes it easier for her to balance work and family time while remaining within the amazing nanny industry. Chloe loved being a nanny and saw firsthand how it benefits both the nanny and the child to work within a home setting. Chloe is passionate about childcare and recruits nannies for South Essex families who are looking for a recruiter who is easygoing, passionate, and understanding. Learn more at <https://harmonyathome.co.uk/childcare-services/nanny-agency/essex/>.



NANNY / HOUSEMANAGER AND AGENCY EMPLOYEE

SARAH FOSTER

Sarah Foster is a career nanny and house manager of twelve years and is currently based in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She is an International Nanny Association-credentialed nanny, child passenger safety technician, and two-time top-five nominee for the International Nanny Association's Nanny of the Year award. She currently works as the onboarding director for CincyNanny, a Cincinnati, Ohio-based agency, co-leads their Nanny Panel (a leadership group of volunteer nannies,) and is the co-founder of the Twin Cities Nanny Education Collective.

Before You Leave for Work

Preparing for work can differ depending on the day, week, or month. My preparation for work typically starts a week or month before. At the beginning of each month, I sit down and detail in the family calendar all the appointments, school activities, cleaning schedules, and additional house manager tasks that need to be completed that month. This is also the time that I will begin preparing lesson plans and learning-through-play activities and determine what items need to be purchased, what books need to be requested from the library, et cetera. Each Friday, I review my plans for the upcoming week to be fully mentally prepared for the new week.

My daily preparations typically start the evening before. I pack my bag with all the necessary items, prep my breakfast for the morning, and brainstorm what I will wear. I know myself in the mornings, and I am always grateful to "Night-Before Sarah" for setting me up for success.

While You Are Working

When I arrive at work, I automatically begin prepping for the day. This includes packing lunches, laying out outfits, readying school bags, preparing breakfast, and deciding on a hairdo for the five-year-old that day. One of the highlights of the morning is getting to do her hair! She loves the fun and intricate styles that I come up with, and it really gives her a boost throughout the day when people compliment her on her hair.

After morning preparations are complete, the next step depends on the day. Some days are therapy days when my charge has physical therapy, occupational therapy, or speech therapy. While at therapy, I listen in, take extensive notes, and confer with her therapists to update her continuing at-home plan to support her current goals.

After drop-off on school days, I transition to my house manager role. My tasks are primarily self-directed, although there are times when I am tasked with specific goals. My house manager duties can include the following: laundry, grocery shopping, dropping off dry cleaning, researching and collaborating with contractors, large organizational tasks, preparing for parties, household cleaning, meal prepping, washing bedding, and running errands. Each day as a house manager fluctuates, and I step in to complete whatever task is necessary to keep the household running smoothly and efficiently, both while there and after I leave.

Typically, after I pick up my charge from school, she will still nap, but we are currently transitioning out of this and into a "quiet time." After quiet time, we play and learn! I love incorporating process art into all of our activities. I create "invitation to play" areas so she can practice independent play. (I like to include her therapy goals in these activities as well!) When time allows, we love to get out of the house and have fun adventures at different local parks, splash pads, zoos, museums, and libraries.

What You Do After

When I leave work, I like to take time to decompress while driving. This might mean listening to a meditation session, podcast, or audiobook. After arriving home, my nanny hat comes off, and I replace it with my agency hat. During most weeks, I have anywhere from one to four nannies to interview and onboard in our agency. Each nanny must meet and pass our thirteen-point screening. I really value the time I get to connect with nannies during interviews. Educating them on industry standards, resume help, and how to be the best nanny they can be brings me a lot of joy. I have even continued on to grow friendships with some of the nannies I interview!

After agency time, I fill my evenings connecting with my partner and snuggling up with my long-haired Siberian cat before starting my prep for my morning the next day.

INDUSTRY INSIGHTS

PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

By Sue Downey and Kellie Geres

Why performance reviews? As an employee, it is important to be reviewed and evaluated on your work. This will not only help you grow as a professional but will also increase your communication with your current family and help keep the relationship strong. It is also an essential first step if you are asking for a pay increase or additional benefits. Last, it is protection for the future. If the relationship turns sour, you will have a written record of your dedication and hard work, even if you do not have a written reference. Sadly, sometimes even the best of relationships may fall into a he-said, she-said situation, and regular performance reviews lay out the history of your work with a family.

Planning the Meeting

If it is not specified in your contract, or if you have no contract, you should decide when it is a good time for a review and request it if a family does initiate one. You can begin by simply asking to set up a time for a meeting and an evaluation. Let the family know you have a form and give them a copy of the evaluation at least two weeks before the meeting. It may be that your family needs even more lead time, so be flexible. The meeting needs to be kid-free, so you may need to suggest an early morning one day or be willing to stay late if you are able. Leave a few gentle notes as reminders as the date approaches if needed.

Evaluation

You may choose to do a self-evaluation in addition to asking for an evaluation from your employer. This is good practice to see how well expectations are being met on both sides of the fence. If so, let the family know you made two copies, and then each of you can fill them out and exchange them to discuss. Be open to feedback. This is not easy for many of us, but it is how we grow as professionals. Take in what is said, and if you start to feel upset or emotional, you can ask for some time to digest the information and come back to discuss it at another time. Go through the evaluation and the



checklist to ensure you use the opportunity to address any issues from your employers or yourself. Better to discuss now than to let things build up. Soak in the praise and feel good about the high marks on your evaluation.

Wrapping Up

After you finish the evaluation, take a few minutes to conduct a team review, making changes to the job description and contract if needed. Then make sure all parties sign and date a paper copy of the evaluation and updated paperwork. It may seem formal, but it is an important step. Be sure to set a date for your next review so that everyone knows the timeline of any modifications and improvements that have been discussed.

A Word about Raises

Often nannies are unsure of when or how to ask for a raise. Evaluation time is the perfect time to address this with a family. Be sure to do your homework and know the going rates in your area and the tax implications of any pay raise. Be open to additional perks as a part of an increase in wages. Employer compensation for health insurance, retirement contributions, and other non-cash benefits can sometimes be even more beneficial to your bottom line, as they save taxes for you and your family.

For help with your next performance evaluation, check out our Nanny Evaluation Kit. This handy six-page package comes with a two-page nanny evaluation, a family meeting checklist, and suggestions for both nannies and parents regarding nanny evaluations. Evaluations are wonderful tools to help improve communication, job performance, and your relationship with the family. Done yearly, they can help nannies grow and develop as professionals and help determine compensation increases.



Sue Downey and **Kellie Geres** are the founders of Our Nanny Diary. Our Nanny Diary takes the hassle out of organization and keeps your information handy. In addition to the Nanny Evaluation Kit, our Nanny Diary offers over forty digital downloads and kits plus four printed and bound communication diaries. As a special for Nanny Magazine readers, you can save 20% on your purchase of the Nanny Evaluation Kit. Print it at home and use it as often as you need. Use coupon code NannyMag20 at <https://www.ournannydiary.com/>.

In Support of Nannies:

In Response to a Nanny Job Advertisement Posted on Social Media

My simple opinion is that a nanny should focus on the children that they are responsible for—primarily the health and safety aspects, but duties would naturally include all the usual nanny things. I suspect a number of people just think of a nanny as a general dogsbody and expect nannies to do all the household cleaning, washing, and cooking. Nannying, however, should be very limited in scope as it pertains to the children. Asking a nanny to do gardening is going way too far, and expecting all of this to be done in ten to fifteen hours per week shows a complete lack of understanding of how long these things take. I hope this is not a trend, as many nannies are young and vulnerable themselves and may take this work on since it was asked by the employer.

Brad Sutherland, retired teacher and father of a nanny



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

Nanny Magazine will cover:

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

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

Deadlines are as follows for the digital publication:

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

Website and print submissions are accepted on an ongoing basis.

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

READER SUBMISSION

A NANNY'S LOVE IS EVERLASTING

BY BETH STOCKDALE



I was lying in my bed. A sliver of sunshine shown though my window. Faint voices hummed up the stairway and into my room. I squeezed Teddy tight. Daddy told Ms. Maggie they have decided I am growing up, so we no longer would need a nanny. My heart sank. I thought, I still need her!

I pleaded to Momma and Daddy, "Please, let me keep Ms. Maggie!" Daddy said, "You'll be doing more grown-up things now. Be strong, sweetheart."

Then Momma told me the story about the day I was born. She said when they arrived at the hospital, Momma sat next to a woman in the waiting room. The woman was gentle and soft-spoken.

The woman smiled and said, "You are so blessed! I was going to have a little girl too, but I lost her."

I was so sad when Momma told me that. The woman named the baby she lost Laurel because her love for her was everlasting, just as the mountain laurel's leaves are evergreen.

Momma told me how her labor pains were getting closer together and that the nurse called her name and wheeled her back to the labor room. I was born at 1:12 a.m. She said I opened my eyes, and they could feel my love. Daddy told me they had not yet decided upon a name for me, so they decided to name me Laurel.

When I was two weeks old, there was a knock at the door. It was the gentle and soft-spoken woman she had met at the hospital.

With her right hand over her heart the woman said, "I heard you were looking for a nanny. My name is Ms. Maggie. I feel like we have met?" Momma reminded Ms. Maggie they had met at the hospital.

Ms. Maggie replied, "This is a God wink, I think." Ms. Maggie put her right hand over her heart and said, "I have so much love to give her." I thought of all the things Ms. Maggie had done for me since I was a baby, but what I remembered the most was how much she loved to tell stories and read to me. She loved to play music, and she loved to sing. Her voice always cracked a little, but I didn't mind. We went to the park, and we'd watch the squirrels twirl and fly through the trees.

At the zoo, we'd watch the monkeys twirl and fly through the trees. We'd go to play parks, and she and I both would climb on the bars and pretend we were squirrels and monkeys flying through the trees. Ms. Maggie loved to paint daisies, and I did too. Our favorite day was going to story time and to the library. Sometimes we also planted herbs: basil, thyme, rosemary, and mint. Mmm . . . Ms. Maggie was the best cook in the world! The most important thing Ms. Maggie taught me was to love God because He created all things.

With her right hand over her heart, she'd say, "God is love."

Years passed, and I always wished I knew what happened to Ms. Maggie. I think it's because of Ms. Maggie that I became a chef and own my own restaurant. It's called Maggie's Place because I love Ms. Maggie. I still grow basil, thyme, rosemary, and mint. I sing, and my voice sometimes cracks a little, but I just giggle and think of Ms. Maggie. I still love watching the squirrels twirl and fly through the trees. Most of all, I love God and pray every day. With my right hand over my heart, I say, "God is love."

More years passed, and I was holding my little girl, Magdalene, and there was a knock at my door. When I opened the door, there was an old woman standing there.

With a gentle and soft-spoken voice, the old woman said, "Hello, dear."

She was holding a beautiful present. She handed it to me and smiled. I put my right hand over my heart. I felt her love.

I said, "Oh, how thoughtful! Thank you!"

With her right hand over her heart, the old woman said, "I hope your baby loves all the things you love!" Then she turned and left.

Chills ran down my arms, and tears rolled down my cheeks. I quickly opened her present.

It was a beautiful book! The cover was decorated with painted daisies. There was a note inside the front cover.

It read, "I hope you enjoy this book! It took me years to finish writing it. Please read it to baby Magdalene. But, Laurel, I wrote it for you! Love always, Ms. Maggie."

The book: "A Nanny's Love Is Everlasting."



Beth Stockdale is from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and has been working as a full-time nanny since 2010. Beth has attended National Nanny Training Day and belongs to the Pittsburgh Squirrel Hill Nannies Facebook group. Beth is an aspiring author and illustrator of children's literature, and she is a songwriter/composer. Beth has a deep and everlasting love for every child she has cared for, which is why she wrote the story "A Nanny's Love Is Everlasting." To learn more about Beth's songs and stories, visit her website at <https://bethstockdale.com/>.

HOUSTON NANNIES

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WHEN YOU DON'T GET THE GIFT YOU WANT

MICHELLE LAROWE

As an award-winning nanny turned educator, Michelle LaRowe has over thirty years of nanny industry experience. During the end of the year, holiday gifts and annual bonuses are all the buzz. Here's Michelle's best advice on how to handle it when you don't get the gift (or bonus) you want.

In a world where we often view our worth to our employers in terms of our paycheck, our raises, and our bonuses, it should be no surprise that for some nannies, this holiday season could make them feel really valued or really undervalued.

For nannies, we often anticipate what our holiday gift or bonus will be. Most nannies know that it is industry standard to give one-to-two-week's pay as a holiday bonus and more the longer the nanny has been with a family. This information in hand, nannies eagerly wait for their last paycheck of the year, desperately hoping it's filled with the extra money that they have been hoping for. We also tend to expect a holiday gift—something special crafted by the children or an item picked out from a store we would never be able to shop at on our own.

While you may expect neither a gift nor bonus, in my twenty-plus years of being in the nanny world, I've found that most nannies, myself included, have shared these holiday expectations at one time or another.

So how do you handle it when your bonus or gift doesn't live up to your expectations?

- **Consider how you are valued year-round.** Is it fair to base how much your employer values you by looking only at your bonus or gift? If your family constantly tells you that they appreciate you, reminds you of how much you enrich their family life, and thanks you for providing the best care for their children, those things need to be remembered as well.

- **It is the thought that counts.** Families celebrate the holidays differently. Some families aren't big on giving holiday gifts or, more accurately, giving money for holiday gifts. Others don't receive a holiday bonus from their employers, so they don't see the need of giving one to their employee. Keep in mind that holiday bonuses and gifts aren't automatic or merit rated (unless your contract states otherwise), so any gesture should be appreciated.

- **Try not to judge.** It can be so tempting to think that your employer could have done more, but don't. How much your employer makes or has in her bank is irrelevant. You can't view your bonus or pay based on what you think your employer can afford. That's not how it works. Your pay should be based on your skills, experience, education, market demand, and so on, and your holiday bonus or gift is based on what your employer wants to give you.

- **Reevaluate your expectations.** If you were working for almost any other type of employer, would it be fair to expect a new pair of Uggs, then to be disappointed when they weren't under the tree? Just because you want a gift or had one in mind, is it fair to be disappointed that you didn't receive it? Are your expectations based on what your nanny friends are getting rather than on your employer's gift-giving traditions? Is it fair to expect anything over and above your weekly paycheck?

The nanny and employer relationship is a funny thing. Nannies are part of the family, but they are not. The holidays magnify this unique aspect of the relationship. Just as nannies sometimes think of their employer as treating them like family when it benefits them, we must also ask ourselves if we are expecting our employers to treat us like family when it does not.



If you've worked for a family for years, it can be hard to swallow if your gift or bonus is less extravagant than in years past. If you don't receive anything, it can be even harder. While we like to think we know everything that is going on behind the scenes in the family (and nannies often do!), sometimes we don't.

I've worked for families where I've received everything from a tube of facial cleanser to a huge pair of diamond earrings. Funny enough, the family I would have expected to get the diamond earrings from got me the facial cleanser. Was I disappointed? Yes. Did I feel jaded? Yes. Was my disappointment fair? Not really.

Just like we teach our charges, "You get what you get, and you don't get upset." When it comes to holiday gift-giving, this must be our attitude. If it's not, we risk resenting our employers, which if not resolved, can negatively affect the working relationship.

And while it can be tempting to compare bonuses and gifts with your nanny friends, don't. One nanny may be completely thrilled with her holiday gift, until she learns that another nanny in the neighborhood got much more. That nanny could be you!

So, before you exchange gifts or open your last paycheck of the year, take a deep breath, consider your value to the family, and remind yourself it is the thought that counts.

If you truly feel like the gift you received (or didn't) is a true reflection of how you are valued, it's up to you whether you choose to broach the subject with your employer. Should you choose to address it, think very carefully about what you will say and how you will say it.

Michelle LaRowe is the editor-in-chief of Nanny Magazine and has more than 30 years of nanny industry experience. As an International Nanny Association credentialed nanny and Nanny of the Year™ award recipient, Michelle has authored several parenting books including *Nanny to the Rescue!*, *Nanny to the Rescue Again!* and *Working Mom's 411*. Michelle has also served as executive director of the International Nanny Association and of Morningside Nannies. To educate the next generation of nannies, Michelle launched *NannyTraining.com* where she serves as lead educator.



EXPERT TIPS

ENSURING SAFETY WHILE TRAVELING WITH FAMILIES

Denida Grow

In the last ten to fifteen years, we have seen the evolution of childcare services, especially for high-net-worth and celebrity families. We have more families who are looking for professionally trained and experienced nannies to become part of their families and take care of their children. There has been a huge demand for nannies who are not just caregivers but also global companions and cultural liaisons. Sometimes the parents hire travel nannies specifically for the duration of their travels.

Because these sorts of families often lead transitory lifestyles involving frequent travel for work or leisure, they need nannies who can seamlessly adapt to different cultural settings and maintain stability in their children's lives. This change has led to a surge in demand for nannies who are highly educated, culturally savvy, and flexible enough to adjust to changing schedules and environments. This unique role, while filled with the opportunity to explore new cultures and landscapes, also brings forth a set of challenges that primarily concern safety.

The Traveling Nanny

Traveling with the family can be a frequent part of a nanny's life, and the responsibilities go beyond the usual childcare duties. Traveling nannies must adapt to different environments, manage children in unfamiliar settings, and often navigate foreign languages and customs. While traveling opportunities offer enriching and exciting experiences, they demand flexibility, vigilance, and a heightened sense of situational awareness and responsibility. The challenge for nannies who undertake such roles is to balance the excitement of travel with the constant need to maintain a safe environment for the children and themselves.

Although there seems to be a misconception that being safe requires a lot of work and is somehow "inconvenient," we must emphasize that if you follow basic steps, you can still lead an amazing life, all the while being safe and enjoying your trips.

Pretravel Preparations

Most of the time, when working for a family, you will be informed about the upcoming trip without having enough time to prepare for it. However, there are simple steps you can take. Before embarking on any trip, thorough preparation is key.

- Ensure that all travel documents, including visas, work permits, and identification, are in order. Health is another crucial factor for you to consider. You must do your research on vaccination requirements for the country you will be visiting and make sure you have comprehensive health insurance that will cover any trip emergencies.
- Each destination has its own distinct customs, traditions, and cultural norms. It is important to familiarize yourself with the local customs to show respect and avoid unintentionally offending anyone. Learn about appropriate dress codes, acceptable behavior, and any cultural practices you should be aware of. Educate yourself on their religious or national holidays and understand what is expected during these celebrations. Remember that you are a visitor in someone else's home and that it is crucial to show respect. Keep in mind that in some countries, there are very strict rules regarding cultural and religious holidays, and violations can be punishable by law. Be sure to adhere to these rules to avoid any legal consequences during your trip. Understanding and respecting cultural differences is essential for a traveling nanny. This awareness helps in providing appropriate care in various cultural contexts and avoiding potentially sensitive situations. Also, being aware of the local laws and the nanny's rights in different countries is critical, as legalities around childcare and employment can vary significantly across borders.
- Do your research about the political climate of your destination. Stay informed about any ongoing political unrest, demonstrations, civil disturbances, or even elections that may impact your safety. Check travel advisories issued by your country's government or reputable international organizations, such as the US Department of State, and verified news media outlets.

Safety During Travel

Maintaining safety while traveling involves the following:

- Ensure you have done your homework to obtain the necessary emergency contact information. This may include local authorities, medical facilities, and the contact details for your country's embassy or consulate. Save these numbers in your phone and keep a physical copy in case of technological failures.
- Avoid flaunting your jewelry or expensive watches when you travel. You do not want to make yourself a target for individuals who may have their eyes on your gold earrings or ring. Keep your valuables secure while traveling by taking necessary precautions—or even better, leave them at home. Consider using antitheft bags or backpacks that feature hidden compartments, slash-proof materials, and lockable zippers. Keep important documents such as passports, IDs, and credit cards in a secure pouch, or utilize the hotel safe (and keep copies on you).
- Keep important documents, such as passports, identification cards, credit cards, and travel insurance papers, in a secure and easily accessible location. A travel pouch or a money belt worn under your clothing is a good option to keep your documents close to you. Alternatively, you can store them in the hotel room safe when you're not using them. Make digital copies of your important documents and store them securely online or in a password-protected cloud storage service as a backup.
- Stay vigilant in outdoor areas, such as coffee shops, restaurants, local shops, airports, and other tourist attractions. Keep your bags and belongings close to you at all times and be cautious of distractions or crowded situations that may create opportunities for theft. Keep in mind that unfamiliar individuals have no reason to be in close proximity to you, so if you notice someone trying to get too close or intentionally overcrowding your personal space, be suspicious.
- Be vigilant of tourist hotspots, as they are often crowded and attract both genuine tourists and opportunistic individuals. Stay vigilant and keep an eye on your belongings in crowded areas such as popular landmarks, markets, or public transportation hubs. Be cautious of distractions created by individuals working in groups and avoid engaging with unsolicited offers or salespeople.
- Upon arrival, evaluating the safety of living arrangements is a priority. This includes checking the security of the accommodation and ensuring a safe environment for the children. Know where the fire extinguishers and emergency exits are located and learn how to get from your room to the stairs in darkness in case of emergency.

Traveling as a nanny presents a unique set of challenges, with safety being the foremost. Preparation, awareness, and adaptability are key elements to ensure a safe and enriching experience. While the role demands a high level of responsibility, it also offers the opportunity to explore new places and cultures, making it a uniquely rewarding experience. With the right approach, traveling nannies can not only provide excellent care in changing environments but also grow personally and professionally, embracing the vast opportunities that come with their journeying role.

For more information about overall travel safety for you and your family, download our free [forty-four-page Step-by-Step Guide to Essential Travel Safety Considerations](#).



Denida Grow is the co-founder of Nannyguards. She is an International Executive Protection and Intelligence Specialist with over 21 years of experience working in different countries and cultures. In 2002 Denida founded Athena Worldwide & Athena Academy in Greece which is a training and placement company dedicated to female security professionals. In 2008, after working on many security details with UHNW families and working security details for children and teenagers, she decided to create Nannyguards. A hybrid service that combines child care with protective services. To learn more visit www.nannyguards.com.

An advertisement for NannyGuards. It features a photograph of a woman in a white top and blue jeans walking hand-in-hand with a young girl in a yellow shirt and grey pants. They are outdoors with trees in the background. The text 'Security Trained Nannies', 'Travel Nannies', and 'Celebrity Nannies' is overlaid on the image. At the bottom, the NannyGuards logo is displayed in blue and white, followed by the tagline 'The Child Protection Specialists'. The website 'www.nannyguards.com' and phone number '+1 (360) 420-4475' are listed at the very bottom.

Security
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Travel Nannies
Celebrity Nannies

NannyGuards The Child Protection
Specialists

www.nannyguards.com +1 (360) 420-4475



People Profile

Sarah Washburn

Sarah Washburn is the founder and owner of The Washburn Agency, a Boston based household staffing agency.

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

My journey into the nanny industry began during my college years when I was an after-school Nanny for three children. It was during this time that I discovered my genuine passion for working with children and families. After completing my degree, I initially ventured into the hospitality field; however, I soon realized it wasn't my true calling. In 2005, I made the decision to return to the nanny industry, where I spent the next two years as a full-time nanny. This experience solidified my commitment and passion for this profession.

Today, I am proud to be the owner and founder of the Washburn Agency, which is widely recognized as one of Boston's top household staffing firms. In this role, I connect dedicated and professional household staff with families who seek the best in childcare and household services. It's a fulfilling position that allows me to continue making a positive impact in the industry.

How has the industry evolved since you've become involved?

Since I first became involved in the industry, there have been significant advancements. One of the most noteworthy changes is the growing recognition of domestic workers, including nannies, as professionals. This recognition, exemplified by the Massachusetts Domestic Workers Bill of Rights, has been hard-won. As a result, more and more domestic workers are receiving written work agreements, overtime compensation, legal pay, and access to essential benefits like health insurance and sick leave. These changes have significantly improved the industry, making it a more equitable and sustainable profession.

How did you get to where you are today?

My journey to where I am today has been shaped by a commitment to hard work and determination. Building the Washburn Agency hasn't been a simple task, but it has been incredibly rewarding.

At the core of our agency's success is our dedication to delivering the best possible candidates to our families. This means carefully matching a candidate's skills, values, and aspirations with the specific requirements and expectations of the families we work with. Ensuring that the job also aligns with what the candidate is seeking is a big part of how we operate and why we are so successful.

We're all about improvement and constantly looking for new ways to make our services better, whether it's by refining our matching process, staying current with industry trends, or implementing the latest technology to better serve our clients and candidates. It's this commitment to excellence and adaptability that's helped us get where we are today.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

In the next five years, I plan to continue finding the balance between personal and professional aspirations. Personally, I see myself continuing to explore the world with my husband and kids, finding new destinations and creating memories together.

Professionally, I intend to continue taking steps back from the agency's daily operations, empowering our talented team to assume more responsibilities. However, I will remain actively involved in the agency's growth and expansion, ensuring that we maintain our commitment to excellence.

My best advice for nannies is to never settle for less than you deserve. Know your worth and have confidence in your skills and the valuable role you play in the lives of the families you work with.

-Sarah Washburn



What is your best advice for nannies?

My best advice for nannies is to never settle for less than you deserve. Know your worth and have confidence in your skills and the valuable role you play in the lives of the families you work with.

Maintain professionalism at all times. This includes being punctual, reliable, and trustworthy. Effective communication is key, both with the children under your care and their parents or guardians. Building strong, respectful relationships with the families you work for is essential. Continuously invest in your professional development. Stay current with best practices in childcare, attend National Nanny Training Day and nanny conferences, and consider furthering your education. Networking with other nannies can also be immensely beneficial for sharing experiences and learning from others in the field.

Finally, never underestimate the importance of self-care. Nanny-ing can be a demanding and often emotionally taxing profession. Take time for yourself to recharge and seek support and resources when needed. Remember that by valuing yourself and your work, you'll create a more fulfilling and successful career as a nanny.

What is the most controversial topic that you've seen in your group?

A frequently debated topic in our group is the "entitled nanny." These are nannies who require the highest pay and a wide array of benefits while simultaneously having a long list of demands and things they refuse to do. It's important to remember that the nanny-family relationship is a two-way street and should be treated as such, with a balance of give and take.

What is one thing you see nannies share over and over again regardless of how many times it's addressed?

One common theme that nannies often share, despite it being repeatedly addressed, is the challenge of establishing and maintaining clear boundaries with the families they work for.

Setting boundaries regarding work hours, responsibilities, and personal time can be an ongoing struggle. Nannies often find it difficult to assert themselves in these areas, especially when they have a strong desire to please the families they work for or fear that asserting boundaries may negatively impact their job security.

It's crucial for nannies to communicate openly with the families they work with and establish clear expectations from the beginning. It's also important for both nannies and families to regularly revisit and adjust these boundaries as needed to ensure a healthy work-life balance and a successful working relationship.

What is your educational background?

I have a bachelor's degree in hotel and restaurant administration. This knowledge and skill set have been instrumental in my career, allowing me to excel in roles that require attention to detail, excellent communication, and a commitment to delivering exceptional service.

How do you give back to the nanny community?

We love our nanny community and wouldn't be here without them. We give back by hosting International Nanny Training Day and community events to give nannies the chance to connect, share experiences, and grow their careers. Additionally, we have proudly sponsored the International Nanny Association and Nannypalooza conferences as well as nanny dinners as part of National Nanny Recognition Week.

Looking ahead, we are committed to expanding our support and hope to sponsor more continuing-education trainings in the near future. These opportunities will allow nannies to stay up to date with best practices, develop professionally, and excel in their roles. Our aim is to foster a strong and united nanny community where individuals can grow, learn, and thrive in their careers.

Biggest nanny agency myth?

The biggest myth regarding agencies in the nanny industry is the belief that agencies take a portion of the nanny's pay. In reality, reputable agencies charge

fees to the family for their services in matching families with qualified nannies and ensuring proper screening. This fee does not affect the nanny's pay or come out of their pay. This myth can lead to misunderstandings and negative feelings toward agencies.

What is the one thing you'd like parents who employ nannies to know?

One crucial thing I'd like parents who employ nannies to understand is that nannies are not mind readers. Building a successful working relationship between a family and a nanny requires open communication, patience, and understanding from both sides. It takes time for a nanny to get to know your children, their routines, and your family dynamics.

Ongoing training and clear guidance from the family can significantly enhance the quality of care your nanny provides. Each family has unique expectations and preferences, and it's important to share these openly with your nanny. Regular communication and feedback help nannies perform their best and tailor their care to your family's specific needs. Remember that a collaborative and respectful partnership with your nanny ultimately benefits your children and creates a harmonious and productive work environment for everyone involved.

As an agency, we're always available to help families and nannies navigate this unique partnership and provide the guidance and tools needed to ensure a strong working relationship.

THE
Washburn
AGENCY

10 INDUSTRY EVENTS



YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS

2024

The industry has come a long way in terms of providing opportunities to gain new knowledge and network with other professionals. From virtual events to in person conferences across the globe, there is an opportunity for you!

1. Nanny Careerfest 2024 will be held on February 17 and 18. More than just a job fair, the Nanny CareerFest is a two-day industry-wide event spotlighting the nanny and family assistant workforce and promoting those positions as professional job choices for individuals looking for meaningful work for a few years or a lifetime. Visit https://nannycarehub.com/careerfest_2024/ to learn more.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

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

Nanny Camp by Adventure Nannies and Playful Acre will be held in 2024. To learn more, visit <https://adventurenannies.typeform.com/to/W56ZmxAE/>.

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



NANNY KNOWS BEST

IN DEFENSE OF HIGH QUALITY CARE

BY AMY HUNTSMAN

Amy Huntsman's original, cutting-edge innovation and pioneering insights drive her progressive thought leadership in the realm of infant, child and family development. Amy is an experienced and highly qualified infant and child development specialist, credentialed and licensed in education and health care. Her work provides a uniquely new, unified perspective, combining pearls of wisdom from traditional pedagogies with evidence from the the cutting edge of current research on children and families, and then delivering it to busy parents and professionals portioned out into quick, simple steps and short reflections that can have a major impact.

Have you ever had a parent ask you, “But why aren’t you doing something with them?” while their child is happily focused on an engrossing play and learning task? Has a newborn care specialist (NCS) client ever asked you why you aren’t “teaching” their infant the ABCs or how to roll over? It can feel disheartening to provide high-quality, evidence-based infant and childcare and then have your professional performance questioned or criticized by parents (or grandparents!). How can we respond effectively in situations like that? It’s important not only to assert our own professional competency, but also to advocate for the infant or child who is benefiting from this high-quality type of care and who deserves these opportunities for internally motivated and self-initiated learning.

The first step is always to take a deep breath and relax. Most of the time, parents are asking because they really don’t know that what you are doing has been demonstrated to be an ideal way to support healthy infant and child development. It helps to frame their question as an honest inquiry rather than a criticism, even when you suspect that it might in fact be intended as a criticism. You can give them the benefit of the doubt and rely on the shared care and love that you and they have for the same child as the basis for an authentic, respectful response, one that also sets and maintains the boundaries of your professional conduct. For example, if a grandparent asks you why you are “just letting the baby lie there and stare at their hands instead of reading to them,” you can first take a calming breath and decide to engage as if they had asked in a polite and inquisitive manner, “I noticed you are letting the baby do their own thing. What exactly do you think they are working on right now in terms of learning?”

This re-phrasing of their question then provides a template for your answer: you can explain that the baby is looking intently at their hands, and from their focused gaze, you realize that they are engaged in meaningful learning about their own bodies. You can further explain that every moment and sensory experience is new for a baby after they are born. Because their brains grow so fast (the brain doubles in size in the first twelve weeks after birth), they get to reexperience everything for the first time again, as the new parts of their physical brain start to wire with new functionalities. As these new abilities start to come online, the baby begins to actively notice new aspects even of the things they have been experiencing passively and without direct engagement since they were born. So, if the baby is staring intently at their hands, we can deduce that they are learning something meaningful in terms of training their visual perceptions and possibly also about the hands themselves (depending on whether they have become aware of their hands being part of themselves or not).

Very young babies are strongly drawn to look at different patterns at different times, and research has shown that at different points in their development, babies “wire in” the rods and cones in the retina that discern vertical lines, unlike the ones that discern horizontal lines and the ones that discern diagonal lines. Babies will choose to actively look at and engage with these patterns for extended periods of time because their neurological development depends on firing and refiring those neural pathways so the pathways become strengthened and eventually become the automatic, unconscious, default pathways of “seeing.” Thus, if the baby is intently focused on something, we can assume that they are learning from it. (Note that this chosen, intently focused way

of looking at something is not the same as the gaze reflex, which is involuntary and consists of unfocused staring, usually at a source of light, and is a late sign of tiredness in infants.)

You could close by pointing out that we could interrupt the learning that the baby has chosen by proposing another activity, but since so much of their lives are already taken up with sleeping, eating, and other essential care routines, babies have relatively few opportunities to let their internal drive to grow and learn have free rein. I call these the “golden moments” of childhood (as explained in “O is for Open-Ended” in the ABCs of Respectful Care series in this magazine) because they are when the child is free to engage in whatever learning their impulse prompts them to do. Whatever that activity consists of is guaranteed to be the very knowledge and experience that their brain and body are perfectly ready to work on and acquire in that moment. As long as they are safe, why would we inject another idea to supplant that?

They might very well go along with our suggestion, but we have no way of knowing what they are perfectly suited to be learning in any given moment, so if they are giving us a clue, we can observe and choose to respect their superior self-knowledge in this moment, as expressed by their intentional focus. If they were asking for our help, or simply needed our affection and attention, we would choose to respond to that cue as well, so why not respond to their cue of being self-sufficient and hold space for their independent learning for as long as it lasts? Additionally, scripting and directing their activities from the outside all of the time (which is neurologically equivalent to “providing entertainment to them all the time”) prevents them from developing their personal agency and their ability to engage in independent tasks with persistence and resilience. These are goals we generally hold as essential in the development of a human being from infancy through adulthood, and we should begin as we mean to go on: by supporting the expression of these critically important skills from their earliest appearance. Therefore, when there is a moment that the baby has the energy and focus to work on a new skill that their brain and body are perfectly suited to work on right then, we choose to let them pursue their interest until they tire of it, and then we offer interactive activities when they no longer have the energy for self-initiated focus and would benefit from connected time with a regulating caregiver, such as reading a story.

Thus, a moment that begins with us feeling attacked (or at least misunderstood) can become a cheerful and enthusiastic moment of connection with the grandparent, sharing wonder and awe over the amazing leaps of development and skill that babies undergo on a continuous basis.



NANNYGUARDS
The Child Protection Specialists

You see a Mother or a Nanny
We see a Nannyguard

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Similarly in situations involving older infants, toddlers, and children of all ages, you can choose to interpret such questions as respectful inquiries and then, without feeling defensive, orient your response in the context of the child's ongoing unfolding development. Once parents (or grandparents) are led through this process of revising their mental image of the infant or child as being a passive creature into which adults pour knowledge and which adults must actively guide and direct at all times, they can come to see the child as a competent partner in life and learning and appreciate the beauty of the child's role in their own learning. They will appreciate your role as the professional carer-educator who actively and intentionally facilitates the child's self-directed learning while also discerning and providing support and interactive care when that is appropriate. At a couple of conferences this year, I shared preliminary drafts of my upcoming book describing a comprehensive A to Z of concepts and techniques in care and education and the relationships between them. The limited prerelease version that I shared at the Nannypalooza conference in Washington, DC, accidentally became an Amazon bestseller, thanks to tremendous enthusiasm from conference attendees who purchased it. In gratitude, I promised them I would prepare something that they could share with their charges' parents to explain once and for all why we hold space for independent learning and all of the other amazing things we do that parents tend to misunderstand and question.

Author's Note

I am delighted to announce that this book for parents is now available for you to purchase, and it makes an excellent gift for your nanny bosses and NCS clients! I recommend getting a copy of the book for each parent, not in order to boost book sales but rather because each chapter has short reflection exercises in which the reader writes down personal notes. These reflections are integral to the book, and each parent would probably prefer to write in their own copy. You can also get a copy for yourself because this kind of content rewards repeated interactions; every time you revisit these ideas, you connect them with your experiences since the last time you thought about it, and you create new knowledge –just like our kiddos do when we provide opportunities to extend their learning. This is Not a Parenting Book by Amy Huntsman is available on Amazon worldwide.



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FROM ABCS TO DO-RE-MIS: A NANNY'S GUIDE TO NURTURING CREATIVITY AND CONFIDENCE THROUGH MUSIC EDUCATION



Music, a universal soundtrack to our lives, is with us almost everywhere we go. It fills the air in supermarkets, gives life to our celebrations, and turns every car journey into a sing-along adventure. Now think of that same impact of music and imagine it through the ears of a child.

For babies and toddlers, music is more than just a pleasant melody; it's a dynamic tool that stimulates brain development, boosts memory, and lays the groundwork for language skills. In this article, we'll explore how those catchy tunes we often take for granted are helping shape the minds of music explorers.

Get ready to learn why hitting Play on your favorite lullabies could be one of the best things you do for your child's future.

Engaging with music early on nurtures emotional intelligence, fostering social skills as children learn to share songs, move together in rhythm, and express the feelings that arise from the melodies they hear. Whether it's through playing simple instruments, singing along, or just bopping to the beat, musical experiences are building blocks for a lifetime of learning and growth. Here's a parent's guide to nurture creativity and boost confidence through music education.

Harmonious Habits for Daily Musical Growth

Musical Mornings

Begin the day with a song. Create a morning routine playlist that includes a variety of music, from classical to world music. Use songs to signal different parts of the routine: a wake-up tune, a breakfast song, and a “time to leave” melody. This not only energizes the morning but also subconsciously teaches children about different genres and rhythms.

Instrumental Storytime

Swap out some traditional bedtime stories for musical storytelling. This can be as simple as playing pieces of instrumental music and asking your child to imagine and narrate a story that goes along with it. This exercise enhances their creative thinking and listening skills, and over time, they'll begin to recognize the emotions and narratives music can convey.

Kitchen Concerts

Turn cooking time into a fun learning experience by making it a kitchen concert. As you prepare meals, involve your child by using kitchen utensils as makeshift instruments. Create beats with spoons and pots, learn about rhythm and tempo, and even discuss the science of sound with different materials.

Musical Language Lessons

Use songs in different languages to foster a love for both music and language learning. Children can learn basic vocabulary and correct pronunciation through catchy tunes. Moreover, it introduces them to diverse cultures and global musical styles, broadening their worldview.

DIY Instrument Craft Time

Encourage your child to create their own instruments using household items. Crafting a simple drum from an old container, or a shaker from a bottle filled with rice, provides a tactile experience with music. It also fosters an understanding of how different materials can be used to produce various sounds, which is a fundamental concept in acoustics and physics.

The Crescendo of Early Music Education's Benefits

Beyond the fun of sing-alongs, early music education can literally reshape the brain, boosting areas critical for language mastery, mathematical thinking, and spatial reasoning. Participating in a music class or program can open up a symphony of advantages for your child.

Embracing the Energy and Building Independence

Every day presents a new vocabulary for children, and what better time to introduce musical elements? Singing aids in auditory development and vocabulary expansion. Early childhood music classes offer an arena for children to channel their energy, find their voice, and experiment with instruments at full volume.

Exploration of All Seasons and Senses

Children are natural explorers, and they learn through the discovery of all seasons and senses. Music education guides children through a sensory exploration of the seasons, allowing them to see, hear, and touch the vibrating strings of a guitar, the diverse genres of music, and the feel of a drumbeat under their palms.

Parents and Caregivers Are the First Teachers

We believe in parents and caregivers as educators. Music classes involve adults to reinforce listening skills and routine through foundational songs that signal transitions and help establish a sense of order and anticipation.

Early Literacy through Music

The ABCs are inherently musical, helping children grasp and memorize letters. Reading music often precedes reading text, allowing for pattern recognition and language development, easing the transition to literacy and numeracy.

Create Music Together

Music exploration can happen with friends and families. Attending an early childhood class is a great way to make new friends. Vivaldi Music Academy offers a fun-filled forty-five-minute class for children ages one through six. A great way to explore music can start at home today with Carnegie Hall's free resources for families and kids (<https://carnegiehall.org/Explore/Learn/Families-and-Kids>). From exploring the world of color, unwinding with soothing lullabies, or family sing-alongs, begin your music journey today.

Add a Weekly Class to Your Routine

Classes like Vivaldi Music Academy's Early Childhood Music Class, Vivaldi Seasons, are a wonderful way to introduce a child to music, and it's an enriching experience for children and adults. Our Vivaldi Seasons students develop listening skills, gain hands-on experience playing instruments, and learn fun sing-along songs to help them remember each new lesson.

The benefits of music are timeless and ageless, offering a symphony of advantages, particularly for the youngest among us. Establishing a routine that incorporates music can lay the first notes in cultivating the lifelong rewards of musical education. Whether it's attending a free community concert or sampling a preview class, your children will embark on an enriching musical journey.

Nurturing an early appreciation for melody and rhythm can do more than just entertain; it can ignite a spectrum of developmental progressions, from cognitive growth to fine motor skills. Let music become a harmonious part of your family's routine and watch as your little ones dance to the beat of their own discoveries, one note at a time.

Find a Free Preview Vivaldi Music Class Near You

Begin your early childhood music journey today. Experience a fun-filled forty-five-minute class and preview of our Vivaldi Seasons class at a location near you:

<https://vivaldimusicacademy.opus1.io/w/seasons/>.



Misty Munoz serves as the chief operating officer (COO) at Vivaldi Music Academy, where her leadership has been pivotal in broadening access to high-quality music education for students of all ages and levels. For more than ten years, Misty has played a critical role in championing the academy's mission and spearheading its development. Visit <https://vivaldimusicacademy.com> to learn more.

SEASONAL SAFETY



TRAVELING WITH KIDS DURING COLDER MONTHS

Nannies for school-age children are often tasked with transporting children to and from school and activities. For nannies who care for multiple children, this can often require traveling with a younger sibling in two. In areas of the country where cold weather dominates the winter months, it's essential to be knowledgeable about safe transport.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) offers these ten safety tips for keeping children safe while traveling during cold weather months:

- Store the carrier portion of infant seats inside the house when not in use. Keeping the seat at room temperature will reduce the loss of the child's body heat in the car.
- If you are planning to head out the door with your baby in tow on winter mornings, get an early start. You have a lot to assemble, and your baby may not be the most cooperative.
- Dress your child in thin layers. Start with close-fitting layers on the bottom, such as tights, leggings, and long-sleeved bodysuits. Then add pants and a warmer top, such as a sweater or thermal-knit shirt. Your child can wear a thin fleece jacket over the top. In very cold weather, long underwear is also a warm and safe layering option. As a rule of thumb, infants should wear one more layer than adults. If you have a hat and a coat on, your infant will probably need a hat, coat, and blanket.
- Don't forget hats, mittens, and socks or booties. These help keep kids warm without interfering with car seat straps. If your child is a thumb sucker, consider half gloves with open fingers or keep an extra pair or two of mittens handy (once they get wet, they'll make your child colder rather than warmer).
- Tighten the straps of the car seat harness. Even if your child looks snugly bundled up in the car seat, multiple layers may make it difficult to tighten the harness enough. If you can pinch the straps of the car seat harness, then it needs to be tightened to fit snugly against your child's chest.
- Use a coat or blanket over the straps. You can add a blanket over the top of the harness straps or put your child's winter coat on backward (over the buckled harness straps) after he or she is buckled up. Some parents prefer products such as poncho-style coats or jackets that zip down the sides so the back can flip forward over the harness. Keep in mind that the top layer should be removable so your baby doesn't get too hot after the car warms up.
- Use a car seat cover only if it does not have a layer under the baby. Nothing should ever go underneath your child's body or between her body and the harness straps. Be sure to leave the baby's face uncovered to avoid trapped air and rebreathing.
- Remember, if the item did not come with the car seat, it has not been crash tested and may interfere with the protection provided in a crash. Never use sleeping bag inserts or other stroller accessories in the car seat.
- Pack an emergency bag for your car. Keep extra blankets, dry clothing, hats and gloves, and nonperishable snacks in your car in case of an on-road emergency or if your child gets wet on a winter outing.
- Leave plenty of time to get to where you are going. Driving in wintry conditions will require you to slow down and be extra cautious.

The AAP also warns parents that many retailers carry car seat bundling products that are not safe to use in a car seat. Make sure products have been approved by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

If you have questions about car seat safety, please reach out to a child passenger safety technician in your area. Visit <https://cert.safekids.org/> to find a tech near you.



Five tips to consider if you'd like to work at an agency and how to do both nannying and agency work:

- Stay up to date on current industry standards and the trends in the area you service.
- Time management is your friend. Ensure you keep your calendar up to date and review it often to avoid double commitments.
- Be aware of your communication style and adjust as necessary when working with different nanny candidates.
- Be prepared for challenging conversations and situations. Only some candidates will be a fit for your agency, and you may not like every nanny you interview.
- Communicate well. There are multiple moving pieces when processing candidates in an agency. Open communication with other agency staff will ensure everyone is on the same page and candidates are processed efficiently.

BONUS: Many agencies are moving to a virtual platform. Interviews are done over Zoom, Trello can be used to organize information, and there are many other possibilities. Make sure you are comfortable using these platforms or are willing to learn as necessary.

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