

January 2019

teach | play | love

NANNY MAGAZINE



Multigenerational Care

THOUGHTS ON ELDER CARE
MULTIGENERATIONAL HOUSING
USING TIME-OUT CORRECTLY
RETIREMENT PLANNING

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"Tomorrow, is the first blank page of a 365 page book. Write a good one." -Brad Paisley

Editors Note

I wish you a very happy new year, filled with continued love, growth, and joy. Growing the next generation is our work, but we know no generation exists alone. We have those who came before us to thank, and must always consider those who will come after us, too, as they are the ones who stand to inherit what we build. In recognition of this interconnectedness, this issue's theme is **intergenerational care**. Care spanning generations is something to celebrate as caregivers.

We know you've got the basics down pat when kids are involved. But what about when MomBoss's parents are in town, or when your own parents start to need you more for their own care? Former U.S. Marine and author, Baltimore-based Dario DeBattista, writes about the benefits of multigenerational housing. Also in this issue: how to make nice when GrandBoss comes to town, age-gap friendships celebrating kinship that knows no age limits, and one woman's musings on how elder care makes her more flexible. This issue publishes during some important celebrations as well. Check out our data blitz filled with factoids on Black History Month, and read through author Savanna Fox's article, pulled from our archive, which takes you on a real gender bender in contemplation of gendered toys. Wondering who's is on the cover of this issue? She's Philadelphia-based nanny Kara Khan as photographed by Carrie Biegler of the Strength Source Project, and she shares her strength story in this issue. I hope you will be inspired to search within yourself for what makes **you** strong, too, after reading through this powerful, soul-searching exploration.

It's hard to believe we're now entering our sixth year of publication, but we're proud to stand by your side for another year in the communities you serve. This year, we are resolved to provide our readership with content that better fits and celebrates the whole nanny without losing sight of our core mission to teach, play, and love. Starting... now. Enjoy this issue, cover to cover, dear readers.



Photo by Angela Gaspar.

Kids' Health

Dr. Michael Warmoth,
Pediatrician at Heal

Nannies caring for infants should be aware of new recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics.



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

AN UPDATE ON SUDDEN INFANT DEATH SYNDROME

The American Academy of Pediatrics has recently updated its recommendations pertaining to infants and sleep. Infants sleeping soundly allow parents and overnight caregivers of babies to sleep soundly as well. Knowing tummy sleeping and bed sharing increase the risk of infant death is troubling, and that information certainly keeps everyone from sleeping peacefully.

To start, put the baby on their back to sleep in a crib next to the parents' or caregiver's bed. They will adjust and you'll have the comfort of knowing they're safe. Once they are able to turn themselves over, they will choose their position of comfort.

Concerns about choking and spitting are often on caregiver's minds. We know that babies spit food out or swallow it back down to stay safe. If you're still concerned, get the answers you need by talking to the child's healthcare provider.

Unfortunately, the risk of SIDS is higher in African American and Native American populations. The NAACP has partnered with the National Institute of Child Health to get these safe sleep practices more widely known. Similar advocacy efforts are underway amongst dedicated Native American communities.

There are further details on how to help your infant charge sleep safely at kidshealth.org/en/parents/sids.html, but an appreciation of the information shared above will go a long way to help the baby and their family.

Dear Stephanie,

My MomBoss's mom is coming into town in a few weeks and will be staying with the family for about a month. She does this every year so it's not news to me, but year after year I find my job more difficult to do with Grandma around. She's suffocating me and doesn't seem to acknowledge me as a professional who is able to do my job. I know my bosses are pleased with my performance, but for some reason everything I do is subject to constant scrutiny from Grandma.

How do I get her to realize she's not my boss and that it's my job to care for these kids, not hers?

-Nanny under a Microscope

Dear Nanny under a Microscope,

Ask your MomBoss to help by explaining to her mother that while you are working you need to do your job without being micromanaged. Ask if you can create a daily schedule so you know what times each day you will be solely in charge of caring for the kids. Likewise, this schedule can spell out other times during the day when Grandma is in charge and can do things on her own with the children without your involvement as well.

You should also prepare to respectfully stand up for yourself with Grandma directly. Speak your truth in a kind and respectful way. Being assertive requires you to consider the other person's feelings, wants, and needs, while not apologizing for expressing your own. It is when you do not express your wants, ideas, and feelings and when you don't stand up for yourself that you feel like a victim and resent others. Prepare statements you can use to stand up for yourself ahead of time. Be ready to say, "I am just following the parents' instructions," or "I hope you don't mind, but I would like to finish this the way MomBoss has asked me to do it."

Keep in mind that Grandma truly loves her family and her personality isn't likely to change. When all else fails, remember there is an end in sight. This is a short visit and Grandma will go home at the end of the month, and normalcy will be restored soon.

Signed,
-Stephanie Felzenberg

Nannies Ask

Stephanie Felzenberg of *Be the Best Nanny Newsletter* guides us through Grandma's visit. Be sure to also read Angela Johnson's article in this issue for more on this topic (p. 28).

19 THINGS TO DO FOR YOUR HEALTH IN 2019

1. Drink more water.

2. Get enough sleep.

3. Cook at home more often.

4. Switch to organic choices on the “dirty dozen.”

5. Go for a walk after dinner.

6. Find a friend and conquer the isolation common in the care professions.

7. Take a daily multivitamin.

8. Get an annual physical.

9. Contribute to your future healthcare costs.

10. Brush your teeth for a full two minutes (sing “Happy Birthday” slowly in your head to know when the time is up).

11. Practice deep breathing and meditation during stressful moments.

12. Eat more veggies.

13. Reduce red meat intake.

14. Get your eyes checked.

15. Change your air filter.

16. Find mental stimulation in a new hobby.

17. Read a book that challenges your mind.

18. Buy a new pair of shoes to motivate you to exercise more.

19. Commit to a better diet by tracking your calories in and out with an app like MyFitnessPal.

INTERVIEW

NANNIES SUPPORTING EMOTIONALLY

INVOLVED FATHERS

BY STEPHANIE HELD

Nannies can provide a sense of continuity of connection between parents and children, according to Jeremy G. Schneider, MFT, a marriage and family therapist. For many nannies, though, communication about childcare and development is frequently shared with the mother. How can dads get better involved?

Jeremy is the author of Fatherhood in 40-Minute Snapshots, an insightful and revealing collection of personal essays exploring the joys and challenges of being an involved dad. In a recent interview, he shared tips on how to be an emotionally involved dad, and how nannies can help foster better father-child relationships.

NM: In your book, Fatherhood in 40-Minute Snapshots, you talk about the importance of involved dads. Can you give us a sense of what “involved” means?

JGS: When I first became a dad, I knew dads were important and being involved mattered, but I had no proof, just a belief



that it must be true. When I thought about involvement, I thought it meant presence. To be involved I needed to be present in my children's lives on a regular basis. Even though I had to go to work every day, I needed to be home every night for dinner, be a part of meeting their needs, taking them to bed, and so forth. I would spend as much time with them as I could when I was home on the weekend and my days off.

NM: You mentioned that you believed involvement was an important part of fatherhood, but didn't have proof. Did you ever find proof?

JGS: As a matter of fact, I did. There are dozens and dozens of studies that explored the importance of involved dads. Children of involved dads tend to do better in school and are more likely to experience overall life satisfaction. Young adults who had nurturing and available dads while growing up are more likely to see themselves as dependable, trusting, and friendly, and are more likely to succeed in their work. They are also more likely to be mentally healthy.

The truth is, children are better off when their relationship with their dad is secure, supportive, sensitive, close, nurturing, and warm.

NM: What should dads know to be more involved?

JGS: In my book, *Fatherhood in 40-Minute Snapshots*, I begin by talking about the four important things to know about involvement. First, it starts with understanding that quality is more important than quantity, that more time isn't always better if they're not fully present with their kids.

Second, being involved means participating in all areas of parenting instead of just being the good cop who avoids cleaning diapers and discipline. We need to be involved in as many aspects of our kids' care as possible.

The third tenet tends to be the most challenging. In my research, I've discovered that dads don't determine involvement. Almost every study I reviewed measured the perception of the child's thoughts—not what the dad thought. So if we think we're being involved, but our child doesn't feel that, all of the benefits disappear.

The fourth is that our involvement needs to change over time as our children grow up. How we were involved when they were babies or 3 or 10 or 17 is all different. We need to keep adjusting to remain involved in their lives.

NM: Do you think there is something nannies can do to foster the father-child relationship?

JGS: I think nannies are in a great position to help foster a connection. I think some of that would involve helping keep both parents—not just moms—informed on what happened with the child, the new developments, the issues that popped up. The more parents know about their kids, the better chance parents have of connecting with and understanding them. The more nannies can talk about both parents with the kids, rather than of just moms, would also be supportive. For instance, "Daddy, is going to be excited to hear you did that today!" or "Mommy will be so happy to hear you said that!" If nannies can provide a sense of continuity of connection between both parents and kids, that can help build a stronger bond between dads and kids.

Jeremy G. Schneider is a marriage and family therapist whose career spans more than 15 years of working with individuals and families, focusing on parenting, relationships, and mental health. He is the author of *Fatherhood in 40-Minute Snapshots*, a book that reveals how love for oneself, his children, and family can flourish over time. Jeremy has been featured in *The New York Times*, *TODAY*, and *CNN*, and has been a speaker on panels in New York, Philadelphia, Dallas, and Liverpool, England. He lives and works in New York City with his wife, Gem, his son, Lucas, and his daughter, Dorit.



Collective Wisdom

Passing helpful life tips and wisdom down from generation to generation is a way to continue our stories and share our love across decades. We reached out to our Facebook community and asked our followers to share one bit of wisdom they hope to pass along to their charges, or one piece of wisdom their charges imparted to them..

“I teach unconditional love and acceptance.”
// Jen Acres
(West Jordan, UT, 5 years as a nanny)

“I’ve learned to go see whatever my littles are engrossed in while we’re on a walk that makes them stop to investigate. They’ve taught me to find wonder in everything.” // Janette Collins (Greenwich, CT, 28 years as a nanny)

“I try to teach trust and consistency to children, and manners, and adventure in everyday life.” // Giovanna Balistreri (Germany, 22 years as a nanny)

“Not everyone is going to love you like your parents and family. It’s a shock to a lot of kids going from school out into the real world.” // Liz McCallum Porter (Scotland, 34 years as a nanny)

“I had a 3-year-old charge who would say, ‘There’s a problem, now let’s make a plan.’ I didn’t realize how often I say that as a calming technique.” // Cynthia Mack (Charlotte, N.C., 20 years as a nanny)

DATA BLITZ

Photo via Pexels.



Often stereotyped as “mammies,” black slave women during America’s antebellum period are often, tragically, forgotten for their roles in caring for children. Mauma Mollie was one such slave. No record exists regarding her own personal life.

Source: World Digital Library

3 mph: the speed at which the average snowflake falls.

Source: Michigan Science Center

According to Roman mythology, Cupid was the son of goddess of love and beauty, none other than Venus.

Source: CNN

February is Black History Month. Did you know, the Quakers in Philadelphia were the first recorded group to protest slavery in the United States?

Source: PBS.org

Women’s History Month is in March. In 2016, 58.1% of females in the United States aged 16 or older participated in the workforce.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Windshield wipers, a standard on all cars starting in 1916, were invented by a woman (Mary Anderson).

Source: Arcadia Publishing and History Press



Fairytale

Knocks on the back door
and front.
Jingles alert:
load complete.
Texts incoming: 5.
Emails: 22,
unread.

Children playing,
laughing,
reading books about a llama
and
his
mama.
Me,
looking out at this.

Content.

Pick a crayon,
purple or
pink.
Play dough or
putty that's silly.
Put on happy face,
paint picture,
perfect.
It is.

Nanny or
Nan.
Woman or
man.
Nanny or
manny = love.

Mermaids have hands and shiny smooth tails.
I have seen one.

Dinosaurs talk and roar.
I've heard one.

Monsters live under beds.
You've showed me one.

Mac and cheese does stick to the ceiling.
You proved it.

I'm fortunate enough to live life in a way
that reads like
a
fairytale.
Lucky me.



AMY MARTINO & COLLEEN YOUNG

I've been in the childcare industry now for over 30 years. This makes me a more "seasoned" nanny. It also means that I am not in a majority age group among my fellow nannies. I've never shied away from introducing myself to the younger crowd, but I'm not always well received... or perhaps I quickly realize that I don't really relate well to them. I'm playing Ella Fitzgerald for my charges, while they are playing Taylor Swift. That sort of thing.

Once in a while, I get lucky and I meet a nanny who, although younger than myself, becomes a friend I can't imagine not getting to spend my days with. This is the case with my nanny friend, Colleen. I first met her when we were in a class for newborn care specialists. About a year later, we ran into each other at a playground. I recognized her, so I went over to her and reintroduced myself. Our charges were about the same age, so we planned a playdate.

The more we got to know one another, the better friends we became. The age gap between us blurred. Since then, we have playdates several days a week all over Seattle, and there have been many days we have gotten together with the kids to cook or go to the beach. We're able to bounce ideas off each other, encourage one another through tough days, which also sometimes comes with being able to vent about the not-so-glamorous side of being a nanny. Wait, is there a glamorous side? We can also cheer one another on because, let's face it, whether you're old or young, it's good to have "that" friend, especially in such an isolating job. Our friendship is proof that age is just a number.

AGE-GAP BFFS



RACHEL MASSINGILL & NAOMI MASSINGILL

"I was close friends with my 93-year-old grandmother and was welcomed into her group of fellow widows. Now, when I am home, I get together with one of the ladies on Tuesday nights to watch NCIS. She is in her 80's. It was about the people and relationships with them, not their age."



A Demonstration of Unity: Photographer Captures Personal Strengths through Portraits

*By Jennifer Kuhn.
Photos by Carrie Biegler.*

Imagine This

Ask yourself this question: “What is something that you’ve done in the past or are doing now that’s made you feel strong?” Now imagine a stranger—a polite stranger, not that it matters—with a digital camera issuing that question. Now pretend the photographer asks whether you wouldn’t mind being photographed for publication of your photo alongside your answer, whatever that may be, and however the complexities or blessings of your life may shape it. What would you say?

Enter Carrie Biegler, a Philadelphia-based photographer, activist, mother, and art teacher. She has blonde hair and an inner intensity that is balanced with sensitivity that most people, plain and simple, do not have these days. You could call her brave.

Carrie has taught studio art and photography to students in elementary school, middle school, high school, and college for 15 years. She has long believed in the power of art, in the power of an image, to heal and to convey feelings and ideas. Dealing with a lot of anger, frustration, and feelings of powerlessness in her own life, particularly surrounding her experiences with sexism, led her to want to flip those negative feelings while pushing out a more positive message to other women. She wanted to connect and share with other women. She wanted women to know how fierce and brave and strong they truly are, bringing out these qualities in the subjects of her portrait series, which received attention through *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Real Woman* magazine, and a show at the Abington Art Center just north of Philadelphia. To date, she has met with and photographed over 125 women in the region.

Inner Reflection

I met Carrie at a little coffee shop in the Northern Liberties neighborhood of Philadelphia. Her husband and two children were in tow and it was easy to see that to Carrie, being a beacon of light in a sometimes

dark and dusty community is part of the fiber of her being. It's something she just can't help. So when she walked up to women—strangers—in and around Philadelphia with her camera in her hand, she had one goal in mind: helping others find and capture their own inner strength. "Everybody has something to share," Carrie says. "These aren't celebrities; these are women you pass on the street."

Carrie asks her subjects, "What have you done in the past or what are you doing now that makes you feel strong inside?" She says, "A lot of women said they didn't feel very strong at all but then when they sat down and thought about it, they said that they then realized they were much stronger than they had ever given themselves credit for." Carrie says she feels her work enables her to "bear witness" to others' stories through the "profound conversations" she has with her subjects, women she says she would not have met if not for the project. "I've gotten in my car and just cried my eyes out because something someone said was so deep, profound, or moving," Carrie says, and goes on to mention that sometimes the things her subjects say are just the thing she needed to hear in her own life.

Themes of Strength

Carrie identified that four major themes emerged through her work with her subjects. The first theme was caring for other people. As contributors to the childcare community, this one may strike a personal chord;

nannies know what it means to put the needs of others ahead of our own, and the sacrifice it often takes to do so. The second theme Carrie honed in on was that her subjects reported drawing strength from doing what was unexpected of them—not living life by other people's standards. Third, Carrie describes the strength her participants obtained from their family heritage, their personal histories, and what they've been taught by the most important people in their lives. And last, Carrie has identified strength her subjects describe as coming into through the consequence of survivorship: abuse and trauma are transformed through survivorship, giving strength to turn victims into powerful women. Of this last



group, Carrie says survivors are now seeking her out for their chance to tell their stories. "There's a lot of loneliness that people walk around with," Carrie says. "But we can overcome it. That these women can look at their own triumphs as a way to help other people is inspiring. It's a really scary thing to do."

That these four themes were repeatedly revealed through the course of her work illuminates how we are more alike than we are different, whether we feel weak or strong on any given day, and whether we have had an easy

go of it or a more difficult life wrought with tragedy and loss. It shows that at the end of it all, we are all one, and we are all in this together. "This work has taught me that we have a lot more in common outside of our comfort bubbles and our families than we may initially think," Carrie says.

With the new year here, what better time than now for us all to take inventory of our own inner strengths, and profile the ways we can use them to shine a light in this world.

"There's a lot of loneliness that people walk around with, but we can overcome it."



Kara Kahn

"The past few years I have been building my business, Pop Up Polaroid, a Polaroid photo booth, here in Philly. Since I first started setting up on the corner of Frankford and Girard with a handmade backdrop stand and one camera trying to convince passers-by to let me take their photo, Pop Up Polaroid has grown up quite a bit. I am now working with amazing clients and collaborators and in places I never dreamed I could. Most recently I moved Pop Up out of my house and into a studio, a goal of mine since I can remember. I am now able to make 8x10 Polaroid portraits, something that felt like a pipe dream just a year ago. So whenever I'm feeling defeated or overwhelmed or let imposter syndrome creep in, I step inside this space and remember that I made it here. I remember how many times I didn't think I could make it happen but kept at it anyway. I remember every time I questioned if I was crazy for running from my day job to a night gig to my day job to my computer to answer emails and try to build a website that made me look like I had any idea of what I was doing. I remember every time I was scraping by to pay the bills and still buying just enough film to keep going. I come in here and am reminded that it was all worth it and it still is. It shuts down the self doubt, at least for the moment, and gives me the space and the motivation to go for the next big thing."

Kara is still a nanny in Philadelphia while running her business. Check out Kara's website at www.popuppolaroid.com.

"I was raised by a tribe. A tribe including incredible parents whose love is strong and true. By five siblings who taught me to always stand up for myself. By a mother, an aunt, and sisters who taught me to never apologize for being a strong woman. By a father who taught me that everyone has a story, so always be kind. Our family is deeply rooted in those values.

We were taught to always put others before ourselves, especially those less fortunate, and to take nothing for granted, since most of our life is based on luck. That we are the lucky ones. My family makes me feel strong. I find my strength in raising my children the same way. I find strength when I look at my husband who has similar roots. We are trying to raise kind, responsible, emotionally intelligent humans. This is not an easy task in a world that can look ugly and breed greed and selfishness. But they are being raised by their own tribe. You will see my strength in my family values that will continue in the next generation. You will see my children strong minded, strong hearted, and strong willed, just like their tribe."

-Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Karley Weidner

"A lot of women said they didn't feel very strong at all but then when they sat down and thought about it, they said that they then realized there were much stronger than they had ever given themselves credit for."





MR. MANNY

UNDERSTANDING TIME OUTS

By Matthew Lister.

The time out chair, naughty step, calm-down carpet, calm corner. There are many names for it, but each point to the exact same thing: time out. Over the years, many people, from the average parent to parenting experts, have advocated for the use of time outs. Reasons supporting its use are always very similar:

- It removes the child who is engaging in problem behaviors from the immediate environment to refocus.
- It allows the child who is engaging in the problem behaviors a chance to sit and think about what they have done wrong.
- It allows the child to see what others are doing without being able to engage so they will try harder to make better choices.

But ultimately, time outs are often still misused or overused. Here's why.

We need a lens shift pertaining to

time outs. Time out isn't just about putting the child and his negative behavior out of sight and out of mind by removing him from his immediate environment. Rather, it should be regarded as "the contingent withholding of the opportunity to earn access to a positive reinforcer or the loss of access to positive reinforcers for a specified time" (Cooper, Heron, and Heward, 2007). In other words, the child who engages in a problem behavior loses access to a preferred item or activity for a specified amount of time.

Through the lens of applied behavior analysis, time outs are considered a negative punishment. They remove something to decrease the likelihood of the offending behavior occurring again. They remove a reinforcer (such as the toy or the activity associated with the offending behavior) to decrease the presentation of specific behaviors (hitting, tantrums, etc.) associated

with that item or situation.

To be successful, time outs require active caregiver awareness. Proper use depends on situational awareness and knowing when and why to use a time out, as opposed to using time outs as a blanket catch-all punishment. Nannies and parents should be diligent to ensure that the reinforcer the child stands to lose access to is something they would be motivated not to lose. As an example, if you tell a child, "Clean up the toys, and then we can go outside to play," and the child throws a tantrum or becomes aggressive, placing that child in a time out prolongs the period of time for which they do not have to do what you asked. It also may be the case that going outside isn't really something they feel drawn to, so it may not be motivating enough to get the child to clean up his or her toys. In this scenario, the time out has become an escape for the child. Children often are willing

to sit staring at nothing if it means they do not have to clean up their toys or do something they are not particularly interested in or are averse to doing.

A nanny must understand the function or purpose of the behavior before implementing a time out for it to be effective. The nanny must understand why the child is exhibiting the behavior so they know whether a time out will increase or decrease the likelihood of the negative behavior occurring again.

There are times when a time out that removes the child from the situation is not appropriate. When a child engages in a behavior to escape doing what you have asked, time outs may provide a template for future behaviors in which the very act of being removed from the scene helps the child avoid having to complete the task at hand, increasing the likelihood of the pattern continuing.

Make time out effective by not making it a game. Give very little attention to the child, and know that time out does not necessarily mean removing a child from the physical location to sit on a chair, a step, in a corner, or on a stool. Time out can also mean withholding access to the child's preferred item or activity. Lastly, use time out as an occasional tool rather than a go-to, as overuse can minimize its effectiveness.



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Feminism versus Dolls: A Nanny Takes on Gendered Toys

BY SAVANNA FOX.

One of the underappreciated skills a nanny possesses is being able to adapt to different parenting styles. A nanny, at some point in her career, will enter into a household unrecognizable from the one in which she herself was raised. It could be a house with same-sex parents or opposite-sex parents, one with processed foods or an in-home chef. The girls we care for may not be allowed to play with girl-gendered toys, or only girl-gendered toys, where pink and all things female are shooting out from every crevice in her bedroom.



While some of the choices a parent makes may seem baffling, the exposure to these different styles and methods can encourage us to grow and think constructively. Let's, for instance, think about the gendered-toys I just mentioned. In recent years there has been a cultural backlash against the hypergendered-toy market, especially in the "pink aisle." This backlash has stimulated a gender-neutral movement in general, from gender-neutral toys to gender-neutral colors and names. However, for some people, gender-neutral isn't always good enough.

WHEN "IT" STARTED

The first time I heard a mother say "I never want my daughter to play with dolls; I only want her to play with trucks," I was flooded with memories from gender studies classes in college, classes in which we discussed the potential evils of Barbie, baby dolls, and both the colors blue and pink. We theorized that these gendered toys and colors were upholding patriarchal structures and the harmful subversion of women.

I immediately felt a sense of camaraderie with the mother, thinking she too was aware of the social and feminist issues that take root in our young. By removing female-gendered toys, she was attempting to push back against outside gendering the world would inflict, both socially and pro-

fessionally, on her daughter. I presumed this mother knew that statistically her daughter would likely earn less money than her male counterparts, be overlooked for promotions, feel pressure to have kids, and to look a certain way, just to name a few of the feminist issues children are still too young to have to struggle with. At the time, I believed that this mother, myself, and others like us were invoking positive feminist theory by engaging in and enforcing gendered-toy monitoring, but were we?

THINKING DIFFERENTLY

As a nanny in a progressive Brooklyn neighborhood, I continued to hear similar parenting qualms with specifically girl-gendered toys and I found myself questioning this "no dolls" logic. Weren't we oversimplifying the source of gender separation, especially because the idea and practice consistently excluded boys from the same toy monitoring?

I believe the "no dolls" parenting fad, while masked with claims of relief from gender, patriarchy, and sexism, is severely flawed. How did we transition from believing that we are a gendered society and that some toys are gendered to removing specifically girl-gendered toys from biologically female girls and introducing opposite-gendered toys (e.g., trucks)? Does the removal of one gendered toy and the introduction of another equally gendered toy break down gender barriers? Or do we simply reinforce gender differences by acknowledging the legitimacy of gendered toys?

GENDERED-TOY MONITORING

The driving force behind the ban on dolls practice seems to be the fear that providing young girls with girl-gendered toys will pressure our daughters or female charges into subservient roles, both socially and professionally. Are we worried that toys that appear to typify stereotypical female characteristics of image over substance, nurturer over logician, will lead girls to only want to become stay-at-home moms, caregivers, cooks, and wives? Are these fears valid? And are these career and lifestyle choices inherently bad or digressive to the feminist movement?

While the fear of a gender-coercive world is real, girls' choices to inhabit these roles are not bad or harmful to the feminist movement. People should be aware, though, that their children will have outside pressure to embody the ideals of "male" and "female". But I do not think the knowledge of a hyper and yet unattainable embodiment of male and female warrants actions that disembody girls from all things female. Aren't we just limiting our daughter's options in the name of feminism?

The fundamental misstep occurs when the parent substitutes boy-gendered toys for their daughter's girl-gendered toy collection. This action contradicts the feminist movement instead of upholding it by taking away choice and associating feminism with women's likening to male, to becoming more male rather than being equal. The core of feminism is choice; limiting it is precisely what we are fighting against.

MALE VS. FEMALE

Substituting male playthings for female ones also devalues classical female roles. While on the one hand we are saying "no" to dolls, we are confusingly and simultaneously saying "yes" to typically male-gendered toys. In this scenario, not only are gender dichotomies upheld, sexism is amplified by highlighting the perceived differences between male and female gender norms.

The embedded message in the "no dolls, only trucks" practice is that classical female roles are less important than male roles. It appears as though sexism can be avoided so long as women don't enter into the hyper-female roles that girl toys may represent (e.g., motherhood, the housewife, caregiver, and cook). By practicing gendered-toy monitoring, parents instill in their daughters and sons the idea that sexism only exists when a woman chooses a classically female, or not male, role in society.



STIGMA IN CHILDCARE

This reasoning places feminism in conflict with the stay-at-home-mom and all classically female roles. I myself have been subject to the stay-at-home-mom stigma because I've chosen to be a nanny. The stigma surrounding my career choice is clearly in conflict with my peers' original image of me as a "strong, educated, feminist female." When I tell my peers that I'm a professional nanny, I am greeted with awkward silences followed by statements like, "I need to really work and use my brain to be stimulated." These comments directly demonstrate that classically female roles are not considered "real work" unless performed by a man. Men are often rewarded and praised if they choose to dedicate any portion of their lives to "female" work. Stay-at-home-dads are all the rage these days, or so it seems.

Is this what we aspire to teach future generations, that one can only be a feminist or a radical if she engages in what has been culturally determined to be "male" work? Don't our very acts of toy monitoring only further set up a world where male and female continue at odds, where "female" maintains its subversion through the praise and likening to "male"?

THE REAL PROBLEM

Baby dolls, Barbie, the colors blue and pink are just things. They are symptoms of our errors in thinking, not the cause. I believe it's important to remember that toys only carry as much cultural weight as we put on them. Toy dolls are not responsible for sexism, people are. When we blame objects for sexism and negative gender dichotomies, what we do, by accident, is push aside the real issue, which is our way of thinking, making it harder for us to find the real source of the problem, and thus, the problem persists.

The reality of the "no dolls, only trucks" practice does not instill feminist values. It does not teach you or the children you care for how to effectively address issues of gender coercion or sexism. Instead of addressing,

teaching, and educating on issues of equality, feminism, and gender difference, toy monitoring only reinforces gender differences and women's subversion. There is no gender neutrality when parents substitute one gendered toy for an equally gendered toy.

WHAT TO DO

If toy monitoring isn't an effective tool against gendering and patriarchal structures, then how do we address these issues? How do we effectively as individuals and caregivers continue to pursue this topic for our children and ourselves?

I believe the best way to address these issues is to constantly maintain a dialogue with our peers and the children in our care. We should question both the short-term and long-term effects of our chosen parenting and coparenting, styles, not just turn a blind eye to the inconsistencies in logic. As long as caregivers and parents create and maintain an environment that stimulates conversations and encourages creative play of all kinds, the dangers of gendered-toy play should be limited.

Caregivers, unfortunately, will be limited in addressing some of these issues, unless specifically asked their opinion, in which case it's good to be informed. Issues of feminism, gender, and sexism should be a topic for all.

If the family you work for is against baby dolls but their daughter is obsessed with them, point out that baby dolls can be a useful social tool. Children can learn how to relate to themselves and how to become a big sister or brother, for starters. Role playing is important and will likely happen with or without a baby doll. Gender divides, while they exist, are not concrete. Children learn how to gender themselves from the adults in their lives. You can remind the parents that inanimate objects don't speak, they can't have real back and forth dialogue with them, but you can.

Planning for your retirement

By Ned Dickert.

No job is forever, and there will come a point when even the most devoted nanny will want to retire. You worked hard caring for your charges, playing a vital role in shaping them to be the people they will grow up to be. You deserve to retire comfortably. The key is to remember that it is never too early or too late to start saving.

The easiest thing to do when contemplating your retirement savings is to establish a “set it and forget it” mindset. Talk to your bank or an online brokerage firm about the different types of retirement accounts available. Consider a ROTH IRA, where you can contribute up to \$5,500 (\$6,500 if over age 50) in 2018, invest your money in any number of options, and take out the proceeds tax-free in retirement. Thanks to the power of compound interest, the earlier you start, the greater the benefit of this strategy.

Fully funding an IRA each year may not be feasible in your financial situation, but don't be discouraged. Set up an automatic payroll deduction and watch how even a small amount adds up. If you open an account with \$100, deposit \$25 per month, and earn a 7% average annual return for 30 years, you will have \$31,609 in the bank by the time you re-



tire. That's \$9,100 you saved and more than \$22,000 in interest you've earned. Hopefully you're now thinking twice about what to do with the rewards from that cash back credit card.

Also consider asking your employer if they are willing to consider including retirement contributions as part of your total compensation. Perhaps they will fund a SEP IRA on your behalf instead of giving you that

year-end bonus. This is a great way to fund your retirement each year without impacting your weekly budget. At HomeWork Solutions, we are seeing an increasing number of nannies and employers asking about retirement plans like this. Don't be shy about asking your employer if this is something they would consider.

It is worth noting that in order to take advantage of all the retirement benefits you deserve, you must be paid "on the books." Some nannies are unaware that employers are required to contribute to your retirement through Social Security and Medicare taxes, commonly referred to as "FICA." The employer must pay an amount equal to 7.65% of your gross pay, and they can withhold an equal portion for your tax liability from your pay or choose to cover your portion themselves. You get credit for every calendar quarter in which your employer pays into the Social Security system on your behalf, and you qualify for benefits with 40 quarters paid in. On the flip side, if you don't pay in, when it comes time to retire, you won't be able to cash in on the benefits.

Too often we at HomeWork Solutions hear from a nanny approaching retirement who has just discovered that she will not qualify for Social Security because she has always been paid "off the books." Don't put yourself in that spot. Demand fair and legal pay with all the benefits that entails from the start of your career and you'll be ahead of the game. Coupled with a dedicated savings strategy as early as possible, you'll be able to retire on your terms.

If you have any questions about payroll, taxes, retirement accounts, or employment laws in your state, please feel free to reach out. We're here to help.

HomeWork Solutions is a payroll and tax company that helps household employers manage the requirements of having an employee and are strong advocates for the rights of nannies and other household employees.



When possible, go above and beyond for your NannyFamily by staying tuned in to your charges' extracurriculars that may typically fall under the parents' jurisdiction. Imagine your MomBoss or DadBoss rushing home to relieve you after their workday to take the kids to soccer practice, and after facing a bad day at work and horrendous traffic having to wrestle a child into a uniform and look for that pair of cleats that has disappeared for the thousandth time this month. Having the children dressed and ready to go is a simple, yet effective way to make your employer's life that much easier.

Being a record keeper is also a helpful way to step up. Keep a shared planner that is accessible by both you and your employers, and write down all noteworthy information that might be helpful for the parents. For example, jot down what your charges ate for each meal, including snacks, and

describe the activities you did together. What did your charge learn that would blow his or her parents away? This is especially kind to do when you work for parents who struggle to leave their children every day, missing important moments that we, as nannies, get to witness. Keeping a planner chock full of everyday goings-on might just be a little something extra to make your employer feel more actively involved.

Nannies can become leaders of the home in some ways. Clutter usually comes with toys and outgrown clothes. One of the best ways to assist your NannyFamily is to chip in with the organizational aspect of managing the children. Little things like separating old toys or packing away clothes that don't fit could be a tremendous help that doesn't take much effort at all. Some of us care for children who still take naps daily, a great time to use to your advantage in your mission to go the extra

mile. If you don't feel comfortable with making decisions about what to toss and what to keep on your own, a simple conversation with your employers could give you the push you need to take these little tasks upon yourself to declutter your NannyFamily's home.

Communication is so key between nannies and employers. When in doubt, talk it out. Your NannyFamily will appreciate your candor. It's important to remember that it's the little things that go a very long way. These small, simple gestures could be just the thing to really show how much you care.

Looking for a few more ideas? Here are a few we can all do to share kindness.

- Put your grocery cart in the designated area in the parking lot when you're done with it. Don't be one of those people who leaves it stranded in some random parking spot because it's too cold outside to do the right thing.
- Don't underestimate the power of a simple "please" or "thank you." We teach these virtues to our charges, so let's not forget to exercise them ourselves.
- Leave a decent tip. Those who work for tips depend on this income to live. Don't be cheap or skimp. 15% to 20% is considered a standard tip, even when service is slower than we'd like.
- Go the extra mile for Mother Nature by reducing the amount of waste you produce. Teach your charges the importance of reducing and reusing materials consumed by their homes, and teach proper techniques for recycling.
- Smile. You never know whether the lady scanning your groceries at the market or the person handing you your dry cleaning could use a friendly face that day.

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SURVIVING + THRIVING DURING

Grandma's Visit

BY ANGELA JOHNSON.

Many of us have heard horror stories about when Grandma comes to town. These tales may be told to us by fellow nannies or even MomBoss herself. They flip an invisible switch in our imaginations and a movie reel of scenarios starts playing through our minds. We imagine the worst possible situations and immediately go into panic mode. Perhaps in this movie reel, Grandma is a micromanager who is never quite satisfied with the way you wash out a bottle. Maybe she criticizes your every move with your charge. This is many a nanny's worst nightmare.

But it doesn't have to play out according to the script. Careful planning and a change of perspective can alter the movie playing in your head. Before you hit the panic button, try some of these "Be Attitudes" instead.

Be Proactive

As soon as you get the news

that a grandparent is coming, sit down and have a discussion with the parents. Find out what their expectations are for you while their parent is in town. Discuss the children's schedule and which parts of the schedule are not flexible, such as nap times. Find out if there will be periods of time that the grandparent will have the children all to herself and how that will affect your work schedule so you can plan accordingly. Ask your employer to speak to their parent ahead of time about house rules, nonflexible schedule items, and activities that may be appropriate to do with the children while in town. If you get the chance, sit down with your visitor and create a plan that works for both of you during her stay.

Be Prepared

Keep in mind that if your GrandBoss is visiting from out of town, odds are they don't get to see their grandchild often.

Why not go the extra mile to make their short visit memorable and fun? Plan for the time that your charge's grandparent will be visiting to include places to visit, art activities, games, and alone time with the grandparent. Always include travel time in the schedule for children who still take naps. Discuss the plan with your visitor so you will both know what to expect from each other.

Always have an extra set of clothes for each child. Depending on the time of year, be prepared with a jacket, swim suit, boots, flip flops, or rain gear. Make sure you pack plenty of snacks. Anything can happen to delay your plans. Carry a small first-aid kit in the backpack or diaper bag. Be sure to include any special equipment your charge may need in case an emergency comes up. Have these items ready to go on time for when your charge is ready to head out for the day with his



or her grandparent. Bonus tip: pack the camera so the grandparent can capture all the precious moments they make with their grandchild. Showing you are an ally will go a long way toward getting rave reviews from GrandBoss.

Be Accommodating

Let the spoiling begin. Grandparents are famous for “spoiling” their grandchildren. They haven’t seen them for a while, so they feel like they must make up for lost time. They shower your charge with gifts, which may or may not be age appropriate, and are very lenient when it comes to following the rules that you have set for the children. Almost any activity or outing the children suggest will be a go for the grandparent. Your charges are banking on this and they will probably choose activities that you don’t normally allow them to do. If Grandma chooses to an outing or activity that you

don’t like, let it slide. She wants to create special memories with her grandchildren and the activity she chose is special to her. Come up with a compromise to help her create that magical moment for the kids while keeping them safe. If Grandma wants to feed the children or read them their bedtime stories, let her do it, even if this is something you look forward to doing yourself. Be willing to give them the extra time that it takes to read “just one more book,” even if that means bedtime gets pushed back by a few minutes. This is special bonding time that they need.

Be Flexible

The weather changes, someone gets sick, or Grandma changes her mind and wants to do something totally unplanned and not sanctioned by the mutually agreed schedule. Things don’t always go according to plan and

sometimes you won’t be privy to the new plan until you show up for work the next day. Don’t get upset because you were not informed ahead of time. Children can sense when you’re stressed and it can cause them to be stressed too, which can lead to behavior issues. Just breathe, count to ten, and go with the flow. It will be better in the end for everyone if you don’t try to fight it.

Be Patient

Children often act differently when they are with only their nanny than they do when guests are visiting. They can become more whiney, may cling to whoever lets them have their way, may suddenly decide they don’t like certain foods, and a host of other behaviors can be displayed. Grandma probably doesn’t do things the way you do them. She may often “suggest” (tell you) how certain things need

to be done. She may create her own set of rules for the kids. She may come running and even take over when she hears one of them crying, especially an infant.

Try to remember that these are her grandchildren and she only wants what's best for them. Also remember that what she feels is best and what you feel is best may differ. If the children are safe and well, don't stress. Just go with it.

Be Respectful

Grandma does things according to her knowledge, the way she was raised and the way she was taught to raise her own children. We do things according to how we were raised, new scientific studies, and professional development classes we've taken. We do better because we've learned and know better. Grandma may do things "old school" and we do them "new school," but that is not a valid reason for us to discount what she says or does. If it is not harming the children, be willing to tolerate a different way of doing things. Reciprocity: you can both learn from each other and create a new-found respect for each other by having nonjudgmental conversations about your differences.

Be A Listener

I know, I know... boring! Don't automatically turn a blind ear to your employer's parent when he or she starts telling you stories about what your employer was like as a child. If you listen closely, you will learn a great deal of information about the parent that may help shed light on some of the traits you see in the children.

Be Engaging

You are more familiar with the kids' temperaments, so help your visitor by making suggestions according to how you know the kids will respond. Younger children may see their grandparent as a "stranger" and want to cling to you. Create environments where you take turns playing with the kids until they become more comfortable with their grandparent. Once they become comfortable, you can leave the immediate area but never be out of their sight so the child will still feel safe.

Unless otherwise requested, actively participate in what's going on instead of standing off to the side just watching. This is bond building, creating

memories, a show of solidarity to the children, but most of all, it's fun. Most of the time, all it takes is a change of perspective. Simply putting yourself in the other person's shoes can transform the atmosphere. These small modifications can make a huge difference. So, whether your employer's parent is coming to visit for the first time or the tenth time, flip the script by using some of these "Be Attitudes."

Angela Johnson owns and operates Third Parent Academy. Join her Facebook Live events each week on Monday night at 8 p.m. Eastern.

Most of the time, all it takes is a change of perspective.





3 Post-Holiday Hacks to Kickstart Your New Year

BY ROBERT JOHNSON.

It's the new year. The festivities are over and all you have to show for it is a load of empty boxes that your charges insist on playing with, a low bank balance, and an ever-tightening pair of pants. The boxes and bank balance can wait, but the trouser tightness can be looked at right away. Procrastinating over a problem will just allow it to get worse with time. Think of it like removing a plaster; do it quickly to minimize the pain.

The past is a “now” that has come and gone. The future is a “now” that has not happened yet. Therefore, the only time is now, as Eckhart Tolle would say. Now is the only time you can change. Here are three post-holiday hacks to start using “now” to get you back on track.

Hack #1: Fill up with Goodness

You may have holiday treats still lingering around your house. Overindulgence over the Christmas period is going to happen. Trying to resist it can be very tough, but there is one way to indulge without it all being negative. The trick is to fill up first on the good stuff. Allow yourself to eat as many of the healthier, lower-calorie options as you like. You may find that by stuffing yourself with the goodness, you don't feel quite so keen to tuck into the sweets after all.

Hack #2: Intermittent Fasting

You've probably heard about people doing intermittent fasting with great results. Whether it's healthy or not depends on how you do it and what you eat. If you're not keen on the idea of going 16 hours without food, that's understandable. Fortunately you don't have to with this hack.

Skipping breakfast and having just a black coffee until mid-morning is like a mini-fast. Then you can snack on some almonds and drink plenty of water or herbal teas. Perhaps you can try going until lunch before eating your first proper meal. Make your first meal higher in protein and fats. Trying this hack up to three times a week can really help control your food intake and allow the body time to burn off the extra fat it has stored from the holiday period. Check with your doctor before you start any new diet.

Hack #3: Pack a Protein Punch for Breakfast

Eating around 30 grams of protein for breakfast can reduce food cravings later in the day. Not only that, but cutting back on sugary cereal will help you maintain a consistent blood sugar level, important in maintaining stable energy throughout the day. Spikes will inevitably lead to dips, which impact mood. You're also more likely to crave high-calorie snacks during a dip. By starting off your day with a stable blood sugar level, you are less likely to start early on the chocolates and sweet treats.

HOME IS WHERE THE PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, AND IN-LAWS ARE:

AN EXPLORATION OF MULTIGENERATIONAL HOUSEHOLDS

Imagine it's morning. Your alarm clock goes off. You yawn and stretch and not-so-gracefully get onto your feet. It gets brighter earlier this time of year. The very awake sun makes you squint painfully. You didn't sleep well enough, again, and you're still exhausted. First things first: time to make the coffee. You walk down the stairs and are greeted by your children.

And your in-laws.

And your parents.





Far from a stressful situation, this is a boon to your day. A fresh pot's already steaming. You father-in-law has made breakfast. Your parents are playing with your kids before school. They're going to drive them there for you. You smile.

In 2018, this reality—multigenerational households, or households that include two or more adult generations—are the new norm for many American families. According to the Pew Research Center, 1 in 5 Americans now live in such an arrangement. While the reasons for this major uptick are many, the Great Recession, general costs of living, and the aging baby boomer population are the major factors for 64 million people living in

multigenerational homes. It's a complex living situation with many considerations, but the benefits are many those who live in multigenerational households. And what's the key to making them work? A lot of planning and consideration.

Financial and Family Support

Cassandra Walters of Rio Rancho, New Mexico, lives with her mother and her 10-year-old daughter. When Walters' father died, she and her brother very quickly knew that their mother should not live alone. "She became really depressed," Walters said. "They were married for 32 years, so it was very hard on her." And while many multigenerational families choose their

arrangement because of cultural traditions, Walters attributes hers to a family value. "We don't allow anyone to suffer alone."

Beyond the impact of the peace and comfort Walters is able to give her mother, there are other positive outcomes of their multigenerational home. For Walters, in particular, having to pay one rent instead of two, and splitting groceries, utilities, and other living costs helps a lot. "We're able to add to our savings rather than living paycheck to paycheck each month," Walters said.

Kristina Gano, who lives with her boyfriend's parents in Foster City, California (a suburb outside of notoriously expensive San Francisco), also finds the money-saving aspect of living in a multigenerational home to be key. It's the exact reason for her arrangement; she is currently saving money to buy a house. Despite this, "It feels like we will be saving forever," Gano said. But without this arrangement, that forever may never come.

Other reasons that people choose multigenerational homes are for the benefit and support of family raising family. Nick Heuer of Hartford, Wisconsin, began living with his mother because of divorce and childcare needs. He says his mother has been absolutely "necessary" in



helping him raise his three daughters. His children range in age from 4 to 7. Their routine is a team effort Heuer wouldn't have otherwise. They work together on the exhausting checklist of feeding, dressing, brushing teeth and hair, and walking to school that all parents and caregivers know.

Emily McCulloh Hartzell of Phoenix, Maryland, also finds the support of family to be the best benefit of her multigenerational household, which includes her parents and her kids. "My dad just turned 80 and was concerned about my mom's well-being in the future. She is only 68," McCulloh Hartzell said. Her father is also undergoing treatment for prostate cancer. "It's important that he be comfortable in any stage."

Making It Work

Despite the benefits that multigenerational households can offer, there are many dynamics that can complicate activities of daily living and other considerations that should be taken into account.

For Walters, privacy is a balance that has to be thoughtfully carried out between her mom, herself, and her daughter. "My mom and I have separate bedrooms and separate bathrooms. We don't enter each other's spaces without asking, and we don't comment on each other's rooms." This is with the exception of Walters' daughter, who she calls a "floater" because she uses anyone's bathroom or lays on anyone's bed.

Similarly, Gano struggles with



privacy and boundaries in her household. She's of Asian descent, and part of the cultural tradition for families like hers to live together requires great respect for the elders in the household. And while she and her boyfriend live on the upstairs floor and his parents live in the basement, they obviously frequently come in contact with one another. "Sometimes I want to just come home and not talk, but it's hard. You can't do that when you live with people," Gano said.

Even Heuer, who describes his home as "fairly large," still also uses strong language when discussing privacy. "I'm usually in our finished basement, which is effectively my territory. The kitchen and living room are my mom's. We all have our respective rooms and bathrooms, which we respect. We just don't go into those spaces unless asked or is essential," Heuer said.

For McCulloh Hartzell's multigenerational household, which came about less out of need and more out of love and comfort, they've dealt with privacy and





Photo by futurestreet via Flickr Creative Commons.

Multigenerational Homes and Live-In Nanny Arrangements: Similarities and Differences

- *Communicating expectations for personal space help to define when and where boundaries are needed. The same is true for live-in nannies when off duty and older parents living in the home who wish to maintain a sense of privacy and autonomy.*
- *Living with members of your own family may be in some ways easier or more difficult than living with another family.*
- *Having readily available extra adults in the house makes managing childcare scheduling snafus a lot easier.*
- *More people living in the home means more people are able to step up in a pinch. Unexpected delivery? It's more likely that someone will be home to sign for it. Child gets sick at school? The odds are better that someone will be there to pick him or her up without significantly disrupting the day.*

space considerations by building two entirely separate spaces within their home to include two kitchens. "It's super easy to never see each other if we don't want, which is not the case," McCulloh Hartzell said.

Who Does What?

The day-to-day aspects of living under a roof with others—like cooking dinner, cleaning, chores, and disciplining children—are matters requiring consideration for those living in multigenerational households.

McCulloh Hartzell's household takes a collaborative approach, methodically doing chores and cleaning at the same time, and supporting each other with other household tasks that come up in less timely ways. "My husband handles taking out the trash for everyone as we have a long driveway, and my dad usually gets the mail because it's an important part of his day," McCulloh Hartzell said.

Discipline is a concern for Walters, who serves as the family's main disciplinarian. Walters expects her daughter to be courteous and respectful toward her grandmother, who occasionally steps in to provide discipline, but there is some disagreement about her grandmother's old-school perspectives on forced affection. "My daughter is her own person and I allow her to have her own response as to when she wants to hug or kiss family members."

The other households figure the rest out the same way any people living under a roof do: the pragmatic puzzle of who can do what, when, where, and why.

The New Normal?

Multigenerational households are becoming more and more common, a trend that will likely continue. They

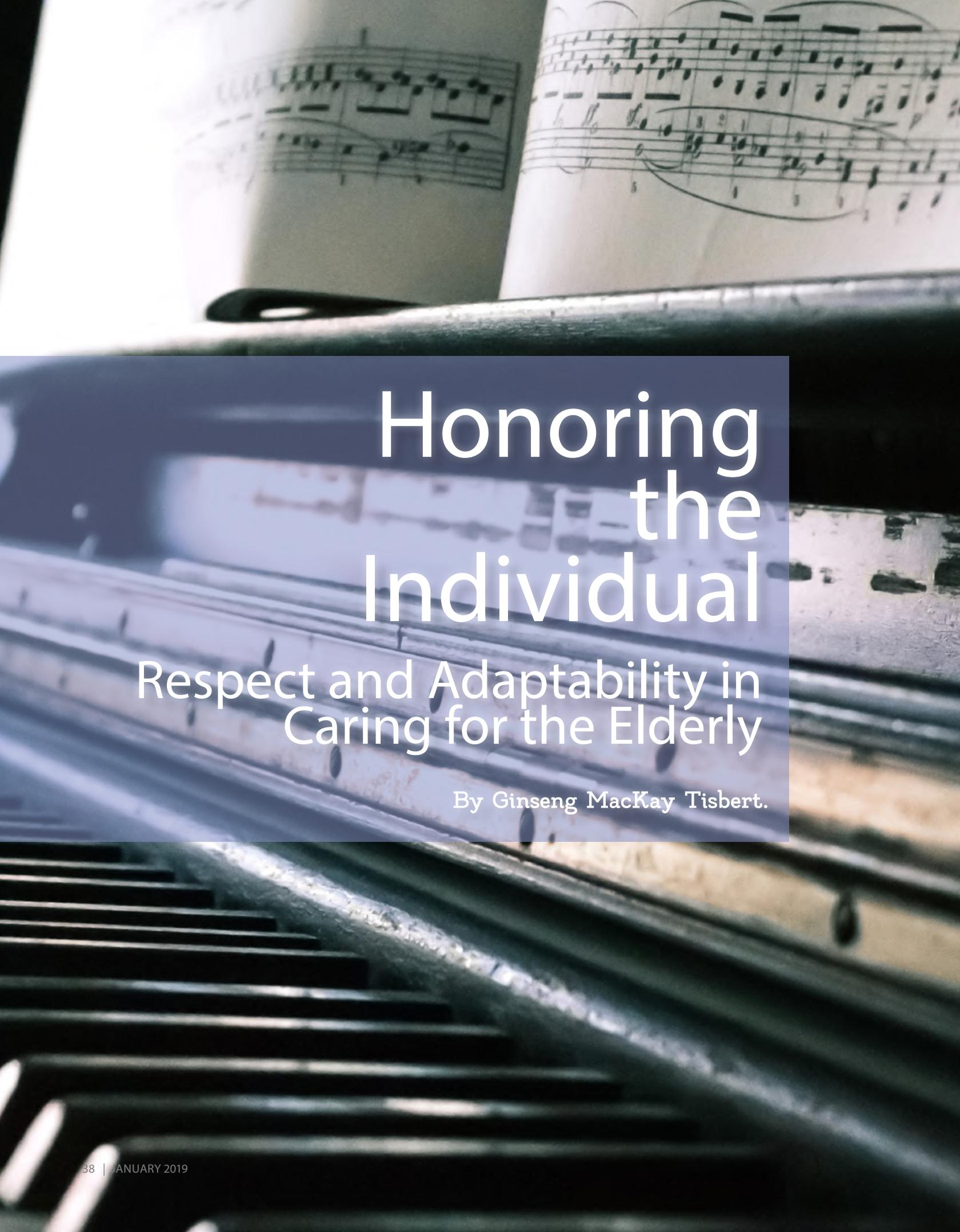
can be of huge benefit to all with some smart planning and intentional purpose. Maybe the best benefit? Living with people who've lived more life than you. Of her mother, Walters fondly said, "I also know that when I mess up or I'm wrong about something, she is pretty good at letting me know that."

In 2018, this reality—multigenerational households, or households that include two or more adult generations—are the new norm for many American families. According to the Pew Research Center, 1 in 5 Americans now live in such an arrangement. While the reasons for this major uptick are many, the Great Recession, general costs of living, and the aging baby boomer population are the major factors for 64 million people living in multigenerational homes.



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Honoring the Individual

Respect and Adaptability in
Caring for the Elderly

By Ginseng MacKay Tisbert.

My experience with personal and professional caregiving, whether it be at home, with my daughter, with my grandmother in her last years, or professionally in a residential setting or professional nonmedical homecare, is that the two most holy tenets of caregiving are adaptability and respect (respect in tone, action, and spirit).

I came to find a place in nonmedical elder care by the zigzags of life's unpredictability. It is often the case with entry-level work that experience is important, but aptitude paramount. In many cases you can apply to work per diem for an agency that provides homecare. The contracting, scheduling, administrative aspects, and billing are left to them and your only responsibility is to the individual's direct care, which varies considerably. The scheduling provides a great deal of flexibility. This is mostly what I have done, because as the single mom of a young child, this allows me to balance my life and schedule as I need to. I access my schedule as well as client information online and drive to my shift.

The agency tries to keep a consistency of caregivers and schedules, but this ideal is not always possible. Often I read a couple of paragraphs about the health and care expectations of a person who has lived a rich and full life of 90 years and arrive to meet them cold: at their home, at a rehabilitation center, at a nursing home or assisted living facility. I arrive and I meet them where they are after a surgery, a fall, a move, as their mind and memory is changing or getting lost; I am ready to adapt and engage immediately. I may be welcomed into the neat and curated home of an elderly couple for 4 hours of routine housework, cooking, and personal care in the company of the woman of the house, who has a strong mind but challenges with mobility. For a long time she would follow me from task to task to ensure they were done just so. This client appreciated my willingness to follow her requests to the letter; another client valued creative organization of her home. I do my best to adapt,

personality to personality, need to need.

The next day I may arrive in a rehabilitation facility to spend the day essentially as an advocate and companion. For twelve hours it is hard to not want to do more. At the same time, the difference between the care and experience of the individual I spend the day with and her roommate is dramatic. My first position in caregiving was direct care in a facility for individuals with cognitive and intellectual disabilities. There I had medical training and responsibilities, but in this role I am unable to perform medical tasks. I am there all day. We play cards, I notice changes in her memory, in her speech, and pass these along to the nursing staff, I help her respond to an ardent letter from her boyfriend, at home, at assisted living, who one day she remembers fondly with an embarrassed chuckle and the next does not know to whom I refer, maybe, in fact, it is a scandal that I suggested she has a romantic interest at all. Meeting somebody, respectfully, where they are, when they are struggling with the challenges of dementia also means from one day to the next where they are may change rather dramatically. We may look at old photo albums or create memory boards, we may post up reminders and notes, but this can also cause stress and anxiety, so part of the role is reading what is supportive and when. When she needs to use the bathroom, be transferred because she wants to go for a walk, taken to an activity, needs anything, I go find the staff, whereas her roommate may push a call button and wait, 30 minutes, 45 minutes... until she feels forgotten and in despair. I get up and go find the staff. "Mrs. So and So needs this. We pushed the call button 15 minutes ago and nobody came. Can a nurse come bring her to the restroom, help me transfer her for bingo, check her vitals?"

Those shifts—the ones when you walk into a facility as independently contracted care for one individual—are the hardest, I think. I am

happy to be an advocate, but there is a fragile balance that needs to be read and struck in how you work in harmony with the facility staff in service of your client. The difference is observable, instead of sitting through bingo unable to hear the calls, nervous and cheerless, I repeat them for her and we chit-chat or giggle over a memory or an observation. Sometimes, even if you itch to do more, being a voice, a strong, persistent voice, for someone vulnerable, using a tone of respect and humanity with them, is the most powerful thing you can be in terms of their well being.

It is easy to understand how adaptability is a tenet. Respect, as a concept, seems easy on the nose of it, but in practice, I find and have observed, it is a complex, fragile, and nuanced thing, easily misunderstood or pantomimed through. When I first worked in direct support, respect of the individual was principle with protocol around safety. It is one thing to speak directly to a nonverbal, nonambulatory person, to ask before helping them undress or come to dinner; it is entirely another to do it with all the sensitivity of valuing their capacity for choice, independence, and humanity.

It is one experience to help a toddler with a bath, someone who is growing and learning every day. They are in a state of wonder, they play, everything is ahead of them. One day when I was providing respite for my brother and his wife, caring for my grandmother, with my daughter in tow, I helped my grandma with her bath. There was an incredible reverence. She had bathed me as a child, she had helped me bathe my daughter, she was the woman who taught me everything I know about how to keep a house or tend a love, and now we could give that care back. My daughter, two or three at the time, and our grandma delighted in each other, reveling in the long stretch of years and life between them. Being able to care for her when she

was too weak to step over the wall of the tub or lie on the floor of the tub or stand in the shower was only an honor. We knew her. She was not only an old woman who asked the same question over and over or pointed out the stitching in your sweater a dozen time in half an hour, she was still that strong, black-haired slim young woman who went to Hartford as a Rosie the Riveter building airplane parts.

When hired to care for a person in their home, it is important to respect and honor their entirety, no matter what it seems they have been reduced to. Underneath everything they are now, there was one another version of them, one version of them as a child, another version when they were a new parent: it is all there. Remembering this is a way to grow into respect for the person.

When coming into the home of an elderly person you are trained to look for safety hazards. Does their nightgown need to be hemmed? Are there a lot of side tables, stacks of mail, magazines that pose trip risks? Can their new walker or wheelchair fit safely through the rooms? Are they able to lift the milk container, reach the cereal bowls? Intentional caregivers notice and fix these things. Respectful caregiving embraces that this is this person's home, and that those stacks of papers are their treasures, histories, and memories. So, you don't just "fix it," you start a conversation.

One of my most cherished memories as a provider of elder care was in supporting a person who had once been a concert pianist, but had not played in years. Her piano, which I dusted and cleaned routinely, was not accessible. Her sheet music, stored in boxes on the floor, was not accessible. So, with collaboration I supported her to rearrange, organize, and pare down. I encouraged her reminiscences about tours she took, pieces she learned, accolades she had earned. I empathized with her frustration and disappointment in herself; she used to practice for hours every day. Feedback was given to visiting nurses about the stiffness in her hands. Respect is buttressed by

**There is nothing
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version of
themselves.**

patience and restraint.

Finally one afternoon I was able to sit and watch soft light play off the cleared, warmly stained, hardwood floor and listen to her play through pieces of classical music. Maybe the performance was imperfect (she said it was), but I wouldn't have known or noticed. There is nothing more beautiful or inspiring than watching someone engage in that thing that they feel makes them the most real and best version of themselves.

From the experience of bathing my grandmother to learning how to speak with validation when addressing the turbulent feelings of a two-year-old girl to suspending again and again my idea of how things should be done and being open to supporting the will and individuality of someone who may not always remember their name, I know each experience in caregiving will be a fresh lesson in the nuances of respect.





Nannies are in a unique position to help mothers, babies, and the entire family thrive through perinatal depression and transition challenges.

The birth of a new baby usually comes with excitement and joy, but there is a less-discussed side to the story that nannies need to be aware of: difficult postpartum transitions and depression. As nannies, if we are well prepared to recognize the signs of trouble after the new baby and mom return home, we can be the ideal advocate for a family experiencing challenges with perinatal transition. Providing informed care and knowing when the experts should be called in is something all nannies caring for newborns should be versed in.

A Case Of the Baby Blues?

The term "baby blues" refers to a benign condition affecting up to 80% of new mothers. Typically, it is not a major cause for concern. However, "perinatal mood and anxiety disorders" (PMAD) (the new phrase being used in place of "postpartum depression") is more serious. This shift in terminology takes into account that new mothers may experience significant anxiety in

Recognizing Postpartum Depression: A Nanny's Role

BY ALEXARAYE VALLEJO



addition to symptoms of depression. PMAD may affect up to 20% of new mothers and generally requires treatment. These symptoms can affect mothers of any age, cultural background, or economic standing. The word “perinatal” refers to the time “all around birth,” and includes the period during pregnancy and well into the first year after the child’s birth. The condition, which can manifest in several different ways, affects the family as a whole, not just the mother and infant.

What Leading Research Tells Us

Research about postpartum depression (PPD) has grown, reshaping our definitions and understanding of its varied symptoms and stages. Dr. Nicole Cirino is the director of women’s mental health and wellness working in reproductive psychiatry at Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, Oregon. In her role, she works alongside other doctors and working medical professionals to counsel women through matters related to perinatal mental health and psychiatry. She says that most symptoms of PPD are caused by a combination of psychological, social, and biological factors, which can vary from woman to woman. Some symptoms can be identified in the early pregnancy stages through recognition of family history with anxiety, depression, bipolar disorder, and sensitivity to hormonal changes.

Postpartum Mood and Anxiety Disorder

Dr. Cirino says that PPD commonly develops within the first 2 to 3 weeks after the baby’s birth, with peak onset at 6 to 8 weeks after birth. This is perhaps where “baby blues” and PPD end and shift into what is postpartum mood and anxiety disorder. Postpartum mood and anxiety disorder is most common through pregnancy and

during the postpartum stages. If left untreated, symptoms of anxiety and depression can last 4 to 9 months after birth. Medication, mindfulness practices, and support from health-care practitioners can be useful in treating symptoms.

Postpartum Psychosis

In some circumstances, postpartum psychosis (a more serious form of PPD) can occur. Mothers may experience hallucinations, hear voices, see things that aren’t there, or have periods of mania, confusion, and even memory loss. If you observe this rare condition, be prepared to know that handling it exceeds your qualifications as a nanny; consult with the mother’s next of kin (husband or partner, parents, siblings, etc.) to seek immediate medical attention on behalf of the mother and child.

Positioning Your Nanny Family for Success

Share accountability and advocate for the new mother by logging entries into a journal about mother’s and baby’s activity. Record daily nutrition, fluid intake, and breastfeeding times and consumption. Also chart sleep and emotional notes for both baby and mother. These are great points of reference to have in supporting the baby’s overall development. Watch for observable signs of PPD. “You may see an increase or decrease in energy, hyperemotional behavior, tearful moments, anger, anxiety, exhaustion, not eating or sleeping, and a significant decrease in breast milk supply,” Dr. Cirino says.

Observation Is Key

What can nannies do to encourage employers to advocate for themselves or seek help? It starts with awareness. Do you notice that the new mother is not eating, sleeping, or socializing? Pay attention to

major changes in patterns of daily living. If you notice, for example, that each morning when you arrive the baby is awake and lively and the mother is exhausted, you may observe that the family needs to ask for help or even hire a night postpartum doula to come in and help out so the new mother can catch up on sleep. A mother who feels present, alert, and prepared to take on the day during her baby’s waking hours will in turn supply a happier and healthier foundation for her child’s development.

Supporting the Entire Family

In your role as a nanny, you are in a unique position to support MomBoss while she adjusts to life with a new baby. In doing so, you provide support for the entire family and household. Here are some practical tips on how to accomplish your mission.

- Help MomBoss maintain a consistent sleep routine by offering to care for baby while she rests.
- Pitch in with preparing frequent and balanced meals.
- Keep fresh water and liquids near the mother so she is encouraged to maintain adequate hydration; this will be particularly useful if she is breastfeeding.
- Infant massage can help with bonding; encourage MomBoss to massage her child to promote bonding.
- Plan some special activities for any older siblings in the house to alleviate any guilt MomBoss may have about loss of quality time with them.
- Offer to accompany the new mother and child on a walk outside.
- Provide resources for additional support outside the home, such as breastfeeding support groups, postpartum groups, and postpartum doulas
- Encourage physical activity, such

as light exercise.

- Ask MomBoss to write a list of "I-Needs" and work with family, visitors, and partners to help make these happen. This can be as simple as tidying up the house, buying groceries, or just bringing home special treats.
- Work with older children to write supportive love letters to their mother, keep a quiet home so mom and baby can rest, clean up after themselves, and make sure their mom has enough water to drink.
- Look after the new baby while older siblings spend quality one-on-one time with their mom.

Active Awareness

Take note if MomBoss exhibits any of the following signs, as these are indicators of PPD that require medical attention.

- nonresponsive to the infant's needs.
- irritable toward the baby
- shakes or bounces the baby too swiftly
- leaves baby unattended in a crib or other area without tending to, feeding, or changing the baby.

Resources

PostpartumSupportInternational.com provides local support and help for mothers in your area. Mind the Bump is an app that promotes mindfulness and speaks

to mothers about how the brain works during their transitional season.

Discuss your role with your employer before birth to be most effective. Most families will be thrilled for you to use your innate gifts and learned talents regarding PPD. Additional training in this area can help nannies be aware of when outside and professional support is needed to help mothers and infants thrive during this precious season of life.

DISCLAIMER: This article should not be considered medical advice. Neither Nanny Magazine nor the author or Dr. Cirino assume liability for this content. Please consult your charge's pediatrician or other qualified healthcare provider, with permission from the child's parents or guardians, for professional medical advice.



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Digital Darlings

BY ANNA DUVAL

the best facebook groups for nannies

As nannies, we become experts on creating a safe environment for the children in our care. It's our job to create a place where they feel comfortable enough to voice their ideas on how you're doing at your position as a caregiver. But small children aren't always the best people to bounce concerns and ideas off of, so what's a nanny to do? Lucky for us, we live in the 21st century and have a world of connections at our fingertips with Facebook groups. Facebook groups can be an amazing place to connect with others nannies from all over the world. Once you join, you're exposed to countless perspectives and ideas on anything you can imagine regarding your job as a nanny. With hundreds of different nanny Facebook groups available for you to join, it can become a bit overwhelming to find your niche, so here is a list of some of my personal favorites.

The Nanny Collaborative

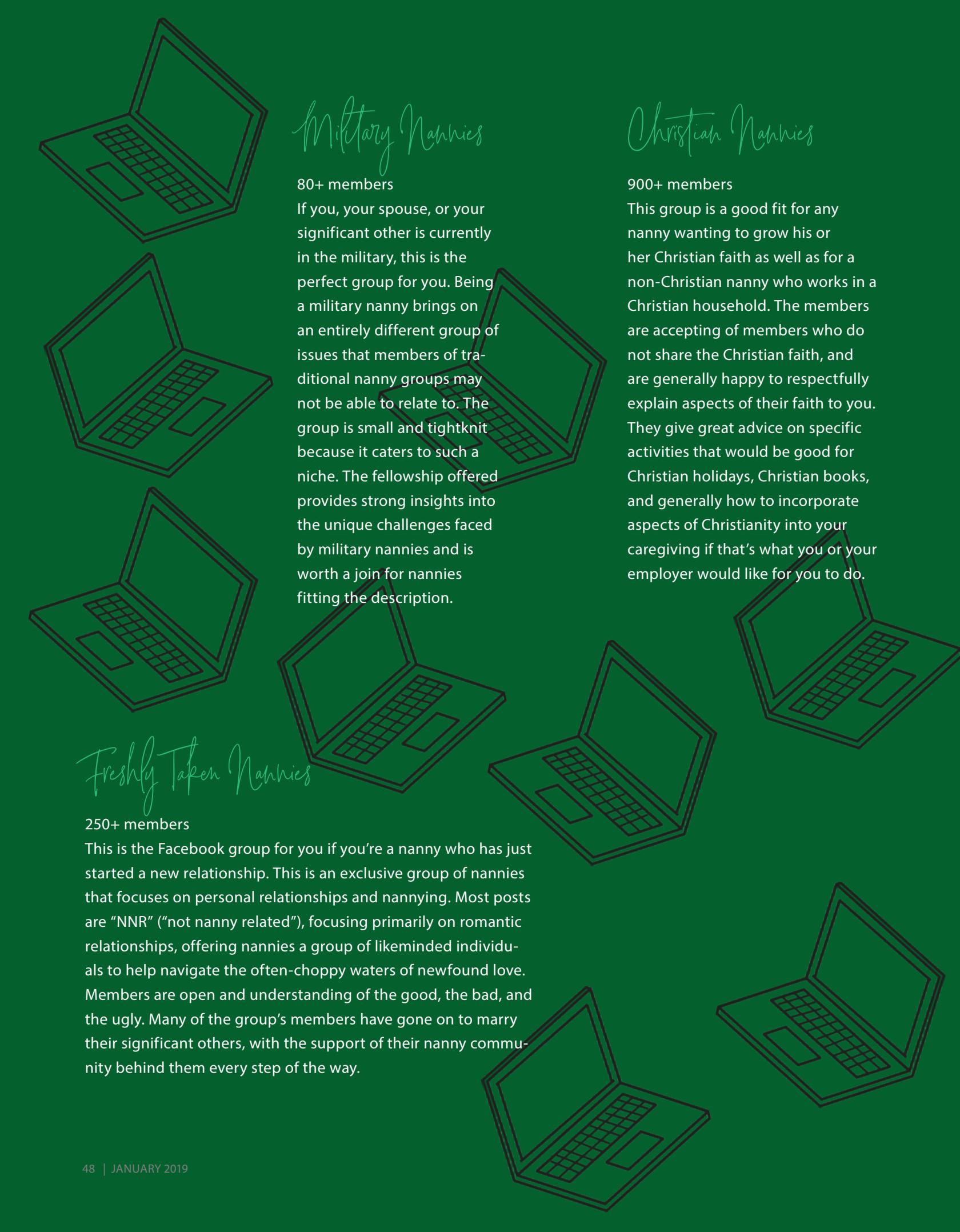
8,000+ members

This Facebook group has the largest members of numbers on this list, but I can assure you it is a very close community. Because of the large number of active members, topics discussed cover a huge range. As a member, you can feel completely content and safe voicing your concerns and asking opinions about specific situations. With an active community this large, you can feel assured that someone will have some advice to help you with your situation.

Nannies United

2,000+ members

Nannies United is an incredibly active group, with fast response times to posts. The group's main focus is to foster an environment with no major rules except for respecting others' opinions and being kind, which admins monitor closely. This group provides users with a place to go to make posts looking for advice, a place to vent and share ideas, and a forum to relate to fellow nannies. The admins encourage users to share photos (with permission from parents, of course), so if you choose to join, be prepared to see some of the most adorable little faces on your timeline. Despite the group's size, the community is highly engaged and supportive.



Military Nannies

80+ members

If you, your spouse, or your significant other is currently in the military, this is the perfect group for you. Being a military nanny brings on an entirely different group of issues that members of traditional nanny groups may not be able to relate to. The group is small and tightknit because it caters to such a niche. The fellowship offered provides strong insights into the unique challenges faced by military nannies and is worth a join for nannies fitting the description.

Christian Nannies

900+ members

This group is a good fit for any nanny wanting to grow his or her Christian faith as well as for a non-Christian nanny who works in a Christian household. The members are accepting of members who do not share the Christian faith, and are generally happy to respectfully explain aspects of their faith to you. They give great advice on specific activities that would be good for Christian holidays, Christian books, and generally how to incorporate aspects of Christianity into your caregiving if that's what you or your employer would like for you to do.

Freshly Taken Nannies

250+ members

This is the Facebook group for you if you're a nanny who has just started a new relationship. This is an exclusive group of nannies that focuses on personal relationships and nannying. Most posts are "NNR" ("not nanny related"), focusing primarily on romantic relationships, offering nannies a group of likeminded individuals to help navigate the often-choppy waters of newfound love. Members are open and understanding of the good, the bad, and the ugly. Many of the group's members have gone on to marry their significant others, with the support of their nanny community behind them every step of the way.

BREAK OUT THE HAND SANITIZER

BY MARIE CHIR

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

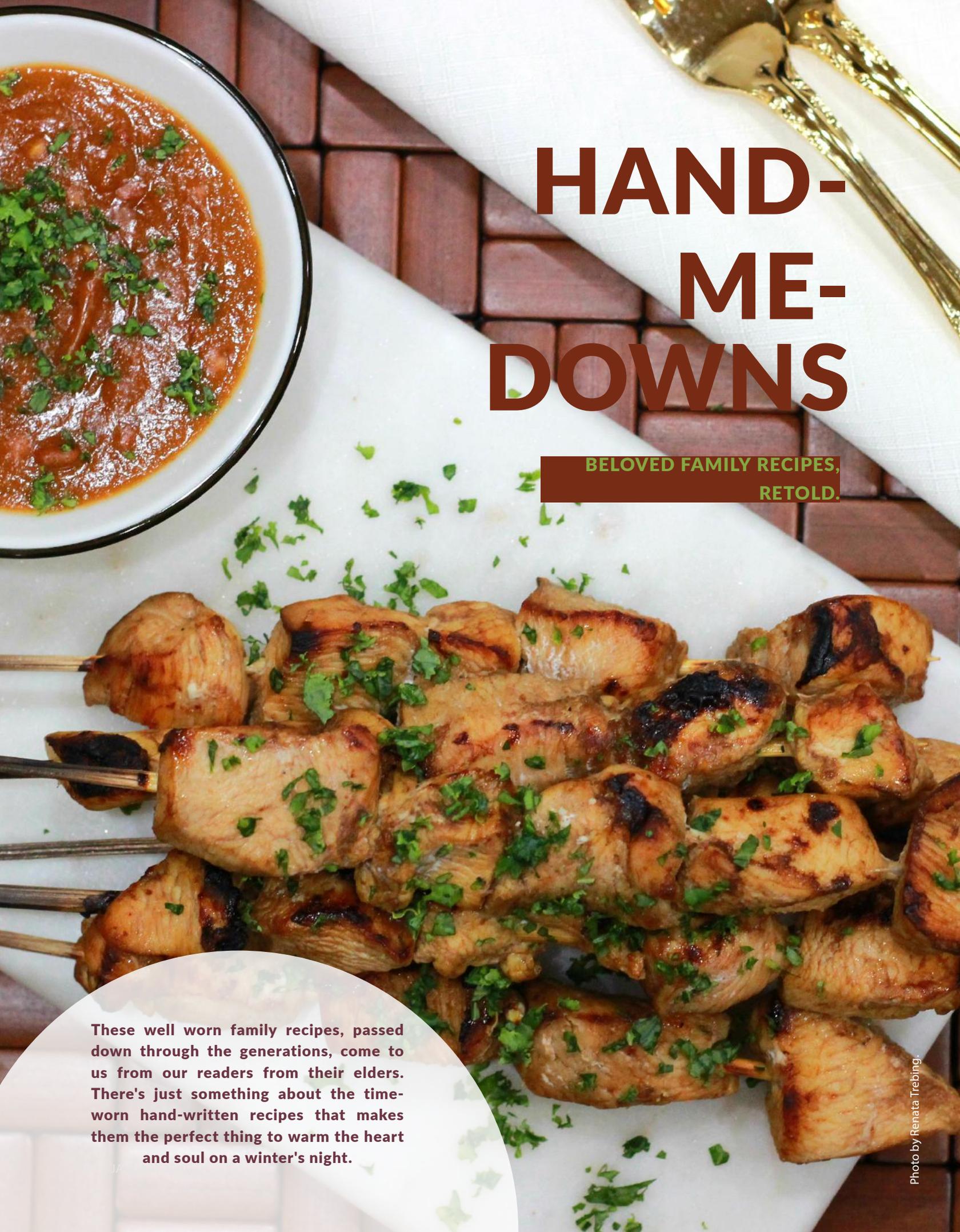


No nanny wants to ever hear their charge is sick. The poor thing becomes a snotty, coughing, miserable mess. There is only so much you can do when they feel like they're drowning in mucus. I always try to make their favorite foods, put on a movie, and create a cozy nook on the couch for them. However, they are so sick and pathetic all they want are snuggles and to cough in your face. Hence, why you, as the nanny, need to up your wellness game!

Between the months of September and May, I am on germ patrol. Why those months? SCHOOL! Kids are known for spreading unpleasant conditions back and forth to one another in the classroom: the flu, strep, and hand, foot, and mouth, just to name a few. There's only so much hand sanitizer I can use on these kids. I change their clothes after school, spray disinfectant in my car, and scrub my hands until they're chapped. And yet, somehow, somehow, I still end up with sick kiddos in the house. And every nanny knows that when there's a sick child, it's only a matter of time until that feverish feeling comes your way and you, too, start coughing up jellyfish.

I'm a firm believer that if you're the nanny, you need to be at work. Under only extreme circumstances have I ever missed work due to illness. The only time I was out of commission, I was literally in the hospital hooked up to intravenous fluids and receiving hourly breathing treatments. That's how seriously I take my job. I will chug disgusting orange-flavored Airborne effervescent beverages, shower immediately when I get home, and fall asleep at 7 p.m. in effort to stay healthy.

And yet, some things cannot be avoided. Inevitably, I end up a congested mess for months because that's just what sometimes happens when you work with kids. The only thing to do is be stocked up on tissues, aspirin, and tea. Just like in Hollywood, "The show must go on!" for nannies. Being there for the kids and their parents is a must. If that means if you're not at 100%, so be it. The kids will be happy you're there. Even sick, you're still more fun than daycare.

A top-down photograph of a meal. In the upper left, a white bowl with a black rim is filled with a thick, orange-red soup, garnished with fresh green herbs. Below it, a white plate holds several skewers of grilled chicken, with the meat pieces charred and glistening, also garnished with green herbs. The background is a dark red brick surface. A white napkin and a gold fork are visible in the upper right corner.

HAND- ME- DOWNS

BELOVED FAMILY RECIPES,
RETOLD.

These well worn family recipes, passed down through the generations, come to us from our readers from their elders. There's just something about the time-worn hand-written recipes that makes them the perfect thing to warm the heart and soul on a winter's night.

Indonesian Chicken Satay and Peanut Sauce

By Renata Trebing.
(pictured to the left).

I come from a big Indonesian family where every family get-together was adorned with a huge spread of food. My most vibrant childhood memories were visiting my grandmother, Oma, my father's mother. I remember her house and how all her children, and their children, would come and laugh, eat, and play music for hours. Oma was always smiling and laughing from the kitchen as she cooked. I remember helping to peel onions and crying from the acrid onion fumes. I remember watching her cook by standing up on the couch and peering over the kitchen counter. I remember how she would give me big hugs and I felt warm and safe. These are some of my happiest childhood memories.

Although we lost Oma a few years ago, her memory lives on in the recipes she passed down to the family. One of my favorite Indonesian recipes is her chicken satay with peanut sauce. It is the ultimate comfort food for me. The grilled savory chicken skewers paired with the creamy, yet spicy, peanut sauce, takes me back to being a kid and sitting on the floor of Oma's house, listening to the uproarious laughter from the adults as we ate plates of delicious homemade Indonesian food.

Ingredients:

For the chicken and marinade:

- 3 pounds of chicken breast, sliced into 2" chunks
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup kecap manis or sweet soy

sauce, available at most Asian grocers or online

- Juice from 2 small lemons
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 tbsp minced garlic

For the peanut sauce:

- 1 cup peanut butter, creamy or crunchy
- 2 tablespoons kecap manis or sweet soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon sambal oelek or asian chili paste
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- Up to ½ cup boiling water

Instructions:

1. To marinate the chicken, place the chicken pieces and marinade ingredients into a large plastic zipper bag. Seal the bag and massage all the ingredients till mixed thoroughly. Allow to marinate from 1 hour or, even better, overnight in the fridge.
2. Soak some bamboo skewers in water for at least 30 minutes. Alternatively, use metal skewers.
3. Skewer a few chicken pieces onto the bamboo skewers and place them on a lined tray until ready to cook. Continue till all the chicken pieces have been skewered.
4. Cook the chicken skewers by either grilling or broiling under a high heat in the oven. The edges will turn a deep golden brown and begin to caramelize. Turn the skewers over so that the other side of the chicken gets golden brown too. Keep the chicken satay warm in the oven until ready to serve.
5. For the peanut sauce, in a small saucepan, add all the ingredients except the boiling water. Stir well and place on the stove over a low heat.
6. Slowly add in some of the boil-

ing water until the peanut sauce is the consistency of heavy cream. Stir well.

7. Bring the sauce to a simmer. Add more hot water if needed to thin out the sauce. Remove from the heat.

8. Serve chicken satay with peanut sauce plus extra sambal oelek for more of a spicy kick.



Greek Lemon Chicken Soup (Voula's Version)

By Voula Tripolitsiotis, Gaithersburg, Maryland
(pictured to the right)

I grew up with this Greek lemon chicken soup. My mom used to make it, and her mom made it for her. It was always one of those recipes that never gets written down, but I decided to document it last year as I made it. It's a cure-all for everything from a bad day to a bad cold, and it's pretty easy to make. For an added bonus, I also make what I call "Greek grilled cheese." It's a pita with a pocket cut down the middle and stuffed with about 1/3 cup of crumbled feta cheese and a tablespoon of chopped fresh dill, then brushed on the outside with olive oil and grilled until golden brown and melty. Before I eat the soup, I drizzle the soup with a little good quality olive oil, and then I go to town!

Ingredients:

- 3- or 4-pound whole chicken
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 3 carrots, roughly chopped
- 1 large onion, roughly chopped
- 3 stalks celery, roughly chopped
- Juice of 2 lemons (add more or less for taste)
- 4 egg yolks
- 1 cup orzo
- Salt and pepper

Instructions:

Chop the onion, carrots, and celery and place them in a 6-quart pot over medium heat with the melted butter, add salt and pepper and cook until veggies are starting to soften, about 5-6 minutes.

Cut up the chicken and place it in the pot with the veggies. Cover everything completely with water (6 to 8 cups). Cover and cook over medium heat for about 30 minutes or until the chicken is cooked. Remove the chicken from pot and set aside to cool. Strain the chicken stock and reserve 1 cup. Bring stock back to a boil and add orzo. Cook orzo until al dente according to the package instructions.

Beat egg yolks until they start to thicken, then add the lemon juice. Take the reserved warm stock and slowly add it to the egg mixture, stirring constantly to bring eggs up to temperature.

Once the chicken has cooled enough to handle, shred it and put aside.

When the orzo is done cooking, slowly stir in the egg mixture and add the chicken. Add salt and pepper to taste.



The Best Cheesecake

By Irene Rose, Denham Springs, Louisiana (by way of Moosup, Connecticut)

"I scribbled the recipe years ago as my husband, Perry's, mom told me how she made it. It is an excellent cheesecake. I would argue, the best! Perry's Mom was also Irene Rose and I wrote the recipe out at her kitchen table."



Podcast Roundup

Untangle those earbuds and have the young people perk up their listening devices (a.k.a. “ears”). We’ve picked some of our favorite podcasts, enjoyable and appropriate for both curious youngsters and nannies alike.

BRAINS ON: SCIENCE PODCAST FOR KIDS

We can’t decide whether this one is more exciting for adults or children, but either way, it’s super cool. 20- to 40-minute episodes cover all the cool science stuff (the stuff of STEM dreams), including the dirt on dirt and how GPS works. Episodes are delivered weekly.

<https://www.brainson.org/pages/listen>

LITTLE STORIES FOR TINY PEOPLE

This one’s the perfect bedtime treat for kids who stick to a strict routine of storytime before sleep, featuring stories and poems for the younger set. Most episodes hit around 20 minutes or longer for those nights when you just can’t read *Harold and the Purple Crayon* one... more... time...

<https://www.stitcher.com/podcast/little-stories-for-tiny-people>

BUT WHY: A PODCAST FOR CURIOUS KIDS

NPR’s kid-friendly podcast draws on curiosity surrounding everything from health and bodily functions to animals and what it’s like to be an adult. Delivered roughly once per month, this one’s perfect for special car trips clocking in at roughly 20 to 30 minutes in length.

<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/474377890/but-why-a-podcast-for-curious-kids>

THE ALIEN ADVENTURES OF FINN CASPIAN

This serial story podcast follows main character Finn as he navigates the excitement of being a kid. You don’t have to listen to episodes in sequence, but we suggest you do as a way to get kids invested in looking forward to new episodes.

<http://www.finncaspien.com>

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