

July/August 2015

NANNY MAGAZINE

teach play love

Interview
alert!



Let's Get Creative!

writing, building, painting,
playing, & more!

HOMEWORK?
BUT IT'S
SUMMER!

**GETTING YOUR
CONTRACT
RIGHT**

**BABY FOOD:
MAKE YOUR
OWN**

**OTHER MOTHER
I AM THAT
OTHER YOU**

NANNY MAGAZINE

teach play love

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BY JENNIFER KUHN



Get your blender ready for registered dietitian Amber Ketchum's perfect-for-summer peach popsicles. Great for your charges on a hot day!

Photo Credit: MorgueFile

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Editor's Note

"CREATIVITY IS INVENTING, EXPERIMENTING, GROWING, TAKING RISKS, BREAKING RULES, MAKING MISTAKES, AND HAVING FUN."

—MARY LOU COOK (TEACHER, AUTHOR, PEACE ACTIVIST)



Look around you and count the ways you are blessed to have the job you do. Your job description is loving and laughing. Your worth is increased in the eyes of your employer not by how well you keep a spreadsheet or contribute to the bottom line, but how large your heart is and how much you help your charges to grow. When I worked as a nanny, I always felt joy to reflect on the option my job gave me to flex my creative muscle with my charges. Beyond all else I loved to introduce them to the new depths in the worlds of art, literature, and play and how those spheres could intersect and collide to color childhood with shades my charge's parents didn't know existed. That is why I love this quote from artist and activist Mary Lou Cook and why I have chosen to use her words to kick off this issue that's all about creativity. I can't wait for you to flip the pages and get as excited about this issue as I am.

We have some goodies in this issue to inspire your creativity and help you whip up some fun arts and crafts with the littles this

summer. Nice weather? Rainy day? It doesn't matter—we've got you covered whatever the weather man says. Stephanie Felzenberg writes in to answer a question from a nanny with a conundrum: MomBoss keeps throwing out her charge's artwork and it's breaking her heart. Find out what Stephanie advises in this situation.

Keyanna Barr weighs in on this issue's dilemma: should your charges be doing homework over the summer break? Is it fair? What do you think? Turn to page 22 to find out what other nannies and real-life MomBosses think.

My favorite article in this issue is Beth O'Keefe's piece, "Other Mother"—beautifully written, Beth delves into the often challenging topic of what it means to love someone else's child unconditionally, almost to the point of serving as an additional parent.

Sheri Lopez, past International Nanny Association Nanny of the Year awardee, writes in this issue about why you need a contract. Does your contract need a reboot? Or are you just starting out in a new position and struggling to finalize your own agreement? Flip to page 32 to get our pro tips.

It may be summer vacation, but that doesn't mean your charge's education should fall by the wayside. 6th grade teacher Steven Singer writes on behalf of Bad Ass Teachers, a nationwide group of educators who are on fire about teaching. Learn his tips for summer reading success by using graphic novels and incentives for keeping reading skills fresh.

I hope you love this issue as much as I do and find it to be inspiring to your creative senses. Please share snapshots of your photos with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest! Go forth and create, nannies! (And may no glitter fall on the carpet...)



Jennifer Kuhn, MPS,
Editor in Chief



**WHAT THIS PLACE NEEDS
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Gotta Have It Merch Roundup

BY JULIA JUDSON.

GADGETS AND GIZMOS GALORE! HERE ARE A FEW TOP PICKS WHEN IT COMES TO SHOPPING FOR THE YOUNGSTERS IN YOUR LIFE.

1



1. YUMMY IN THE TUMMY

Safely introduce your little one to new tastes and textures with the Munchkin Fresh Food Feeder. With its mesh design, it's easy to use and clean while providing peace of mind from the worry and danger of choking. These are available at Target in a two-pack for \$6.99.

2



2. CHILDHOOD DREAM

Whether at the beach, the park, or even in the back yard, the Beach Baby Pop-Up Shade Super Dome creates a roomy, shaded environment and safe haven for children of all ages. Air is easily circulated through the mesh windows, which also allow for supervision of those inside. You can purchase this product from buybuybaby.com for \$59.99.

3



3. ROAD TRIP

Flights and long car rides no longer have to be stressful due to the irritability boredom can bring. The Purple Cow has a variety of games and puzzles perfect for traveling. Keep the kids (and yourself!) entertained with tangrams, hangman, chess, and more! Buy for \$9.99 at www.whitcoulls.co.nz.

soooo many cute designs!

4



4. TOO CUTE TO BE REAL

The list of uses for Aden and Anais swaddling blankets seems endless. This versatile product has become a favorite to countless caretakers. The ultra lightweight and breathable muslin fabric reduces the chances of overheating or suffocation. The blankets are quite large (47" x 47"), making it simple to convert this piece to just about anything you need it for. Their bright yet simple patterns stay clear and vivid wash after wash. Buy online at www.adenandanais.com for around \$50 for a four-pack.

5



5. MARK IT UP

Make outings to restaurants pleasant for everyone with the mark-mat from Modern-twist. Made from silicone, this high-quality mat comes with dry-erase markers and rolls up for easy transport. A variety of mat designs will keep your charge busy creating their own masterpiece time and time again. www.modern-twist.com. (\$18 to \$25)

banish boredom!

6. LABEL LOVE

Forget about the hassle and confusion when it comes to sorting personal belongings. Mabel's Labels is a fun and creative way to personalize a wide range of things such as clothing to eating utensils. Incredibly durable, these adhesive labels are waterproof and stay put until the time comes when you choose to remove them by simply pulling them off. Buy 108 labels at www.mabelslabels.com for \$37.

6



Nannies Ask

BY STEPHANIE FELZENBERG OF

BE THE BEST NANNY
NEWSLETTER.

Dear Stephanie,

MomBoss always throws out the art projects my charges make, even the ones that are so cool I'd be willing to hang them up at my own apartment. That makes me sad. I feel like she should be showing off her kids' creativity by hanging them on the fridge or at least putting them in a box somewhere for the future. Am I out of line for feeling this way?

-Sentimental Nanny



Photo Credit: 123rf/pictrough

Dear Sentimental Nanny,

It is not inappropriate to appreciate your charge's art projects, but it would be disrespectful to disobey the parents' wishes to get rid of the clutter. There is just no possible way to neatly keep every masterpiece the kids create each year.

I recommend taking photos of the children's art projects and creating a scrapbook to showcase the photos of their creative treasures once a year. The scrapbook makes a wonderful birthday, Christmas, or holiday gift both the children and parents will cherish forever.

I really think a scrapbook is the perfect solution to showcase their creativity without the clutter.

Sincerely,
Stephanie



Getting Your Nanny Contract Right (Hint: Write It Yourself)

BY JENNIFER KUHN.

Volume 2, Issue 2 | www.nannymag.com | Nanny Magazine | 9

Fewer problems in the nannysphere bother me as much as hearing from hard-working nannies who are not protected in their positions by having a basic contract in place to serve as a basis for the work agreement with the NannyFamily. I'm often surprised when *Nanny Magazine* posts a question on social media regarding how nannies structure their agreements only to read comments from followers who don't have any semblance of a contract.

Sheri Lopez writes in this issue about why all nannies need a contract to govern the work relationship between you, the nanny, and your employers, supporting the relationship that good intentioned as it may be could still

go wrong in any number of ways. The short of it is that if you are a nanny and you don't have a work agreement in place, you need to get one. Now.

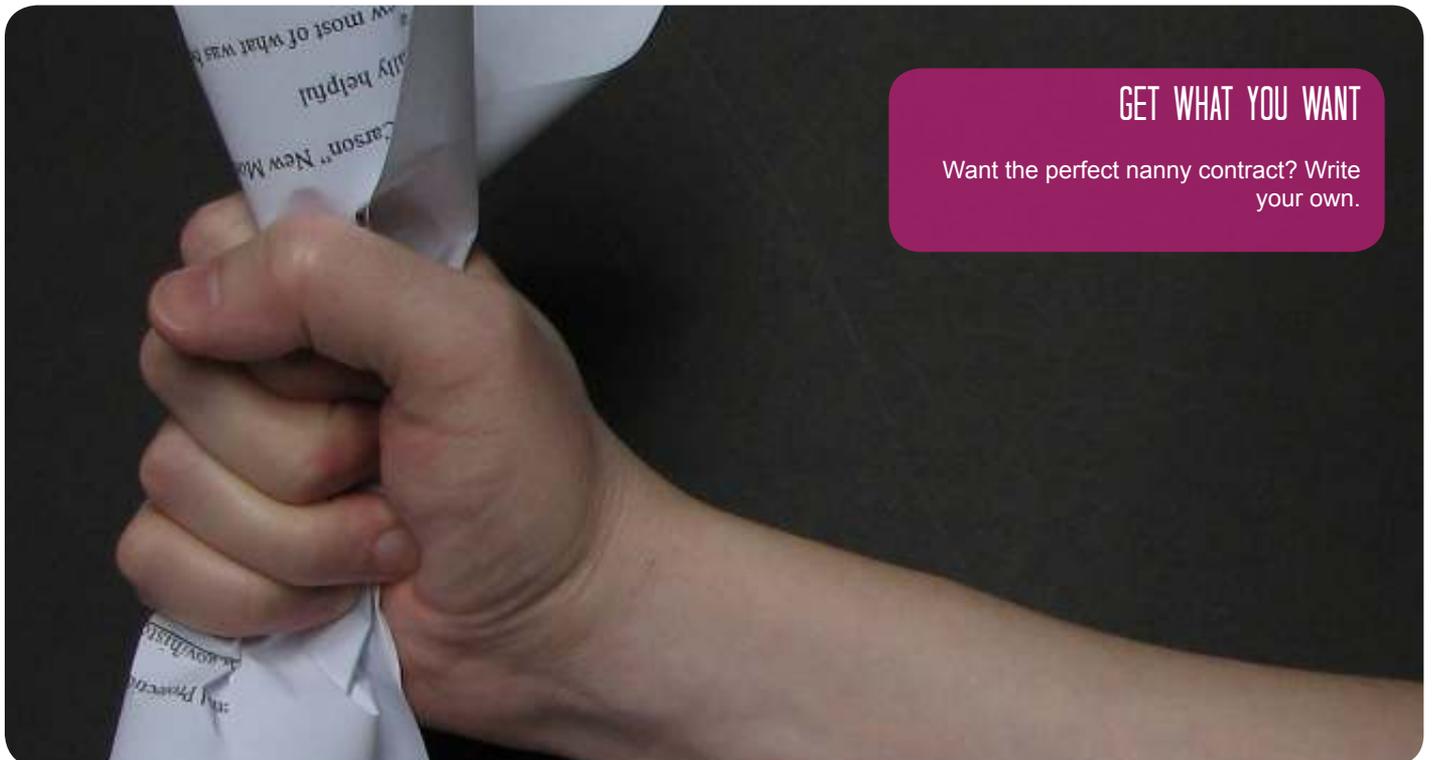
So many sources are already out there with fill-in-the-blank printable templates you can use for your contract. But with this being our DIY issue, in the true spirit of doing it yourself, I want to encourage you to write your own agreement... from scratch. Why? Because no two nanny positions are the same and no template in the world will capture the essence of what you will be doing in your role. Creating your own agreement gives you the opportunity to truly reflect your unique responsibilities on paper.

WHAT SHOULD BE IN YOUR NANNY CONTRACT?

The basics in every nanny contract will cover the number of children in the nanny's care, the hours worked, the pay rate and frequency, raises, sick and vacation days, length of the agreement, termination notice, and holiday and overtime pay. Most of these are standard elements of any employment contract and are not necessarily specific to the nanny world.

Other nanny-specific items are listed out below to spark your thought process.

- Whether or not the nanny is to accompany the family on vacations (and if so, what the rate of pay is, what sort of travel is covered, and what the accommodations are)
- Food considerations. Does your charge have any known allergies? Are you required to bring your own lunch? Should you be cooking for the entire NannyFamily?
- Communication methods (for instance, does Mom-Boss like to have a written log left on the kitchen counter



GET WHAT YOU WANT

Want the perfect nanny contract? Write your own.

Photo Credit: Morguefile

or does she want you to text her throughout the day?)

- Medical authorization (what if your charge gets hurt while you're on the clock?)
- Chores. Here's a big area you'll want to get as tight as you can with, otherwise you run the risk of getting taken advantage of. Will you be doing grocery shopping? Running errands? Scrubbing toilets? Running the kids' laundry? Making beds? No detail is too small in this area, but no matter how long the list is, add in some language specifying that only the listed chores will be completed.
- New additions. In this line of business your workload can increase dramatically with the addition of a new baby. If that is a remote possibility, it should be written in.
- Life transitions. What will become of your position when your youngest charge starts going to school full time?
- Professional development and safety certifications. Your contract is the perfect place to spell out what your expectations are in terms of continuing education. If your NannyFamily is on board with getting the most out of having a well educated nanny who is up to date on trends in the childcare industry and safety certified, then they'll be willing to pay for it and willing to write it into your contract. Here is the place to spell out that you want time off to attend Nannypalooza, reimbursement for your annual subscription to *Nanny Magazine*, and your yearly membership to the International Nanny Association paid for. A NannyFamily that is willing to invest in your professional development shows that they care about you not just as the wonderful person in their lives who is charged with looking after their most precious possessions, but that they care about you as an individual as well.
- Tuition reimbursement. Are you enrolled at the local university or looking to go back to school? Why not ask for tuition reimbursement for classes in your field? MomBoss and DadBoss will be familiar with the request, as it's likely something that's accounted for in their own employee handbooks at their jobs. Fair is fair!

IS A CONTRACT MORE IMPORTANT FOR LIVE-IN NANNIES?

No. It is just as important for a live-out nanny to have a detailed and thorough contract as it is for a live-in to have one, but several additions and tweaks should be made to accommodate for considerations that are specific to the nanny who lives onsite. The live-in nanny should have a heightened awareness of when she's on the clock as opposed to when she's off duty, because your charge bursting into your bedroom for Saturday morning snuggles is one thing, but DadBoss asking you to watch the kids for a few hours when you're trying to catch up on Netflix is a totally different beast, and if you're not seeing extra green for that, then you're being taken advantage of.

Other things a live-in nanny should include in her contract include a detailed description of the living quarters she'll be assigned. It should be specified in the agreement that the quarters are to be hers and hers alone. Proper time for a transition out of the living quarters should be provided for, especially if the relationship turns sour and the employer tries to turn you out of the house with nowhere to go. Also ask about how your pay may change should you happen to take an outside apartment.

NEGOTIATE. NEGOTIATE. NEGOTIATE

Very often, the first time two parties see an agreement will not be the last iteration of it. If you see a term written into the agreement that you don't like, say something. Get it changed, clarified, expanded, whatever you need the language to say in order to feel comfortable with it. Now is the time to make sure you're setting yourself up with terms for your employment that you can actually live with. Don't want to come into the home on Monday morning to clean up a sink full of dishes? Negotiate that into your agreement. Add in a fee if you must.

BEFORE YOU SIGN

Whether you've drafted your contract yourself or one of your employers (perhaps even a lawyer) created it, make sure you review each draft and pore over it with a fine-tooth comb, reading every single line. Ask questions when you come to a term or clause that is not clear to you and keep asking until you get a clear understanding of what it means.

METHODS FOR WRITING

From Scratch: Sit down with a pen and notepad and brainstorm a list of every possible consideration specific to the position. Once you have your list, organize and arrange by category and start writing. If your NannyFamily is comfortable, ask them to have their lawyer review and approve the text.

Half Scratch: Not comfortable starting from scratch? Download your favorite nanny contract template from the Web and pull out what you like, cross out what you don't like, and add in what you need that isn't already in the template.

This article only begins to scratch the surface of the myriad considerations when approaching the topic of contracts. Remember that any contract you sign is a legally binding document. Make sure you've got it right and have everything you want written into the document before you sign it. If you can afford it, it's always a good idea to have an attorney look it over before you autograph it. Once the contract is executed by both parties, keep a copy in your permanent files.



This month, we'd like you to meet Chicago nanny Kelly Biernat. Want to be featured in an upcoming My Life column? Get in touch with us at submissions@nannymag.com and we'll feature you and your awesome accomplishments!

Kelly comes to us from a southwest suburb of Chicago where she nannies for four older children who changed her life in more ways than one! Kelly explained

that when she found her current NannyFamily of four years, they instantly clicked, and it changed her life in a big way.

Typically, a nanny attempts to help her charges make healthy choices when it comes to diet and exercise, but in Kelly's case, it was the other way around. Her NannyFamily pushed her to completely change her lifestyle and to get healthy, helping Kelly to lose a whopping 100 pounds! After losing the weight, Kelly ran a 15K with her charge's mom by her side and the kids cheering her on! Kelly also

explained how she got back into dancing, one of her passions when she was younger, by teaching Zumba classes at the local park district. All of these huge accomplishments and changes were completely thanks to her NannyFamily. Kelly said, "Being able to dance again has been so great! My NannyFamily has always been supportive of me and helped me to achieve my goals!"

Kelly is also taking her passion for working with kids one step further by going to school to be a special education teacher. Teaching is such an honorable profession and so similar to nanning, and it's no wonder why so many nannies choose that path in life. When Kelly isn't working or going to school, she loves doing anything outdoors, whether it be camping, gardening, hiking, or kayaking. Kelly is truly an amazing nanny and an inspiration to us all, which is exactly what she hopes to accomplish.

Kelly explained, "I hope to make some sort of mark on this world. My favorite quote is by Abraham Lincoln and that is, 'Whatever you are, be a good one'. Whether it is being a nanny or being a teacher, I want to be a good one. Whatever I do, I want to have an impact." It's pretty safe to say that Kelly has not only had a positive impact on her charge's and student's lives, but all of us as well. We are all proud of you Kelly, keep up the awesome work!



PEACHES AND CREAM POPSICLES

BY AMBER KETCHUM, MDS, RD.
REGISTERED DIETITIAN

fresh fruit
to frozen fun
in a flash!

These popsicles are easy to make and are a great alternative to ice cream! Just in time for the dog days of summer, and did we mention dietitian approved?

Ingredients:

1 cup frozen peaches or fresh peaches, peeled and sliced
1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
1/8 teaspoon cinnamon (optional)
1 teaspoon honey
1/4 cup water

Directions:

Place all ingredients in blender and blend until smooth. Use a spoon to transfer the mixture into popsicle containers and freeze for 3-4 hours or overnight. Makes about four 1/2 cup popsicles.

Photo Credit: Amber Ketchum

Yes, You CAN Make Your Own Baby Food

IT'S HARD TO DENY THE CONVENIENCE OF QUICKLY OPENING A BABY FOOD JAR WHEN IT'S MEALTIME AND THE LITTLE ONES ARE CRYING AND YOU HAVE A TON OF OTHER TASKS AT HAND. WITH A LITTLE PREP TIME AND DEDICATION, HOWEVER, HOMEMADE BABY FOOD CAN BE JUST AS CONVENIENT AND MANY TIMES MORE ECONOMICAL THAN STORE-BOUGHT VERSIONS.

BY JOSIE DE HOYOS, MDS, RD,
REGISTERED DIETITIAN



Compared to store-bought baby food, which can be high in sugar and salt, homemade versions give you control over how much of each is used (or left out altogether). Along with fresher ingredients and certain spices, homemade baby food also has an enhanced flavor that many times packaged baby foods lack, which any baby is sure to love.

If you're looking to fill your charges' bellies with wholesome meals, be sure to follow these easy ABC's to homemade baby food making!

A. SAFETY

- The four-day rule: introduce new foods to Baby one at a time and wait four days before introducing another new food. This method ensures that if the baby has a food reaction, you'll be able to narrow in on which food was the cause.
- Thoroughly wash hands and any equipment that will be used to prepare the food with warm soapy water.
- To help avoid cross-contamination, use separate cutting boards for meat, poultry, and fish and another for non-meat foods, such as vegetables and fruits.
- Always wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly under clean running water. Keep in mind that even if you plan to peel a fruit or vegetable, such as an avocado or squash, it's best to wash it first.
- Cook meat, poultry, and fish thoroughly to kill any bacteria that might be present. Be sure to use a meat thermometer and cook all meats to an internal temperature of at least 160° F, fish to at least 145° F, and all white meat poultry to an internal temperature of at least 165° F. Side note: As a nanny, an understanding and training in basic CPR is important, and even more so when babies under your care begin to eat solids. For a full guide on pediatric CPR and/or to register for a course, visit www.redcross.org.

B. PREPARATION

- Choose fresh vegetables and fruits without major bruises and thoroughly wash, peel, and remove the pit and seeds. Slice vegetables and fruit into chunks then place vegetables or fruits in a small amount of boiling water and cook until tender. You can also cook by steaming or microwaving.
- When choosing meats, opt for unsalted plain varieties. Bake, boil, or roast the meat until it is a soft texture and is thoroughly cooked.
- For meat alternatives, such as beans, peas, and lentils, choose uncooked or canned versions that do not have salt or other flavorings added; rinse and drain well.
- Depending on the age of the baby, mash, mince, grind or puree the soft cooked vegetables, fruits, meats, or meat alternatives. A little bit of water, low-sodium broth, breast milk, or formula can be added until you get the right texture.
- You can mix in age-appropriate spices for added flavor, however adding sugar or salt isn't necessary.

C. STORING AND FREEZING

- Important: always throw away any uneaten food that's left over in the baby's dish; do not save it for a later time. To avoid any food waste, be sure to only serve the baby small bite-sized amounts at each sitting.
- Never allow cooked food to stand at room temperature for more than 2 hours (or more than one hour when the temperature is above 90°).
 - Prepared baby food should be stored in the refrigerator for no more than 24 hours for meat, poultry, fish, and eggs and no more than 48 hours for fruits and vegetables.
 - Thoroughly reheat refrigerated or frozen food to an internal temperature of 165° F.
 - Never defrost baby foods by leaving them at room temperature or in standing water. If needing to defrost, place under cold running water until fully defrosted and then heat (if needed); serve immediately.
 - To freeze homemade baby food safely, put it into labeled and dated containers and freeze it for up to a month.

Josie's Easy Avocado Delight

Ingredients:

- 1/4 ripe avocado
- 1/2 small ripe banana
- 1 pinch of cinnamon

Method:

1. Purée or mash the avocado and banana.
2. Sprinkle with cinnamon and mix with spoon until well combined. Serve immediately for best flavor and color.



Photo Credit: MorgueFile

Wonderful Watermelon and Lime Slushie!

BY AMBER KETCHUM, MDS. RD.
REGISTERED DIETITIAN

THIS QUICK WATERMELON SLUSHIE IS A SIMPLE, FUN RECIPE THAT'S THE PERFECT HEALTHY SUMMER TREAT AND REFRESHING TO BOOT! MAKE THEM ON THE JOB FOR YOUR CHARGES OR SURPRISE YOUR FRIENDS AT A BACKYARD BARBECUE THIS SUMMER.

Makes 1 serving.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup seedless watermelon chunks
- 1 tablespoon freshly squeezed lime juice (about half of a medium lime)
- 1 teaspoon sugar (optional)
- 1/4 cup ice

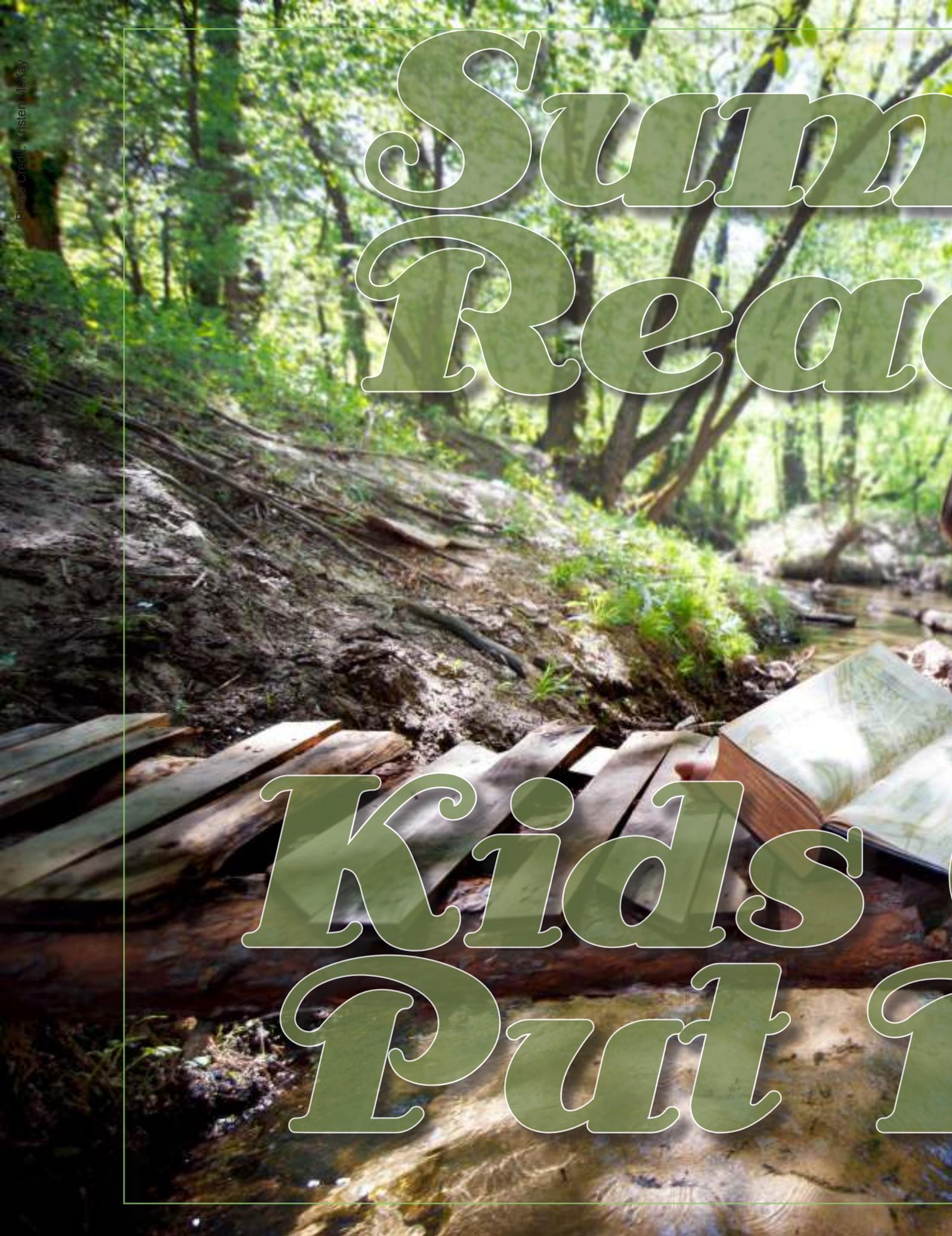
Directions:

Place ingredients in blender and blend until everything is combined. Serve in frosted glasses with a fun straw for extra excitement.

Photo Credit: Amber Ketchum

Summer Reading

Kids Put It



A young boy with short brown hair, wearing a blue and white checkered shirt and yellow shorts, is sitting on a rustic wooden bridge made of planks. He is holding a bright yellow fruit, possibly a lemon or orange, and appears to be eating it. The bridge spans a small stream with clear water. The background is a lush forest with green trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

Summer
Reading

Can't
Down

BY STEVEN SINGER.

MR. SINGER TEACHES 8TH GRADE LANGUAGE ARTS IN PENNSYLVANIA. LEARN HIS TIPS AND TRICKS FOR KEEPING KIDS READING ALL SUMMER LONG.

Kids love comic books. We want kids to read. This is a no brainer!

Give them what they want!

In the adult world, we call them graphic novels, which really just means stories with pictures. Graphic novels seem to be a big deal these days, with some even going on to win the Pulitzer Prize for literature.

So while it may be summer vacation, nannies (and teachers!) still want kids to read. Why not make it more fun by offering graphic novels and a reading chart with an incentive to keep reading all summer long? But where to start and what's appropriate for which age group? Here are some suggestions:

PRE-K:

You can't go wrong with anything by Mo Willems, especially the "Elephant and Piggy" books. A carefree porker and worrywart pachyderm are the best of friends and have lots of fun adventures.

GRADES 2-3:

"Robot Dreams" by Sarah Varon. This almost wordless story about a dog that builds a robot friend allows even the youngest readers to follow the story independently.

GRADES 4-5:

"Wizard of Oz" series adapted from Frank L. Baum by Eric Shanower and Skottie Young. The books enjoyed by generations get a facelift for today. Less Hollywood, more fantasy. These graphic novels appeal to both boys and girls.

GRADES 6-8:

"Bone" series by Jeff Smith. Three cousins go on an adventure in a magical land with laughs and scares. Equal parts Charlie Brown and Tolkien. This series is a classic for all ages!

GRADES 9-11:

"American Born Chinese" by Gene Luen Yang. Jin Wang just wants to fit in with his classmates. This story about ethnicity and alienation is a masterpiece!

GRADE 12:

"Maus" by Art Spiegelman. This is the true story of the author's father surviving the Holocaust in a concentration camp. The Jews are drawn as mice, the Nazis as cats. Emotional and thought-provoking!

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READING
LOG



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You're a
dumb piece
of trash.

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bullying like
this every day.

Your kids do.

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**be more than
a bystander.**

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StopBullying.gov



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***Mommy
Musings***

*A real MomBoss
weighs in on all
things nanny*

***Money,
Honey***

BECAUSE THAT TRIP TO THE CRAFT
SUPPLY STORE DOESN'T COME CHEAP.

BY ERIN BAILEY.

Let's talk money! No, not your pay check, but all the money it takes to keep your charges fed, entertained, and well crafted.

DIY projects can be costly, so who picks up the tab at the craft store? If it is not already laid out in your contract, have a detailed conversation with your MomBoss.

Here are some questions to ask when it comes to moolah, not just for fun projects like those you'll see in this issue, but for everyday common occasions as well:

-How often is it ok to take your charges out to eat?

-Can you include your meal on the bill when you and your charges eat out or do they need to be separate?

-How often can you take your charges for entertainment that costs money, like movies, waterparks, bounce houses, and fun parks?

-Is there a weekly or monthly budget for extras?

-Who will pay for craft store trips for craft supplies, sensory tables, behavior charts, and other supplies to enrich your charge's youth?

-If you need to go to the grocery store for diapers, medicine, or other incidentals, who will pay and how?

Once you and your MomBoss have some clarity regarding how much you can spend on your charges and for what, you need to decide how you will pay for extras.

Here are some options:

1. COLD HARD CASH.

Advantages: Cash is simple and helps you stay within budget. After all, you can't overdraft on a twenty.

Disadvantages: With cash, accounting for receipts can be somewhat annoying. Not to mention, if you run into a true emergency, that same twenty won't really be of much

use.

2. A CREDIT CARD WITH YOUR NAME ON IT.

Advantages: Having your own credit card provides access to money in case of emergencies, and gives MomBoss the ability to track spending without needing receipts.

Disadvantages: On the downside, having a credit card creates liability for MomBoss should you spend more than authorized. Not to mention, if you truly need cash (like if the ice cream truck rolls through the neighborhood), it isn't readily available.

3. A PREPAID DEBIT CARD.

Advantages: With a prepaid debit card, you get easy access to cash, the ability to track spending without keeping up with receipts, and MomBoss's liability for unauthorized spending is limited.

Disadvantages: A prepaid debit card can be somewhat of a hassle when it needs to be reloaded, and sometimes they come with a nominal fee.

In my home, we have chosen to use the American Express prepaid debit card. Most months the monthly fee is waived. I do have to remember to reload it every week with the weekly budgeted amount for extras, but my nanny has a card with her name on it that is easy to use and she does not have to keep up with receipts. In case of an emergency, I have been able to put more money on the card instantly using an app on my phone.

Regardless of what method you and your MomBoss choose, have the conversation about money for extras and be sure you are both on the same page as to budget so expectations are clear. And either way you slice it, we sure do appreciate if you try to keep prices in mind during your super fun trips to the craft supply store!

"WITH A PREPAID DEBIT CARD, YOU GET EASY ACCESS TO CASH. THE ABILITY TO TRACK SPENDING WITHOUT KEEPING UP WITH RECEIPTS. AND MOMBOSS'S LIABILITY FOR UNAUTHORIZED SPENDING IS LIMITED."



OTHER MOTHER



ER

Photo Credit: 123rf/Olga Murina

BY BETH O'KEEFE.

“I AM THAT
OTHER
YOU.”

What would it look like to actually have that other pair of hands you wish for when you have four hours left of work to get done today and its already 10:00 at night? How many times have you growled, “I need another me!”

I am that “other” you.

I am The Nanny.

It is astounding how many nannies are caught in a trap of muddled expectations on a regular basis, from household to household, one job to the next job, by not having in their own minds a clear definition of their career and the foundation by which their job is a truly respected value. Let’s see if we can clear this up.

TOMATO/TOMAHTO

A little blue-eyed boy looked guilelessly at me and asked, “What’s the difference?” Ahh, the question we all deal with in our field: what is the difference between a “babysitter” and a “nanny”? Most of us have found constructive, even humorous, ways to simplify this answer for our little friends (“Have I ever sat on you? No? Then I must be the nanny...”), but we also know that their lack of understanding does not originate with them because the term “babysitter” did not originate with them. Somewhere a grownup is telling them that’s what you are, and it is grating. Why?

The Same Difference. Let’s once-and-for-all draw the lines. Let’s educate ourselves and know what we do and who we are. I once read a veteran nanny explain role differences on a popular caregiver’s forum, and I couldn’t have disagreed more! Her definitions included that a sitter does projects with the children, and a nanny did housework. No wonder so many of us don’t know what’s expected of us! Too many hard-working nannies do not understand that their career is their responsibility, so their contract must be their

own responsibility as well. To avoid being considered a babysitter, one must not think or act like one, but to take ownership of the terms of the contract.

Here are my definitions for terms commonly used in the childcare industry:

BABYSITTER - One who is employed on a part-time basis to supervise others' children in the absence of the parents, usually for a short period of time. Their chief responsibility is to keep the children safe, preferably entertained or engaged in a productive diversion, and to ensure they follow their parents' expectations in behavior and responsibilities (eating, hygiene, sleep, homework, play, etc.). The babysitter is not responsible for decision making, character development, or teaching. Their responsibility ends when the parents return.

NANNY - One who is contracted with, usually on a full-time basis, as the result of a mutual business agreement with the employer, and within the context of her ongoing career. Unlike the babysitter who serves only the family, the nanny is also accountable to her career goals (e.g., retirement, pay raises, income/outflow, living expenses, etc). Her chief responsibility is to act in the capacity as either or both parents; she is in fact an alternate parent, or the "other mother." Her duties include all of those of a babysitter, but only as they relate to the larger picture: raising a child. Activities are not to be merely diversions to keep the kids occupied till Mom gets home, but rather as a means to an end, an intentional cog in the developmental wheel. Every day, every portion of every day, is a 100% devotion to the purpose and work of governing and guiding a child and that child's family, and accepting the responsibility of that goal.

We all know the minimal hurt, the slight annoyance and the barely-there reticence to fully connecting with the parents of our charges when they view us as the sitter (we feel that same sting from some other adults; our spouses, friends, or others, too, when they dismiss our career choices as not being real). I am not sure that we know why we chafe though—partly because it is so slight that we almost feel guilty for it, particularly if our relationship with our employers is an otherwise good one. So what is that nagging grrr-factor?

NANNY 911

Being a mom is a hard job. Being a stay-at-home mom is incredibly demanding; it is a nonstop, 24/7/365/18- to 20-year gig with relatively little sleep and reimbursement in the form that only a parent can appreciate. Being the nanny for other people's children is the second-most challenging role of all, because you have the responsibility of parenthood but more pressure to execute it flawlessly because you're being paid for it. You must be more exact in your expectations, stricter with your en-

forcement, and are much more vulnerable in the event of less-than-perfect results. If a parent makes a mistake—even if something happens outside of their control—with their own child, they sweat and shake and fine-tune their parenting skills for next time. If a nanny experiences the same scenario, she can be subject to a lack of confidence from the parents, lecturing, or even discharge and the loss of her livelihood and reputation. Except for the discharge (unless it is obviously genuine carelessness and not just navigating the nuances of another family), we even shoulder the weight of the parents' responses because it is justified panic on behalf of their precious children. Sometimes we realize that they just need to vent, and that's okay too. Even if we come away knowing that we did our best under the circumstances, we can accept "correction" humbly because it is, after all, their child, and this is not "just a job," it is someone's entire life. We recognize this. We respect this.

"HOW MANY MOMS CAN ENVISION CARRYING THAT 18-MONTH-OLD CHILD UP THE STAIRS AGAIN FOR A POOPY DIAPER CHANGE FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS?"

RESPECT. RECOGNITION... AND RED CRAYONS

What I believe we are chafing from in our very important careers is three-fold: respect, recognition, and, well, we'll save the last one for later. Oversimplified, we give respect, and would like it in return on the same level.

"A country's character is defined by its 'rustics'... they are the legs you stand on, and that position demands respect." (Ever After: A Cinderella Story. Film, 1998. Cinderella [Drew Barrymore] to Prince Henry [Dougray Scott])

Respect. This, truly, is the bottom line. Many of us enjoy an excellent relationship with our MomBoss and Dad-Boss. We enjoy a team effort at raising the children and we have a healthy, mutual respect. To date, I have enjoyed two such work environments in which the level of genuine care and mutual respect was stellar. It was not the result of a contrived sense of the parents "giving

the employee her due respect,” but rather an authentic, selfless appreciation for the support and sacrifice that she makes to enable the parent to work, to finish their education, to follow a dream. In short, it is the understanding that what you do makes what they do possible. You are equals.

Recognition. We recognize the family unit we serve, and while we don't want a pat on the back, we would like to have it recognized that our own families and relationships exist and are equally as important to us as yours is to you. We may even get a distant respect that says the words, but not an altruistic one that truly recognizes our individual needs at home. To shop. To clean the tub. To kiss our loved ones and stir our own suppers or cry into our pillows. For many of us, we have open-ended schedules, based on our employers' time needs, pushing all of our own to those two tiny days known as “the weekend,” which then become more like personal work days than any kind of break from work.

Red Crayons. Recently, I was goofing around with a little boy I work with and acting like a gorilla, loping around and swinging my arms and grunting and screeching until he was shrieking with laughter. He panted out, “Oh my gosh, you are so immature!” Hahaha! I almost fell over! But it is a fact that one of the reasons we succeed in our field is because we love acting silly, and we love acting silly because our inner child is alive and well. It is one of the things that make us good at our jobs. And, particularly if we have also raised children, we have an accompanying sense of responsibility that transcends a list of expectations from the parents, such as what a babysitter might receive.

When my children were toddlers, I was led into the girls' bedroom one day by my five-year-old daughter. She held my hand and pointed anxiously to the corner beyond her and her three-year-old sister's beds. There sat her little sister, clutching a fat, red crayon with her name scrawled in large, uneven letters across the wall. I promptly took the crayons away from the child and turned to my eldest: “You are not allowed to use crayons for one week; you will come with me immediately and get cleaning supplies, and you will scrub that mess off the wall until it shines! And when you are done, you will sit at the table with me and teach your little sister how to write letters, since she's three and doesn't know how.” That five-year-old is 32 now and tells me that she still hears my voice in her head and knows that even though she is a scientist and still pursuing further degrees, I will always outsmart her (this may or may not be true, by the way, but why would I let her in on this?). The point is, we have our fun, but we also have responsibility, and we have invaluable experience that defines the parameters of being “the alternate parent.”

The children you work with will be in your heart forever,

but the contract is with the parents, not the children, and it is a business issue, not just a heart one.

This, in turn, gives the varying rates we charge appropriate value and unashamed credence. This can be a real sticking point for many nannies, if you don't really know your base worth. You should.

IT'S ALL ABOUT THAT BASE

Well, then, how do you know your base worth? How do you charge? I am always fascinated to read the reader responses to those pertinent questions that Nanny Magazine poses on Facebook and Twitter. What fascinates me is how little so many out there do not appreciate their own value in the field. Does this happen because it is a “natural act” to care for children, so it doesn't feel like a marketable commodity? Is it because what we do is based on relationships and there is an unspoken guilt about being paid for acts of relational caretaking?

As with any profession, there are foundational points that determine your hireable value, and in our profession, there are one or two points that determine what it is not. It is easier to embrace these when you understand that what you do is a profession. What's more, it is a business. Let's look at the hireable qualities first: experience, education, and energy.

Experience. If you are 16, still study for your algebra tests on weekends, and could use some extra cash for makeup and that cute top at H&M, then you are in a perfect position to gain experience. But if you have been in full-time child care for at least one year, you have earned experience. This can be care in the home, in a school, or at a camp or daycare. The pay scale should be relevant. When you have acquired five years of childcare experience, particularly if the work has been in varied environments, your expertise analogously warrants a due increase. This is true in every business. When your résumé reads that you have had a wide and varied experience over 20 or more years, this is truly equivalent to any other profession that enjoys earned respect, pay raises, benefits, and title changes. Because you are solely responsible for your personal advancement, then you are the one to dictate how it is perceived. You can call yourself “Nanny Deluxe” if you want! (Not on my recommendation though—it makes it sound as though you come with plastic attachments.) Respect your experience!

Education. Again, correspondent to any other profession, the education you have acquired to further your career adds to your value in that career. If you have a GED but over the course of 10 years have acquired state accreditation in early childhood education and care, you are CPR and first aid certified, and have a clean background check, then your hireable value is increased exponen-

tially. Aside from traditional education, I personally hold many such accreditations that are directly related to this field, but because I have enjoyed a dual career over the last 35 years, I am also accredited in the food industry. The fact that I am ServSafe certified increases my hireable value as a nanny. In fact, in two of my positions, this accreditation earned me the job because of special dietary needs in the family. Whether you have been an art major with an associate's degree, or taught piano in your living room, or have read aloud at your library's story hour, these are all invaluable assets to your resume and your career. They have hireable value. Respect your education!

Energy. Okay, we all know it: we love crafts, we love silliness, we love singing, "Stay awake, don't rest your head" every day at naptime. None of it gets old for us. We can walk for miles pushing a stroller or holding a tiny hand, we can slide down a slide meant for smaller bottoms, we can carry babies up and down stairs 20 times in a day and chase a toddler out of the kitchen garbage. We can do it for years. I read of a study done once in which a football player followed a toddler around for one day, mimicking his every move; at the end of the designated time period, the player collapsed in exhaustion while the toddler ran on and on! Yet it is every stay-at-home mom's—every nanny's—daily exercise. But even the stay-at-home mom has a toddler who grows up. The nanny moves from family to family as the needs change, and she continues to exert the same energy year after year. How many moms can envision carrying that 18-month-old child up the stairs again for a poopy diaper change for the next 30 years? It is what we do. The required necessary energy to fulfill your work responsibilities of being an (appropriately called) "active participant" in the raising of a child or children, is above the norm of even a parent; it is a skill that your career demands that other careers do not. It has accumulated the same way your experience and education has: with hard work and diligence. It is extremely valuable and marketable. Respect your energy!

Now let's take a brief but important look at what your marketable value is not. It is neither favor nor sacrifice (there was no alliteration for this category; I checked!).

It is not a favor. When negotiations are being discussed, it is important to not only define your job expectations, but to defend them later on if necessary, so negotiate carefully. This can be tricky, as the people and personalities that we encounter at the interview and negotiation table have a "spin" on what we are given to expect. Clear definitions, citing examples, are critical. So how do you know what to really expect? Nothing can be certain, but this is where the trial period buffer can be helpful (three months is reasonable). You need to determine if you helping someone out comes at your business's loss. For example, will you negotiate a \$3 per hour wage cut

because they tell you they can't afford it, and then for the next six months watch as they remodel the house and landscape the yard? Do they want to whittle down your allowable sick days, and then you are caught losing needed rest (with pay) when their kids get you sick? If, for example, you state in your contract that your responsibilities do not include general housework, but then you say aloud, "Of course I don't mind tidying up the messes the kids make." This can be misconstrued and can even unintentionally give your DadBoss license to ask favors of you. "Nanny Monday" can become a daily nightmare.

It is not a *sacrifice*, but a service. These are not interchangeable terms. Your contract is your contract. It is not there for you to make sacrifices in changing it, which will require you to make sacrifices of a personal nature that extend beyond professional responsibility. A correct analogy here would be a homeowner "asking a favor" of the landscaper they hired to pick them up a coffee too, when going through the drive-through, and then continuing to take advantage of their kindness by having them bring breakfast every morning on their way in to trim the shrubbery. This becomes an unreasonable sacrifice.

Neither "favors" nor "sacrifices" should be impediments to being hired or negotiating pay raises. If they seem to be, in either the interview or negotiation phases, move on to the next family.

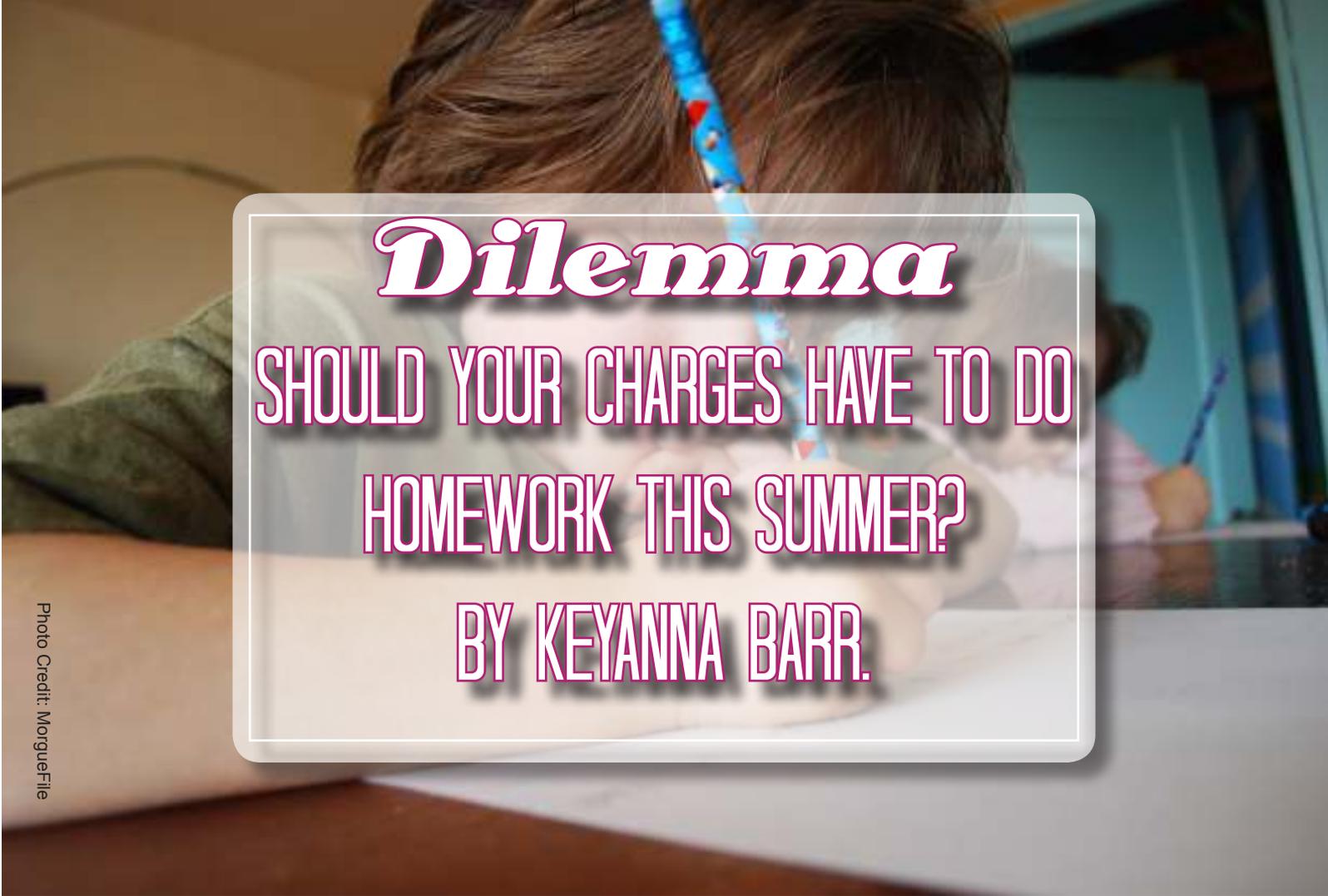
I have been fortunate in that I have only ever once been in a position where most of the concerns of this article were part of my professional experience. The whole point of this writing, then, is to help us all become more aware of the value of the work we do and how to reasonably manage and market that value.

You are the alternate parent and household manager. You have a highly marketable value.

Respect your value!



Photo Credit: MorgueFile

A child with brown hair is seen from behind, sitting at a desk and writing with a blue pencil. The scene is slightly blurred, focusing on the text overlay. The text is contained within a white rounded rectangle with a thin black border.

Dilemma

SHOULD YOUR CHARGES HAVE TO DO HOMEWORK THIS SUMMER?

BY KEYANNA BARR.

Photo Credit: MorgueFile

THAT'S IT! SCHOOL IS OVER.

At least for the summer.

There are few events that excite children as much as this annual right of passage. Visions of late nights, fireflies, the beach, and sleeping in are probably still dancing in their heads long after they leave the school building for that last time. Your charges are no doubt excited that they'll get two and a half whole months with no tests, no school bells, and no homework.

But wait. Some parents and nannies out there are firm believers that the end of the school year does not signal the end of learning, and homework has a place in the child's routine whether or not school is in session. So should kids still be doing homework over the summer, or does their summer vacation give them the right to put down their pencils until September?

This topic is probably up for much discussion in many households across our country.

Lots of people want their kids to see the summer as a season to be carefree and all about fun. Bekah Noel, a mother of three and a teacher simply says "no homework!"

Tiffany Loveland, who is also an educator as well as a mom of one, elaborated by saying she would recommend "enrichment and projects to tie the learning to what they like to do, but not homework."

A common theme among moms and nannies alike that I spoke with about this topic was that some amount of reading during the time off from school is a good thing. This doesn't have to be seen as "homework," especially if you can make it fun or tie it into the other activities of the day. Perhaps you can read a book about volcanoes and then create one! Another idea for kids that like to be hands-on would be to find a recipe that you can cook together and while the food cooks, you can read a related story. These ideas help foster continued engagement and learning without deadlines, leaving the attitude and negative feelings that the word "homework" generally evokes on the table.

Tammy Gragan-Sellers says that at least 20 minutes of reading is a must for her son each day of the week year-round. She says she has seen him grow so much as a reader because of that dedicated time.

Most of our moms are saying "homework schmomework." Which side of this coin do you fall on?

Data Blitz

We've scoured the Internet to come up with these interesting facts. Learn something new this month!

BY AMANDA DUNYAK.

The black pirate flag known as the "Jolly Roger" was originally a bright red French "surrender-or-die" banner known as the "Jolie Rouge."
(MentalFloss.com)

July was the fifth month of the year, until Julius Casear added 2 more months, making July the 7th month.
(FunTrivia.com)

During Elsa's coronation in the movie "Frozen," you can see Rapunzel with her short hair and Flynn in the crowd.
(SoTruefacts.com)

The average woman uses her height in lipstick once every five years.
(TheFactSite.com)

All the swans of England are property of the queen.
(Uselessfacts.com)

McDonald's is one of the largest owners of real estate in the world and it earns the majority of its profits from collecting rent, not from selling food.
(RandomHistory.net)

Summer is all of December, January, and February in the southern hemisphere, and all of June, July, and August in the northern hemisphere.
(KidsKonnnect.com)

The “dog days of summer” refer to the weeks between July 3 and August 11 and are named after the Dog Star (Sirius) and the Canis Major constellation.
(RandomHistory.com)

The male platypus has a venomous spur on its hind foot that is capable of dispensing a poison that can kill a medium-sized dog.
(LiveScience.com)

Strawberries are not actually berries. Berries have very specific characteristics, none of which the strawberry embodies.
(Produce.About.com)

Dimples may be cute, but they are an inherited genetic flaw. They are caused by a fibrous band of tissue that connects the skin to an underlying bone.
(MentalFloss.com)

There are more lifeforms living on your skin than there are people on the planet.
(AllThatIsInteresting.com)

Why You Need a Contract

BY SHERI LOPEZ.

SEE PAGE 9 FOR TIPS ON HOW TO WRITE YOUR OWN NANNY CONTRACT!

It is best to start any new working relationship with a clear understanding of your duties and responsibilities. At the same time, it is important for the employer to completely understand the expectations of the nanny.

Verbal communication is a must for a healthy relationship, however the meaning behind what someone says can be understood in different ways. That is why having the terms that govern the working relationship in writing is important.

All too often a verbally agreed-upon working agreement starts out great, but over time things that were once agreed upon can be forgotten or changed. Therefore, laying a foundation to build upon through a clear working agreement is the best way to develop a mutually respectful working environment for everyone.

Your work agreement can be considered a legal document, so you should keep it should you need to call upon it for employment disputes, like if you get unjustly fired and need to enroll for unemployment benefits.

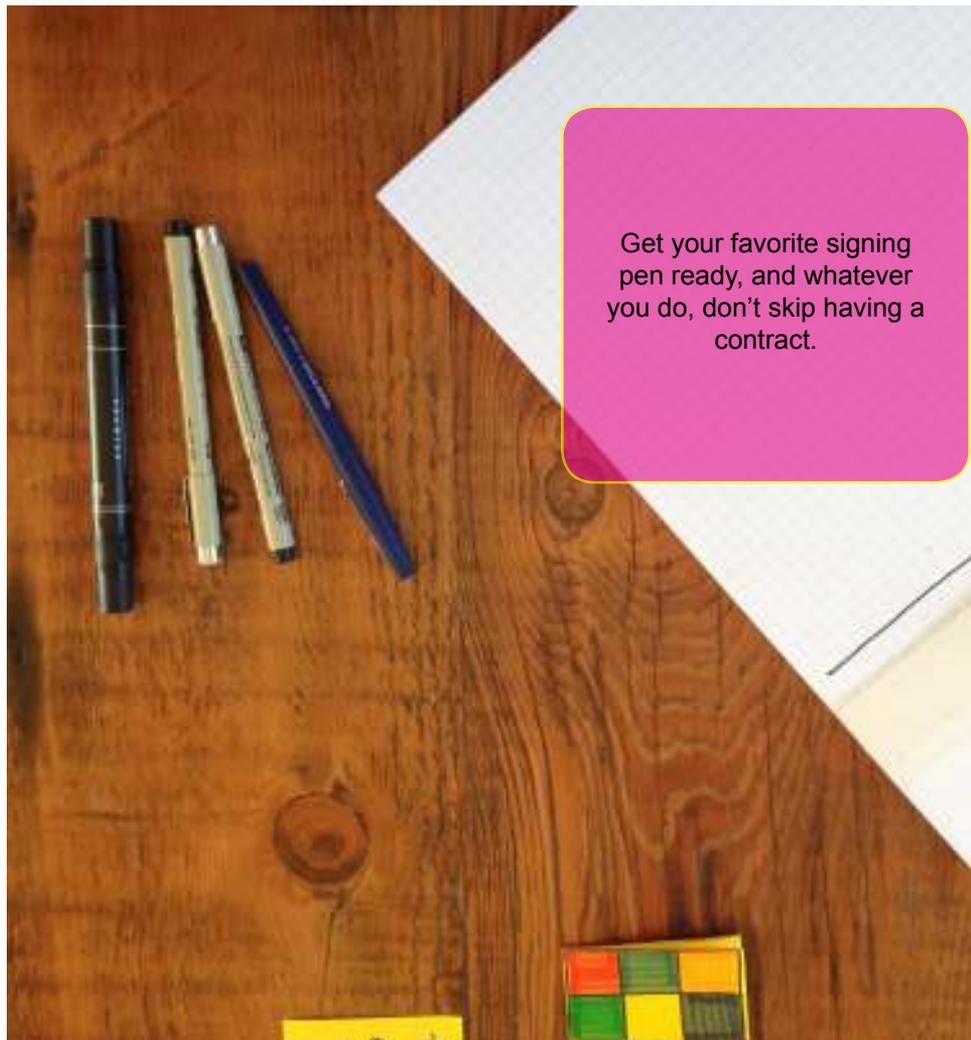


Photo Credit: MorgueFile

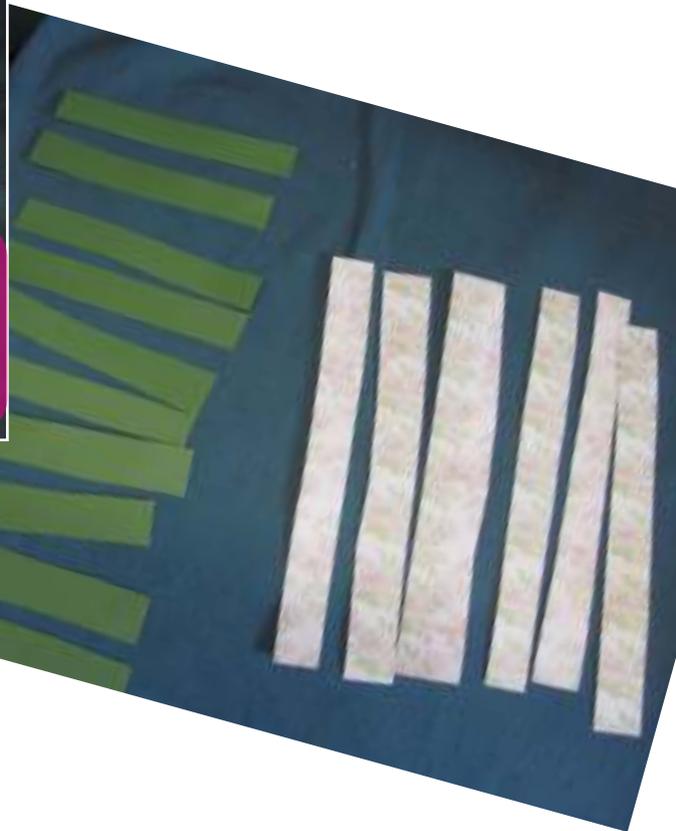
Get your favorite signing pen ready, and whatever you do, don't skip having a contract.



So easy and fun to make!
Just help your littlest
charges with the cutting!

YOU NEED

- Pretty cardstock paper in whatever color or pattern you like.
- Glue
- Scissors
- A photo of someone you love



HOW TO DO IT

Just cut your cardstock paper into 1" strips, using the entire length of the paper. Then, have your charges weave their strips to form a grid (shown to the left). Once the frame is made, drop in your photo and you're done!

Make Your Own Paper Photo Frame

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY REYNA SOTO MEJIA.

Are You More Right or Left Brained?



BY KERRIE BASCOMB.

Our brains are split into two different hemispheres: the right hemisphere and the left hemisphere. The right brain/left brain theory claims that of the two sides of our brain, one might be more dominant than the other side. The right side controls our creative and expressive abilities, while the left side controls our logical, analytical, and language abilities. *Which are you?*

1. Which activity would you prefer to organize?

- A. Choosing wall colors and designing a new nursery
- B. Planning a birthday party and getting each task done little by little
- C. Planning a preschool curriculum to help your charge

3. Which hand do you write with?

- A. Left
- B. Right
- C. Both. I'm ambidextrous!



5. MomBoss needs help planning out your charges' schedules for the coming school year. With so many activities to choose from, several of them overlap in time. You plan to figure out these schedules by:

- A. Ask your charges which activities they prefer and then assess their actual availability.
- B. View their schedule as a puzzle and figure it out.
- C. Try squeezing it all together and hope it works.

2. Which of these games do you prefer?

- A. Charades
- B. Checkers
- C. Scrabble



4. When studying for a class, you find it better to study with:

- A. Music on in the background
- B. Complete silence
- C. Either way is fine by me!



6. You prefer to work for a family in which:

- A. You're fully in charge of how the day shapes up
- B. Your contract fully dictates how your time is spent and you like the boundaries
- C. You like having rules and boundaries but with a healthy dose of flexibility.

What Are Your Results?



Mostly A's: Right Brained. You excel in the creative world. You make decisions based on emotions and gut feelings, which makes you a bit more on the intuitive side. You may often rely on hand and body gestures to help you to communicate. You also might be left handed as it is said that the right side of your brain controls the left side of your body.

Mostly B's: Left Brained. You are a realist and analyze everything. You most likely did very well in mathematics and foreign language classes in school. Left brainers are planners and enjoy making lists. You also prefer an environment or job where rules and boundaries are set up from the beginning. You are also most likely right handed as it is said that the left side of the brain controls the right side of your body.

Mostly C's: Whole Brained. You use both parts of your brain equally. This means you have a mixture of both right brained and left brained characteristics. You are probably on the more flexible side of thinking as you use both sides of your brain to make decisions and solve problems. You might also be able to write pretty well with both of your hands, making you ambidextrous. You really have the best of both worlds!



Staff Picks:

Our Favorite Etsy Shops

IN THE SPIRIT OF DIY, NANNY MAGAZINE'S STAFF ARE SHARING THEIR FAVORITE ETSY SHOPS. BECAUSE NOT ALL DIY NEEDS TO BE DONE BY YOU...

Kerrie's picks



Amanda Jane

"This woman makes awesome Disney themed jewelry! Very cool."

Social Manor



Monograms are back in now!

PoshPeanutKids



"Soooo cute!"

Jennifer's picks



Tip Top Teepee Shop

"Every expecting mother I know needs to wear this shirt from HeryoniT!"



HeryoniT

Amanda's picks

"We received the Mary Poppins phone decal in our Nannypalooza bags last year."



Pawsitively Southern

SHOPPING GUIDE

www.etsy.com/shop/byAmandaJane

www.etsy.com/shop/SocialManor

www.etsy.com/shop/PawsitivelySouthern

www.etsy.com/shop/LovingOutLoud

www.etsy.com/shop/NoahsBoytiques



www.etsy.com/shop/Marleyjanedotcom

www.etsy.com/shop/PoshPeanutKids

www.etsy.com/shop/TipTopTeepeeShop

www.etsy.com/shop/HeryoniT

Kristen's picks



Loving Out Loud

Jill's picks

Noah's Boytiques





Photo: Grant Delin

If you always store your firearm safely, no curious kids will put their fingers on it. And no gun will accidentally fire. Which means no screams of pain will be heard. And no 911 calls will be made. And no scars will be left. So please, always remember to keep your firearm stored safely.



Visit ncpc.org to determine the best firearms safety solution for you.



Make Your Own Baubles

By Jennifer Kuhn.

WHO SAYS NANNYING MEANS YOU WEAR VOMIT-STAINED TANK TOPS ALL THE TIME?

Not us! We support every nanny's personal style decisions, especially when it offers the opportunity to get creative with accessories. Save your cash and spare yourself the embarrassment of wearing the same Forever 21 baubles every other lady is wearing and make your own conversation pieces!

ALL ABOUT YOU

Your favorite colors. Your favorite designs. Your favorite chain length. Your favorite materials. Making your own accessories guarantees that you're getting what you want instead of fighting your way through some jumble of tangled accessories at the local mall.

IT'S WHAT YOU GIVE

We all know what it's like to be strapped for cash at just the precise time that a person who means something to you is about to have a birthday. Why not make them a beautiful home-made gift instead? A cute necklace or other accessory made by Y-O-U is more meaningful than anything you could buy anyway.

GET YOUR GEAR

Are you convinced that making your own is better? Stock up on these goodies to get going!

TIE A YELLOW RIBBON

Ribbon is cheap and can spruce up any headband. You can also use ribbon in necklaces and bracelets. So many colors to choose from you can't go wrong!

HOT. HOT. HOT

Hot glue, that is. If you don't already have a hot glue gun, you're going to want to buy one for securing beads and other shiny things to fabric surfaces. Supervise your charges if they're helping.

BEADS 'N BUTTONS

Shiny ones, glass ones, sparkly ones. Buttons and beads span a wide range of prices. Go fancy for wire-based jewelry and opt for the inexpensive big bag for kiddie projects with your charges.



SOME GIFT IDEAS

Make a friendship bracelet for your charge.

Bedazzle a pair of cheap sunglasses from the dollar store for a totally unique look.

Whip up an adorable hair accessory for your niece or daughter.

Use wire and fancy beads to make a special necklace. A long necklace looks great with a simple t-shirt to spruce up a classic look.

Find meaningful charms and collect them over time. Then pull them together into an adorable charm bracelet for your mom or best friend.

Crafting with Older Kids

By Joanna Becker.

*“Making
with kids
practically
requirements
nanni*



*crafts
for kids is
not only a job
requirement for
nannies.*

Making crafts with kids is practically a job requirement for nannies. We love to help kids make turkeys out of their handprints, paint a paper bag puppet, or put together a “tam-bourine” with paper plates and dried beans. These are tons of fun with the preschool and early elementary crowd, but around age eight, kids grow out of these old-school favorites. So how do we involve our upper elementary and tween charges in craft projects? Here are five ideas to get them engaged and excited.

MAKE IT MESSY!

In the late childhood years, kids are well versed in the boundaries around keeping things neat and clean. They’ve learned to clean up toys, put away clothes, and wash their faces and hands. They hear adults telling them to clean up day after day. So when kids are given an opportunity to get really messy, they are delighted! Some messy ideas include papier mâché, working with clay, or tie-dying.

TIE IT IN!

Think about your charges’ favorite books, television shows, or movies and create craft projects that tie in with those interests. For instance, if your charge loves the Harry Potter series, he could design and create his own broomstick. If she’s currently reading Charlotte’s Web, she could try making a spider web by painting with string.

GET SCIENTIFIC!

With older kids, consider changing your concept of arts and crafts to include science experiments. Upper elementary kids are fascinated by how science and nature work. Next time you’re looking for a fun craft, try getting scientific and make homemade crystals, make a soda and Mentos rocket, or make magnetic slime.

LET THEM DECIDE!

The best tool in your nanny crafting toolbox is your charges’ imaginations. Ask, “what should we make today?” Let them brainstorm on crafty ideas, and you’ll be surprised what they come up with. If your charges are ones to respond with “I don’t know,” be prepared to offer a few suggestions or ask follow-up questions.

GET INVOLVED!

Crafting is so much more fun for kids if adults join in rather than supervise. It isn’t just fun, though—it’s also a wonderful opportunity for conversation and building your relationship. If she’s making bracelets, sit down and make one, too. If he’s making colored slime, get your hands messy, too.

For more ideas on craft projects and science experiments to do with kids age eight and up, visit our “Crafting with Older Kids” Pinterest board at www.pinterest.com/nannymagazine/crafting-with-older-kids/.

Photo Credit: MorgueFile

Q&A Alert!

***Nanny Mag
Chats with Kids'
Book
Author
Florence
Ann
Romano.***





BY AMANDA DUNYAK.

PHOTOS COURTESY MEGHAN LEIGH PHOTOGRAPHY.

“Nanny and Me” by Florence Ann Romano came to me at the perfect time. I was in the interview process with a wonderful family and sure enough, during my second interview, they hired me! I was so glad that I had “Nanny and Me” tucked away in my purse. I would be their first nanny and that can be a confusing thing for a child. I left “Nanny and Me” with them that day and in the week since, they have read it to my new charges quite a few times. What a great tool for this transition period! I had the pleasure of chatting with author Florence Ann Romano, who just radiates warmth and kindness and is so humbled by all of the opportunities that have come her way.

Nanny Magazine: Tell us a little about yourself!

Florence Ann Romano: Well, I was born and raised in Chicago. I have cared for children since before I was twelve years old- first as a mother’s helper, then a babysitter, and exclusively as a nanny throughout college and early adulthood. I currently own a company with my father called Original Six Media as well as the online publication TheSixThirty.com. My history is in donor relations. My brother Michael is autistic and I worked for Giant Steps, a school for children and adults with Autism, which he attends. Doing donor relations for them there, I started a Junior Board for Young Professionals.

NM: What made you become a nanny? How long was it before you switched careers?

Florence: I have always loved children. When I was a little girl, I used to think that the toy store was the hospital where you would go and pick up your baby. So, when I wanted a new baby doll I would tell my mom I wanted to go to the hospital to get my baby. I have always had a special place in my heart for nurturing and caring for those around me. When I started babysitting, it made me so happy. Babysitting parlayed into a career as a nanny. I always knew that the “winds would change,” as Mary Poppins said, and there would be a time when I wouldn’t be able to be a nanny anymore. The career change came once my father and I started the family business. Being a nanny fulfilled me and taught me more about life than any other career I had. It taught me responsibility, discipline, values, and imagination, which all play into any career. These were all very important principles that taught me about myself and about what I wanted in life and encapsulates why I was a nanny.

NM: Where did the idea for “Nanny and Me” come about? Was

writing always a passion of yours?

Florence: I always wanted to be a children's book writer, but I didn't want to force myself to tell a story that I didn't need to tell. A couple of years ago, I started getting the itch to write about what I knew, and what I knew was what it was like to be a nanny. I always wanted to tell the story of what I did as a nanny and make it educational (for the parents to use as a tool to help with transition, which can be very scary and anxiety-ridden). I realized there was nothing out there for the most important end of the equation when hiring a nanny: the child. I wanted to write a book that speaks to the child and that was told from the child's perspective to help them understand why a nanny is coming into their lives. I wanted parents to use the book as a tool to prepare them for the transition, to be able to communicate and talk openly about it. A lot of parents can find it hard to broach the topic and reading a book is a great way to do that! A nanny is an extension of the parents' eyes, ears, and heart. When I have speaking engagements, I like to ask children if they know what a nanny is and I tell them that there are different words for a nanny, but ultimately it is whoever takes care of you when their parents aren't there. I like to relate it back to the children and what their general image of a "nanny" is without pigeon-holing the term. Something that really made me want to write this book was the last little girl that I nannied for. I loved her. She was still quite young and I knew it would be hard for her to remember me, so I gave her a jewelry box with a picture of her on it with a poem (a variation of which is in the book): "Our time has come to part, until tomorrow you are in my heart." I remember when I started caring for her, her mother handed her to me and I could see the nervousness in her eyes because it was her first child. She was scared but I could also see she was excited to be able to go back to work and have adult conversation while knowing that her daughter would be taken care of. In that moment, I knew that look on her face was a look that echoed around the world, and that planted the seed to write this book.

NM: Do you have any other books in the works?

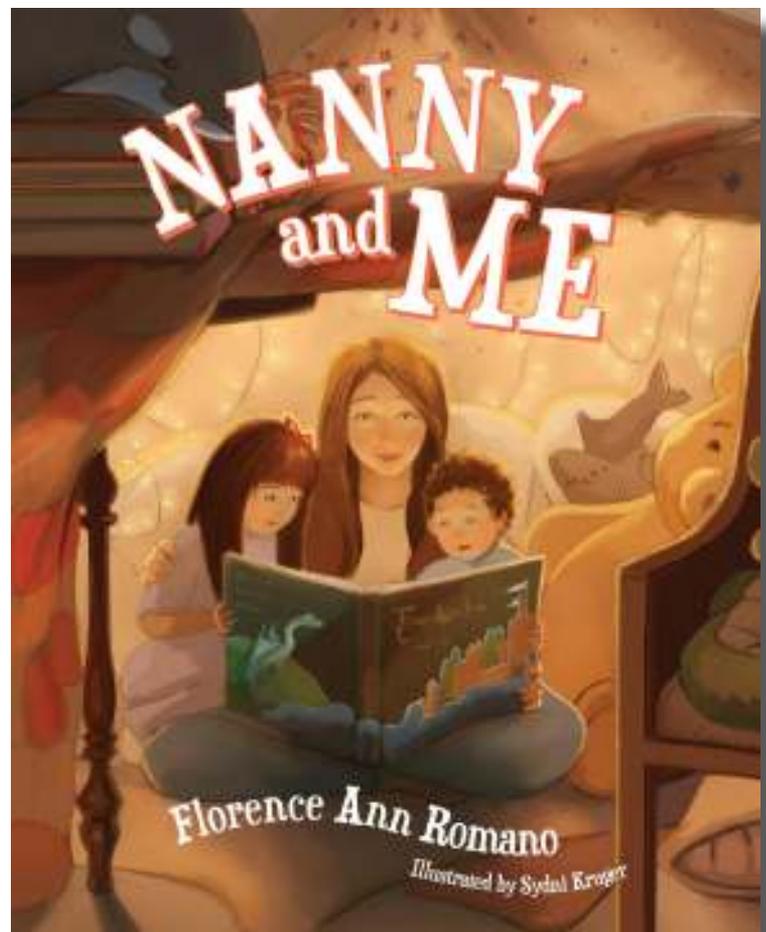
Florence: I am hoping to make "Nanny and Me" into a series. It's all in my mind, I just need more time to flesh it out. They will be an extension of "Nanny and Me," different adventures that they will go on and different lessons the nanny will teach the children.

NM: How do you hope the book will help to inspire its readers?

Florence: I really want this book to become a part of the conversation, a tool that parents can use to help the children understand that they didn't do anything wrong and that having a nanny is not a punishment, that all families are different and have a different dynamic, so that children can find a way to fit themselves into the equation. I want parents to know that they are not alone and it's okay to have people help them care for their child. A nanny is not a replacement for the parent; they

Want to win a copy of Florence's book?

Write to us by email at info@nannymag.com with 3-6 sentences about why you love *Nanny Magazine* and you'll be entered to win!





Children have the best sixth sense. Parents can watch their interactions with a potential nanny and then ask the children what they thought and take cues from the children.

NM: Nannies are portrayed by the media in such a negative light; what can we do to change this?

Florence: Just opening up the dialogue brings the subject matter to life in a beautiful, magical, and safe way. Movies can be fun, but can leave a bad taste in your mouth. There is this stereotypical socio-economic demographic that is no longer accurate anymore. 59% of American families have a caretaker and this number rises just as fast as the employment rate. We can fight against this stigma by having parents not be afraid to say that they have help, that this is “our normal,” not what society says is “normal.”

NM: Tell us about Giant Steps.

Florence: Giant Steps is in Lisle, Illinois. My brother, Michael, has been part of the adult program since he was 22 years old. At 22, the government no longer helps financially and families will have to turn to private organizations for assistance. I am doing productive work and I feel fulfilled. I started the Junior Board, made up of 21- to 35-year-old young professionals. We are a fundraising arm for the company. I wanted to communicate that you don't need deep pockets to make a difference and to make your mark in the world. I want to give them the skills to learn how to make a difference, for tolerance and acceptance in a world that is always changing.

NM: Finally, how can we purchase “Nanny and Me” and keep up to date on your work?

Florence: You can go the conventional route with Barnes and Noble, Amazon, or Books a Million. I would be thrilled to have readers visit my website, which I update regularly (<http://www.florenceannromano.com>) or find my author page on Facebook. I am also doing a book tour and meet and greets in cities like Memphis, Miami, Los Angeles, and New York. Come out and meet me!

are just another person to help shape the child.

NM: What is your best advice for nannies?

Florence: Make sure you have an open line of communication with the parents. This can be a difficult line to teeter. You see what goes on in their daily lives and it's hard not to want to get involved in the discipline side of things. You don't want to step on any toes, but you also have an ear to the ground in the child's life that the parent may not have. Respect needs to be established early on. Your job as nanny is to carry out what parents want; if there are any issues, they should not be discussed in front of the children.

NM: What is your best advice for parents?

Florence: The interview process needs to be very communal. There should be multiple interviews that are both transparent and interactive. Interviews should be family-oriented and the nanny should have time to interact with the children.

I hope I can get out to meet Florence at a local stop on her book tour and tell her how much her book is already helping people, as I hope it will become my new charges' favorite book!

Crayons Aren't Just for Coloring

By Nicole Panteleakos.

Melted crayon art is a fun way to pass the time and get crafty with your charges, especially on a rainy day. Because one of these three crafts requires glass materials, another needs a glue gun, and all involve using a hair dryer on high heat, these are not ideal for charges younger than age six, and all require adult supervision and assistance. The various projects come out colorful and unique, making them great gift ideas for kids to give away at holidays, birthdays, or as an end-of-year thank you for teachers. The best part is, kids can reuse the same crayons over and over again, making as many projects as they wish, or even return to their coloring books when the masterpieces are complete!

MELTED CRAYON CARDS

You Need: crayons, hair dryer, glue gun, thick paper

Step One: Prepare Your Card and Colors

Strip the paper off of the crayons and break each full-sized crayon into three or more pieces (the smaller, the better). Fold each piece of paper like a card.

Step Two: Arrange the Crayons

Have charges lightly draw a simple line design on the front of their cards. Hearts, single letters, and suns are some easy suggestions. Now arrange the pieces of crayon to fit over the lines to ensure there are enough pieces of crayon to complete the design.

Step Three: Superglue

Doing one small section at a time, cover the lines with glue from the glue gun and quickly top each section with bits of crayon. This is not recommended for children under 12. If working with younger kiddos, let them direct you while you do this part for them as the glue will be hot. Let dry.

Step Four: Meltdown

Have your charge work the hairdryer over his or her crayon card. More melting will result in a spilled candle wax look, less leaves the picture with splatters of color around or inside the outline. Once the crayons have cooled, break off any extra stringy pieces of glue. Now let the kids add a special message inside the card and present to the friend!

USE EXTREME CAUTION WHEN
USING THE HAIR DRYER FOR
THESE PROJECTS AROUND KIDS.

MELTED CRAYON ORNAMENTS

You Need: crayons, hair dryer, fillable clear glass (not plastic!) ornament balls

Step One: Choosing Colors

Help the kids pick out their favorite colors. For best results, use no more than three complimentary colors in each ornament.

Step Two: Break It Up

Remove the paper from the crayons before breaking crayons into small pieces of no more than twice the size of your thumbnail.

Step Three: Fill Your Ornament

Put two or three of each color (or more, if using one color) in each glass ornament ball. Place the ornament ball inside a container. One suggestion is to use an old plastic Halloween bucket. It must have high enough sides to keep the ornament contained, as the ball will jump around once the heat is on. While the bucket can be plastic, the ornament should be glass. Plastic ornaments may melt or warp under the heat.

Step Four: Melt Away

Let your charges control the hair dryer, moving the airflow around so that the ornament spins and rolls in the container. Do not let the kiddos touch it until it is completely cool, as it will be both hot and prone to shattering. This is extremely important: if you handle the ornament when it is still warm, even if it is not heated enough to burn your fingers, it can and likely will break. Once the ornament has completely cooled, put the top back on and display either on a tree or in a window.

You Need: crayons, canvas (any size or thickness), duct tape, hair dryer

Step One: Colors and Pattern

Kiddos pick out their crayons – newer ones work best for this, as they should all be the same length and width. Line up the unwrapped crayons side by side vertically with enough to span the length of one side of their canvas. If trying out a pattern, put several crayons of the same color side by side for best results. For example, a rainbow effect works best if charges line up four reds, four oranges, four yellows, four greens, four blues, and four purples. Artsy kids can even use glitter crayons for an added shine.

Step Two: Secure the Crayons

Duct tape across the lower half of the crayons, where the paper remains. Do this on both sides so your crayons stay firmly together. Lay the crayons flat against your canvas surface. If using a thicker canvas stretched over a wooden frame, place the crayons along the top and be prepared to hold them there, sticking about a half-inch over the edge of the canvas. If using a thin canvas that's more like watercolor paper, place the crayons so that they overlap the front of the canvas by an inch. Tape on the back (you will still have to help hold them in place).

Step Three: Switch on the Heat

Hand kiddo the hairdryer and let him go to town on those crayons! Changing the direction of the hairdryer changes the trajectory of the colored wax, so experiment with different angles. Moving the hairdryer more comes out to a flatter end result, whereas holding it over the crayons in a steady, downward motion will cause more 3D candle wax-like drippings. This is where old clothes will come in handy; the wax will splatter. It comes off skin easily enough, but will ruin your outfit.

Step Four: Let It Dry

Once dry, help your charges display their masterpieces with pride!

MELTED CRAYON CANVAS





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