

# NANNY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2022

12

**PHRASES THAT  
MAKE EVERY  
NANNY CRINGE**

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TO WATCH  
IN THE HOUSEHOLD  
EMPLOYMENT  
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SPRING 2022



# NM

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# EDITOR'S NOTE

Michelle LaRowe

In a typical year, most of us look forward to spring with much anticipation. With the dreariness of winter behind us, we eagerly await the growth of new life around us, and the hope that comes with it. As the grey turns to green, we think of new beginnings and the light and airy breezes that remind us that the world has awoken.

But this is not a typical year, nor a typical season. As we have focused on navigating the new normal in a post pandemic world with our children, we now must navigate the news of war. Just as the world began to reopen, again the world seems to be shutting down.

Children continue to look to us, their trusted adults, to make sense of their world and in an age of technology, those of us caring for older children know we have tough work ahead.

Model love. Model peace. Model compassion. Model empathy. As you'll see in this issue, it's the work of nannies to do just that. Be a helper, be an anchor, be an advocate—for yourself and the children in your care—because that's your work too.

While we may not be able to give children the answers to why the world is turned upside down, we can give them that. When we do, we're continuing to change the world, at least our part of it, one child at a time.



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# SPRING 2022

# NM

## CONFERENCES

The **International Nanny Association** will be hosting its 2022 Annual Conference March 31 - April 3, 2022 in Las Vegas, Nevada. Please visit [inaconference.org/](http://inaconference.org/) to register or learn more about this event.

**International Nanny Training Day** will be celebrated April 9, 2022. More information about this event can be found at [nannypalooza.com/nntd.html](http://nannypalooza.com/nntd.html) as it becomes available.

**The Great British Nanny Conference** will be held April 30, 2022 in Manhattan, New York featuring speakers from both the US and the UK. To learn more or to purchase your ticket, visit [uknanny.org/new-york/](http://uknanny.org/new-york/).

The 2022 Inaugural **NCS Enrichment Conference** will be held June 2-5, 2022 at the luxurious 5-Star Omni Resort & Spa at Montelucia in Scottsdale, Arizona! Visit [www.ncscon.com](http://www.ncscon.com) to learn more.

The **US Nanny Association** will hold its annual conference in September 2022. More information will be available on their website in April 2022. Visit [usnanny.org/conference/](http://usnanny.org/conference/) for conference updates as they become available.

**Nannypalooza** will be held October 7-9, 2022 in Raleigh, North Carolina at the Double Tree by Hilton Raleigh-Durham Airport location. For conference updates, to purchase your ticket, and to learn more about this annual event, please visit [www.nannypalooza.com](http://www.nannypalooza.com).

The 2022 **APNA Conference** will be held October 19-22, 2022 in San Diego, California. Visit [theapna.org/](http://theapna.org/) for updates as they become available.

## INDUSTRY NEWS



**UK nanny Maria Culley prepares for the release of her first book, *There's a Nanny in My House!*, that explores and validates the emotions children experience throughout their day when their parents have returned to work, and they are left in the care of their nanny.**

Having worked her way up from the nursery to management, Maria entered the nanny field after being headhunted by a family to become their nanny. While she had worked many years in the early years industry in private day nursery settings and schools, it was a huge jump to go from working alongside other practitioners to being on her own as a nanny. To combat that isolation that so many nannies face, she started a Nanny's Night Out in her local community, which grew into regular gatherings with nannies and their charges over the holidays and for day trips.

As she increased her social opportunities with her peers, she also increased her education. "One of the most important things I've learned as a nanny is that you are never too old to learn. Throughout the course of my career, I've learned about neuroscience and self-regulation, and what I have learned has changed my practice for the better," said Maria.

And while many people think nannies sit and play all day, Maria believes nannies are professionals and not everyone is cut out to be a nanny. "Many of us keep several balls in the air, doing our jobs with a smile on our faces and a cup of coffee going cold somewhere."

Maria stayed in her longest nanny job for almost five years and is still in touch with that family. Today, she still works as a full-time nanny, but she also advocates for nannies and for the industry to become regulated within the United Kingdom. "To be treated as a professional, you must hold yourself accountable and continue with professional development," said Maria. Having a regulated industry would help ensure nannies receive professional acknowledgment and continue their professional development.

Maria has combined her experience and insight in her latest project, authoring a children's book. "With so many transition books available for children to explore changes, family growth, and more, I realized there was nothing available to aid children with the transition of their parents returning to work and their transition into the care of their nanny."

Her first book, *There's a Nanny in My House!*, will be released in spring 2022, followed by a second book later in the year. Throughout this story, Maria explores and validates the emotions children experience throughout their day when their parents have returned to work, and they are left in the care of their nanny.

"We all have a journey and a story to tell." Nannies are no different. "Hold your head high and tell your story. You never know your story could be the inspiration to someone to make the leap into the industry."

To learn more visit [mariaculley.co.uk](http://mariaculley.co.uk).

*Maria Culley has over fifteen years of childcare and early years experience in the United Kingdom and abroad. She holds a wealth of qualifications and certifications, ranging from a CACHE diploma in childcare and education to certifications in self-regulation and child psychology. Maria is also a certified family trauma professional and is currently studying Neuroscience in Early Years and completing her Emotional Coaching UK Practitioner status.*

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## EXPERT TIPS

# IT'S MORE THAN MILESTONES! FIVE OTHER AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT EVERY NANNY SHOULD KNOW

By Elizabeth Agrapidis, PT, MS, MPT, C/NDT

As a nanny or postpartum caregiver, the family looks to you for guidance. Wouldn't it be amazing if you had working and practical knowledge of what is going on inside the brain and body of a baby and the skills to help integrate their developing systems through your interactions, all while educating the parents so that your services continue benefiting the baby and family, even when you are no longer there?

Imagine how valuable this would be.

Everyone talks about developmental milestones, which according to Medical Dictionary are defined as achievements or abilities that have special importance in the growth, motor functioning, or social development of infants, toddlers, and older children and teens. But there is more.

In our profession, we have an amazing opportunity and responsibility to learn and understand as much as possible about infants' and childrens' needs and how to facilitate their development along their journey.

Here are three things that every nanny and caregiver should know about developmental milestones.

### 1. Developmental Milestones Are Great When Used as Markers

They help us understand the big things that babies are supposed to do and make it obvious if there is a delay. The big motor milestones include rolling, sitting when placed, crawling, standing, and walking. There are different aspects of development, however, that also have milestones. These include cognition, speech, and gestures. These milestones can be less clear because societal reasons can contribute to a baby having or not having these skills. Insecurity, anxiety, separation anxiety, and social differences can impact skill development. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many more variables surrounding socialization have also been introduced that can impact development. Since these other types of milestones are harder to measure, people look to motor milestones to guide their understanding of development.

While helpful, there are limitations and missing pieces if professionals are only looking at motor milestones.

### 2. Looking at Only Big Milestones Has Limitations

Assessing child development using only big milestones has two main limitations.

First, every developmental chart is different and has different windows for skill development. This can be very confusing and leaves assessment open to interpretation. For example, if a range in a section of a chart states the range is zero to six months, it does not qualify which skills should be mastered by one or two months, or which ones should be met at the end of six months. If a baby is four months old and is just learning to hold their head up, for example, this would be concerning, but since the range is up to six months, it may not be flagged as such.

Second, the charts and information given by doctors, textbooks, and Google do not teach how to promote the skills shown in the charts. If the child does not learn or experience the small things that are the foundations of all development early on, then delays and difficulty with tasks such as rolling and crawling will follow, and delays will be noticed with bigger milestones.

Consider a baby who spends most of his or her time in a swing, car seat, bouncy seat, or exersaucer. This baby will not have had the experiences of moving their body in different ways to problem-solve rolling, and therefore they are very likely to have weakness in the neck, upper back, core, and upper extremities. This will present itself later in higher-level skills such as crawling, maintaining proper posture, and even handwriting, just to name a few. Remember, development is like building blocks. Skills are not mastered independently of each other.

### 3. There are Five Other Areas of Development Every Nanny Should Know About

In addition to the major milestones, there are other developmental areas nannies should be familiar with. These include:

- **Movement Quality.** It is important how babies are doing things, not that they just appear to be doing them. Many parents get excited when their newborn curls up and accidentally rolls over at one month of age, for example. While this looks like rolling over to an untrained eye, this is not true rolling from a developmental perspective, which typically happens around four months of age. The newborn rolled over using gravity, not intentional movements. When you have a working knowledge and training of what development should look like and when, you can help educate parents, facilitate development, spot potential developmental problems, and prevent major difficulties down the road, including developmental delays, worsening torticollis, orthopedic issues with feet and legs, and even cognitive and sensory system issues like ADHD and deficits in coordination.

- **Quality of Interaction with the World.** Babies learn through trial and error and by experiencing things. It is important to know the movements, sounds, and social interactions that babies should be experiencing so that you can provide experiences for the child. I once worked with a patient who was very well provided for. She had a great family, and everyone thought she was the world's happiest baby, doing what she was supposed to be doing. She would sit on the floor at seven, eight, and nine months old and be perfectly content. This was unusual behavior for a child that age. We learned through our time together that she sat there because she didn't know how to move her body and was afraid of movement. She was perfectly content to be there and be still because it felt uncomfortable for her to move. The family did not notice this until I asked them to move her in different ways while holding her. She became immediately fearful. Understanding how babies interact with their world can help clue you in to how they are developing.

- **Sensory Systems and Processing.** Sensory processing is how babies and children take stimuli from the environment (auditory, visual, vestibular, tactile, and proprioceptive), process it, and respond with their body. There is no milestone for this, only observation of issues that often arise when children are older and things just aren't working right. Sometimes these issues arise as a child struggling in school (e.g., because of ADHD or dyslexia), sports, or relationships with friends. During infancy, there is amazing and rapid growth in the number of connections being made. When we know what to look for, we can guide these connections. If a baby seems unusually uncomfortable during play or eating, providing stimulation in other areas of development in a nurturing way during this rapid year of physiological and neurological growth can help.

- **Body Confidence.** Proprioception is the awareness of the body in space. Babies will only gain confidence in their body through movement successes and failures as they figure out how their body works. Without regular and consistent floor time to have these opportunities, babies can have challenges, which becomes obvious later when they are unsuccessful with a task or activity.

- **Brain-Body Connection.** While there is no independent milestone for this, if a child is meeting big milestones, we can assume the brain and body are connecting well. There are, however, smaller signs that can be observed along the way when something is not connecting or communicating. If a child isn't rolling over, for example, we can work on and strengthen those connections by facilitating purposeful ways of rolling them during floor time, such as using a bed and introducing big movements safely or by introducing rolling on different surfaces.



## About

### **Elizabeth Agrapidis , PT, MS, MPT, C/NDT**

Elizabeth Agrapidis, PT, MS, MPT, C/NDT is an accomplished educator, pediatric physical therapist, teacher, neurodevelopment treatment-certified practitioner, author, toy inventor, wife, and a mom of two. She puts the puzzle pieces of whole child development together for nannies, caregivers, and professionals through a home-based certification program and specially offered seminars.

As a physical education teacher, adaptive physical education teacher for children with special needs, and as a pediatric physical therapist, she noticed early on in her career that something was missing in fostering child development. To help nannies, caregivers, and families be better equipped to guide children's physical, mental, and emotional development and to assist babies in reaching their greatest potential, she combined her knowledge, experience, and tools to launch her educational program.

Elizabeth's program supports the abilities of the body, mind, and spirit for professionals, babies, and their families. Through AbiliFit Baby Development Specialists, a growing movement that features the Develop Connect Nurture Method and Certification Program, Elizabeth is building a community to support children, nannies, and families by optimizing baby development and movement patterns and eliminating problems before they start.

To learn more and receive a free download from Elizabeth on the five other areas of infant development, visit [Baby.AbiliFit.org](http://Baby.AbiliFit.org).

Knowing these five other areas of development and all the amazing things that are happening will equip every nanny, caregiver, and parent with the tools to help babies develop and connect while being nurtured. Having foundational knowledge and a baseline of how to assess and interact with babies can set them up to reach their fullest potential.

# ASK THE NANNY

Dear Stephanie,

*I see another nanny from our neighborhood at the park almost every day. The child is almost always in the stroller while the nanny is on her phone. When she lets him out, she's not playing with him, she sends him off and sits on the bench on her phone. Since the children play together (as they are of a similar age), I've tried to approach her and introduce myself, but she signals she's on the phone and doesn't engage. I am concerned that she isn't watching him at all and that he could get hurt. What should I do?*

*Concerned Nanny*

Dear Concerned Nanny,

This is a very difficult position for you to be in. For a nanny that is vigilant and all about child safety, it must be upsetting when you see another caregiver that doesn't share the same care for child safety and strong work ethic as you.

The debate of whether parents and caregivers spend too much time on cellphones while caring for children is pervasive. While forbidding nannies from using cellphones while working seems extreme, it certainly isn't the best choice for a caregiver to focus on their phone rather than the child—especially when out in public.

Working as a nanny, you are a mandated reporter. This means if you feel a child is being neglected or abused,



you must report it to the proper state authorities. But since the child hasn't been hurt due to the nanny's neglect, I don't think there is anything for you to report at this time.

Since the nanny is present at the playground, you can alert the nanny if the child starts to leave the playground area, plays aggressively, hurts others, or gets injured.

This nanny you see at the playground clearly lacks the same professional work ethic and child safety standards that you do. But from what you describe above, it does not sound like criminal neglect to me. If I am interpreting your description improperly and you feel she is being criminally negligent, then by all means contact the proper state authorities.

Good luck,  
Stephanie



*Stephanie*

Submit Your Questions to Stephanie  
[info@NannyMag.com](mailto:info@NannyMag.com)

**Stephanie Felzenberg**

Stephanie Felzenberg has twenty-eight years of nanny and family assistant experience caring for children—from newborns to teenagers. She is the publisher of [bethebestnanny.com](http://bethebestnanny.com) and has been the newsletter editor for the US Nanny Association since 2019 and a nanny advice columnist for Nanny Magazine since 2013.

# AGENCY ADVICE

**FROM MELISSA SCHOONMAKER  
AGENCY DIRECTOR, A NEW ENGLAND NANNY**

*Every time I take a job, I swear I am going to keep professional boundaries but find it really hard to advocate for them. Even during my interviews, I find myself oversharing and wanting to be like family right off the bat. I think it's costing me jobs. How do nannies work in private homes but maintain professional boundaries? What is the secret?*

While a nanny often becomes “part of the family,” that takes some time, and it shouldn’t be your goal before you even have the job. I think the secret is to keep in mind this is an employer-employee relationship, and you must keep the boundaries in place. You can still maintain a good working relationship without going into details about your personal life. Remember, this could also backfire on you one day. Sharing too much personal information may cause issues down the road. At the start of a job, only share personal information that is relevant to the position.



*Less is more* would be my advice. Focus on the children and your experience. Tell the family what you can offer them regarding your experience working with children. Keep the conversation focused on the interview at hand and why you are there. You are there to share all the wonderful things you have to offer them for childcare.



## **Melissa Schoonmaker**

Following her studies in human services at Hudson Valley Community College, Melissa began her career with A New England Nanny in 1997. She has been fortunate to have worked with hundreds of the finest on-call and full-time nannies, babysitters, housekeepers, and other household professionals over the years. Melissa has had the pleasure of meeting and working with so many wonderful families to help find the right person that fits their individual needs. Each family is unique, and Melissa has thoroughly enjoyed developing a trusting relationship with each one of them, providing advice and guidance throughout their search and during their employment relationship.

Melissa’s dedication to the household employment industry was recognized in 2017 when she received her twenty-year service award pin from the International Nanny Association.

Melissa prides herself on the referrals she receives from happy clients and nannies alike. As a result, she is able to offer unparalleled professional services to families and local companies across the Capital Region of New York.

## FINDING YOUR NICHE

# WORKING AS A TRAVEL NANNY

BETH LEHMANN



I've been a career nanny for over thirty-five years. While I am based in New York City, over five years ago, I made one of the most satisfying decisions of my life: I transitioned to becoming a traveling nanny. Being able to combine my passion for travel and nannying is the best thing ever! My travel jobs have all come by word-of-mouth recommendations from families who have sought me out. I did not plan on becoming a traveling nanny, but while I was in between jobs, I had the opportunity to travel with a family and haven't looked back since.

### Before You Leave

My first traveling nanny trip was to Modena, Italy, and then to London, England.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, I was taking six to eight travel jobs per year and traveling for two to eight weeks at a time, usually to Europe, with a few domestic locations here and there.

I prepare for my travel adventures by reviewing our trip itinerary. From the itinerary I can figure out what we will need to pack for the length and destination of trip. I start researching everything from weather forecasts to activities to do at destination with the children and family, and I book advance outing reservations, restaurant reservations, and transportation. I also secure maps of the area to study. I usually have free reign on the planning aspects of the trip for the children and myself.

We start the packing process by making lists for myself and the children. Suitcases ready to go, we use compression bags for clothes, shoes, and well-wrapped liquid items. Compression bags are color coded when suitcases are shared. Carryon luggage is typically backpacks that hold passports, copies of vaccine cards, basic toiletries, meds, a first-aid kit, snacks, toys and entertainment, travel blankets, headphones, tablets, chargers, adapters, empty water bottles, an extra set of clothes and pj's, and anything we may need to get us to our destination or handle a possible delay. I am responsible for packing the children and myself.

Travel day starts by double-checking our packing list and heading to the airport. We usually order a car service and try to take a red-eye flight to make the trip easy. At the airport, we check in, drop off luggage, clear TSA, then grab a bite to eat before boarding. At boarding time, we get to our seats, organize what needs to be out for the flight, and settle in. Once we depart, we relax and watch a movie, go to the bathroom, put pj's on, then get the kids ready to hopefully sleep a few hours on the flight. It's a long flight when they don't sleep, and it makes for a long day ahead.

### While You Are There

Upon landing internationally, we proceed through customs, get our luggage, and take a car service to the hotel or home rental. We take it easy the first day.

We usually walk around to stretch our legs, find a park to play at for a bit, and explore the hotel or home area to get acquainted with the neighborhood. We also stop and pick up drinks and snacks for the room. On the first day, we also check with the concierge to find out about local events to add to our itinerary. We have dinner at the hotel restaurant or order room service and get to bed early so we have a great start to our holiday adventure.

Some of our most exciting adventures have included attending gladiator school in Rome, Italy, taking a glass blowing class in Alaska, snorkeling in the Virgin Islands, riding a donkey in Costa del Sol, Spain, exploring the Alhambra in Granada, Spain, boating around Lake Zurich, Switzerland, exploring castles in England, taking a tuk tuk tour in Lisboa, Portugal, exploring the Heraklion in Crete, Greece, and driving a Ferrari in Italy. In every village, town, or city, we try to find a local carousel to ride.

I have enjoyed experiencing local culture through the arts. I have attended a flamenco dance show, visited museums and theaters, sampled new foods in each country, wandered through local markets, and engaged with the local people. My one souvenir tradition is I bring back earrings made by local artists from each place visited—something that represents the region.

When traveling, we average 18,000 to 20,000 steps a day when exploring by foot. For this reason, I always bring two pairs of good walking shoes. We have used many modes of transportation besides walking, though! We have rode funiculars, donkeys, bikes, busses, boats, gondolas, ferries, pedicabs, trolleys, tuk tuks, and trains.

### What You Do After

Sadly, our time must come to an end, and we must depart our wonderful destination. Using the same process, we pack, head to the airport, land, clear customs, and return home. I unpack the children before heading home to await my next adventure.

Although the travel industry has been slow due to the pandemic, things are starting to pick up again. While most of my clients have stayed domestic the past two years, I am ready to put my wings on and hit the air again. There are more adventures awaiting this nanny on the go.

# 6 TRENDS TO WATCH IN THE HOUSEHOLD EMPLOYMENT INDUSTRY

By GUY MADDALONE



What can nannies and families expect in 2022? Here are six trends to keep an eye on this year.

## 1. Tight Nanny Job Market

This is one of the most competitive nanny job markets in recent memory—or perhaps ever. The demand for in-home childcare is unprecedented and does not seem to be slowing down, as many daycare centers remain closed, have lengthy waitlists, or continue to have limited availability due to the pandemic.

Nanny placement agencies say in-home caregivers are in extremely high demand, calling the job market “highly competitive.” Others say they are “experiencing a shortage of candidates,” with nannies seeing their rates increase by \$2 to \$4 per hour.

For families, this means not only offering a competitive hourly pay rate but also presenting themselves as desirable employers. In a recent survey of nannies by GTM Payroll Services, the trustworthiness and personality of the family were more important to nannies than the rate of pay.

## Guy Maddalone

Guy Maddalone has more than 30 years of experience in the payroll, human resource, and employment services industries. In 1991, he founded GTM Payroll Services to provide payroll tax compliance and insurance administration services for families that hired a nanny or other household employees. Guy is also the author of *How to Hire a Nanny: Your Complete Guide to Finding, Hiring, and Retaining Household Help* and *How to Hire a Caregiver for Your Senior: Your Complete Guide to Finding, Employing, and Retaining In-Home Help*.

## 2. Demand for Benefits and Legal Pay

With competition for nannies seemingly at an all-time high, families are offering—and nannies are asking for—more benefits. While most caregivers receive paid time off, paid holidays, and vacation time, health benefits remain somewhat elusive for nannies. However, families can easily offer a health reimbursement account that pays back nannies for health care expenses and provides tax savings. They can also offer a retirement plan for an attractive compensation package to stand out among potential employers or retain their best workers. Because demand for nanny work remains high, the GTM Payroll survey also showed that nannies are turning down jobs that do not pay “on the books,” with only 3 percent of in-home caregivers saying they were very likely to take a position without legal pay. The pandemic has brought into sharp focus how household employees benefit from legal pay, from qualifying for unemployment to coverage under paid-leave laws.

## 3. Surging Popularity of Nanny Shares

With this competitive nanny job market and limited daycare availability, more families are coming together and starting nanny shares. In a nanny share, two or more families hire a caregiver who will look after all the children in one of the family’s homes. This can help families save on the cost of in-home childcare and provide similar socialization benefits as a daycare for their children, while a nanny can make a little more than their customary rate for a single family. Typically in a nanny share, each family pays two-thirds of the nanny’s usual hourly rate. If a nanny normally charges \$21 per hour, each family in a nanny share would pay \$14 per hour (as long as that rate is above the applicable minimum wage), meaning that nanny would make \$28 per hour.

## 4. Paying Nannies by Mobile Payment Apps

Paying for goods and services like babysitting or childcare through mobile payment apps (e.g., Venmo, PayPal, and CashApp) will be reported to the IRS if those transactions total \$600 or more in a year. Before this year, the threshold for reporting was at least two hundred transactions worth a combined \$20,000 or more. That means many more nannies and babysitters may receive 1099-K tax forms in January 2023 if they are paid by families through a mobile app.

It has always been a requirement to report income when net earnings from self-employment (like babysitting) exceed \$400. This new rule simply broadens the reporting of tax information to the IRS. Learn more about this new tax-reporting rule at [GTM.com](https://www.gtm.com)

To avoid any confusion, it is best that nannies are paid through direct deposit or with a paper check as they are considered employees of the families and should receive a Form W-2 at tax time and not a 1099.

## 5. Expanding Domestic Worker Protections

Nannies across the country continue to gain new rights in the workplace, from paid sick and family leave (including pandemic-related paid leave) to protections from discrimination. For example, nannies in Connecticut now have access to paid sick and family leave, and New York City just extended its Human Rights Law to include household employees. Among other protections, domestic workers cannot be sexually harassed or face age and religious discrimination in the workplace. Several states and cities— with more to come— have domestic worker protection laws and/or paid leave rules that cover household employees.

Minimum wage rates also continue to rise. Half of US states are boosting their minimum wage rates at some point in 2022. Nannies and other household employees are required to be paid at least the highest of the federal, state, or local minimum wage rates.

## 6. Lingering Effects of the Pandemic

As the latest COVID-19 surge seems to be winding down, states are ending their mask mandates, and cautious optimism abounds for lives returning to normal soon. Many lessons were learned by nannies over the course of the pandemic. Being paid legally is required to qualify for unemployment and paid sick leave. Health benefits are an important part of a family’s total compensation package when looking for a job. A family can make COVID-19 vaccination part of their job requirements. In a survey of household employers conducted by GTM Payroll Services, 84 percent of families said they would not hire a nanny in the future who was unvaccinated. Also, 51 percent of nannies would not take a job for a family with parents who were not vaccinated.

Nanny Magazine,

It was so fantastic to see a list of all of the nanny events in one place.

It was like a conference calendar just for nannies!

This will allow me to look ahead and plan my professional development.

I also learned about some new events I did not know existed.

I hope you continue to include this feature in every issue.

Thank you for putting that together!

Thank You,

Nanny Sarah

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

*If you have an event you'd like to submit for inclusion into our calendar, please email [info@NannyMag.com](mailto:info@NannyMag.com).*

*You can also find a calendar of events at [NannyMag.com](https://www.NannyMag.com).*

# THE KNOWLEDGEABLE NANNY

BY TENEISHA COOK

Teneisha Cook is the founder and CEO of Nannies Infinity, LLC, a nanny placement agency located in Phoenix, Arizona. Teneisha has over ten years of experience caring for children. Her childcare journey started when she worked as a part-time nanny while attending law school. After moving across the country and working for the federal government, she was blessed with her first-born son, Harper, who gave new meaning to her life. As a working mom, Teneisha reflected on her own childcare struggles and committed to helping other families with theirs. This newfound passion led her to work in a daycare setting, which allowed her to attend school and complete her master's degree in early childhood education. Her love of children and desire to assist families with quality childcare are the key reasons why she created Nannies Infinity. Working closely with children and families and helping make their lives easier by providing high-quality services with full integrity and trust is what drives Teneisha and her passion for creating successful nanny-family matches.

Nannies are professional caregivers with a bundle of childcare experiences. They provide little ones with high-quality childcare while providing parents with an extra set of hands when they need it most. It is important to understand the difference between professional nannies and babysitters to best understand why added education and professional experiences place some nannies at higher earning potentials than others.

### **Nannies vs. Babysitters?**

So, what is a nanny? Many use the terms nanny and babysitter interchangeably without realizing that there is a true difference between the two. Professional nannies are experienced caregivers that are dedicated to one family on a consistent basis. They are employed on a full- or part-time basis and paid by families to assist in providing meaningful childcare experiences for their little ones. Many are trained in early childhood development and have several years of experience. They often stick with families on a long-term basis.

Babysitters are caregivers that provide care for children of all ages on an as-needed basis. They are essential for last-minute or short-term childcare, including for emergencies and the occasional date night. Babysitters usually work on an as-needed basis and focus on keeping the children safe in the parents' absence. Babysitters aren't expected to have any additional training or experience.

### **Why is additional training important, and how can it set you apart?**

At the bare minimum, families and agencies alike usually require a professional nanny to have several years of childcare experience and current First Aid/CPR certification. However, having additional training outside of the bare minimum can set you apart from others. Experienced and well-trained nannies can create fun and engaging learning environments that aid in the child's growth and development. Parents need to know that you can provide a structured environment while giving their children guidance to not only play, but also learn and grow. Understanding the wholeness of a child means that you can create an environment that is inclusive of all areas of growth and development. Every family is looking for something different, so if you possess a specialized skill with training behind it, this makes you a hot commodity.

### **What types of additional training is there?**

First things first, what drives you? Are you passionate about healthy eating habits, art, or perhaps theater? Can you speak several languages (Spanish, Mandarin, and French are highly sought after), or do you have experience working with newborns, multiples, or children with special needs? Outside of CPR/First Aid and other general childcare-related training, nannies can specialize in specific areas to narrow down the type of care that they would like to provide. Finding courses, trainings, and certifications that you are truly interested in is essential. When you are fueled with interest and passion, your ability to obtain and produce results from what you've learned comes to the forefront in your day-to-day nannying experiences.

For example, if you have a passion for working with newborns, becoming a newborn care specialist not only places you in a different tier in terms of earning potential, knowledge, and experience, but sets you up to properly care for a family's youngest child. Considering your interests can spark ideas about what you should pursue further in the



childcare industry. Families love to see when a nanny can speak different languages, knows how to swim, or can prepare healthy meals, because they know these are helpful skills that will benefit their children. It's also nice for families to have a one-stop shop when seeking experiences for their children. If you know a language that they would want their child to learn, for example, parents are typically willing to pay more for a nanny who can teach it versus sending their child to a separate tutor to learn it.

### **Where can you find this additional training?**

Finding additional childcare-related training is as simple as doing an internet search. However, getting feedback from other nannies in your network can often lead you to some great options as well. Starting at the local level is the best way to get familiar with the offerings in your community. From workshops to classes at a community college, community programming is usually offered at an affordable rate. There are also several different organizations that offer nanny-specific certifications, trainings, conferences, and resources to keep you well informed about the industry. Take the time to do your research to ensure that providers and organizations are reputable and that their mission and ideals align with your own. As with anything, investing in your craft is vital. Paying for trainings to gain more knowledge can increase your earning potential, so never be afraid to invest in yourself.

### **How do you highlight your training to potential employees?**

Whether you are looking for a family on your own, on a childcare website, or through an agency, it is important to remember that every family has different needs and hiring requirements. Understanding early on what families are wanting and highlighting the attributes that you have during your interview is crucial. Parents and recruiters need to see and hear your commitment to what they need and understand the knowledge and experience you can bring to their families. Speaking highly of your skills and abilities while highlighting exactly how they translate into being their best choice for a nanny can help you land the job.

Becoming a professional nanny isn't something you do as a hobby—it's a career. As with any other career, the opportunities afforded to nannies who invest in their professional development increases their earning potential. Having experience, along with proper training, can position you to provide exceptional care and increase your earning potential and the demand for your services. Parents rely on a nanny's knowledge and expertise to assist them in raising their children. It is a rewarding experience to make a difference in the life of a family by doing what you love and having the knowledge and know-how behind it.



# THE ABCS OF RESPECTFUL CARE

BY DANIELLE BUJNAK

***Editor's Note: This is the last part of the series entitled The ABCs of Respectful Care. Read all installments in the 2020/2021 issues of Nanny Magazine at NannyMag.com or look for our upcoming single issue special.***

The Respectful™ Approach to Human Development, Education and Care is a multi-disciplinary and open-ended approach that combines elements from classic teaching methods and current research in the neuroscience of human development. The goal is to deliver a level of care that meets the genuine needs of all of the individuals involved in the care experience.

## YES SPACE AND YES BRAIN

It's no surprise that in an approach where we find ways to guide infants and children without using the word no that we would also emphasize the word yes. I try to find every opportunity to use the word yes in daily interactions with infants and children, because we are guaranteed to hear the word no many, many times throughout our lives—why not preload our minds and brains with the positive by starting out hearing yes a little more often to balance out those inevitable experiences of later everyday life?

The term Yes Brain was coined by Dan Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson in their excellent book of the same name, and it refers to when we are in a state of relaxed readiness and openness to connection—we are literally are ready to say yes to connections

and new ideas. In the Yes Brain state, we have full access to the functions of our “upstairs” brain, at least as much of it as has developed. That is not very much for extremely young infants, but the wiring in the upstairs brain develops on a daily basis throughout infancy and early childhood. Our “downstairs” brain is fully developed at birth and allows us to seek warmth and comfort and bond effectively with our caregivers, much like other mammals. Being in our Yes Brain state is another way of saying that we have achieved emotional regulation between our upstairs and downstairs brain functions, whether we have self-regulated or interactively regulated with the assistance of another person. We can express ourselves freely and form and maintain healthy connections with others.

Another sense of yes is the correlation of positivity and “not saying no” to the context of the curated environment, which was discussed earlier in this series. Our curated environment can be a Yes Space, which means a space in which the answer to every question that the infant (or child) asks is yes. They can do anything that they wish in that space, because it has been prepared for them such that they can be safe. They cannot injure themselves or make a mess that is unacceptable. The term is widely used in the RIE (Resources for Infant Educators) community, and the rather extreme example that is commonly given is, “If you got locked out of your house for four hours, would your baby be completely safe in that space? They might not be happy, but would they be safe?” Basically, is there anything

whatsoever in that space that could potentially injure or harm them? If there is, then it is not a Yes Space.

Before you dismiss the Yes Space as an insane idea, let me assure you that virtually every North American home where an infant lives has a Yes Space for that infant. It is called a crib. You can leave a baby in a crib for four hours (or all night long), and they absolutely will be safe! They might not be happy, but they will be safe. When an infant or a child (or an adult) is in an environment where they can express their inner motivations freely and without fear of injury or external restrictive forces telling them no, they are able to be in their Yes Brain, maintain emotional regulation, and pursue their internal motivations and creativity with genuine freedom.

Having this freedom is one reason that infants and toddlers do not experience their cribs as jails or as places of abandonment. Another reason is that the parts of the brain that experience the concepts of jail and abandonment simply don't develop until later in childhood. Though parents often project their own perceptions and imagine that their infant or toddler is sharing their perception, that is not actually possible. They might not want to be in the crib at a given time, but it is not because they feel it is "like a jail." Imagine that you as an adult were in grave danger, like an infant who is on an adult bed with a dangerous drop to the floor. For example, imagine diving underwater with hungry great white sharks. In that case, would the steel cage surrounding you feel like a jail? Would you actually want to get out of it? Probably not. Likewise, infants know that they cannot keep themselves safe, and they appreciate the reassurance of boundaries (even the literal physical boundaries of the sides and slats of a crib) just as much as an adult appreciates the steel cage while diving with sharks. If an adult is making a big fuss inside the steel cage underwater with the sharks, is it likely that they are doing so out of a desire to get out of it? It is far more likely that they are upset because of something else (hungry sharks?) and expressing that while they are inside the cage, rather than that they are complaining about the cage itself. Interestingly, it's just about the same with babies and their Yes Spaces (i.e., cribs).

## ZONE OF PROXIMAL DEVELOPMENT

Our final term in this A-to-Z glossary of Respectful Care™ is the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky created this term to

describe when "what the child can only do with the help of the adult today, she will do on her own tomorrow" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 87). Children are rarely interested in revisiting previously acquired skills and instead are keenly attuned to the very edge of their skill set—the proximal or next stage of developed skills. Dr. Maria Montessori (as well as everyone who has thoughtfully observed young children) noticed the pattern in which the child seeks to understand and start to imitate a skill, then works toward mastery of that skill, and then enjoys the mastery for a period of time before moving on to seek to understand and learn a new skill in the same process.

Children need us to support or "scaffold" this learning that occurs on the edge of their current abilities so they can build on their existing mastered skills and develop the proximal or next set of skills. Children are internally motivated to seek the next stage of skills when their brains and bodies are ready to move beyond their current skill set. Our role is to provide just enough—and just the right kind of—assistance to support this development until the child can sustain it on their own, the same way that a scaffold supports a building while it is being constructed. Until the building (or child) is strong enough to support itself permanently, then the scaffold is removed. Interactively regulating with an infant or child is an example of scaffolding their learning about emotional regulation, as well as building the foundation for secure attachment.

I hope this very basic introduction to Respectful Care™ has been informative, sparked new thinking, and even inspired some new practices in your daily work with infants and children of all ages. The Respectful Approach™ is singularly unique in that it encompasses a wide range of contributing sources, from Montessori, Waldorf and Steiner, Pikler and RIE, and Reggio Emilia, to the documented evidence base of attachment theory, the polyvagal theory, and interpersonal neurobiology.

I invite you to investigate our content that has been prepared specifically for nannies, including our streamed video course Respectful Care™ for Newborns, Infants, and Toddlers, which is available online through Newborn Care Solutions; the upcoming digital version of our Advanced Course in Respectful Care™; and my brand-new book Principles and Practices of Respectful Care.

## DANIELLE BUJNAK

Danielle Bujnak is an experienced Early Childhood Educator with more than two decades of experience guiding and caring for infants, children, and their families in a wide variety of settings. Danielle has been a nanny, governess, and Master Newborn Care Specialist, as well as a teacher for children of all ages. She has supported families in private family residences, through homeschooling, daycare, preschools, and Montessori and Waldorf-based early childhood programs. Her California Child Development Permit qualifies her at the "Master Teacher" and "Site Supervisor" levels, licensing her to run a multi-classroom preschool or daycare for infants and children, and to guide and mentor other teachers in best practices. After completing a graduate-level certificate in Early Childhood Education, Danielle is currently completing an MSc in children's mental health and special education, following the Constructivist approach.





# 10 THINGS TO KNOW IF YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT BECOMING A TRAVEL NANNY

By Chelsea Novakowski

Chelsea Novakowski is a passionate, caring, curious nanny with more than ten years of experience and an adventurous streak. Her home base is beautiful British Columbia, Canada, but she is currently in the Bahamas. She holds a bachelor's degree in global development studies and a certificate in child and youth mental health, and she is a certified early childhood educational assistant. She has been fortunate enough to care for children around the world, including on the ski slopes of Montreal, on sailboats in the Aegean Sea, at summer camps in Ontario, by the ocean in Spain, and in the suburbs of Australia. She has also spent six months as a consultant at the United Nations in Laos, taught ice skating in Afghanistan, and most recently finished her master's degree in development studies. Get in touch at [thetravelnannycanada@gmail.com](mailto:thetravelnannycanada@gmail.com).

Travel nanny is an attractive option for many nannies. The allure of going to a new place and making an adventure fun for the children in your care is very exciting. As an international nanny with travel experience in more than thirty-five countries, I've learned plenty of lessons about how to effectively work around the world with different families. Below I'll share some of the things I've learned in my travels to help you on your way to a travel nanny position.

**1. If you don't have any nanny experience, try working first as an au pair.**

I spent time in Australia and Turkey doing this, and it was very valuable for me, as it got me familiar with living with a family in a new culture. I was lucky enough to travel to Greece and Turkey with one family, which got me comfortable in many different settings. If you are in college, think about going on your summer break, as this is often a good time to find the best au pair positions and build up your resume.

**2. Know your must-haves and your wants, and put these in writing.**

I can't stress enough the need to have a contract that outlines your agreement with the family, as having this arrangement will help make conversations easier. I recently had COVID, and luckily the family and I had discussed our options beforehand so that when this stressful situation arose, we were able to handle it more smoothly.

**3. Know the industry standards.**

It is standard that when traveling with a family, they should cover travel expenses (such as transport, room, and often food). You are responsible for your personal spending money (for example, for snacks and clothes), and meals and drinks away from the family. If you are working during an excursion that the family wants to do, this should be covered. If you are taking a personal excursion, you will likely have to pay. Remember that this is not a vacation for you but part of your work requirements, and ensure you are compensated when you are performing work duties.

**4. Find a rhythm that suits you and the family.**

This includes discussing boundaries, taking time away from the family on occasion, and also stepping up when you see they need extra help. Take time off when you're offered it, and show up when you are needed. This generally takes some time to fall into, so be patient. It will become easier the more different families you work with. Being flexible is a must in this industry.

**5. Give more than you take.**

Always strive to do the little bit extra that you can, and this will reflect well on your work ethic and make it likely you'll receive an excellent reference. This is a surefire way to continue in the industry. Do your research on the country and situation, and make sure that you are making the travel experience easier, not harder, for the family.

**6. Be a lifelong learner!**

I have taken a formal education path, but I've also done a lot of personal learning about children's development. Knowing a wide range of educational and developmental techniques will work wonders when working in different parts of the world and make you a standout candidate.

**7. Join Facebook groups in areas where you want to work.**

Social media is a great way to network, find jobs, and see what agencies have to offer. I have found travel opportunities in different Facebook groups, and once you chat with a family, set up a Zoom call to determine whether you are a good fit. Be clear and timely with your communication, as this is expected in the industry.

**8. Make Google your best friend.**

Look into the country you are visiting—their visa and health requirements, what activities they have for kids, and general tips and tricks to know. Being knowledgeable about your location can make things easier for your family and you.

**9. Prep and pack.**

Research what will be available in the country you may be visiting, and learn what you may need to bring. It's always wise to bring craft supplies, educational activities, or sports equipment (such as a jump rope) that takes up minimal space, as these can help you entertain the child in your care.

**10. Be attentive.**

If you are working with a new family, take notice of the routine so you can jump into your role quickly. Being proactive is imperative to making the best impression and doing your best work.



**Chelsea Novakowski**

Travel nanny is an intense experience, but by following these tips, hopefully you can be more prepared to explore opportunities and expand your knowledge about what it is to travel nanny!





# NANNY KNOWS BEST TWELVE PHRASES THAT MAKE MOST NANNIES CRINGE

— BY MICHELLE LAROWE



Michelle LaRowe is the editor-in-chief of Nanny Magazine. Michelle LaRowe has more than 20 years of nanny industry experience. As an International Nanny Association credentialed nanny and Nanny of the Year™ award recipient, Michelle has authored several parenting books including *Nanny to the Rescue!*, *Nanny to the Rescue Again!* and *Working Mom's 411*. Michelle has also served as executive director of the International Nanny Association, executive director of Morningside Nannies, editor in chief of eNannySource.com, and as an expert content contributor, product reviewer and consultant for a variety of major brands. To educate the next generation of nannies, Michelle launched NannyTraining.com where she serves as lead educator. Her formative course, offered exclusively in partnership with NannyStella, Inc., is the only US Based CACHE Endorsed Customized Qualification for nannies.

Every industry has specific occupational terms and phrases that are only truly understood by those engaged in that industry. The nanny industry is no different. As nannies seek new positions in a competitive job market, here are twelve phrases that most nannies find cringeworthy.

**1. Light housekeeping.** If there's ever been a phrase that should be eliminated from a nanny employer's vocabulary, it should be light housekeeping. For different families, light housekeeping means different things. While originally intended to reflect things like wiping down the counter after preparing children's meals, loading the dishwasher after feeding the children lunch, and sweeping or vacuuming up any childcare-related messes, this catchall phrase has come to include, depending on the family, everything but scrubbing toilets and mopping floors. One way nannies can avoid the ambiguity related to this phrase is to ensure their contract spells out what light housekeeping entails. Instead of cleaning the children's rooms, aim for specific language like "vacuum the children's rugs once per week" or "disinfect the changing table daily."

**2. Flexibility.** While most nannies understand that flexibility is part of the job, when flexibility really means twenty-four-seven availability, there lies the problem. Running late occasionally because of traffic or a work emergency is expected—and much different than setting the nanny's end time to 5:00 p.m. but never returning home before 5:30 p.m. If nannies notice a shift, and their end time is consistently later than agreed upon, even if just by fifteen minutes each day, they should approach the parents and ask if shifting their schedule would work for them. After all, the parents have been unable to get home at the agreed-upon time.

**3. For the right person.** When seeking a nanny, it's not uncommon for parents to agree to do x, y, or z—for the right person. The issue with this concept is the failure to understand that the "right person" is the person who can work the family's job and meet the family's needs. When parents make exceptions or accommodations for candidates that don't meet their needs, resentment can build up. When interviewing for positions, nannies should consider whether they can meet the family's needs and avoid accepting positions where the parents must really bend to make the job work.

**4. Can you do me a favor?** Have truer words ever been spoken in the nanny world than today's favor is tomorrow's chore? In true nanny lingo, this is the definition of job creep. The first time a nanny shows up on a Monday and loads the dishwasher, it sets the stage for that becoming the new weekly duty. Of course, nannies tend to pitch in and do what is needed to support their work families, but when acts of kindness become new expectations, therein lies the rub. If a family begins to have new expectations, it's important to address them. If you're willing to add the task to your routine, offer to do so—for compensation. "It seems like loading the dishwasher has been super helpful for your guys. Would you like me to start my shift fifteen minutes earlier each Monday so I can manage that for you?" If you're not, you'll need to address that too. "I'm finding it really hard to get breakfast ready on Monday mornings when the sink and counter aren't available. Is there something we can do to resolve this?"

**5. I'm running late.** Enter the never-ending workday, where you can't leave until you're relieved, and you have no idea when that will happen. Running late is expected on occasion—and one of the benefits of nanny care for parents is not paying by the minute for being late. But when running late becomes the norm, it becomes problematic—especially when there's no communication of an expected return home time. If you notice tardiness is a habit, speak up. Offer to adjust your schedule, or ask how you'll be compensated for these unplanned workday extensions. Expecting the nanny to stay late without notice, outside of the occasional situation that is outside of the employer's control, demonstrates a lack of respect for the nanny's time and life outside of work.

**6. No pet care required.** While most parents are careful to let prospective nannies know that there is no pet care required for the position, that usually isn't possible. Where there are pets, there is additional work. From letting the dog out, to giving water to the cat, to "helping" the kids clean the guinea pig's cage, to dealing with accidents and pet messes—unless the nanny-family agreement is super specific about duties related to pets, chances are that the nanny will have to provide some type of pet care. While parents may agree to come home if the dog has an accident or needs to be taken to the vet in an emergency, in practice, the expectation will usually fall to the nanny.



**7. One parent works from home.** "We have a home office," they say. "We work completely separately," they tell you. Everyone underestimates the impact of multiple transitions on young children when parents consistently come in and out of the room and the undermining of the nanny-child relationship that happens when the nanny is not allowed to soothe and comfort the child and respond to the child's needs. When considering working for at-home parents, it is essential to have boundaries in place. While the parents are, of course, entitled to have access to their children whenever and wherever they want, discussing concerns related to how multiple transitions impact the children are necessary to ensure everyone is on the same page with regard to who has responsibility for the child and when. Eventually nannies and parents fall into a groove that works for everyone, but getting there can take time, tough conversations, and trial and error.

**8. Chopping veggies.** The gateway to family meal preparation is chopping vegetables and usually follows with light meal prep, then just tossing something in the oven, then following the recipe left on the counter. While most nannies realize preparing children's meals is part of the job, when it comes to preparing meals for their families, most nannies would prefer not to. If you're comfortable preparing meals and are passionate about cooking, a position that requires meal prep may be for you.

If you're a nanny who dreads turning on the oven, you'll really want to explore the expectations around assisting with preparing family meals.

**9. Care is only for the baby.** The job description advertises that the family has three children, but two are in school, so care is primarily for the baby. Until snow days, summer vacation, school closures, or when someone is home sick. Although the children may be in school, who is responsible for picking them up if they are sick? For providing care if school is closed? For running the forgotten instrument up to school? It's important that nannies articulate how they support all the children in the family, not just the ones who are home full time. Unlike with daycare, nannies aren't paid per child; this sometimes leads to a misunderstanding on the parents' part of how having a child in school impacts a nanny's compensation.

**10. Here's your 1099.** Most nannies learn quickly, albeit sometimes the hard way, that nannies are employees of the families for whom they work and are not independent contractors. While there are very few exceptions, like nannies who are employed by an agency, more and more nannies continue to demand fair and legal pay. Being paid legally and being correctly classified as an employee gives nannies access to benefits, including unemployment and Social Security, and creates a legitimate work history, which is needed for buying a home or car on credit.

**11. Travel around the world.** Working for a family who travels can be a perk—if you love to travel and are insistent on having a travel clause or separate travel contract. It can be easy for parents to forget it's not their nanny's vacation, especially when they are footing the bill for the trip. However, having to travel with a family means leaving your own routine and family and working in a different location. In addition to being compensated for all hours worked, savvy nannies who travel with families often require a travel stipend, a set number of hours off each day, and their own sleeping quarters separate from those of the children—especially if they aren't getting paid for the hours that require overnight supervision.

**12. This is an easy job.** Said no truthful parent ever. While of course there are aspects of every job that are easier than others, providing high-quality care is no easy feat. When parents overestimate how angelic their children are or fail to acknowledge that providing consistent, high-quality care for

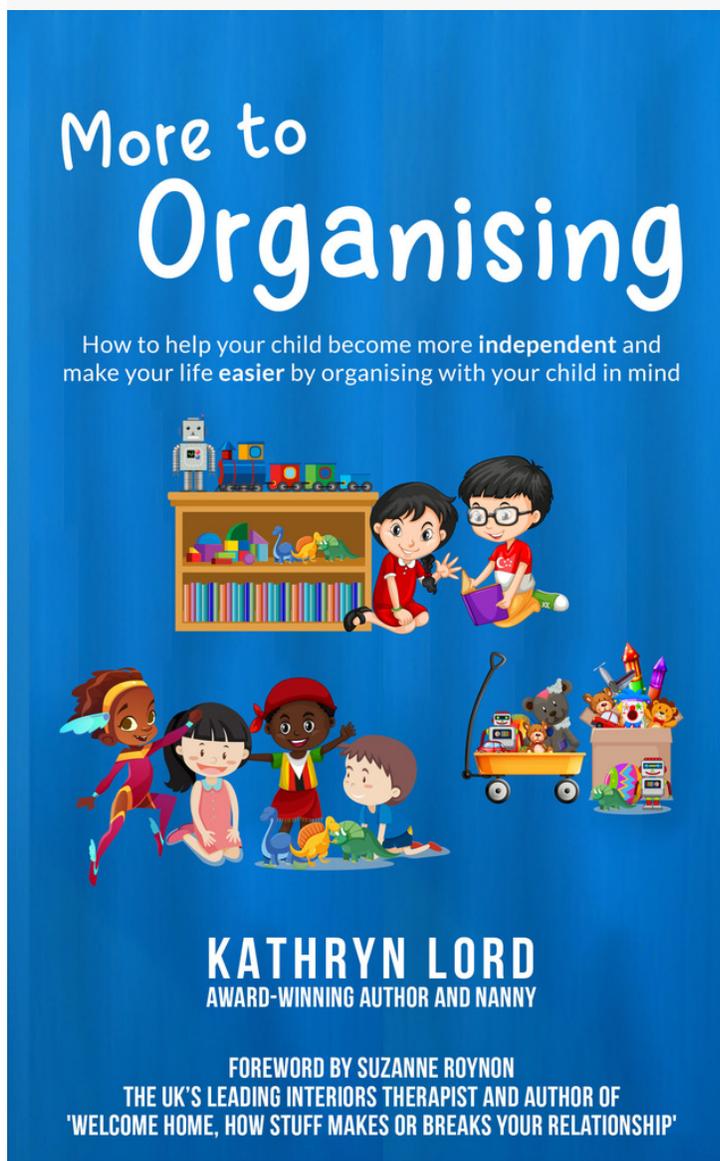
children is not easy, nannies can expect to have a difficult time getting parent buy-in to correct undesirable behaviors and managing realistic expectations of what can be accomplished during the day.

As nannies wade through job descriptions and conversations with potential and current employers, it's essential to ensure that everyone is speaking the same language. When the understanding is clear, both nannies and families can evaluate whether the expectations are appropriate and working for them.

**In a February 2022 poll of over 225 nanny members from the Facebook group Nanny Professional Development Opportunities, more than 100 nannies, when given a list of the five most cringeworthy phrases, said light housekeeping was the most cringeworthy phrase, followed by I'm running late and flexibility.**

**Thank you to those who shared feedback in this group.**

## NEW BOOK FROM UK NANNY KATHRYN LORD



Kathryn Lord is a UK based award-winning nanny and author who just released her newest book, *More to Organising*. Focused on helping nannies and families organize their lives more effectively, her book shares practical tips and strategies for reclaiming the space in your home and your life. From making playroom, children's spaces and prams more organizationally friendly, to sharing creative ways to display children's art, if you have children in your life, her tips can help take your environment from chaos to calm.



Learn more about Kathryn Lord and her work at [www.moretoorganising.com](http://www.moretoorganising.com).



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# QUESTIONS WITH STACEY WODIN

VISIBILITY STRATEGIST

### **1. How did you get involved with the nanny industry and how has it changed since you became involved?**

I started babysitting when I was twelve years old for the neighborhood kids around the block. I continued doing that all through junior high and high school. Eventually I realized that I could work as a nanny and have that be my actual profession. I was a nanny for twenty-one years before COVID, which is when I started working full time on my current business. In my current role, I work as a visibility strategist for birth professionals. My company does everything from website development to social media and marketing for those who work with new parents and babies.

When I first became involved in the nanny industry, there wasn't a community like there is now. Social media has really changed the game when it comes to that aspect. Nannying wasn't seen as a profession, and the laws that now govern us and guarantee fair and legal pay weren't around back then either. I still think that we have a way to go, but the industry is headed in the right direction.

### **2. How did you get to where you are today and where do you see yourself in five years?**

Plain and simple—hard work, dedication, a willingness to learn and keep learning, and going above and beyond for not only nanny families, but for nannies and birth professionals in general.

Hopefully with a thriving business that can help a plethora of birth professionals and nannies alike.

### **3. What is your best advice for nannies?**

Advocate for yourself. Make sure that you have a contract before you start a job. Make sure that you are paid legally so you can take advantage of the perks of being an employee, such as social security, disability, and unemployment, if you ever need them. Keep learning by going to conferences, taking classes, and reading books; there are ways to keep learning that don't cost an arm and a leg. But most importantly, be professional—always.

### **4. What do you like best about your job? Least?**

I just love helping people in general. I guess that's why I started working with kids in the first place.

I'm horrible with boundaries because I'm the type of person who likes to go above and beyond, so having those in place is necessary, but they're my least favorite thing.

### **5. What is your educational background?**

I have some community college under my belt, but I'm a trained Newborn Care Specialist (NCS) (through two companies), and I have taken countless courses and have attended and even hosted conferences.

### **6. How do you give back to the nanny community?**

I run the largest and oldest Los Angeles-based nanny group on Facebook called the LA Nanny Network, I mentor nannies and birth professionals, I'm an ambassador for the International Nanny Association, and I sit on the board for the Newborn Care Specialist Association.

### **7. Biggest nanny industry myth?**

That you need to have a college degree. You don't need it to succeed in this industry. Nannying is an amazing and rewarding career, and from it you can go on so many different paths. You can become a house manager or birth professional, open up an agency, or use other skills like I do to support those working in our industry each day. The sky is the limit.

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

Nannying is a job, which means that you need to be paying guaranteed hours, paying legally, and so on. Don't nickel-and-dime your nanny and then expect them to stay around long term. Treat them fairly and respectfully, just as you would any person at your job, and make sure to have open communication. Doing these things will help to ensure that you have a nanny that stays with you long term.

### **9. How did you overcome the challenge of being paid consistently, then transitioning to starting your own businesses?**

The main reason that I opened my own business was because I was having a baby. I worked for high-profile and high-net-worth clients, and unfortunately, they didn't understand that I couldn't work around the clock and have a baby. So, I prepared myself once I was in my second trimester and started saving money. I was also able to get disability benefits (maternity leave) for a few months after having the baby and was able to save that as well. By the way, I was able to do that because I was paid legally, which is another reason why I recommend legal pay for nannies. With all that said, I had a small cushion that would pay my bills for a few months while I started my business and worked on getting clients. I was incredibly fortunate to be able to start making enough to cover my expenses before I ran out of my savings.

### **10. What is your advice to other nannies who may have a special skill or knowledge they want to use to support those in the nanny industry?**

Start—just start. Even if it's a side hustle while you build it up, just start. Also, visibility is key. You need to put yourself out there, and you need to talk about what you do and what you offer. But if you don't start, then you'll never know if it will work.

## **ABOUT STACEY WODIN**

Stacey's has been involved in the nanny industry for over 20 years. She has a variety of experience, including having works as a nanny, household manager, private personal assistant, and roles in estate management. Stacey is a native Angelino, a mother, and a devoted industry professional, who strives to build strong relationships with her clients. Stacey believes that her two most valuable assets are her network and her reputation.

Though Stacey has served in many roles in the household industry, one thing has remained: her love for being an intricate part of an ever-growing industry. Stacey strives for continued success, not just within herself, but within like-minded peers dedicated to moving in a positive direction. She is someone who continues to build momentum by helping others as she helps elevate our industry.



# People Profile

Becky Kavanagh



Becky Kavanagh was in childcare for over thirty-four years, twenty-eight of those in the nanny industry. She has an AA degree in early childhood education with an infant/toddler specialty certification. Becky is an INA credentialed nanny. In 2010 she became a certified parent coach. In 1998 she represented nannies when she was honored with a Parents Magazine Child Care Award. In 2006 she was selected as INA's Nanny of the Year. Serving the nanny industry has brought her joy. That service started with the INA, with her participating on committees and as a board member. It continued with the local support group and now in online groups. Currently, she has partnered with Glenda Propst in developing video webinars specifically addressing the needs of nannies in career transitions. She is also a member of the leadership team for the Nanny History Project. Now retired from nanny work, Becky continues to remain active in the nanny community. "Once a nanny, always a nanny" is her motto.

### **What made you become a nanny?**

After years of working in a childcare center connected to a college and being part of the lives of not only children and families but students and instructors, I felt a change was needed. I just didn't know what it would be. A dear friend of mine had just gotten a nanny position, and I was visiting her over a weekend. Her employer mentioned she knew someone who knew someone who needed a nanny. I contacted them and did a cold interview the next day. Everything simply lined up. I loved their parenting philosophy and the relaxed environment in their home. I could see myself working with them as a team. So after a bit of negotiation and exchanging more details, I started my nanny career.

### **What is your childcare background?**

I have an AA degree in early childhood education with an infant/toddler specialty certification. I'm an INA credentialed Nanny, and in 2010 I became a certified parent coach.

I started in early childhood helping my sister with a small group childcare center, and then we both were hired at the local college childcare center. I worked in all aspects of the center including as a lead teacher in the infant, toddler, tot, and preschool classes. I was the assistant director in this same center while I taught for several more years. Then I moved into my nanny career.

### **How did you get involved in the nanny community?**

I became a member of the International Nanny Association (INA) as soon as I accepted my first nanny position—even before my first day on the job. I knew that I wanted to be involved in the industry and to know more about it. I was privileged to be active in the INA as well as serve on the board of directors for many years and present workshops at several conferences. When a local nanny support group formed here in the Twin Cities (Minneapolis and St. Paul), I joined and was involved in that group. I'm still connected with the group as it's moved to an online-only format. I was also part of our local International Nanny Training Day planning committee for several years.

### **What is the longest you've been with a family?**

My first ever position lasted for almost twenty-two years. I never would have guessed that would have happened. This family saw the value of continuity for their children. It was a gift to us all! I know other nannies don't often have this opportunity, so I cherished every moment. That doesn't mean that it was all perfect, but riding out the storms of life together served us all very well.

### **What is the most memorable lesson you've learned as a nanny?**

There are so many lessons, but one that comes to mind is that flexibility does not mean "without boundaries." I was happy to be flexible for the families I worked with when it was needed because we all appreciate this. To avoid the dreaded job creep, I was clear that this was a limited-time addition to my duties. If they felt something should be permanent, then we could discuss it further, often finding something to drop off my list to accommodate the additional task. And, most importantly, I needed to feel it was appropriate to my overall role. If not, I'd explain my reasoning. Honestly, it's all about communication.

### **What is the one thing you wish people knew about nannies?**

Unlike most professions, nanning is a very personal career full of emotions. Nannies provide a service that requires not only an array of skills and expertise, but also the love and emotion we pour into it. It's no wonder there is grief and loss when a job ends.

### **What is your role in the nanny industry now?**

While I have officially retired from nanny work, I'm still involved in support groups and nanny-related projects. I'm part of the Nanny History Project leadership, with the goal of preserving and sharing the breadth of history behind that nanny career and industry. I'm involved with industry leader Glenda Propst in developing and creating topic-centered videos for nannies who are in a transition. Right now that work is done through Glenda's Nanny Transitions group. There have been several occasions where I've been asked by individuals developing and implementing programs to assist them in those projects. I enjoy these continued collaborative opportunities.

I also have a business, Busy B Services, which has an array of services for nannies called The Hive. I collaborate with nannies who need help with their resumes, cover letters, coaching for interviews, or developing a digital portfolio.

### **What is your biggest piece of advice for new nannies?**

Communication is key! Start communicating with your employers from day one. Being able to discuss issues, small and large, provides a strong foundation and structure to long-term and satisfying work.

It's been my experience that nannies are wonderful at communicating with children and helping them develop communication skills, but they are less confident when communicating with their employers. It takes active and daily practice to be comfortable and confident. Talking about the little things daily opens the door to discussions about the occasional big topic or hard conversations.

### **What would you say to other nannies looking to break into other parts of the industry as you have?**

Be open and flexible. Working with a family for almost twenty-two years meant facing changes that required flexibility. As children grow and families transition, some duties will shift to accommodate these changes. Being proactive and anticipating the family's needs can help you steer your job into new paths.

In my case, I took on the role of lead homeschool teacher for the oldest child. It was a decision we discussed and a challenge I was excited to face. As the children got older, there were more household-management and pet-care tasks that I enjoyed doing. I had an opportunity to work at our neighborhood elementary school and an area-placement agency, but the children and family were always my priority. I enjoyed a lot of travel with the family as well as caring for the children twenty-four seven when parents were traveling. All of these opportunities came out of conversations with the parents and being willing to try new things.

### **What is your favorite memory of your nanny industry experience?**

There are so many! I could note the 1998 Parents Magazine Child Care Award or the 2006 INA Nanny of the Year, both of which were huge honors and amazing experiences. However, I'd love to share a more personal story. Over the years, the three children from my long-term position have maintained a huge place in my life. I thought there would come a day when they no longer wanted to hug in public or cuddle or sit on my lap or call me nanny, but it has never happened. Never! Each of them has introduced me to friends and coworkers as their nanny. They are in their twenties and thirties now, and I'm still a big part of their lives—and they are a huge part of mine.

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