

November/December 2015

NANNY MAGAZINE

teach play love



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PLAYGROUND
POLITICS
SURVIVAL PLAN

UGLIEST
HOLIDAY
SWEATERS

MOVING ON:
WHEN SHOULD
YOU QUIT?

INFERTILITY
AS A
NANNY

LET'S
PLAY
DRESSUP!

NANNY MAGAZINE

teach play love

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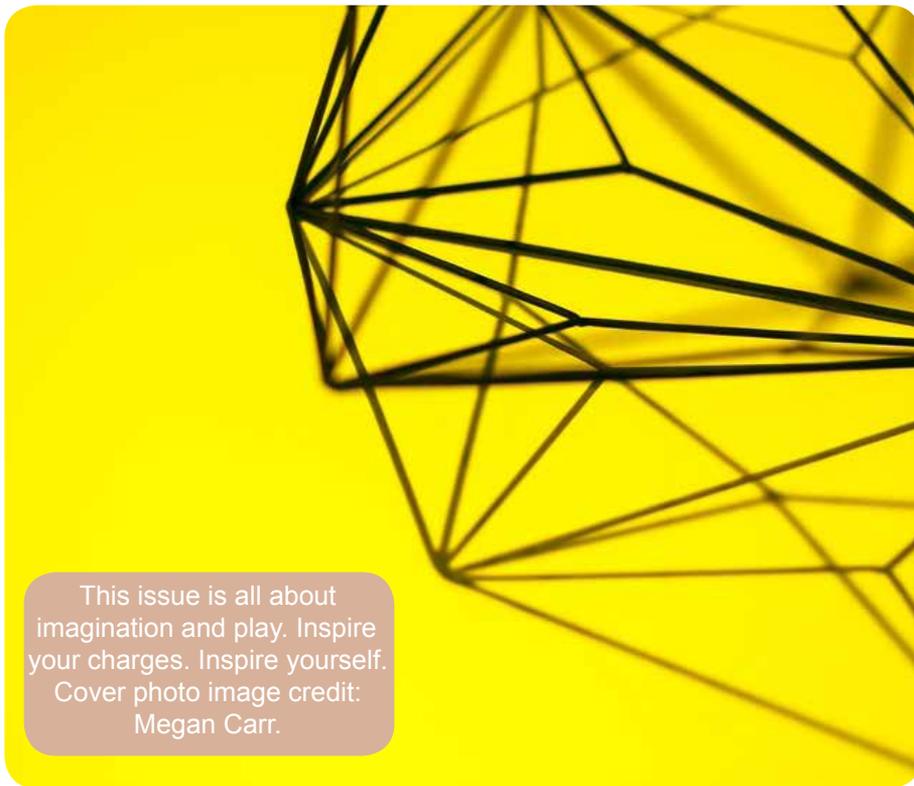
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This issue is all about imagination and play. Inspire your charges. Inspire yourself. Cover photo image credit: Megan Carr.

Photo Credit: Pexels

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Editor's Note

"LOGIC WILL TAKE YOU FROM A TO B. IMAGINATION WILL TAKE YOU EVERYWHERE."
-ALBERT EINSTEIN



Snuggle up with a cuppa and enjoy the last issue of the year!

It's the most wonderful time of the year – time for *Nanny Magazine's* Imagination & Play issue (oh, and the holidays, too, of course)! That's why I've chosen the words of none other than Einstein himself to kick off this issue. Imagination and play are the backbones of childhood, and nannies have a huge responsibility to ensure that their charges' lives are not so overscheduled and hectic that these realms go unexplored. Let's have fun with our charges this winter. Read on for some good ideas and a peek at what's in store for you in this issue, the last one of the year!

IN THIS ISSUE

I'm excited to bring you this issue just in time for the holidays. Not only do we have the usual suspects you'd expect (shopping guides and cold-weather recipes) in the lineup, but we're taking a deep dive into this issue's theme. What better time to explore imagination and play, delving into the perfect indoor escape: creativity and daydreaming.

Read Sarah Elaine Milkintas's article on holiday writing prompts for all ages and have your charges put pen (or pencil, marker, crayon, or stencil) to paper to create a Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Hanukkah literary masterpiece. Dietitian Josie De Hoyos brings us several whimsical snack ideas that are big on imagination and fun but easy on the prep work. Are you hosting or attending an ugly holiday sweater party? If so, good news: Kelciann Ross has done the legwork for you and brings us the ugliest of all ugly sweaters. Want more activities? Jen Webb shows us how to go big with dress-up parties, and Amber O'Neil reviews some of the most necessary products for boosting creativity. Other highlights we look forward to sharing include Julia Judson's "Playground Politics," which explores when a nanny should step in versus when she should let the kiddo duke it out solo, and dietitian Amber Ketchum's slow cooker recipes.

This issue also contains several hard-hitting articles that you are encouraged to share with your nonsubscriber friends: Amanda Dunyak covers quitting your nanny job, and Pam Chandler tackles infertility in nannies.

This is the last issue of 2015, and my, what a year it's been. I would like to personally thank each of the loyal subscribers and readers who've been with NM from the start. Your support propels us forward to a 2016 filled with hope and fun and joy. #NannyLife forever!



Jennifer Kuhn, MPS,
Editor in Chief



**WHAT THIS PLACE NEEDS
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BECAUSE GREAT THINGS HAPPEN WHEN WE LIVE UNITED.



Creative Time Must Haves for All

BY AMBER O'NEIL

THE IMAGINATION AND PLAY ISSUE SIMPLY WOULDN'T BE COMPLETE WITHOUT A LISTING OF PLAYTHINGS THAT CHARGES OF ALL AGES WILL LOVE AND FEEL INSPIRED BY. CHECK OUT SOME OF OUR CURRENT FAVORITES.

1



LET'S TIE DYE!

...e dying white shirts in various colors in different patterns is messy, but so much fun. ...ying and rinsing takes about 2 hours to do, ...t allow the dye to rest in the shirt for at least 6 hours. Kids ages 2 and up will enjoy ... but don't let kids under 5 work with the ...ve so it does not stain their hands or their ...othes. Create Basics 10-Color Tie Dye Kit ...es not come with shirts.

WalMart. \$12.97

2



WATERCOLOR FUN

Anyone 2 years and older can enjoy this product! The pencils can be used on paper, either dry or wet. If you use them dry, wet a paintbrush and paint the pencil markings to create the watercolor effect.

WalMart: \$2.97



3

BEAD CREATIVITY TIME

Perfect for school-age kids who love making beaded jewelry. This does require fine motor skills that kids 5 and under may not possess.

WalMart: \$2.97

4



CLAY PLAY

Girls and boys alike love it! Once the clay has been softened, any child can manipulate it. Once the clay has been used to create a project, it can be baked.

WalMart: \$9.97

5



STENCIL ART

Perfect for adults to teach little hands (ages 2 to 5) how to stencil and practice making shapes. The kit contains everything but the paper, so you have (almost) everything you need in one convenient place.

WalMart: \$4.97



6

GROW TIME

Perfect for little hands to learn how to grow plants. The stickers and figurines can be placed where the child wants them.

Michaels: \$14.99

Nannies Ask

BY STEPHANIE
FELZENBERG OF BE
THE BEST NANNY
NEWSLETTER.



Dear Stephanie,

Photo Credit: Pexels

I'm a live-in nanny. My family lives far away, and I'm unable to go home for Thanksgiving, but at the same time, I don't feel comfortable asking my NannyFamily if I can celebrate the holiday with them. What should I do?

-Alone for Thanksgiving

Dear Alone for Thanksgiving,

Wait until November to see if you get an invitation from your NannyFamily or from your friends. If your employers invite you to join them, accept the invitation so as not to seem rude. Be sure to offer to make your favorite dish or ask what you can make to add to the meal.

If your employers are traveling for the holiday without you and you don't want to be lonely, see if other nannies and au pairs in town are in a similar situation. Ask your NannyFamily for permission to host Thanksgiving in their home for other caregivers that cannot make it home for the holiday. Ask each person to bring a dish to reduce the burden of cost and having to make the entire meal yourself.

If your employers go away to celebrate Thanksgiving and don't invite you, be happy to have the day off. Don't invite yourself.

Sincerely,
Stephanie

Whimsical Snacks

BY JOSIE DE HOYOS, MDS. RD.

Snacks and kids go hand in hand like peanut butter and jelly, and as a mother of two growing boys, it seems they are always on the hunt for their next snack. We have the usual go-to snacks in our kitchen, like fresh fruit, crackers, and cheese sticks, but once in a while I like to throw in a fun, yet easy snack as a way to mix things up. You, too, can help encourage playfulness amongst your charges with these 5 whimsical snack ideas!

SMILEY FACES

While in my house we like to use leftover mini whole-wheat pancakes, these can be done with any piece of whole-grain toast, waffle or other “base” you have on hand (such as pita bread).

Use bite-size pieces of fresh or dried fruit and whole-grain cereal to create a yummy, smiley-face snack. For an added treat, dark chocolate chips can be used, too!

DIPPING DELIGHT

Combine equal parts cream cheese and Greek yogurt with a squeeze of honey (or maple syrup) and mix until well combined.

Cut up age-appropriate pieces of fruit, like apples and bananas, and dip away! Veggies like carrots and celery work well, too.

MINI KEBABS

Use pretzel sticks as the base to this fun and simple snack. Small pretzel sticks work great for little hands and kids just love foods on a stick!

Take red and/or green grapes, chunks of cubed Colby Jack cheese, and baby spinach leaves and arrange one of each on a pretzel stick.



Photos credit: Josie De Hoyos

Try these fun little kebabs at snack time with your charges today!

YUMMY YOGURT CUPS

Choose a plain or mild-flavored yogurt, such as vanilla. Yogurts with fruit blended in, or those with cartoon characters on the label, tend to be full of excess sugar.

Place a few tablespoons of yogurt in a kid-friendly cup, then layer on any fresh or frozen fruit, such as bananas and blueberries. Add a few more tablespoons of yogurt and finish with a low-sugar, whole-grain cereal for a crunchy topping!

HAPPY TRAIL MIX

Most store-bought trail mixes contain ingredients that are too high in sugar and processed ingredients. Not only does it cost less to make your own, the possibilities of ingredients you can use are endless, so get creative!

A good, basic trail mix will usually contain some kind of grain, like mini pretzels or whole-grain cereal, nuts and/or seeds (if appropriate), like unsalted peanuts, cashews, or pumpkin seeds, and dried fruit, such as raisins or dried bananas. Mix all ingredients.



Delicious (and darling!) dip.

Photo credit: Josie De Hoyos



A snack that smiles back.

Photos credit: Josie De Hoyos

Eating Healthy on a Budget.

INTERVIEW WITH NOTED COOKBOOK AUTHOR LEANNE

BROWN. AUTHOR OF 'GOOD AND CHEAP'

BY AMANDA DUNYAK.



As nannies, parents, or anyone who works with children and has a busy schedule may know, finding the time to cook delicious, healthy meals can be a challenge. We so often find ourselves just picking at the remnants of what the children have left behind on their plate. Those of us who are constantly on the go may end up eating fast food more often than we would like to. Add to that the fact that so many people are on budgets, really pinching pennies. How do you eat healthy when you're so busy and only have a certain amount of money to spend each month? I have tried so many diets myself, and I have failed miserably. Trying to substitute "unhealthy" ingredients for "healthy" ingredients (e.g., almond flour instead of white flour, almond milk instead of regular milk, etc.) was starting to really hurt my wallet. After struggling so much with how to work out a meal plan for myself that would work, a friend pointed me in the direction of a free cookbook that you could get online called, "Good and Cheap" by Leanne Brown, which tells you how to "eat well on \$4 a day." What? A free cookbook with yummy food that I can actually afford? Tell me more!

I immediately downloaded it and felt I just had to speak to the author to find out what this was all about. Leanne was immediately very friendly and upbeat and I started off our conversation

by explaining my own struggles with dieting and budgeting to her.

NM: It's so hard to know where to start and to stick to a diet plan. I feel like I am always setting myself up for failure!

LB: It depends on how you look at dieting. Dieting is a short-term, very painful thing. What can really make you healthy in the long-term is figuring out a regular way to eat that is generally pretty healthy and that doesn't make you feel miserable. That can be really difficult to figure out!

NM: It's hard for a lot of people, especially people with children in their care. You end up picking off of their plates a lot of the time.

LB: Oh yes! Someone's got to eat it and you don't want it to go to waste!

NM: I have seen nannies on numerous discussion boards seeking help with meal plans and healthy recipe ideas. I see on your FAQ that you wrote a meal plan but decided not to include it, stating that everyone is different and what works for one person might not work for another.

LB: It takes time to change your habits and it's really hard in the beginning. This is why a lot of people think healthy cooking isn't for them, because it does

take a little while. The first step is hard, I would never deny that, but it does get easier. It's just a matter of figuring out some new habits that might be slightly different from what you are used to. You have to know that it will work out well. You may be skeptical, especially if you took two weeks trying to plan for this, it's taking up so much time, and you're not even sure if it's worth it. It's also expensive and you don't have control over how much food is going to cost. It's a lot and people just need to trust that it will work out well and have some guidelines.

NM: I set myself up for failure. I tried the Whole 30 diet and ended up spending a lot of money getting the right foods to substitute for others.

LB: It's a lot of money! Especially going around to different stores to get what you need. Basic fruits and vegetables are usually pretty inexpensive, but it depends on if you're determined to buy everything fresh and organic. Sometimes frozen and canned can be really good deals. Some of the specialty products can be really expensive and you still have to go home and make something out of them.

NM: Tell us a little bit about yourself and your background.

LB: I moved to New York about three and a half years ago to do the master's food study program at NYU. Before that, I lived in Canada and I have an arts degree from the University of Alberta. I worked in city politics for a few years out of college. I thought it was so worth doing but I found it sort of frustrating. I started doing some food policy work while I was there, but I couldn't really work on it as much as I wanted to because that wasn't what my job was. I didn't know how you could get a job in food policy, I didn't even know that was a thing to do, but I started to look into it and that's when I came across the food study master's degree, and when I saw the description of it I thought, "This is exactly what I need to do!" I was really lucky to have discovered that. Nutrition is a super important part of the food system. It's sort of a science how things work in the body and it's a great guide for what we should eat. We don't think about how much vitamin B is in something we want to eat. We each make choices about food in very different ways. Food study looks at the higher level policy like about why we choose the foods that we do, why some foods are so much more expensive than other foods, and why some neighborhoods and cities are better able to feed their population.

NM: Do you have a background in cooking?

LB: I don't have any official culinary education, but I've loved to cook for as long as I can remember. I really started to enjoy it when I became a vegetarian when I was 14 (I'm not anymore, but I was for a very long time) and I thought, "I don't want my parents to tell me that I'm making bad decisions and driving everyone crazy with my restrictions," so I decided to cook my own food for myself. As a result, I just learned a lot about myself and making better choices, like eating more vegetables. I remember when I moved out, I was at school as a student and had



Photo credit: Workman Publishing

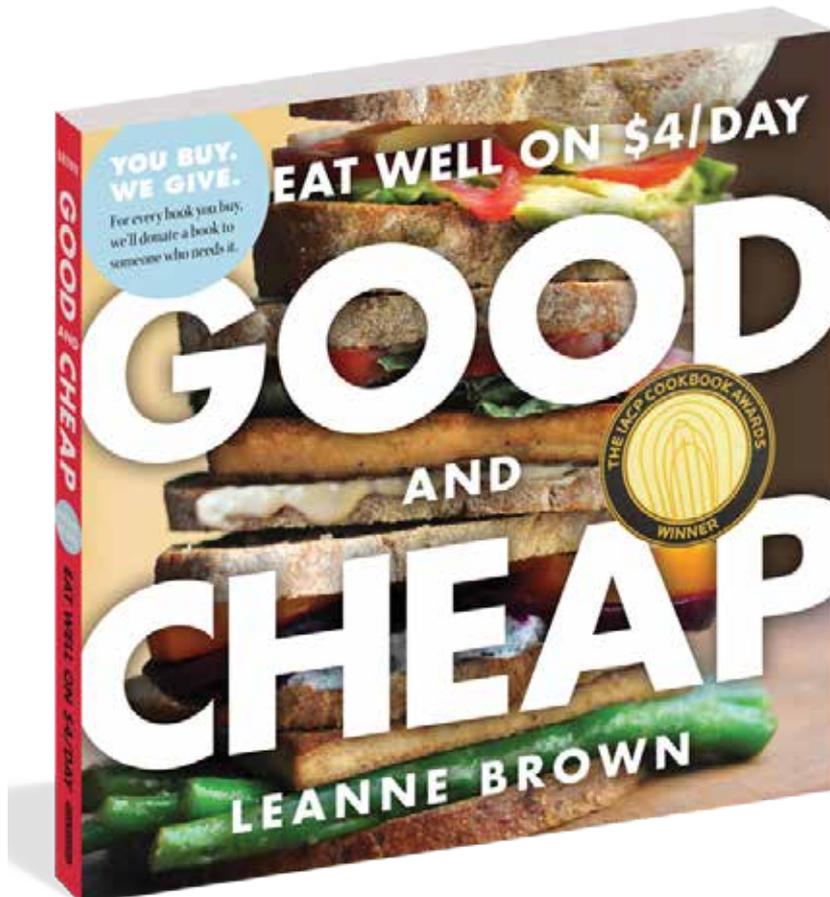
very little money. One of the challenges of cooking is having a pantry, knowing how to shop, and what to buy. I was a perfectly competent cook but I didn't know what to buy. It was different going from my parent's house with a stocked pantry to having to stock my own and I wondered why they didn't teach this kind of stuff in school! There's a lot of information about that in my book because it's such an

joy empowering people to cook for themselves and hearing about something that they made, exactly the way they like it, but I find it so much more wonderful than just cooking for them.

NM: Why did you decide to write this book?

LB: It started as a thesis project for my master's degree. I became really

interested in the food stamp program for a bunch of reasons. Part of the reason is that there isn't a similar program in Canada, so it was new to me and really interesting. Another part of it was that I wanted to spread my own love of cooking and empower more people to cook. I felt that one of the biggest problems is that there was not much awareness about how much being able to cook is the key to making good food, much more so than a budget. Basic foods are quite inexpensive and it's the effort that we put into them that makes it taste good and valuable. That's why restaurants can charge so much because they put so much effort into their dishes. The food movement talks about organic food and local food and how to create a system that is easier on the environment and better for our health, but the movement itself is just a big discussion based around a bunch of middle-class people. I couldn't help but feel like people who are lower income are kind of left out of the conversation a lot of the time and I think a lot of solutions have to deal with taking into account that there are a lot of people who might want to eat better or make better choices, but simply cannot because of budgetary restrictions. There are 46 million people in America who are on food stamps, who have about \$4 a day to work with! That's so little and so hard and I think that really



essential part of cooking, shopping, and figuring out what ingredients to have on hand to be able to put food on the table quickly when you need to. I really got bitten by the cooking bug when I graduated and got my first real job working for the city. I was suddenly struck by the realization that I could look up a YouTube video about how to make an éclair or something and just do it and that is so cool! I think I'm pretty good at cooking but I never wanted to be a chef, even though it is a wonderful profession. I love to cook for people but I love so much more when I can tell people that it's not hard and here's how to do it. I get so much

"I COULDN'T HELP BUT FEEL LIKE PEOPLE WHO ARE LOWER INCOME ARE KIND OF LEFT OUT OF THE CONVERSATION A LOT OF THE TIME AND I THINK A LOT OF SOLUTIONS HAVE TO DEAL WITH TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THAT THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO MIGHT WANT TO EAT BETTER OR MAKE BETTER CHOICES, BUT SIMPLY CANNOT BECAUSE OF BUDGETARY RESTRICTIONS."

stressed me because I'm Canadian and the population of all of Canada is 35 million people. There are more Americans than the population of Canada that are living on this small budget! I think this not only includes all of the people who are on food stamps, but also people like seniors who are on a fixed income, or students, someone who lost their job, or even young families who might be saving for a house, whatever the case may be. There are so many people who really don't have a lot of flexibility and choice in their budget and they all want to eat well too! They are looking for the same things that everyone else is and I just couldn't help but feel that there is just not enough information out there, and not enough really practical stuff aimed at people who are living on a truly restricted budget. I wanted to create something that had no barriers to it, I wanted to make it

me to say that she is physically disabled and has been living with a caretaker for about 10 years, and she only recently moved into housing and was on her own again. She was starting to cook for herself for the first time in years, and she said she was so nervous and frightened about it. She tried a couple of the recipes, one being the Mexican street corn, and it took her a little while to get the hang of. It was difficult because of her disability, but it turned out really well. She told me she ate it and just cried because it was so delicious and she was just so proud and happy to be able to make something for herself. She was just so happy and felt so great. My greatest ambition is just to bring joy to people because that's what food should be! It's so important that food be nutritious, but it needs to give us the ability to get through a difficult life. That's what food is. Food is essential in

"SHE TOLD ME SHE ATE IT AND JUST CRIED BECAUSE IT WAS SO DELICIOUS AND SHE WAS JUST SO PROUD AND HAPPY TO BE ABLE TO MAKE SOMETHING FOR HERSELF. SHE WAS JUST SO HAPPY AND FELT SO GREAT."

free, and I wanted it to be a cookbook of information that is for people who can't really afford a cookbook and who could really use one. I wanted it to be as beautiful as any other book, not in black and white and with pictures that aren't really good, I wanted to make something that looks inspiring where you would look at the recipes and think, "I can't wait to try that! It looks delicious!" Not thinking, "Oh this is a budget meal. Ugh, boring, bland." I wanted it to be something that would inspire you to give it a try and show that there are still all kinds of wonderful foods that can be had, even if you are on a very restricted budget.

NM: How do you hope this book will help people?

LB: This book has done so much more than I ever imagined it would. It started out as just a little thesis project and my big ambition for it was that I would share it with a non-profit and we'd give it away to some people. And it has already touched thousands and thousands of people. I hear from people every day who tell me, even though I did not design it as a diet book, that they were able to lose some weight and go off their cholesterol medication because of eating stuff from the book and changing their lifestyle a little bit. That is incredible to me! I have also heard from people who say that this book has given them hope and made them feel happy. One woman wrote to

making our bodies go and our minds go, in helping us be successful, but it's also something so much more. Food is like an incredible pleasure we get to have three times a day and I think that every person deserves that pleasure, three times a day. For a lot of people, when you don't have money, that means sometimes you have to take control of things and do it for yourself and I love that I can introduce that to people. I also hear from tons of people who say that they've been cooking for years and are really great at it, but they were getting sick of the same old stuff and they've found new recipes from my book that they have integrated into their life. People tell me they like the peanut butter and jelly granola bars because they are so simple. They are made of stuff that is always around the house, and it's something I created to just be a part of someone's regular life, something they eat on a regular basis. Nothing makes me happier than that.

NM: What do you think nannies, parents, or anyone with a busy schedule can learn or gain from this book?

LB: I think the thing is to just try a few things and see what works. I think a lot of the time we think that cooking from scratch takes a lot of time, but it's really important to just give things a try and see how long it actually takes. For example, the peanut butter and jelly granola bars, if you make a tray, take about 5 minutes to put together and

20 minutes to cook, and you have them for the rest of the week. Don't think that you don't have time to cook. When you have a moment, just grab a few things, decide what you're going to make, and just try it to see if it works for you. If something doesn't work for you and it's taking too much time, then don't do that one again. But don't be afraid to give things a try because a lot of the time we think we don't have time for things when we do and we think that something will take a lot longer than it actually does. Maybe don't make the home-made tortillas for your first time, because that is a recipe that does take a lot of time, but some of the other things, like sautéing some broccoli and some garlic and throwing it on some toast. It takes about 10 minutes, it's really nothing, and it would be really worth it! You can get the kids helping too! The other thing I often say to parents and families is that it shouldn't be *one* person's job to get food on the table. If kids are going to be eating and they are at the age where they can be useful, I think they should be, whether it be washing a dish, getting something out of the fridge, or hanging out and just being a part of preparing the meals. Just get them involved! Get everyone involved! Everyone who is going to be eating should be a part of making the food, whether it's going to the grocery store, doing the dishes, wiping down the counter, or chopping up some food, everyone should be a part of it. When you make it where it's everyone's job, than it's less of a burden on one person, because that's just not fair.

NM: Do you have anything new coming out or any hopes for the future of the book?

LB: Right now, I'm just focusing on doing this big book tour, but Workman (my publisher) has asked me to do a second book. I'm not sure what it should be yet. I am excited to just throw myself into the tour and talk to tons of people all over the country and hear what they think about things and figure it all out. When I first put the book out there and made it free, I got to hear from so many people. I think the book has really benefitted from the fact that people can get it really easily. People have told me what they thought about it and that's been really helpful for me to develop more useful stuff, so I hope that this tour will be an opportunity to hear from people about what they need and hopefully I can respond and come up with a follow-up project that sort of addresses some other issues. I am a middle-class girl from Canada. Ultimately, I feel like I cannot speak to the reality of what it's like to live on \$4 a day. I'm very privileged and this is not my life and my world. I never want to suggest that it is, but what I want is to encourage more people to tell their story of what it is like to eat for very little or what it was like to grow up on food stamps or whatever the case may be. I've just had so many people share these incredible stories with me and say they have not told

anyone about these things before and what it was like for them. It seems like hunger is this secret for a lot of people and they are ashamed about it and think that people won't understand. I don't think it's something you should have to be ashamed of! To me, that's really despicable that anyone would feel like it reflects anything on them and so I just want to share more stories and I'm hoping that if there is a second project I can do that. So much of fighting hunger and fighting for justice can only come when we hear those stories more often and realize how common it is to have these experiences in a country where we've come to think of it as being great and fine when there are millions who are not doing fine and regular life for them is actually really, really difficult. That needs to be better understood. I don't want this to be about me and my work. So many people have friends and family who have gone through these things and they just don't know about it because it's not something you talk about and that's really sad. Nobody should be denied the help. SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) is an investment in people. It is such an important program and it helps so many people. On average, people are only on it for a couple of months. It sort of helps people get by through a difficult time and it's essential that we know that it's there for people and not something you should feel guilty or bad about taking. It's important!

Leanne's passion for wanting to help people and her kindness is very inspiring.

CHECK OUT OUR SUPPLEMENTAL ONLINE MATERIAL FOR THE RECIPE FOR THE DELICIOUS PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY GRANOLA BARS THAT LEANNE MENTIONED. ONE LUCKY NANNY MAGAZINE READER WILL RECEIVE A PRINTED COPY OF THE BOOK! JUST WRITE TO JENNIER@NANNYMAG.COM TO TELL US WHY YOU LOVE NM! FOR EVERYONE ELSE, YOU CAN OBTAIN THE PDF VERSION OF "GOOD AND CHEAP" BY LEANNE BROWN AT HER WEBSITE [HTTP://WWW.LEANNEBROWN.COM](http://WWW.LEANNEBROWN.COM). HAPPY COOKING. EVERYONE!

Dilemma

DO YOU GO IN THE SNOW?

BY SARAH ELAINE MILKINTAS

Photo Credit: Pexels

As a child, there is nothing more exciting than waking up and seeing copious amounts of snow on the ground and finding out, “Today is a snow day!” Your mind races with all the exciting plans for the day: fort building, snowman making, tobogganing, snowball fights, drinking cocoa, and a day off school! As a nanny, however, a snow day is a predicament. Should the nanny travel to her nanny job, or should she stay at her own home? “Most adults have to still go in to their jobs, regardless of weather. My MomBoss has to go into work, so I am expected to do the same,” said Barb Jackson, a nanny of one.

Many nannies work for parents who, for whatever reason, cannot miss work, and this means the nanny needs to arrive to her job on time as well. As a nanny, you are expected to arrive at the family’s house regardless of weather. The parents are relying on you to be there, especially if older children are being kept home.

Set an alarm and leave early. If you usually drive, you might want to commute another way instead, or find an alternate method, like a taxi; whichever will be safest and get you to work on time. Snow days can mean colder temperatures and being housebound, so prepare for inside play. Also, if there are older children, make sure to have activities for multiple ages. If you can get the children outside, do so. Have some snow fun; build a fort, have a snowman-making contest or have a snowball fight. Ending a snow day can be wonderful with some hot cocoa with marshmallows and some good stories.

“If it’s not safe for me to travel. I don’t think it’s fair for me to go in. Mom or Dad will just have to stay with them,” said Rebecca Waldman, a nanny of three.

Many nannies think if bad weather is keeping children from school and many other adults from their jobs, a nanny should be entitled to stay home in the warmth of her own home, too. Many schools and places of business close in inclement weather to keep their employees and patrons safe, and nannies are due the same right. Have a snow day plan in place. Every family will have a different set of needs. Some can have a nanny stay home while others need the nanny to arrive on time. Speak with your MomBoss and DadBoss about what will happen in bad weather. Put the conditions in your contract so everyone is aware. Maybe the nanny could spend the night before or stay after, arrive later in the day, have a backup student sitter who can help out, or maybe the nanny does just have the time off. Whatever the plan is, make sure you speak about it long before the snow is on the ground.

VEGAN SLOW COOKER CHICKEN

TORTILLA SOUP

BY AMBER KETCHUM, M.D.S., RD
REGISTERED DIETITIAN

Avocado,
beans, chicken,
lime... yum.

This slow-cooker tortilla soup couldn't be easier! It takes just minutes to prep, but the result is full of flavor! This is the perfect winter recipe because it is light and healthy, but still very satisfying! Makes 6 servings (about 1 ½ cups each)

FOR THE SOUP:

- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 medium zucchini, chopped
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels
- 1 15 ounce can low sodium black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 15 ounce can low sodium kidney beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 10 ounce can diced tomatoes with green chilies
- 4 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- ½ teaspoon cumin
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- Black pepper to taste

Optional additions for serving:

- 6 corn tortillas, cut into strips
- 2 small avocados, cut into slices or chunks
- 2 limes, cut into wedges
- 1 bunch cilantro, washed and with leaves torn off
- 3 green onions, sliced

DIRECTIONS:

1. Combine all ingredients for soup in slow cooker. Cook on low for 4-6 hours or high for 2-3 hours.
2. To make baked tortilla strips for serving, slice the corn tortillas into thin strips. Spread them out evenly on a baking sheet and bake at 350 degrees for about 10 minutes or until crispy.
3. To serve, ladle the soup into bowls, then top with tortilla strips, avocado, green onion, cilantro leaves, and a squeeze of lime juice. Enjoy!

See more at www.homemadenu-trition.com.



Playground Politics

BY JULIA JUDSON.

Photo credit: Pexels

We've all been witness to, and quite possibly even have been, "that" nanny. You know. The one who sets up a cushy little nook under a small, yet appreciated patch of shade. They're the one with a cell phone glued to the palm of their hand; maybe even a book or magazine to peruse while the kids are hanging on for dear life from the monkey bars.

Of course, we all want to believe we aren't and never would be that nanny, but the honest truth is it's easy to sit back and relax when the charges are in sight.

There's something to be said about those moments of freedom we give to the children. It's a chance for them to initiate social interactions, gain personal pride and demonstrate the independence we work so hard to instill in them.

On the flip side, it's also our job to provide a consistent flow of hands-on care that includes, as menial as it may appear, a push on the swing, an imaginative treasure hunt, and a hug or explanation when things go awry. Those playground games can be pretty serious to a 6 year old; getting tagged in a game of TAG is no joke! Those moments reassure the parents and children that we are more than an extra set of eyes; we are an integral part of the family dynamic. We are a source of comfort, a catalyst of wonder, a teacher, a friend, a referee, and, at times, a disciplinarian.

"THEY'RE THE ONE WITH A CELL PHONE GLUED TO THE PALM OF THEIR HAND. MAYBE EVEN A BOOK OR MAGAZINE TO PERUSE WHILE THE KIDS ARE HANGING ON FOR DEAR LIFE FROM THE MONKEY BARS."

Recognizing the value in how we actively and positively affect the lives of the little ones we vow to help raise is more than enough motivation to continually be involved in playtime whether in a small, intimate play setting or a busy, influential environment. Engaging with the children gives us the ability to connect with them

on a personal level, monitor behavior, and be an example for, not only the youngsters, but to other nannies and parents, too.

There's a sense of guilt associated with the laid-back nanny, in which he/she understands the need for involvement, but is also aware that it has become common and generally acceptable to be more of a spectator of play than a component of the activity. However, to many, this style of caregiving brings forth a feeling of embarrassment. The pressure to seem more present in the play of the children becomes what seems to be an obligatory chore, which can ultimately be perceived as positive motivation.

The key to a happy nanny/child relationship is finding the perfect balance between being involved enough to make a difference and not being so overbearing that it stunts the social and independent growth of children. Often, helicopter parenting techniques result in a lack of self-reliance within a child. They find problem solving to be difficult, and communication skills aren't reaching their full potential. As nannies, we should always be an advocate for our charges, but also give them the opportunity and encourage them to try and achieve their goals by using their own skill-set and ingenuity.

While on the subject of being creative, it is wise to support imaginative play. Giving kids the chance to utilize their inventiveness is, without a doubt, beneficial, as it subtly increases critical thinking performance and lets them explore psychological and internal aspects of human development such as ethics and emotions. We must remember we are there to nurture their expressive nature, not to hinder their vision for originality. This can be attained by taking a break from trendy toys, and the structured supplemental learning resources, and fostering an environment conducive to independent artistic inventions and inspired visions; a place in which their ambition (no matter how exaggerated) is supported and applauded. Simplicity can be a monumental tool for success, a baseline to grow from - a marker of how unique and accomplished children can be.

It comes down to being a guide for the children we care for, and hoping they apply the lessons we teach to the world around them. We should aim to build a stable relationship and cultivate leadership through both interactive play and prompted independence-building activity. Children playing in a solitary manner doesn't have to be viewed as detrimental, as long as we are there to step in along the way, ensuring the happiness and connectivity children crave.





Being a Nanny and Struggling with Infertility

BY PAMELA CHANDLER.

PAMELA CHANDLER INTERVIEWS A PHYSICIAN ABOUT A PROBLEM MANY COUPLES FACE: INFERTILITY. MANY BELIEVE THAT THIS CHALLENGE IS ESPECIALLY ROUGH ON NANNIES WHO CARE FOR KIDS ALL DAY THAT ARE NOT THEIR OWN. READ ON FOR MORE.

"You will make such a great mom one day."

"I thought they were yours."

"You are so good with the kids. I can't wait to see what you are like with your own."

As a nanny, all of these are very common phrases I hear on a daily basis. They are meant to be compliments of my skills, but no one knows how they cut me like a knife. For the last two years, my husband and I have been trying, unsuccessfully, to conceive. Every



Photo: Grant Delin

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time I hear what a wonderful mom I will be someday, I can't help but wonder if "someday" will ever come. I adore my job and my charges but I long for my own children. I have decided it's time to reach out to a medical professional and get some answers on why I haven't been able to conceive.

But where do I begin? What do I do? I feel very competent when it comes to caring for children, but I'm not sure where to start with infertility questions. I contacted Dr. Laura Reuter M.D. a cofounder of MidWest Fertility Specialists, the largest fertility practice in Indiana, to find some answers to these questions and point me in the right direction.

1. What is your job title? Where do you work?

I'm Laura Reuter, MD, Reproductive Endocrinologist, Medical Director of In Vitro Fertilization Midwest Fertility Specialists in Carmel, Indiana. I am an obstetrician/gynecologist with subspecialty certification and expertise in reproductive endocrinology and infertility.

2. How long have you been working in this field?

I have been in clinical practice since 1993 and was a founding partner of Midwest Fertility Specialists in 2004.

3. What is the definition of infertility?

Infertility is defined as the inability to conceive after 12 months of unprotected intercourse or after 6 months of unprotected intercourse over the age of 35. Infertility impacts one in seven couples in the U.S. during their reproductive years.

4. How long should a couple attempt to conceive before they seek medical professional help?

We recommend that couples seek medical evaluation after 12 months of unprotected sex or after 6 months after age 35. However, if a woman has irregular menstrual cycles or a gynecological condition known to impair fertility, such as endometriosis, she should be evaluated right away. Evaluation of the male is vital as about 20% of cases are found to be male related and up to 40% may have both male and female factors involved. We start by taking a thorough medical history of the woman and her partner. Diagnostic testing for the couple can often be accomplished within a few weeks and allows for careful consideration of a range of treatment options. The majority of couples that seek evaluation and undergo treatment will achieve their goal of building a family with fertility care.

5. What is the first step a couple struggling with infertility should take?

A semen analysis for the male is a very important preliminary test. A woman will typically have hormonal blood work that may be timed to her menstrual cycle, as well as evaluation of her reproductive structures with an exam, an ultrasound, and often an X-ray dye exam of her fallopian tubes.

6. What ages are the most fertile for a woman?

A woman's peak reproductive years are in her twenties. Fertility gradually declines in her thirties, particularly after the age of thirty-five. At the age of thirty, a woman's chance each month to conceive is about 20% each cycle. By the age of forty, the chance for pregnancy each month is reduced to 5%. This natural decline in fertility is why we recommend evaluation of women over age 35 more quickly. Most women are infertile within 5 to 10 years before their natural menopause.

7. What's the best advice you would give a couple struggling with infertility?

My best advice to couples struggling with infertility is to focus on their relationship with their partner. Infertility can be a huge stress on any relationship, so communication and understanding is key. Although it can be difficult to seek medical care for infertility, many couples are relieved to know they have treatment choices that will offer them the hope of building their families with fertility care. Even in cases of unexplained infertility, the majority of couples that proceed with a logical course of treatment will be successful.

8. What can the average couple do to increase their own chances of conceiving?

A healthy lifestyle is an important component of fertility preservation and care. Cigarette smoking is directly linked to infertility in women and men, and quitting the habit is essential. Smoking can impact the quality of the eggs or sperm and has been shown to reduce success rates dramatically with advanced treatments such as In Vitro Fertilization.

Maintaining a normal body weight is highly recommended. The optimal Body Mass Index or BMI range for conception is 21 to 24. Extremes of body weight, either too thin or obese, can impair your ability to conceive.

Prior to planned conception, use of condoms can help to reduce the risk of sexually transmitted diseases that can impair fertility such as gonorrhea and chlamydia.

A healthy diet with limited alcohol and caffeine and moderate exercise is highly recommended.

A photograph of a man and a woman in a boxing ring. The man, on the left, is wearing a tan hat and a light-colored button-down shirt. He has a pained expression with his eyes closed and mouth open. The woman, on the right, is wearing a black dress with white polka dots and black boxing gloves. She is punching the man's face with her right hand, and she has a determined, shouting expression with her mouth wide open. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

"MY BEST ADVICE TO COUPLES STRUGGLING WITH INFERTILITY IS TO FOCUS ON THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR PARTNER. INFERTILITY CAN BE A HUGE STRESS ON ANY RELATIONSHIP, SO COMMUNICATION AND UNDERSTANDING IS KEY."

Armed with this new information I'm ready to schedule an appointment with a doctor and begin the process of fertility care. I feel hopeful that I will one day be a mother, but for now I am thankful to be a nanny and have the privilege of loving another's child. If you or someone you know is struggling to conceive, you are not alone. There are many online resources at your disposal to help you navigate this process. The National Infertility Association's website, resolve.org, is a great place to start. They have resources for every aspect of fertility care and beyond. They can help you connect with physicians, counselors, pharmacists, and peer groups in your area. Reach out and empower yourself with information, and above all else, let's support one another as we open a dialogue about infertility.

"I feel hopeful that I will one day be a mother, but for now I am thankful to be a nanny and have the privilege of loving another's child."

Photo credit: Pexels



Holiday Writing Prompts

FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES

By Sarah Milkintas.
Photo Credit: Pexels

The holidays are such a magical time, especially for children. Snow is on the ground, trees are lit up with lights, gifts given by friends and family, and the air filled with joy, blessings and excitement. What better way to channel the childhood enthusiasm and delight of the holiday season than through their own words?

One afternoon, when the snow is falling outside, put on some holiday music, make some hot cocoa, and grab some candy canes, pencils, and paper. Gather everyone around the table to write their own Christmas Carol, have them explain what Hanukkah means to them, or a story about a magic snowfall.

"WHAT BETTER WAY TO CHANNEL THE CHILDHOOD ENTHUSIASM AND DELIGHT OF THE HOLIDAY SEASON THAN THROUGH THEIR OWN WORDS?"

Older children can write their own stories and maybe add a few drawings or photos to illustrate them. Younger children can draw pictures and dictate their responses to be recorded for them. However they get their stories down, it will be a great keepsake for Christmases to come (or maybe a good gift for a family member to read).

Here are some interesting prompts to spark holiday stories:

- Explain your favourite part of the holidays.
- Describe your favourite holiday memory.
- If you could give one gift to anyone (imaginary or real), who would it be and what would you get him or her?
- What do you think Santa's workshop looks like?
- Write your own "12 Days of Christmas" song.
- Explain how it feels to open a gift.
- Describe your favourite holiday food in detail.
- What is on your ultimate holiday wish list?
- What would you do if the holidays were cancelled this year?
- Would you want a pet reindeer or penguin? Why?
- Describe snow falling.
- What would you do if you lived in a gingerbread house?
- What would you do on a vacation to the North Pole?
- Take your favourite Holiday story and retell it (The Night Before Christmas, A Christmas Carol, Frosty the Snowman, etc.).
- Write a poem about snow, ice, or frost.
- Where would you rather be for Christmas? Somewhere snowy? Or somewhere warm?
- Write an acrostic poem for the word "holiday."
- Describe the taste of hot chocolate.
- Are the holidays about giving or receiving?
- Write about a magical snowfall.
- Describe a family holiday tradition.
- What do the Holidays mean to you?

Come again?

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COLD-WEATHER EATS: SLOW COOKER BEANS AND HAM

This recipe is a jazzed-up version of baked beans that makes the perfect quick meal for a cold day!

BY AMBER KETCHUM, MS, RD
REGISTERED DIETITIAN

Do all your
prep before
work!



Makes 4 servings (about 1 1/4 cups each)

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in slow cooker and cook on low for 6 hours or high for 3 hours.
2. Serve with a green salad or coleslaw on the side for a complete meal.

Recipe adapted from So Easy, by Ellie Krieger

Ingredients:

- 2 15-ounce cans low-sodium white beans (such as navy beans or great northern)
- 12 ounces thick-cut ham, chopped (preferably uncured or “nitrate-free”)
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 15-ounce can crushed tomatoes
- 1/4 cup water
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons pure maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon apple cider or white vinegar
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- black pepper to taste

Photo credit: Amber Ketchum



***Mommy
Musings***

*A real MomBoss weighs
in on all things nanny*

Playtime:

WHEN IT REVEALS REAL-LIFE
CONCERNS (AND WHAT TO DO).

BY ERIN BAILEY.

"IF, BASED ON YOUR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AS A NANNY, YOU HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT YOUR CHARGE'S DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRESS, IT CAN BE A DIFFICULT CONVERSATION TO HAVE WITH YOUR MOMBOSS."

Photo Credit: Pexels

You were hired to care for a 12-week-old newborn. You came to love this child and have bonded with him. You spend each day feeding, caring for, playing with and loving your charge. You noticed when he was a little late to crawl, speak, and walk, but he did catch up. As he enters into his toddler and preschool years, you notice that you have a difficult time playing and interacting with him. Instead of racing cars on the floor he picks them up and spin the wheels. He does not understand dress-up games and has a tough time playing pretend. While he speaks enough to communicate his basic needs, he is unable to form sentences and hold a conversation. As the time passes and you see him interact with his peers on the playground, you realize he is far behind them developmentally and that he plays beside them, not with them. What do you do?

As a professional nanny, you have exposure to many children and have a better sense of what is developmentally appropriate for certain ages. Most of us MomBosses, especially with our eldest children, feel like we have no idea what we are doing when it comes to raising our children. We give them all the

love and support we know how, but we are not early childhood experts, we are just doing the best we can under each circumstance.

If, based on your professional experience as a nanny, you have concerns about your charge's developmental progress, it can be a difficult conversation to have with your MomBoss. She may be defensive at first, and may not want to entertain the idea that her child may face challenges in life. Here are some tips for how to handle these touchy subjects:

-Schedule a time to speak with your MomBoss when the two of you can sit down in a quiet space without the kids and without the hectic routine of being in and out of the door.

-Do not presume to diagnose your charge with anything. Simply suggest that you have some concerns about your charge's development and gently suggest that your MomBoss schedule a professional evaluation of the child. Offer to ask around to your nanny friends for the name of a few great therapists (speech,

Is it time to schedule a sit-down with momboss?

Photo Credit: Pexels

occupational, ABA, whatever is needed) and provide them to her.

-Avoid the phrases “normal,” “something wrong,” or “fix.” Better phrases are “delay,” “not typical,” and “help.”

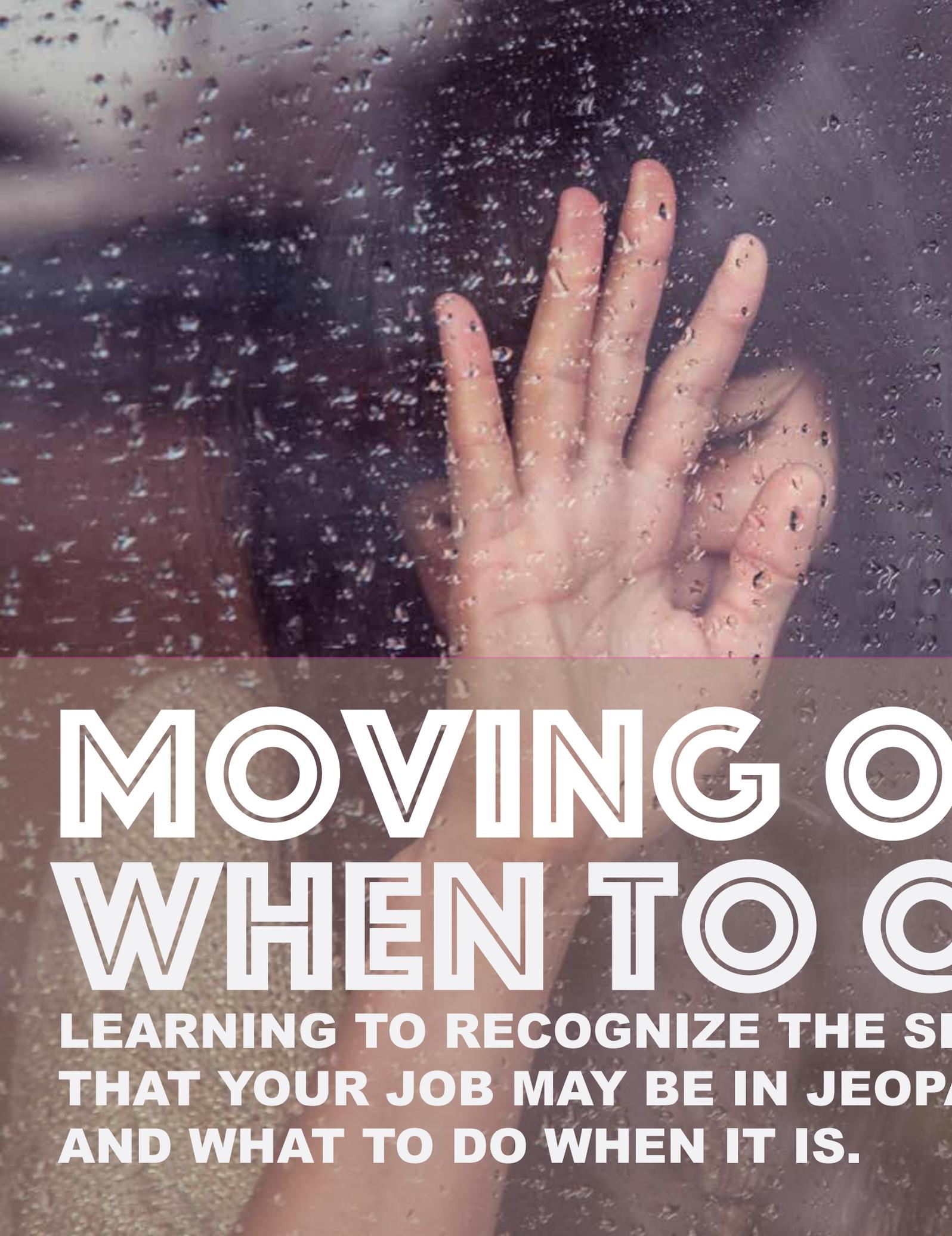
-Offer success stories from other children you have had in your charge or other children you know from your nanny friends. A first-time MomBoss is probably not aware of how common it is for children to need help with a delay in various areas. Here is a great example: “My last charge started speech therapy at the age of 2. He loved his therapist and had such a great time playing with her. After a year of speech therapy he was brought up to appropriate age level speech and he was ready to succeed in pre-school. His mom was so thankful that she addressed his needs at an early age.”

-Remember that ultimately, the decision to pursue further diagnosis and treatment is the parents’s decision alone. If

your employers decide not to seek any additional diagnosis or treatment for what you observe, you should not judge and you should not continue to bring it up. If you do not feel comfortable continuing to care for this child without your charge receiving professional treatment, you should look for another job, not continually bring it up to your MomBoss. She will feel like you are nagging her and will feel like you have invaded her space as a mother.

If your charge does end up in a therapeutic program that you take him to during the day, report back to your MomBoss on the therapy sessions. Take pictures of the play therapy so that she can see her child has fun in therapy sessions. Report to her what they are working on in therapy and his progress. She will be thankful to have you there monitoring the situation. She will also be so thankful that you brought up your concerns and tackled a difficult conversation with her all for the benefit of your charge. Ultimately, it is the best way to show your MomBoss how much you care for her child.

LEARN WHICH PHRASES TO AVOID WHEN TALKING TO MOMBOSS ABOUT A POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY WITH YOUR YOUNG CHARGE.



MOVING ON WHEN TO GO

LEARNING TO RECOGNIZE THE SIGNS
THAT YOUR JOB MAY BE IN JEOPARDY
AND WHAT TO DO WHEN IT IS.



ON & QUIT SIGNS HARDY

Photo Credit: Pexels

BY AMANDA DUNYAK.
IT'S NOT LIKE
QUITTING A JOB
IN ANY OTHER
FIELD.

Have you ever taken a nanny job that started out wonderfully and eventually turned sour? Many nannies take pride in their work. It is very easy to get attached to the children. Your love for the profession and for your charges may blind you to issues that start to creep in. Sometimes, you weigh the pros and cons and realize that it may be worth it to stay, but you're miserable, leaving you feeling "stuck." There are many people who don't like confrontation or who are afraid for the future of their career should they discuss any issues with their employers. Many nannies do not want to let down their employers or their charges by leaving. It's never good to feel that way about any job. Sure, each career has its ups and downs—no job is truly perfect! If you are with the right NannyFamily, though, there should be a level of comfort and communication that should help you work through any issues with your employers. If you do not have that sort of relationship with your NannyFamily and you have been feeling overwhelmed, unhappy or resentful, it might be time to reevaluate.

THE WARNING SIGNS

There are many red flags that could indicate that your job situation may be changing. Some of these red flags can be glaringly obvious, and others might not be, and some may be more negative than others.

The number one red flag that should trigger you to start rethinking your position is unhappiness. Glenda Propst of Nanny Transitions says that you may not even be able to put your finger on why you are unhappy. "It might be a culmination of a lot of things, but it's generally a feeling of being disconnected." What does that mean? Propst says, "It might be that the parents have stopped treating you respectfully or that they have stopped trying to accommodate your needs. Maybe they have started taking on the responsibilities that used to be yours."

Propst explains other signs of disconnect can include feeling like you can't do anything right anymore or feeling like everything is starting to annoy you. "It might also be that you and your employers are no longer seeing eye to eye on important things, such as discipline issues or you are being left out of the loop on important decisions that you used to be a part of. These are all signs that it might be time to move on," Propst says.

Michelle LaRowe, executive director of Morningside Nannies and Editor-In-Chief of eNannySource.com, says that there are a variety of reasons why your nanny job may be coming to an end. "The children may be outgrowing their need for a nanny or the type of nanny you are. Even you, as the nanny, may be outgrowing the job yourself. The needs of the family may be changing or the terms of your employment may no longer be mutually acceptable."

Other reasons for a change in a nanny job include changes in the parents' work or financial situation or if the family is relocating, which happens quite often in this industry. "Regardless of the reason," LaRowe says, "a nanny will typically start to sense some tension in the work environment, sense some distancing in the nanny-employer relationship, experience a change in responsibilities or the ability to complete them to the employer's satisfaction, and have an overall sense that something is just not right with her employment situation."

Kate Jurd, a nanny from Australia, says that from her experience, there are various signs that it might be time to move on. "If you are dreading going to work or if you are expected to do more household chores than childcare-related activities, these could be signs that the position may no longer be right for you."

"Also," Jurd adds, "if at any time my and the family's safety or discipline ideals are at different extremes or if I am starting to be treated as less of an equal, it might be time for us all to take a second look at our needs."

Michelle Cappotto, a nanny from Massachusetts, agrees with Jurd. "If anything that my employers were doing could endanger the children's health, well-being, or safety, I couldn't continue to work in such an unhealthy environment." Cappotto experienced this first-hand when her employers of six months told her that their three-year-old did not like to be strapped into a car seat. "They would only buckle her in if they were travelling on a highway," she recalls. After that, she no longer felt comfortable in that position, and searched elsewhere for employment. The list of red flags can be endless, but some of the main things to be aware of are these: if you are feeling unhappy or have negative feelings toward your job (feeling burnt out), your needs or responsibilities have changed (more or fewer hours, reduction in pay, a great-

er workload, changes in personal life), you lack appreciation for your career and for your NannyFamily, or if there is a great lack of communication between you and your employers, then your job may be in jeopardy. If you have identified the problem, it is time to take the necessary steps to solve it. "Nannies must remember that they need to prioritize themselves and if they don't take care of themselves, they won't be able to take care of somebody else," says LaRowe, "especially when leaving a bad situation, a nanny must work to ensure they are meeting their own needs so that they can successfully leave the job."

COMMUNICATING

Whether or not you intend to leave your current position after pinpointing the reasons behind your unhappiness, you will need to communicate with your employers. This

"MANY NANNIES DO NOT WANT TO LET DOWN THEIR EMPLOYERS OR THEIR CHARGES BY LEAVING."

may come easier to some than others. The first step is to ask for a sit-down meeting with your bosses to discuss the issues you are having and to give them the opportunity to bring to light any issues they are having. This opens the floor for discussion and problem solving and will be the real way to decide if it is indeed time to move on. "If your employers are receptive and willing to try and discuss the issues, making a team effort to work things out, then it is possible that you just might be able to get back on track," says Propst, "but if you sit down with your employers and they are negative or unwilling to try to work things out, then you definitely have your answer." LaRowe says that the way a nanny approaches her employers about leaving depends on the reason why



“Some of these red flags can be glaringly obvious, and others might not be, and some may be more negative than others.”

Photo Credit: Pexels

“WHEN GIVING NOTICE, IT IS NOT THE TIME TO REHASH ISSUES IN THE RELATIONSHIP OR GET INTO AN IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION ON WHAT PROMPTED YOUR DECISION.”

she is leaving and how long she has been with the family. “A nanny who has been with a family for many years, since the children were young, will approach her employers very differently than a nanny who has been on the job for a few weeks or months and the position is simply not working out.”

If you are able to work through the issues and remain employed, Propst recommends taking some proactive steps for your future with the family. “You can ask your employers for a yearly review (this can come in handy as a back-up in case you do not get a letter of reference upon termination) and you can also spend a few minutes each year updating your résumé, keeping you ahead of the game if you ever lose your job.”

Both Propst and LaRowe agree that if you cannot work through the issues with your employers, then it is time to consult your work agreement for the clause regarding giving notice. LaRowe states that if the nanny wishes to provide verbal notice, she should also provide the family with a formal letter outlining the desired terms of her departure. What should you say? “When giving notice, it is not the time to rehash issues in the



When Nanny quits, it's hard on the kids, too. Know how you'll handle contact moving forward.

relationship or get into an in-depth discussion on what prompted your decision," LaRowe advises. She suggests staying positive about the experience with the family in addition to stating your last date of employment with a general statement that you are pursuing a new opportunity. "The condition of the nanny-family relationship will typically dictate how smoothly the transition goes."

Propst says, "Hopefully you can come to a mutual agreement with your employers regarding your last days of employment, how you will transition, what your future relationship will be with the children and who will tell the children, including what they will be told and when." Whatever the outcome, keep your head held high and remain positive and confident that you have made the right decision.

QUITTING AS A LIVE-IN NANNY

A live-in nanny whose job is in transition is in a slightly different position, as her job is also her home, and walking away from that or risking termination from confrontation can definitely be scary. Propst recommends having an exit plan already set. "Have at least two places in mind that you can go for a short while (24-48 hours) and at least one other place you can go for a few weeks until you can get back on your feet. You should have these places set ahead of time so that if something happens and you need to move quickly, you are one step ahead of the game. And always try to have money saved to live on in case you lose your job," she advises.

"A LIVE-IN NANNY WHOSE JOB IS IN TRANSITION IS IN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT POSITION, AS HER JOB IS ALSO HER HOME..."

MAKING THE TRANSITION

Even if the decision to move on has been made, it doesn't mean that the act of moving on will be easy. How do you leave with peace of mind? "I always say that being a nanny is the only job you sign up for where the ultimate promotion is being let go because you have done your job well and are no longer needed," says LaRowe. Whatever you do, don't burn bridges. You still need this reference and will likely continue to need it for

the rest of your career. If the desire to part ways is mutual and amicably decided, LaRowe recommends working together with your employers on a transition plan, especially if both parties would like to continue their relationship. "Nannies should strive to work with the parents to determine a plan for future communication or visits. This may include a weekly Skype call or the nanny coming over for a visit or to babysit once a month," LaRowe suggests.

Propst adds that, "you should always remember the children's feelings and focus your efforts on making this a calm transition for them. Remember that for children, saying goodbye to someone that they love and who has cared for them is very difficult and confusing, regardless of their age, and this is one of the last and most important life lessons you will be helping to teach them."

Stay strong, Nanny. If you're moving on from your job, just remember, you will get through this!

FINDING SUPPORT

Hopefully, you already have a nanny network in place, whether it be a local group or an online community. Your nanny network can offer you a great deal of support. "No one will understand this situation quite like another nanny!" Propst says.

When asking anyone for great resources in this subject, all roads point to Glenda Propst! Propst manages a support group called Nanny Transitions, which you

can find on Facebook or at www.nannytransitions.com.

Further advice for nannies who have parted ways with their nanny families? Grieve. "It is important for you to realize that in order to move through the transitions of leaving a family, you must grieve the loss. You cannot love and care for children day in and day out and not develop strong emotional bonds with the entire family," Propst says. "Understand that grieving this loss is normal and it will take time to work through, but allowing yourself the time to grieve will help you to heal faster." She also stresses the importance of taking care of yourself during this time in your life and career. "Don't use this as an excuse to binge eat or drink or do anything else that is unhealthy or harmful to yourself. Love yourself enough to take care of yourself, sleep well, and eat right. This is the best thing you can do for yourself." Nannies are also advised not to play the blame game. "It's over and done and you need to move on," she says, "You can't move forward when you are looking backwards!"

FINAL WORDS

While facing your issues and confronting your employers may be hard, it is very important to ensure that everyone is on the same page and can deal with any stress or unhappiness that may have crept in. Leaving a NannyFamily is never easy, but when you are a childcare professional, you have to realize going in that one day your time with those children will come to an end. I leave you with Propst's final words of wisdom: "Nanny jobs end. You can be the best nanny in the world, but it will not keep your job from ending. Children grow up and nannies move on, it's part of what we do."



Ending your job doesn't have to mean walking permanently away from your charges.

Let's Play Dressup!

BY JEN WEBB.

Children love to play “pretend” and use their imaginations to create stories and act them out. To encourage a child’s play, it is important to create costumes to allow him/her to become that character. Some costumes can be bought at stores, while others can be made with household items.

Doctor

Your charge wants to be a doctor? What will his/her specialty be? Gather a shower cap from a hotel or buy one from the drug store. Scrubs can either be bought at a store or created with a pair of white cotton pajama bottoms and a long white shirt. Purchase a stethoscope from a toy store or save an old popsicle stick as a tongue depressor.

Teacher

Teacher costumes can be easily created with clothing children may already own. Pair black pants or a skirt with a white shirt and a cardigan. Carry a pencil and a notebook or buy a math/literacy workbook from a local bookstore.

Princess

A Princess costume can be bought at a toy store. To make a princess costume, a child can wear a dress, tights, a handbag, and dressy shoes. A crown or tiara is essential for every princess. This can be bought at a toy store or made with paper and jewels. Free paper crown templates can be found online by researching the phrase "paper crown template".



Firefighter

Find a women's old, black, long-sleeved, button-down shirt. Cut the arms and the bottom of the shirt to match the size of your charge's long-sleeved shirt. Cut off the buttons and put a line of velcro down the front of the shirt. The shirt will now open and close with velcro rather than by button. Find ribbon that has yellow on the outside and silver/grey on the inside and sew a strip of the ribbon around each arm and around the bottom of the shirt. Finish the outfit by purchasing a plastic red firefighter's hat.

Chef

Use a child's old white t-shirt, and with a permanent marker, draw eight buttons on the shirt. Purchase a chef's hat or ask for one at a local restaurant.

Cowboy

This costume is easy to create. A child can wear jeans, boots, a belt, and a button-up shirt from the closet. The most essential item is the cowboy hat! A cheap plastic hat can be purchased at a party store.

Data Blitz

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

BY AMANDA DUNYAK.

The rate of home births rose 29% between 2004 and 2009.
(LiveScience.com)

There is a specific area of the brain known as the bilateral vomitiation center. It makes the final decision whether to barf or not to barf.
(MentalFloss.com)

Most of us experience occasional common snoring, and it is usually not a cause for concern. With this type of snoring, you can't dream.
(SnoringInsights.com)

Eating carrots doesn't improve eyesight; this is a famous misinformation campaign by the British government during WWII.
(History.com)

The most common places with the most cold and flu germs are doorknobs, light switches, and faucet handles.
(WebMD)

The prevalence of obesity among children aged 2–4 years from low-income households in 2011 varied by household income.
(cdc.gov)

Caffeine's effects, which include ore energy and focusing power, kick in after 5 minutes.

(dailyinfographic.com)

The child from the "Success Kid" meme earned enough through his internet fame to fund his dad's kidney transplant.

(SoTruefacts.com)

Astronauts have a patch of Velcro inside their helmet so they can scratch their nose.

(DailyRandomfacts.com)

In 1985, Apple forced out its famous founder, Steve Jobs.

(About.com)

If babies' bodies grew at the same rapid pace as their brains, they would weigh 170 pounds after one month!

(milwaukee.uwex.edu)

During childbirth scenes in movies, infant actors are smeared with cream cheese and red jam for the "just born" look.

(DailyRandomfacts.com)

Nanny's Holiday Survival Guide

BY MEGAN GILBREATH.



Photo Credit: Pexels

Laughter, joy, and thankfulness can describe anyone's holiday fun. But underneath the surface, the holiday season is stressful! From Thanksgiving to New Year's Eve, it takes superpowers to balance managing kiddos and festivities. We can't grant you these superpowers, but here are some tips to boost you in that direction.

1. Communicate the details. Be sure your charges know what is on the agenda for each day, whether it's a day off from school or Christmas Eve. Most children base their expectations for the holidays on years prior and family-held traditions. If something is going to be different this year, make sure your charges are aware of the alteration. In addition, you and your employer must communicate about what festivities you are expected to participate in, as well as time off for your personal holiday plans.

2. Have a sense of humor. Visits to the pumpkin patch and seeing Santa Claus don't always turn out as intended. Children can be unpredictable and it's important to remember that no one is perfect. When something goes wrong, make sure you laugh it off. A burnt turkey or undelivered Christmas present does not signal the end of the world. At the end of the day, our charges would rather look up to a flawed nanny showing a positive attitude than a nanny pretending to have it all together.

3. Spend quality time with your little elves. Many people get lost in the hustle and bustle of the holidays. This season don't forget to have special moments with your charges. Often the unplanned movie marathons and spontaneous baking can prove to have the most opportunities for giggling. Don't get caught up in your scheduling and socializing; the little elves you care for hold the biggest priority in your heart.

4. Love unconditionally. Don't lose sight that the holidays are meant to uplift relationships. A little fight between charges on how to decorate for New Year's Eve shouldn't affect their whole holiday vacation. Help them work it out and rekindle their playful attitudes. And when you become frustrated with negative behaviors, take a step back and solve the dilemma. The stress of the holiday season often gets to us, but we must remember to love wholeheartedly.

“Visits to the pumpkin patch and seeing Santa Claus don't always turn out as intended.”

5. Plan a few silent nights. It takes so much energy to keep up with charges on a daily basis, but it proves to be even more challenging during the holidays. Make sure you take time for yourself to eat healthy, work out, and get plenty of sleep. In order to accomplish tips 1 through 4, you must first feel strong and healthy, ready to tackle this holiday season.



What Creative Talent Should You Tap Into?

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A NEW TALENT TO TAP INTO BUT DON'T QUITE KNOW WHERE TO FOCUS YOUR PLAYFUL EFFORTS? TAKE THIS QUIZ AND FIND OUT WHICH WAY YOU SHOULD GO.

BY SHERI LOPEZ.

What Are Your Results?

Mostly A's: Tap into your inner dancer. Why not sign up for a dance class at a local dance studio and learn jazz, swing, or even ballet? Better yet, this could be a great way to get some exercise, make new friends, and burn off steam after a bad day. Share your love for the movement of dance with your charges by throwing an impromptu dance party after nap!

Mostly B's: Tap into your inner painter. Put your keen eye for detail to work in a new original masterpiece for your home or as a gift to a loved one or friend. Bonus: teach your charges some of your art techniques and make yourself their favorite nanny ever.

Mostly C's: Take your mischievous nature and turn it into an asset. Clowning around isn't only for, well, clowns! You can sign up for a comedy or improv class, or even just hit up your local comedy night to learn some techniques and pointers from the pros. Practice at work by sharing silly jokes with your charges.

Mostly D's: You love sound and music, so embrace your inner Mozart and enroll in a local music class. Many recreation departments offer reasonably priced courses. Not into signing up for a class? Teach yourself how to read music and think creatively about how to write lyrics. Share this love of music with your charges by encouraging the littles to explore new instruments or even how to sing.

1. Which of the following statements seems the most relevant to you?

- A. All you need is the music and the mirror.
- B. You feel a need to create.
- C. You see humor in most things.
- D. A flower can inspire a song.

2. Which of the following statements about confidence seems the most pertinent?

- A. You can see beyond rejection and focus on the one "yes."
- B. Your vision is motivation.
- C. You're endlessly confident and think there may be a little troublemaker within.
- D. You do not let rejection affect your personal perspective or motivation.

3. Which best describes you?

- A. When you set a goal, your mind is made up.
- B. You have an eye for detail.
- C. You like to test the limits.
- D. You follow directions well.

4. Which of the following statements rings most true for you?

- A. You're fiercely independent.
- B. You're incredibly focused.
- C. You are a master of timing.
- D. You are exceptionally self-motivated.

Your Ugliest Holiday Sweater Party Ever

BY KELCI ROSS.

The “Ugly Christmas Sweater” started out as an unfamiliar and possibly strange fashion trend, but it has evolved into a craze among adults, kids, and even pets! As Christmas time rolls around, many start to gear up for their Ugly Christmas Sweater parties. Craft stores are bombarded and the tinsel is stockpiled. The Web is searched up and down for the ugliest of ugly Christmas sweaters to snag the first place prize! Check out these ugly Christmas sweater ideas for the upcoming season.

for the kids

1



CHILDREN'S REINDEER GAMES SWEATER
\$34.99 at Festified.com

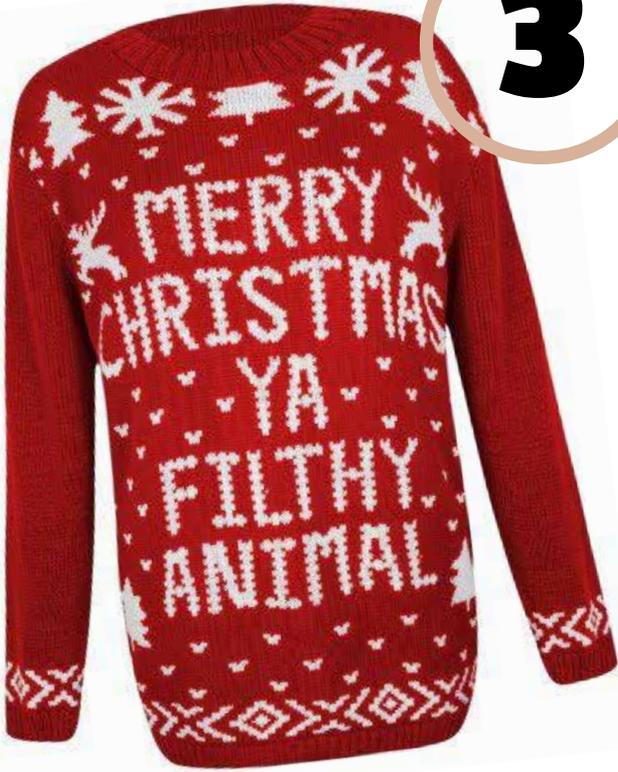
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SANTA SLEIGH INFANT UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER
\$12.99 at OldGlory.com

for adults

3



OUTOGAS CLOTHING WOMEN'S KNITTED SWEATER
\$21.98 on Amazon.com

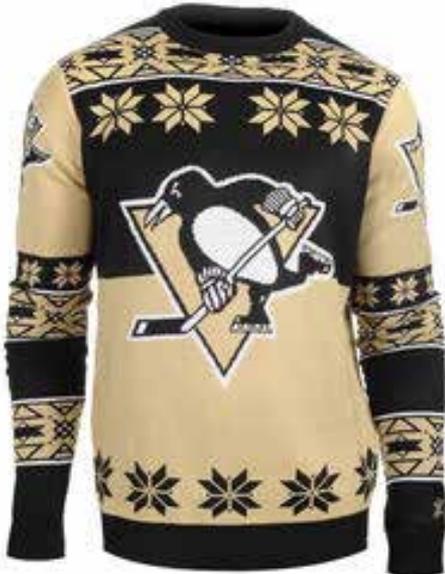


4

ALEX STEVENS MEN'S SANTA INVADERS UGLY CHRISTMAS SWEATER
\$29.99 on Amazon.com

for sports fans

6



MEN'S PITTSBURGH PENGUINS KLEW BLACK ARGYLE
CREWNECK UGLY SWEATER
\$69.95 at shop.nfl.com

5

WOMEN'S DENVER BRONCOS KLEW NAVY BLUE EYELASH
CREW UGLY SWEATER
\$79.99 at shop.nfl.com



for our furry four-legged friends

6

HOLIDAY REINDEER DOG SWEATER
\$21.99 at Festified.com

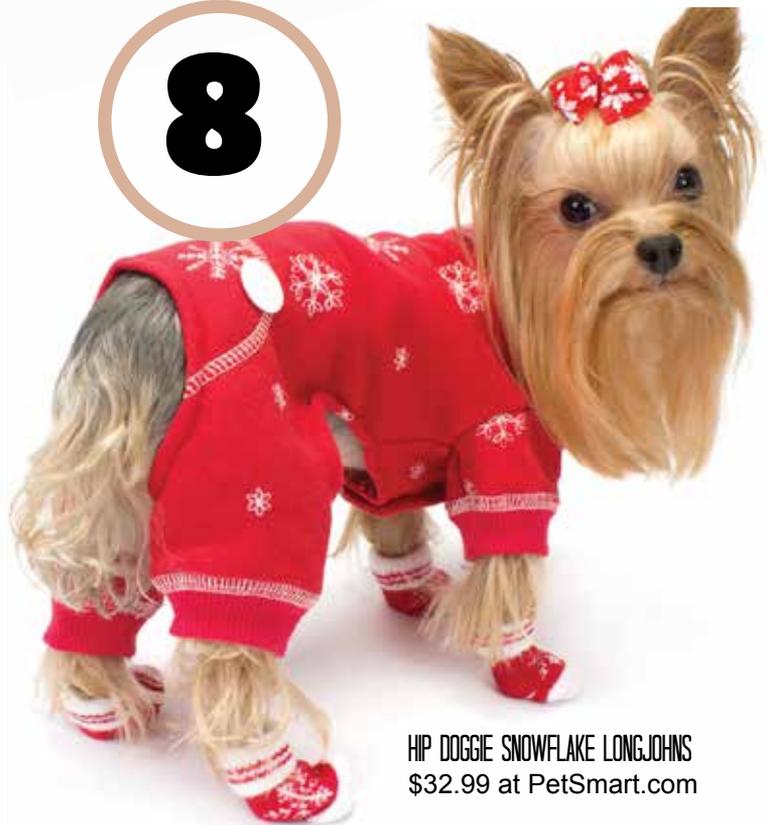


7



CANDY STRIPE CAT SWEATER
\$27.99 at PoochieHeaven.com

8



HIP DOGGIE SNOWFLAKE LONGJOHNS
\$32.99 at PetSmart.com



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\$12.99

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