

# NANNY MAGAZINE

SPRING 2023

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BUILDING  
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**SPRING 2023**



# NM

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

Michelle LaRowe

Happy Spring!

During a recent sermon at church, I was reminded that every season of growth starts with a bit of resistance.

As the flowers push up through the dirt to sprout and grow into their glorious nature, it is not without persistence, power, and preservation.

As we enter into a new season, it serves a good reminder that before new growth, comes the battle to grow.

Push through and don't give up. Growth takes work.

Enroll in that training program, start that side gig, move across the world.

Set your eye on the outcome and be encouraged that sometimes it is hard and messy before the masterpiece is revealed.

Wishing growth to us all during this season,



Michelle



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# SPRING 2023



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## Unicorn Families

The term “Unicorn Family” has become widely popular jargon among nannies used to describe employers whom they believe to be perfect.

But like unicorns, the perfect nanny employers do not exist.

Utilizing this term has attributed to unrealistic expectations for employers, built a false sense of security in employees, and inflated the relationship between parents and nannies. It’s also been used when giving credit to employers who are doing the right thing for their employee, even when the right thing is the only legal or humane thing to do.

Nannies are wise to be reminded that the relationship between nanny and parents is that of an employee and employer. Parents will always continue to make the best choices for their family and nannies are cautioned to do the same.

While nannies may feel like family, it’s important to remember that we are not.



**International Nanny Training Day** will be celebrated April 1, 2023. More information about this event can be found at [nannypalooza.com/nntd.html](http://nannypalooza.com/nntd.html) as it becomes available.

**The International Nanny Association** will be hosting its 2023 Annual Conference May 4-7, 2023 in Orlando, Florida. Please visit [inaconference.org/](http://inaconference.org/) to register or learn more about this event.

The **2023 NCS Enrichment Conference** will be held June 1st - 4th, 2023 in Scottsdale, Arizona Scottsdale, Arizona! Visit [www.ncscon.com](http://www.ncscon.com) to learn more.

The **2023 APNA Conference** will be held September 20-23, 2023 in St. Pete Beach, Florida. Visit [theapna.org/](http://theapna.org/) for updates as they become available.

**The Great British Nanny Conference** will be held September 30, 2023 in London, England. To learn more or to purchase your ticket, visit <https://uknanny.org/event/the-great-british-nanny-conference-2023/>.

**Nannypalooza** will be held October 6-8, 2023 at the Hilton Washington, DC Dulles. 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 US Nanny Association** will hold its annual conference in 2023. More information will be available on their website. Visit [usnanny.org/conference/](http://usnanny.org/conference/) for conference updates as they become available.

For nanny specific training that can be accessed online and completed at your own pace, please visit [NannyTraining.com](http://NannyTraining.com) and [GlobalNannyTraining.com](http://GlobalNannyTraining.com) to view the full course catalogs.

## Nanny Industry Calendar of Events

To add your event to this listing, please email [info@NannyMag.com](mailto:info@NannyMag.com).

## Fair and Legal Pledge

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# EMPOWERING YOU TO ENRICH BABIES' CRITICAL EARLY YEARS

By Michelle Mintz, MS, CCC-SLP



Babies' learning journeys begin the day they are born, not their first day of school. The experiences babies have and their interactions during their first five years will determine their emotional, physical, intellectual, and social development along with their self-confidence, personality, adaptability, and ability to relate with others. The person who spends the most amount of time with the baby, which often is you, has the opportunity to make the most impact on this young one's life.

Nannies love the feeling of having successfully encouraged their baby or toddler client to reach new developmental milestones. They are so vested into their little clients that they get the same feelings of excitement and pride as the parents when they see new growth. But, often, they do not know exactly how to stimulate that brain development or how to turn everyday care into an easy avenue for greater communication and capturing learning moments. They are aware of the stigma of too much "screen time" but do not know how to turn screen time into limited value time. Nannies have shared with me how they have strong skills in taking care of their "littles'" needs (e.g., bathing, diapering, feeding, and safety measures), but they either do not have the background or are not aware of the necessity to "build that little brain."

Communicating is the key to connecting, and it begins from the moment a baby is born. The first communication we often hear is crying, that sweet sound when newborns arrive to let everyone know "I am here!" As crying is one of the first of many ways babies communicate, true smiling does not appear until around six to twelve weeks. From birth, each person that comes in contact with that infant (who then grows to become a baby, who grows to become a toddler, who grows to become a child, etc.) needs to know what that baby is communicating and how best to communicate back with them. Communication abilities change and grow as babies develop, and their ability to grow depends upon the experiences they have.

### Baby's Blooming Brain

Studies reveal that 90% of brain development happens before age five. When babies are born, neurons in their brain are still forming and continue to make neural connections through around age three. Babies' sweet little heads are born with billions of brain cells that can be stimulated to grow based on early and enriching experiences. These brain cells are ready for you to nurture so they can form the connections needed for babies to bloom and grow to their greatest potential.

While many factors influence brain development, your early interactions have the most significant impact. It is important for you to stimulate the baby's brain and plant the seeds for their life successes much earlier than you may be aware. Some newborns are actually able to imitate you sticking your tongue out, and that act of repetition has just stimulated a new brain connection!

Listening, understanding, stimulating, and forming strong attachments with love and security are essential for babies' brain as well as their social and emotional development. You want the time spent to be the most enriching and inspiring. Babies' blooming journeys strongly depend upon your continuous participation and strong active involvement.

There is no extra time needed in your day to be able to help stimulate babies' young brains. You can learn to provide engaging, fun, interactive experiences throughout your natural daily routines such as dressing, feeding, bathing, riding in the car, and grocery shopping, which will increase brain stimulation so you can help that child bloom all the time!

It's not just what you do with your baby, but how you do it that makes the greatest impact!

Through my research, I have discovered that nannies find their days more productive and satisfying if they have a repertoire of meaningful activities to help create brain connections as well as emotional connections with babies in their care.

**Michelle Mintz, MS, CCC-SLP, The Early Development Expert**, is the creator of Baby Blooming Moments™, a unique, one-on-one parent coaching experience, virtual or in person, empowering parents, siblings, grandparents, and nannies to enrich the way they interact with their babies and toddlers. Michelle develops personalized, proactive strategies helping families transform everyday, in-the-moment interactions into valuable, teachable opportunities. Implementing her strategies and hands-on activities throughout the day helps increase communication, brain connections, learning, and social development during those crucial early formative years when the most impactful brain development occurs—which helps all babies and toddlers bloom!

Michelle, who earned her BA in Speech and Hearing Sciences from UC Santa Barbara and her MS in Speech-Language Pathology from Boston University before establishing her private practice in Santa Monica, CA, in 1995, has decades of experience working with families. She is also the author of *All Done Binky!*, a book to help support families with babies and toddlers weaning off pacifiers.

To learn more, visit <https://babybloomingmoments.com/>.





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# ASK THE NANNY

Dear Stephanie,

*How can I get involved in the nanny industry? Some groups seem cliquy, and it is overwhelming for me to show up at an event without knowing anyone. I really want to get involved and meet other nannies. What can I do?*

*Craving Connections*

Dear Craving Connections,

Working as a nanny can feel isolating, especially if there aren't other in-home childcare providers in the neighborhood you work in.

Local nanny support groups are a great way to meet other nannies to socialize with. Check online whether there are nanny groups in your area. The nannies in these groups often make plans to go out to lunch or dinner, to the movies, or for a hike, and that is a great way to make friends.

Attending nanny conferences is always very rewarding. Flying solo to my first nanny conference was scary because I had never met any of the other attendees previously. But meeting men and women who share the same unique work experiences and passion that I do was well worth taking a leap of faith.



The training workshops at nanny conferences are tailored specifically for in-home childcare providers. I have always left nanny conferences feeling refreshed and excited to get back to work to try to use the information I learned at the conference. You can also add the certificates of participation for workshops you attended to your resume.

I also was very nervous attending my first nanny support group outing and nanny conference. But it was well worth going. The friendships I have made have lasted my entire career. The first step is the hardest. Once you meet up with other nannies or attend a nanny conference, you will be glad you did.

Best of luck,

Stephanie Felzenberg

**Stephanie Felzenberg**

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

*Stephanie*



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



# AGENCY ADVICE

## FROM KYLA LOPEZ THE NANNY CONSULTANT

*Dear Agency Owner,*

*I am looking for my next nanny job and am considering moving from a small town to a big city. I think I can earn more, connect with more nannies, and really have a more positive nanny experience. I am unsure how to break into the market in a new city. Should I use an agency or give it a go on my own? If I want to use an agency, how to do I find a good one, and how do I get connected?*

First, it is wonderful that you are considering getting out of your small city and venturing into a larger city. What an adventure! You are spot on; in most larger cities, you will find a larger nanny community, more positions, better benefits, and higher wages. However, with that comes a higher cost of living, so you will want to make sure to budget that in. It also means your competition will be higher, so it is essential to stand out among the rest, especially if you are considering applying and interviewing before you make a move. Families, in general, will feel apprehensive about this, and you will have to stand out more to get an offer. I always recommend utilizing nanny agencies while job searching. Especially when you are new to the city, a good agency will advocate for you and help you find the right fit for you and your goals.

### **KYLA LOPEZ**

With a passion for children and childcare from a very young age, Kyla Lopez, owner and founder of The Nanny Consultant, LLC., started nannying at the age of seventeen, soon was becoming a nanny extraordinaire and taking on the position of household manager. In 2014, after years of providing care to many families in the Pacific Northwest and Southern California, she decided to open a nanny agency, The Nanny Consultant. Kyla is the founder of several nanny connections and parent-nanny groups. She attended the National Nanny Training Day in 2013 and 2016. In 2016, she attended Nannypalooza in Orlando and Nanny Jamboree in Vancouver, BC. In 2017, she attended a Newborn Care Specialist training and spoke at Nanny Jamboree. In 2019, she cohosted the 2019 Tacoma National Nanny Training Day and spoke as well. She spends her time raising her three children and homeschooling, spending at least one thousand hours outside each year. She has received the Golden Teddy Award and the People Love Us on Yelp Award and was a three-time runner-up for the Golden Teddy Award. She now resides in Washington with her daughter, her two sons, her two cats, Oliver and Tilly, and her pup, Charlie.



My first recommendation when it comes to choosing a nanny agency would be to do a bit of research, find the agencies on social media, get a feel for their website and online presence, and decide what you are looking for in a nanny agency. Read through the agency's blog, as this will give you a good idea of their ethics, morals, and standards. Once you narrow down the agencies you want to use, I would encourage you to apply with a stellar application and, when you interview with them, ask them questions about their process and involvement in the nanny community. After your interview, you will get a feel for the agency and whether you want to be represented by them. As for standing out, I would create a nanny portfolio that includes a cover letter, resume, written references, certificates, and even a menu of your favorite meals. You could go as far as creating a website to represent yourself as well. As for getting connected, you will want to find the local nanny Facebook groups and even use Instagram to find local nannies.

Best of luck on your new adventure!

## FINDING YOUR NICHE



**LAURA NEWALL**

# A WEDDING NANNY

Laura is from Devon, England. She has worked in childcare for over fifteen years and now works as a wedding and event nanny where she loves being able to work with so many families from across the globe.

### **Before You Leave for Work**

Before I leave for work, I make sure I'm ready for the day. I pack plenty of snacks and drinks because running around after little ones during a big event is hard work, but with planning, it's lots of fun. I am sure to dress appropriately and wear appropriate footwear in case I am accidentally included in a photograph. I also am sure that my car is ready for the journey, as I work up to two hours away.

### **While You Are Working**

When I arrive at the location, I meet the children and parents. This may be at a hotel, resort, or venue. I have sometimes met the family before briefly on Zoom. After our introductions, I have the parents complete my forms that include information needed to provide care, such as contact information on the day of the event and whether the children have any allergies, and I start my work.

Since I do many events and weddings, I am often helping children get ready, which often includes providing them with snacks, helping them to get dressed for the event, and keeping them entertained while waiting for photos.

I also sit with the children during the events, ensure they are fed, and keep them entertained through play or walking around the grounds. I will often also help get the children ready for bed and put them to sleep, prior to the parents returning.

My shifts can last a few hours, a whole day, or even several days, depending on the event.

### **What You Do After**

When the parents return, my work is done, and I say my goodbyes and head home, knowing everyone has had the best day ever and the children received outstanding care. I then prepare for my next assignment and continue advertising my services, working with local agencies and answering potential client queries.

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# A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CAREER CUSHIONING

By Donna Shannon

Have you heard of career cushioning yet? If not, get ready for the next career trend of 2023.

A carry-over term from the dating world, cushioning is the process of thinking about or actively testing the waters for a new relationship when the current one looks like it might be in danger of ending. In other words, it's getting the fishing rod ready to find more fish in the sea.

In the nanny world, career cushioning is taking steps to prepare for finding a new role, either because your employer's needs have changed or because you are ready for a new challenge. For example, the children are beginning full-time school, or one of the parents decides to stay home with the kids.

While many think that career cushioning is simply updating their résumé, it actually entails a strategic approach to planning the next phase of your career.

## Strategic Steps for Career Cushioning

While dusting off the old resume is an obvious move to prepare for a job search, career cushioning also entails becoming more marketable in a competitive employment market. Therefore, the best first step is determining the requirements for your top-choice job and making sure you have those qualifications.

### Plan Your Career

Where do you want to be in five years? No, this is not a lame interview question but a real tool to evaluate your career plans. Do you want to work for a more affluent family? Do you want to relocate to a different part of the country? Do you want to work with more infants or specialize in your service offerings? Now is the time to put a long-term career plan in the works.

### Add to Your Skill Set

Do you need to add to your skills based on those long-term goals? Then invest in some professional development courses to build up your talents and knowledge.

However, even if you want to continue on the same career path, you must invest in some education. For example, many families demand a certain level of tech-savviness these days. As a result, their nanny needs to be intimately familiar with everything from social media to digital picture library management. Fortunately, taking the time for a quick online course through sites like Coursera or Udemy.com can show your willingness to invest in your career.

### Research the Market

What do parents want these days? As younger generations become parents, their priorities shift.

Conduct some real market research to determine the growing sectors in your area. Associations like the INA can be a great resource for discovering the top traits that modern parents want in their nannies and newborn care specialists.

Don't forget to evaluate current salaries for nannies in your area. Unfortunately, far too many nannies are underpaid because they didn't research comparative salaries!

## Need Help Developing Your Career Cushioning Plan?

Our Down & Dirty Job Search program covers all these tactics and much, much more! Check out the details here: <https://www.personaltouchcareerservices.com/down-dirty-job-search>

Want to See How Your Job Search Stacks Up?  
Schedule a complimentary consultation through our website: <https://www.personaltouchcareerservices.com/contact>



**Donna Shannon**

Since 2005, **Donna Shannon** has helped people in private service land jobs they love, working closely with high-net-worth employers across the country and abroad. Her company, Personal Touch Career Services, is recognized as the gold standard for resumes by top agencies and recruiters across the US. In 2014, Donna received the Private Service Educator of the Year award from the Domestic Estate Management Association (DEMA.) Donna is the author of *Get a Job Without Going Crazy*, the host of the *Tattooed Freaks in Business Suits* podcast, and a presenter at national conferences in Denver, Dallas, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Diego, and Orlando. Personal Touch Career Services is one of Denver's top-rated resume and career coaching services on Google, with over ninety five-star reviews.

**Tactical Steps for Career Cushioning**

Now that we have a career plan, updated skills, and market research, it is time to put your job search into action.

**Update Your Resume and Cover Letter**

While you obviously need to add current roles to your materials, don't forget your actual job targets. Your resume should always be driven by the qualifications and keywords associated with your target job, which might be different from your current role. The art of resumes is not just knowing what to add but also what to take out. If employers have to wade through irrelevant information on your resume, they will move on to the next candidate instead.

**Reach Out to Your Network**

When was the last time you spoke to a former boss or colleague? Now is the perfect time to get in touch with your professional contacts. The trick? Don't lead with your needs or desires. Instead, ask them about their lives. After all, networking is a two-way street, and nobody wants to feel as though you are just buttering them up to ask for a job.

**Gather Recommendations**

One of the best ways to activate your network is to ask for a written letter of recommendation. Not only do recruiters favor candidates with at least three written recommendations, but it is also a great way to let your network know that you are getting ready to move.

**Streamline Your Online Job Boards**

Set up job alerts to feed you the latest job postings. Then, put time into perfecting your search terms to get the most relevant jobs without wasting your time on irrelevant jobs that don't fit your career goals.

**Long-Term Career Cushioning Plans**

If you are serious about entering a new career, you must play the long game. Sure, the "right-now job" is an awesome goal, but if you want a career, consider some of these moves.

**Get Involved in a Professional Association**

I love associations. With these, you get a plethora of benefits, including networking with others in your industry, ongoing professional development, and even certifications. In addition, many associations are holding in-person conferences again, offering a rare chance to really connect with people face-to-face.

**Certifications, Degrees, and Higher Education**

Did your early research show that your target job requires a specific degree? Now is the time to look at options for long-term investment into a new degree to take your career to the next level.

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

Nanny Magazine will cover:

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

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

Deadlines are as follows for the digital publication:

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

Website and print submissions are accepted on an ongoing basis.

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



# EMOTION COACHING

WITH DR JANET ROSE



## What is emotion coaching?

Emotion coaching is a way of telling a child that they are supported, cared about, understood, and respected while also communicating that not all behaviors are acceptable and that they need to moderate how to express their feelings and desires. Through repetitive, consistent, and empathetic emotion coaching, the ability of a child to regulate their emotions and behavior is promoted.

Emotion coaching uses moments of heightened emotion and resulting behavior to guide and teach the child and young person about more effective responses. Through empathetic engagement, the child's emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of "felt" security and feeling understood. This approach seems to work effectively to help calm a child more easily and enables a caregiver to work with the child to help understand more effective ways to behave.

It's important to note that inappropriate behaviors are not condoned in emotion coaching, and when the child is calmer, incidents are discussed in a more rational and productive manner. Moves are made to problem solve and engage in solution-focused strategies.

It can be adapted to the age and developmental level of the child. Emotion coaching considers all behavior as a form of communication and makes an important distinction between children's behavior and the feelings that underlie that behavior.

## Where did the concept of emotion coaching come from?

Emotion coaching is based on research by American psychologist John Gottman, who claimed that emotion coaching involved five steps—but the steps are not necessarily linear or set in stone. It's actually a communication process that adapts itself to the child and the context. Research in England has identified four key parts to using emotion coaching:

- Recognizing the child's feelings and empathizing with them ("You seem to be upset. I understand how you're feeling. I can help you calm down.")
- Validating the feelings and labeling them ("I think you're cross because you don't want to leave the park. It's normal to feel annoyed when you have to stop doing something you enjoy.")
- Setting limits on behavior, if needed ("It's not okay to kick things when you're feeling cross.")
- Problem-solving with the child ("Next time you feel like this, you can tell me or use your calming breaths to help you. I'll also make sure I tell you how much time you have left so you can have a last turn on your favorite slide.")

## What is the goal of emotion coaching?

The goal of emotion coaching is to help children understand and reframe their difficult emotions, which helps to build their resilience and regulate their behavior more effectively. It is a powerful evidence-based technique that aims to help children to improve their emotional intelligence.

Emotion coaching is the key to raising happy, resilient, and well-adjusted children. Thirty years of research shows that it is not enough to just be a warm, engaged, and loving parent. We also need to emotion coach our children, particularly about difficult feelings, use moments of distress to co-regulate a child through their feelings in order to help them to calm themselves, and then support them to understand and manage these feelings. It's not just about helping them to be more aware and learn to recognize their emotions but also about labeling them, promoting emotional literacy. A child's ability to "name" their emotions enables children to help make sense of their experiences using language as a "tool of the mind," and emotion coaching helps them on this journey. Research suggests that when it comes to emotions, caregivers tend to be dismissive of children's emotions, either ignoring their feelings, making light of their feelings, distracting them away from their feelings, or even responding to a child's emotional displays in a disapproving or punitive way. It's important to understand that in recognizing a child's feelings, even during instances of poor behaviors, we are helping a child to manage their feelings and thus their behavior. A key element of emotion coaching involves empathizing with how children are feeling, but it is equally about guidance: being clear about the boundaries of acceptable behavior and working out ways to help a child manage their feelings and behavior more constructively.

Therefore, all feelings are okay, but not all behavior.

### **Why is self-regulation and understanding emotions so important even for children?**

Its usage is supported by growing evidence from neuroscientific and psychological research about how we regulate our stress and how we come to terms with the fact that we can't always get what we want! Emotion coaching is a key strategy for developing skills to self-regulate ourselves, and the foundation for these skills are laid down in the early years and the caregiving environment we provide. The skills include being able to manage feelings, focus our attention, delay gratification, and problem solve. These self-regulation skills, which largely involve being able to manage our feelings, feed into every aspect of our lives, from learning appropriate behaviors to our eating, exercising, and sleeping habits. They are vital skills for coping with particularly stressful or overwhelming times and lie at the heart of developing resilience—our ability to cope with life and manage stressful events.

It's also important to remember that experiencing empathy is an important part of children's development. Think about this in the same way we think about how children learn language. Children aren't born with language as such; they learn to speak by having adults talk to them. The same applies to empathy. Children aren't necessarily born empathic, so they need to experience it in order to learn about it. This helps them to take on the perspectives of others and develop an understanding of how we should behave with others. The significance of having empathy modeled for us by our caregivers cannot be underestimated in helping young children to become empathic people.

### **Is emotion coaching an evidence-based practice?**

Emotion coaching has a strong evidence base from around the world, and the research has shown how it can play a key role in supporting children's social and emotional development. It can have a positive impact on their friendships (because they're more popular, probably due to being more emotionally stable) and their academic achievement (because they have fewer behavioral problems, probably because they are less distracted and able to focus more at school).

There's also evidence it has a positive impact on their physical health (because they have fewer infectious illnesses, probably due to being able to regulate their stress more easily) and their resilience (because they are better able to control their impulses helping them to overcome adversity and resist temptation).

Our ability to regulate ourselves in stressful situations lies at the heart of mental health and well-being, so emotion coaching has a longer-term impact on our ability to enjoy life.

### **What are some practical ways nannies can use emotion coaching in daily practice?**

Emotion coaching can be used by nannies in all sorts of situations throughout the day. It tends to be most effective when used before young children escalate to a full-blown tantrum. A key message is to ensure that you tune into how they are feeling, enable them to calm with soothing and empathic responses, and then when they're in a calmer state, talk with them in an age-appropriate way about how they need to behave and consider what they might do instead.

When your child gets upset, try the following:

- Take them to a calm space in the house. Acknowledge how they might be feeling and empathize: "Ahh, I think you must be feeling tired and upset that you can't have x. I'd feel a bit upset too, but remember it's not safe to throw toys. We use safe hands."
- Validate their frustration or grumpiness. "It's normal to be grumpy when we can't have something we really want and we're feeling tired."
- Be explicit about how you're helping them and why. "I know that you want to keep playing with your toys, but it's time for bed now, and sleep is really important. It will make you feel much happier tomorrow. Next time you feel like this, we can go to the calming corner to help you feel better. In the morning, we'll play with your toys together. You can choose your favorite cuddly toy and story now, and we can cuddle up and read the story together before bed."

Once the child is calmer you can teach them rules about behavior and strategies for coping the next time they are overwhelmed, feel tired, or lose control.

### **Over the years we have seen a shift to really focus on emotional intelligence. Why do you think that's so?**

Research is increasingly showing the importance of emotional intelligence to support our mental health. The early years is an important period for building the foundations for emotional intelligence, so it's particularly important to use emotion coaching to help young children develop the neural networks that enable them to manage their own and others' emotions. The cornerstone of emotion coaching is that all emotions are acceptable, but not all behaviors. It is important to normalize feelings and emotions but guide children to regulate them. It is essential to help children understand their different emotions and how they experience them, why they occur, and how to handle them, leading to happier, more resilient, and well-adjusted children.

### **Is Norland introducing emotion coaching into the curriculum?**

Norland students are all taught about the key strategies of emotion coaching. It forms an integral part of our degree and diploma program, and we visit it through lectures, masterclasses, and reflection on its application during placements, deepening their understanding and improving its use with children during the three-year course.



It's not the only strategy we teach, as parents and carers need a whole toolkit of different ways of supporting children's emotional development and behavior. For example, books can be an excellent way of helping children understand their feelings and develop their emotional literacy. There's nothing wrong with using distraction as a means to moderate behavior if the child is not too distressed. And sometimes, a frown and a disapproving word is enough to prevent a child from transgressing. But emotion coaching is still one of your most important tools!

### **Is emotion coaching for all nannies or only those who embrace a certain caregiving style?**

As an evidence-based communication strategy, emotion coaching can be followed by anyone caring for children—whether they are a nanny, a parent, or another caregiver. It has also been shown to be highly successful in educational settings. For some caregivers, it may be a learning curve to adapt their style of interactions and the ways in which they respond to children in distress or who are misbehaving. But emotion coaching is not something that was invented; it was observed as a naturally occurring interaction by parents who John Gottman labeled "emotion coaches." These parents, who followed the principles of emotion coaching outlined in this blog, ultimately had children who were more popular, more resilient, healthier, and more academically successful. Research has also shown that caregivers can change their style of interaction from a more disapproving or dismissive style to become an emotion coach.

Emotion coaching can be particularly useful for supporting children through overwhelming and stressful times, such as bereavement, separation, divorce, or the arrival of another sibling. It can also be used with children who have additional needs. It can be used alongside other techniques. For example, you might still employ a consequence for a child while emotion coaching them through their distress: "I understand you're upset we're leaving the park, but you didn't use safe hands in the sandpit, and so now we have to leave." It's also important to remember that not all behavior requires an emotion coaching response, but it is an important tool for anyone caring for children.

Emotion coaching is an in-the-moment strategy and is essentially a way of communicating with children during emotional moments. It involves noticing, acknowledging, validating, and empathizing with how a child might be feeling. It also involves setting limits on poor behavior and working with the child to identify more helpful behavior and ways to regulate their emotions.

### **Where can nannies learn more?**

Emotion Coaching UK has been set up to promote emotion coaching as a way of supporting and sustaining children and young people's emotional and behavioral well-being. Emotion Coaching UK is a not-for-profit organization and provides many free resources as well as training for those interested in developing their emotion coaching skills.

The Norland website also has many useful blogs containing practical advice on how to use emotion coaching with young children, including how to support children's mental health, how to talk to children about war and conflict, and Norland online training courses.

For further information, please see the Emotion Coaching UK website, <https://www.emotioncoachinguk.com/>.

For information on the Norland training program, including the BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care and the Norland diploma, please see the Norland website, <https://www.norland.ac.uk>.

### **Dr Janet Rose**

Dr Janet Rose, Principal of Norland, has had a distinguished career in higher education and early years education, training and provision both nationally and internationally. Before joining Norland, she was a Reader in Education and an Associate Professor. She has an established track record of senior leadership in higher education, leading large degree programmes in early years education and early childhood, as well as MA and doctoral degrees, alongside early years teacher training. She is the recipient of two 'Outstanding Teaching' student awards and has a national profile as an early years expert. She is frequently invited to be a keynote speaker at national conferences, including the National Day Nurseries Association Conference and the conference of the International Nanny Association, and she has presented research at both the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Janet is the author of numerous academic publications, including three key texts that she co-authored: *The Role of the Adult in Early Years Settings*, *Health and Well-being in Early Childhood and Emotion Coaching with Children and Young People in Schools*. She is also a Board Member of Independent HE, on the Education Committee of the Royal Academy of Dance, a Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, a Trustee of First Steps Bath and a co-founder of Emotion Coaching UK. In addition, Janet currently has a Fellowship with the Early Relational Health programme at the University of Massachusetts in America.

### **About Norland**

Norland was founded in Norland Place, London, in 1892 by Emily Ward and has been at the forefront of childcare training ever since. The education at Norland has always been progressive. Today's students study for a BA (Hons) in Early Childhood Education and Care alongside the prestigious Norland Diploma, a unique qualification which teaches the practical skills it takes to become a Norland Nanny.

Norland graduates are famous for their best in class standard of training and their iconic uniforms. Norland-trained early years professionals are employed worldwide through the Norland Agency as Norland Nannies and Maternity Nurses. Norland graduates command the highest salaries in the industry, clinch the most sought-after posts and enjoy a busy life often working for high profile clients.

With a degree behind them, many Norland Nannies also progress into other professions that involve working with children, including teaching and consultancy. Norland Nannies are also provided with their own recruitment agency, Norland Agency, to ensure that graduates have outstanding employment opportunities upon leaving Norland, and throughout their careers.

For further information about Norland visit <https://www.norland.ac.uk>.



# THE FOUNDATIONS OF READING BEGIN AT BIRTH

MARGARET WATKINSON

What I love best about the nannying and early childhood “life” is the variety and the consistency that each job and each family brings to my work with the under-five set. While each job and family is unique, one constant remains. Children amaze and delight in their capacity to love learning.



As nannies, our job is to find ways to foster that love of learning by engaging children and teaching them new skills. We make discoveries about each child's capacity to acquire new approaches to conquering challenges while respecting the family dynamics, learning styles, temperaments, and each child's uniqueness within their developmental stage. This is such an honor that, at times, can be a personal and professional challenge.

Learning to read is a skill that most families agree is a top priority and outcome of kindergarten and first grade. Families with nannies expect support to help their children to reach this milestone, so it's important for nannies to understand how to foster early literacy development.

The science shows reading begins at birth with the acquisition of language, commonly referred to as the early language and literacy stage or "emergent literacy." All humans are programmed to acquire language, whether spoken or signed. All babies are born with the capacity to acquire the sounds, or phonemes, of their mother tongue, and over time, their brains lose the ability to both hear and make the sounds of languages that their mother tongue doesn't utilize. For example, my last name is Watkinson, and if you ask a speaker of a language to say my name, and their language does not have the w sound, the word may come out Latkinson. Despite being corrected, the speaker does not hear the w and continues to produce an l sound for w. The reason this happens is that over time, the language center eliminates the ability to hear sounds that are not used. Of course, there are special techniques, often used by actors, to teach people to speak nonnative languages without an accent, but these have varying success.

Children have the capacity to learn multiple languages, accent free, because of their brain plasticity, and they continue to have this ability until around early adolescence. While it gets tougher as children grow, once the ability to hear and create the phonemes of a language is cemented, it will continue to be available. This ability is important to the decoding aspect of learning how to read. Once alphabet letters are introduced and learned, children will begin to map the sounds of their language, which is connecting the phonemes to the letters that represent those sounds.

But there are several aspects of English that makes becoming literate an arduous and lengthy process. The first is that English has forty-four sounds but only uses twenty-six letters to represent them. The good news is that there is a lot we can do to facilitate language learning even from birth.

### **Literacy and Language**

The National Council of Teachers offers this way of viewing literacy: through an expressive lens and through a receptive lens. Speaking, visually representing, and writing are expressive components of literacy, while listening, viewing, and reading are receptive components of literacy.

Receptive language abilities typically develop first and are more advanced than expressive abilities. For example, crying in frustration at not being understood is typical until expressive and receptive speech language abilities are more developed.

Oral or spoken language represents what is in the mind, and letters form words that represent our ideas, experiences, and imagination and connect humans across time, space, and experiences. All humans communicate, but not all become or need to become literate.

Emergent literacy can be thought of in terms of comprehension, which is the ability to understand the meaning of spoken language. The sounds, words, and sentences that babies and young children use to create meaning are the components of emergent literacy.

While language learning is a biological function (the brain is wired for language), adults have the capacity to affect young children's comprehension.

### **How You Can Foster Comprehension**

**From birth:** With newborns, adults instinctively gaze into a baby's eyes whenever they are awake or being held. Singing, using sing-song voices, and interacting with the baby builds social and emotional connection and the recognition that important adult voices are nearby.

**Four to six months:** Babbling starts with p, b, and m, and the baby responds to words, music, and toys that make sounds. When this happens, babies discover their ability to impact the response of their grownup. Repeating and promoting sound production, singing, speaking about what you are doing, responding while also respecting the baby's temperament, and letting there be quieter times (because the baby can't filter out or turn down the sensory input) all support budding comprehension.

**Seven months to a year:** Babies start to recognize words, babble more, seek attention through vocalization, imitate speech sounds, and say maybe one or two words. Talking, slowing down and repeating vocalizations, reading aloud, introducing finger plays, using gestures and signs, and responding to the baby's efforts to communicate foster early literacy.

**One to two years:** During this stage receptive abilities bloom as the baby can point to coveted objects, respond to requests to give, and understand simple questions such as "Where is (familiar person, object or pet)?" Babies begin to use tone to communicate, and their vocabulary develops. Single words commonly represent more complex concepts. For example, "shoes" can really mean "let's get ready to go outside," which eventually develops into making two- or maybe three-word sentences by age two. Babies can begin to sing! Continue to promote what words mean by following up with physical actions or props. Draw the baby's attention to the action while describing and narrating what is going on. Say "I am folding your pants. This is folding." while folding clothes and continue to use the word "folding" as long as the baby attends to the action. The more exposure to new words, along with the concept of action, the better the ability of the baby to build meaning, which is what is required for reading comprehension down the road. Young children are concrete learners and require concrete experiences to cement comprehension of language and their experiences.

**Three to four years:** Expressive vocabulary increases to about 1,500 words during this period, and children start to use past tense. Don't

worry if “writed” is used instead of “written” or “wrote.” This is another huge challenge of learning the English language, and children straighten this out down the road. The “mistakes” they make are conventional in other languages, which is a nod to the universal grammar of language. This age group is beginning to form questions to find out information and starts to add in adjectives (big, fat, blue, tired), adverbs (yesterday, never, today), pronouns (he, she, we, us) and prepositions (up, down, over) with sometimes hilarious results! Recognizing that incorporating these new language skills requires practice and modeling is important when working with this age group. Choosing and adding more complex read-aloud books into the routine is essential, as is discussing what the text is saying and correlating that to what is happening in the story. Asking questions is a skill that often starts out appearing very bossy. The four-year-old can make many demands; however, they need help forming questions. For example, telling a sibling “You play this with me now!” or “Give it to me?” can easily start a battle, but guidance and modeling how to ask a question (e.g., “Do you want to play?”, “Can you play this with me now?”, “Can I have the ball now?”, or “Is it my turn?”) help children learn the complex concept of expressing their needs. Three- and four-year-olds are terrific at using words they have heard modeled or read, appearing as though they truly know their meaning in a variety of contexts. One habit we can cultivate is the gift of isolating a word, finding out what the child knows about it, and then expanding on their experience with that word with examples. If words such as “scared” and “share” are used by the child, for example, and we respond to their assertions (for example, using the word “share” to mean “give”) without expanding on the nuances (“share” could mean “I have a turn, then you have a turn,” or it can mean “I will give you some of what I have”), we lose an opportunity to expand their understanding of their world.

Developing the skills of phonemic awareness is also essential for the complex task of reading and decoding success. The ability to decode is premised on simultaneously seeing a letter, mapping the sound that letter represents to the letter, and making meaning out of that sound/phoneme and combined sound/phonemes.

Developing phonemic awareness skills begins long before and without letter or alphabet knowledge. This is not the same as phonics. We can promote this skill from the earliest of ages by playing games with sounds that teach and encourage isolating and manipulating the sounds of language. Saying “pisgetti” or “bajetti” are examples of how young children confuse the sounds of “spaghetti.” Intentionally promoting sound substitutions that create silly words out of isolated sounds can help children develop phonemic awareness. You might choose the sound p and say some p words—puppy, puddle, popcorn—to teach the child to both hear and reproduce the initial sound of p. Once that is solid, you might say familiar words like “mommy” and then ask, “What if we put the p sound in there?” “Pommy!” Playing this game over time develops the essential skill that one day, will enable orthographic mapping of words so that the child’s brain



### **Margaret Watkinson**

Margaret has been an “evolving” early childhood professional since 1987 and has never looked back! Always an entrepreneur, her work started as a licensed home childcare provider in upstate New York, and over the years, after moving to Maine, she expanded her education and reach. She has worked as the director of a program for children with special needs, a developmental therapist, an early language and literacy specialist, an ECE trainer, and an owner and teacher of an inclusive, developmentally appropriate program. Margaret has been a nanny and household manager for the past ten years since discovering the nanny profession after moving back to the Hudson Valley in New York.

While working with children, Margaret has always been an advocate of continuing education and earned her BS in Linguistics, her MS in Special Education, and an advanced certificate in Early Language and Literacy. Currently, she is working on continuing training and education in the infant world through doula, newborn care, and sleep coaching programs.

will instantly differentiate between words that look similar, like “thin” and “then” or “tried” and “tired.”

Nannies have an important role in building the foundations of early literacy. Fostering a child’s natural acquisition of language with intentional language activities, having conversations that promote playing with the sounds and meaning of language, and regularly reading aloud are strategies all nannies can use in their daily work with young children to contribute to the children’s ability to successfully interact with the world.





## FEATURE

Mirjana Engeli Campos is a family childcare provider who believes she can make a difference in the world one child at a time.

She earned her Bachelor of Science in Family Life and Child Development degree from the premier state university in her country. She graduated with Latin honors and is a member of international honor societies Pi Gamma Mu and Phi Kappa Phi. She has cared for children around the South Pacific, predominantly in Australia, and in the Philippines.

When not caring for and playing with children and her dogs, she spends her time breathing in the beauty of and spending time in nature—observing plants and wildlife, nature journaling, watercolor painting, reading, perfecting her cooking, and traveling to know other cultures.

She is already excited for her next adventure: Canada!

# IMMIGRATING TO NORTH AMERICA AS A NANNY

## ***I have always wanted to care for someone.***

Being the youngest in a brood of three, I didn't experience taking care of a younger sibling or a younger cousin nearby. At an early age, I remember wanting to care for a real baby or a toddler, but our family did not have any. So when I was allowed to take a dog in, I was ecstatic! I started taking care of one dog, and as I proved myself worthy of trust to my parents, I was allowed to have a few, having around five or six of them when I graduated high school. I knew I was good at taking care of dogs but was not sure whether I could take care of children.

I went to get a Bachelor of Science in Family Life and Child Development in college to understand children better and to learn to work with families. Equipped with a diploma, I immediately plunged into the early childhood industry, working as an aide in the early learning center of a prestigious international school in the country. I enjoyed this job and learned a great deal. At the end of that school year, I felt ready to open my own child development center, and I did! Because I also wanted to give back to the community where I spent most of my childhood, I opened the center in my hometown. I fell in love with it—the children, their families, the community I have built around the child development center. I lived my dream. At the end of the fifth year of operation, I had a toddler class and two prekindergarten classes. It was a wild ride! Last year, I opened a childcare business again but, this time, in the confines of my home.

I now consider myself a family childcare provider who offers childcare and education services for young children around the community in my home. The National Association of Family Child Care defines family childcare as the business of childcare and the practice of early care and education in the program provider's home.

The existence of family childcare homes is not as prevalent or popular here in the Philippines as it is in North America. The usual programs for children in the country are the government's day care centers in

every barangay nationwide and the private sector's preschool or child development programs in conspicuous areas in town and city centers and business districts. Hence, there is not a national organization solely focused on strengthening the profession of family childcare or home-based early learning providers.

This is the reason I would like to expand not only my professional experience in childcare but also my background knowledge by going to and caring for children in a country where organizations supporting home-based childcare professionals are operational and evident. As I realized this, I went to find childcare employment in countries where I think I could grow more as a professional in the field.

My journey to immigrating as a nanny to North America started when I applied on a jobsite specifically catering to home childcare providers and employers in Canada. I was chosen by the first employer who interviewed me, and I immediately secured a job that could send me to North America. But when delays in visa processing due to the lag the pandemic caused became apparent to my employers who needed immediate childcare, they understandably backed out. The length of waiting time for the processing of visas and work permits is a notable challenge postpandemic. Even so, I did not lose hope and continued applying for jobs, this time taking into consideration the current time frame for visa processing. Fortunately, I secured another job from the next employer who interviewed me. Despite the impossibly long processing times, I am very grateful that the family is willing to wait.

I immediately prepared the document requirements for a work permit and visa. I have also asked a registered immigration consultant for help with other paperwork and with submitting the documents to the proper office. As of writing, my work permit and visa application have already been lodged, and I am now waiting for any update from the specific government agency.

I am hoping to start working in Canada this year once the work permit and visa

are approved. I will be caring for a toddler, and I am very excited for it! And though I know there would be a steep learning curve when it comes to childcare standards in North America, I am confident that my years of experience in childcare, my aptitude and flexibility to learn and cope, and my knowledge acquired from the nanny certificate course from NannyTraining.com would back me up to still provide quality childcare service while adjusting.

The Nanny Certificate Course specifically supplied details on existing standards for childcare in North America, which included resources for further reading. Since standards vary from country to country or from state or province, it is highly important to be knowledgeable on the specific standards of the area where one will be working. To illustrate, there are recommendations and safety standards around home heating in North America, whereas no such requirements exist in the Philippines because it is a tropical country. I have never considered heating temperatures and safety standards around heating while caring for children in the Philippines, but because I look forward to working in Canada, I need to familiarize myself on those particulars.

There would surely be a good deal of adjustment as I transfer and live in another country. Instead of being scared or nervous about it, I psych myself up and read as much as I can about what I may face to be prepared. I am more than excited for the new adventure. Besides, this is not the first international job and environment that I have confronted.

I am already looking forward to working in a country where support for childcare providers in the context of the home is real. Once I complete a required number of months of work in the field, I will be allowed to apply for a permanent residency, which will allow me to stay and become an immigrant in the country. I may opt to stay in Canada long term.

I am delighted that I will soon have the opportunity to care for someone outside of my comfort zone.





# 10 TIPS FOR BUILDING A BABYSITTING SIDE GIG

BY GENNA HACKLEY

Genna Hackley is the founder and owner of the Northern Colorado childcare agency, Babysitters of Boulder. She began nannying while completing her degree at the University of New Mexico and discovered that providing childcare brought her happiness and fulfillment. She continued working as a nanny and babysitter after graduating college and embarking on a career in healthcare. Genna has cared for children of all ages, from newborns to teens; she has also cared for twins, children with unique needs, and children with developmental delays and disabilities. In 2018, Genna founded Babysitters of Boulder after being frequently approached by parents asking where they could find someone like her to care for their children. When she is not working, Genna can be found outside in nature, with her husband doing home remodeling projects, or spending time with her nephew and niece, who are the joy of her life.



Thinking about venturing into the business side of the nanny world or looking for a way to increase your experience across age groups? Follow these ten tips to start your own babysitting side gig.

**1. Register yourself as a Limited Liability Corporation (LLC) business entity with your state.** You can register under your own name, so there's no pressure to find the perfect business name if you don't want to. This one simple action will do wonders to advance your credibility and may afford you protections that you would not have as a private individual. In the US, this is usually done through the Secretary of State's website and typically costs less than fifty dollars. You will need to renew your registration annually for a minimal fee.

**2. Create collateral.** You'll want to have business cards available to hand out to advertise your services. You can design professional quality business cards online and purchase one hundred or more cards for a minimal investment. Some sites will offer over one hundred business cards for just fifty dollars. You can hand out the cards, pin them to boards at toddler gyms and coffee shops where parents work on laptops, and share with people who ask where they can find a provider like you. Be sure to include your name, contact information, any certifications, and a link to your website or social media profile. If you find that you are being contacted quite a bit, you may wish to launch a simple website or have a separate email or phone line to filter out work related communications.

**3. Do your research.** Before setting your own rates, research the hourly babysitting rates in your area. Look to local Facebook groups where parents and nannies connect to get a sense of what wage parents are paying and what providers are seeking. Search engines and job board websites are typically not a reliable way to determine real time wages in your location as they are too general. You may already have some sense of what a reasonable hourly rate would be for your experience level and skill set. Consider that rate and bump it up a couple of dollars per hour. Don't apologize for your hourly rate by setting it too low or being quick to offer discounts. You must believe you are worth your going rate if you want others to believe that. A higher rate may mean fewer clients at first; however, if you have the skill and the reliability to back up your rate, your client base will grow.

**4. Write out your rates and policies.** Create a script, image, document, or PDF of your rates and policies that you can easily share with customers by text or email. This should include your rates, minimum booking times, instructions for reserving care, cancellation fees, sick care policies, and any other information you want parents to know prior to booking your services.

**5. Be reliable and dependable as heck.** This alone will make you stand out. Being on time means that you commit to being at that parent's door at the booking's exact start time and not a minute after. Do not do short-notice cancellations, ghost clients, give excuses, or cancel for snowy roads if there is another safe way to commute. If you learn that bad weather is coming, help the client by proactively reaching out to address a contingency plan, like rescheduling or altering the start or end time.

**6. Know your client.** Some clients have obligations that they just can't miss. Think of surgeons, nurses, and firefighters. With much of the workforce working remotely, bad weather may not impact their obligations. If you live in an area that offers it, familiarize yourself with public transportation options to ensure you can be there when parents need you most.

**7. Establish your cancellation policy.** Having a cancellation policy is a common practice that helps keep a business going and will reduce frustration toward customers who do not follow through. While you may wish to offer some flexibility with rescheduling or fees for emergencies, illness, or cancellations with advance notice, same day cancellations do not allow you time to rebook clients and can create an income loss.

**8. Set up a bookkeeping system.** You'll need a system in place to record your wages and expenses and to keep track of your receipts and mileage. You can use a spreadsheet or a bookkeeping program to do so. It is essential that you understand the tax responsibilities of your work and, if required, file quarterly estimated taxes as a self-employed person. You will want to be sure to organize your record keeping system before you become so busy that it overwhelms you.

**9. Make a practice of taking payment before you leave your booking.** I often hear sitters say that they feel awkward



Genna Hackley

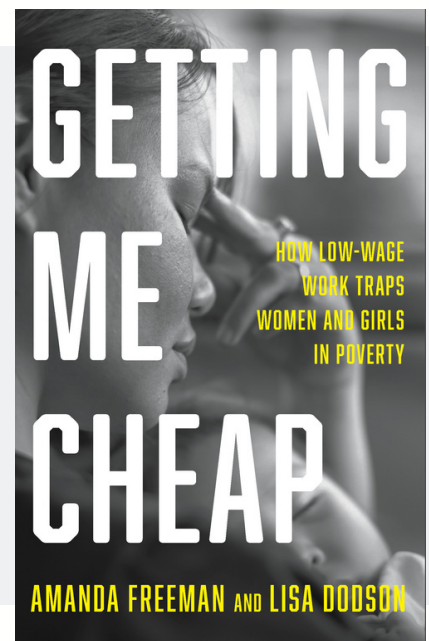
asking for payment, so they leave the appointment without receiving their pay. They then text the parents their Venmo handle, resent the parents for forgetting or not paying, and stew for a couple of days before finally messaging the parent to say something timid such as, "Hi there! So sorry to bother you but I just had not received your payment yet for Friday. Could you send that to me whenever you get a chance? Thanks so much!!" The fact that babysitters are paid for caring for children isn't a dirty secret. Even if you feel awkward asking for payment, and being direct about it, do it anyway. Have your invoice ready for the parent and require payment before you leave their home. If you do this every single time, asking for payment will become part of your process.

**10. Resist the urge to avoid hard conversations.** While all children will test boundaries, if you find a child's behavior is unacceptable, intolerably rude, or unsafe, schedule a time to speak with the parents. Do not ghost the customer as a means of ending the relationship and resist the urge to use the "Sorry, I am too busy!" excuse to fade out of the family's life. Ghosting is an incredibly unprofessional way to end a customer interaction. The only time to consider cutting off contact with a client is when a parent behaves abusively or violently, is harassing, or is making threats. A parent who is late, is impolite, is unreasonable or oblivious, or has misbehaving children does not qualify for ghosting. Once you have spoken with a parent about an issue, if it continues, let the client know you can no longer offer services. There is no reason to keep suffering through bookings that you dread attending, as this will lead to burnout.

As you build your side gig, you may find it turns into something more. Before you grow, you'll want to know the laws, liability, regulations, and tax compliance issues that impact you. These can vary from state to state, so be sure to gather information for your area so that you can plan for success.



# AN INTERVIEW WITH AUTHORS AMANDA FREEMAN AND LISA DODSON



## 1. What made you interested in nannies and domestic workers?

Our work looks at mothers who are working but earning very low wages, and childcare and domestic workers tend to fall into those groups even though they are often doing the care work we value the most. Work in people's homes tends to be like the Wild West with little to no regulation. According to the Economic Policy Institute, around 95% of childcare workers are women, and the median wage is around \$10/hour. One in seven childcare workers is living in poverty, and 85% report receiving no health insurance from their job.

## 2. What separates low-wage domestic workers from high-earning nannies?

High-earning nannies often offer live-in services and work for wealthy families, and although their wages are higher, they are often still living at the whim of the employing family. They may lose jobs when families move or kids grow up; they are often paid under the table, unable to see their own children and may be mistreated by the employing family.

## 3. What are the barriers to these workers earning a living wage?

The mothers we spoke with were working so hard yet not making a living wage to support their families, so they often took on more than one job at all hours of the day and night. Many of the moms were trying to go back to school to be able to get a better job, but that is also very difficult while parenting. For mothers, who are often single parents, work that is not flexible makes it very difficult to care for their kids.

## 4. Do organizations like Domestic Workers United or the International Nanny Association help pave a path out of poverty for women caught in the cycle of poverty?

Connecting to organizations like this is a good idea because it puts these women in touch with resources, experts, and policy advocates who are researching and working to advocate for their interests.

## 5. What part of your research about domestic workers surprised you the most?

The profound way in which they are taken for granted even by employing families who are trying to treat them right.

## 6. What do you think the industry does well to support women you profile? What can be done better?

Several women we spoke with could not take any jobs even when offered because they couldn't afford or attain childcare during work hours. Childcare, and specifically opening their own in-home centers, was one of the few ways that women could earn money while watching their own kids.

## 7. How much does a lack of affordable childcare contribute to the cycle of poverty?

Lack of safe, affordable childcare was one of the biggest barriers to women working and moving out of poverty that we found. Often subsidized childcare has a waitlist that is years long. We spoke with women who said they couldn't get a job until they could prove they had reliable childcare, and they couldn't even qualify for subsidized care until they could prove they already had a job.

## 8. Is working in domestic work a low-wage work trap?

It can be because of the low wages and precarious nature of work inside private homes.

## 9. What is your best advice to those within the industry who want to help break the low-wage work trap?

Look for opportunities to move up and out in the long term like going back to school or learning a trade. If you have a supportive employer, consider making a contract together and joining an organization like Hand in Hand, which works with employing families and workers to advocate for change. <https://domesticemployers.org/>

## 10. What is your background?

Amanda Freeman is an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Hartford and a writer and researcher of motherhood and work. She lives in Westport, Connecticut, and *Getting Me Cheap* (The New Press) is her first book.

Lisa Dodson is Research Professor Emerita at Boston College. She is the author of *The Moral Underground: How Ordinary Americans Subvert an Unfair Economy* and coauthor (with Amanda Freeman) of *Getting Me Cheap: How Low Wage Work Traps Women and Girls in Poverty* (both from The New Press) and *Don't Call Us Out of Name*. She lives in Portland, Oregon.

# ACCOUNTABILITY IS NOT A FOUR LETTER WORD

BY JOY COLINO



Accountability is a multi-faceted condition that boils down to being trustworthy. Depending on your situation, it may be most meaningful and relevant to be accountable to yourself, to others, or in most cases, both. It's also something that takes practice, and you'll never be perfect at it, so just let that go right now. A considerable outcome of being accountable to yourself and others is that it has a positive effect on the people in your world. When you model being responsible and accountable in your everyday life, kids, team members, clients, and friends pick up on your confidence and trustworthiness. They'll feel safe with you and know that you will follow through and be there when they need you. If you are going to start being accountable for the first time in your life, reading this article is a great first step. If you have reason to become accountable in more areas of your life, let's do this!

## **Accountability to Yourself Can Make You Feel Like a Rock Star!**

Remember that time you promised yourself you would spend the whole day on Saturday cleaning every nook and cranny in your house, including the garage, mowing the lawn, dropping off donations (because you were determined to declutter everything in your life that day), and then go grocery shopping on the way home to cook healthy, low-fat, low-carb, low-everything in batches for the coming week's meals, but you watched all four seasons of *Stranger Things* and ordered pizza and felt like a lazy good-for-nothing instead? We have all been there! What if you had promised yourself that you would clean in twenty-minute spurts over the entire weekend? To declutter one drawer? To order groceries to be delivered and make one especially delicious and healthy dinner? To set a date to tackle the garage when someone could lend a hand? All doable, right? Smaller, realistic goals help you to build the muscle of accountability to yourself, nurturing your self-esteem (because, hey, you did it!), and in turn, building stamina and momentum for larger goals down the line.

## **If Not for Yourself, Do it for Grandma!**

Not feeling this whole being accountable to yourself vibe? Despite your best efforts, do Netflix and your super comfy couch continue to prevail? You're sure you'll flop, so why try? For some of us, we need to step outside of ourselves in order to build the accountability muscle. Find yourself a grandma, someone who will begin to count on you once you offer your help. Grandma has never counted on you before, so why should she start now? Well, offer to help in a small way. "Hey Grandma, how about I take you to the mall on Saturday from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. (setting a specific day and time is super important and gets you to do the thing!) so you can check out that new comfort shoe store you were talking about?" Once you show up (and you will, 'cause it's grandma), she'll be so tickled and grateful that you'll feel tickled and grateful that she's so lit up, and you will want to set more days and times to be there for grandma. If grandma is not your go-to, find your soon to be grateful person and get to it!

## **Accountability is Not the Same Thing as Perfection**

I am writing this article just ahead of the deadline. Would I have felt better getting it done with more breathing room? Did I have over a month to write this? Yep and yep! But guess what? I do not have to be perfect, and you do not have to be perfect. No one is! And do you know why I am writing this article just ahead of the deadline? Because there *is* a deadline, and just like with grandma, I set a day and time to get 'er done. If you had sent out invitations for a dinner party for that same Saturday when you zombied out on the couch, you would have cleaned your house. I guarantee it. Would you have mowed the lawn and alphabetized the shelves in your garage? Probably not. But you would have made the place presentable and had a great time with your friends and family. "Done, not perfect." I hope you embrace it because getting hung up on perfection is paralyzing and exhausting. You can be happy and energized while still being a person who has follow-through.

## **Let's Get Down to Business**

Being accountable in your career is super important. It's one of the many things that makes one a great nanny, agency owner, or staff member. Accountability = reliability = trustworthiness = great references and referrals = an awesome reputation = a stellar career that you love! If you have bitten off more than you can chew at this stage in your life, and your career has taken a hit because of that, you can do one of two things:

1. Take a step back and then work yourself up to taking on more. There is so much to learn from failure (also not a four-letter word)! Are you in a job with three nanny kids, but you know you'd thrive with just one or two? Consider finding a position that allows you to hit your sweet spot. When you are your best self, you have more emotional bandwidth and can scaffold in more responsibilities over time to build that accountability muscle.

2. Decide to dig deep and just do it. Create a system for being accountable. This system can come in the form of putting every single thing you need to remember/promised you'd do into a calendar or a reminder program, down to walking the dog. Your system can be digital, a paper datebook, Post-it notes, smoke signals. Whatever works for you. This habit will take time to build, and you will likely be frustrated at times, but once you get in the swing, your sense of accomplishment, and the great feedback you get from your employers or clients, will keep you moving forward.

**Continued on Page 28**

# TALKING ABOUT SEXUAL ABUSE

BY ADRIANNE SIMEONE

Discussing the issues of child sexual abuse can be uncomfortable at times; however, minimizing risk is essential to the well-being and healthy development of children. Rather than avoid such conversations, we need to embrace the benefits and shared goal of protecting children. Here are some issues to consider when addressing sexual abuse prevention with the families you work with.

Child sexual abuse is not a rare occurrence. Current statistics estimate at least one in ten children in the United States are sexually abused before they turn 18; children with disabilities are at higher risk, with 80%–90% estimated to be affected. Awareness of this issue, however, is severely lacking and not all families may be fully informed.

Some common misconceptions that prevent proper understanding of the issue:

- Child sexual abuse occurs in unloving families. Truth: abuse is often enabled and concealed in families and communities that believe they are beyond risk. Convicted abusers have shared that they targeted families they felt would likely not suspect their malicious intentions.
- Teaching children about sexual abuse will only scare them. Truth: educating children openly about bodily rights is the same as teaching them other safety and personal care messages; children do not perceive the severity of sexual abuse with the same understanding adults do.
- Body safety education takes away a child's innocence. Truth: it is often the innocence and naivete of children that abusers take advantage of. The younger the child, the more likely the abuser is someone within the home, which normalizes abuse for the child. Children cannot disclose abuse if they do not know what it is.

As adults, we all have a moral responsibility to protect children. Investing time to learn about the issues of child sexual abuse and ways to protect children is essential to providing the best care possible. Body safety does not have to be an overwhelmingly uncomfortable or complicated set of standards to build into a family dynamic.

Here are some introductory points of consideration:

1. It is important for the family and nanny to be on the same page when it comes to body safety messaging geared toward children, which can begin in the toddler years (age 1+).

- Using proper names for genitals so children can communicate clearly and without embarrassment.
- Teaching the concepts of private parts: the areas of the body covered by underwear and bathing suits that are not meant to be shared or touched by others unless to stay clean or healthy (like a doctor's visit with a parent or caregiver present).
- Encouraging self-care as much as possible (e.g., washing their own body during a bath or wiping themselves after using the toilet).
- Promoting privacy as a family (giving adults and siblings privacy when using the bathroom, changing clothes, etc.). Purposely not taking pictures of children in underwear or ones that makes them feel embarrassed.
- Emphasizing lessons that promote consent: respecting a child when they say no to being touched/tickled, not forcing children to share toys that are special to them, and speaking up for a young child when someone is interacting in a way that does not feel safe or desirable to the child.

2. Understanding the prevalence of child-on-child sexual abuse. At least 40% (to possibly much more) of child sexual abuse is perpetrated by another juvenile—often a sibling, cousin, or peer.

3. Awareness of sexual behaviors in children that range from typical, to atypical, to problematic. All adults involved in the day-to-day care of children will benefit from being educated on what to potentially expect based on age and, more importantly, how to respond to inappropriate behaviors that involve touching, exposing genitals, or voyeurism.

Ultimately, parents and caregivers need to work together as a team to provide a nurturing and supportive environment for children. Body safety education should not be seen or treated as a lesson for children but rather an aspect of positive parenting and caregiving that empowers the child to understand the personal rights of all people.

### Mandated Reporting

Suspecting abuse or receiving a disclosure of abuse can be upsetting. It is important to remain calm, especially if a child has shared something that may require help from the authorities. Adults should not ask leading questions; it is best to keep notes and use the child's language to avoid any unintentional tampering with evidence. Knowing local agencies that handle issues of child abuse, such as a child advocacy center, can be a source of support when you are unsure about how to proceed with a situation. Online resources such as [stopitnow.org](http://stopitnow.org) offer anonymous consultation through telephone, email, and chat.



Adrienne Simeone is the founder and president of the Mama Bear Effect, a nationally focused nonprofit organization dedicated to child sexual abuse prevention education through their library of resources and free educational site: [themamabeareffect.org](http://themamabeareffect.org).





*People Profile*

Ashley Cunningham



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

I got involved in the nanny industry by way of my aunt. I had just graduated from college with my bachelor's degree in Child and Family Development and learned that she was pregnant with my twin cousins and in need of a nanny. When she called me and asked me whether I wanted to move cross-country with her from Missouri to California, without any hesitation I said of course! So I packed two suitcases with the as much clothing as I could fit, left everything else behind, and got a one-way ticket to start my nanny career. Flash forward five years later, and I moved to Las Vegas and am a nanny for two different families. I started my YouTube channel and an Instagram account called Nanny News, and I became a marketing liaison for a child-owned magazine. It's been the journey of a lifetime, and saying yes to my aunt was the best decision I could have made.

### **How has the industry changed since you became involved?**

This industry has changed so much over the past five years. When I first became a nanny, social media started really taking off for our industry. We quickly learned that social media is an easy way for us to showcase our work and connect with each other. I have watched how the strongest relationships can form online, and I have watched businesses grow from the bottom to the top leveraging social media. This industry is on the move. The pandemic really woke nannies up, and we learned how valued and important our job is. This has only made this industry stronger. I seriously love the nanny community. I believe we still have some work to do to elevate our profession, but we are on our way up.

### **Why did you start Nanny Announcements? What is the premise of it?**

I started Nanny Announcements/Nanny News during a child's nap time about three years ago. I noticed that there were so many events, lives, sales, and giveaways happening in our industry that it was hard to keep up. I thought having one place where nannies could go to get all that information made sense. I envisioned a place where businesses can advertise and market themselves and know that it's reaching the audience they want. So Nanny Announcements was formed. Then we started Nanny News, which is a YouTube channel. I started Nanny News because so much happens in our industry that we needed a central place for sharing it. I wanted to create something that was informative but also entertaining. We work so hard during the week; I wanted something that nannies could watch to end their week on a good note. We share the juiciest stories we can find online that relate to the nanny industry. Catch us every Friday for a new episode.

### **Where do you see yourself in five years?**

In five years, I'd like to be featured on news stations delivering the Nanny News. I believe that we will continue making changes in our industry, and others will really begin to respect our profession to the point where they want to learn more about it. I see myself helping other nannies that have just begun their journey and applying my nanny skills to raising my own children. A lot can change in five years, but I believe I am on the right track to achieve whatever God may bless me with.

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

My best advice for nannies would be to be confident, to be adaptable, and to be you. Being a nanny is a title you should wear proudly. We are raising the next generation. Being a nanny is something that is truly unique, and no one will truly understand the work you do outside of our community. Be you! Your ways, your culture, your ethnicity, your love, and your care will make an impact on the children's lives that they will take with them for the rest of their lives. Enjoy the journey. The good, the bad, and sometimes the ugly. Stay true to yourself. Stand up for yourself. Know that you have a strong community behind you riding along with you.

### **What is the most controversial news you've shared?**

I tried to stay away from controversial stories because I want Nanny News to be entertaining, but there are times when we come across some stories that just need to be told. The most controversial story I shared was about a little girl and how she was found unresponsive in the care of her nanny.

### **What topics do you find get the most interest?**

The topics I find to get the most interest are the stories that people don't think would ever happen. For example, we shared how a family was looking for a nanny in exchange for free room and board. We also announced how a nanny sent an itemized invoice to her work family for things that weren't discussed in the contract.

*"My best advice for nannies would be to be confident, to be adaptable, and to be you. Being a nanny is a title you should wear proudly. We are raising the next generation. Being a nanny is something that is truly unique, and no one will truly understand the work you do outside of our community. Be you!"*

*-Ashley*





### What is your educational background?

I graduated from high school in 2012 and started my college journey studying Elementary Education at a community college in Iowa while on a softball scholarship. I stayed there for one semester and moved back home to Kansas City, MO. I then attended community college for the semester before moving to Springfield, Missouri, to attend Missouri State University, where I graduated in 2017 with a bachelor's degree in Child and Family Development.

### How do you give back to the nanny community?

I try to pour as much as I can into the nanny community. I support nanny-related businesses, attend nanny events, and engage online. I share, announce, and promote all things nanny and share what's happening in our community.

### Biggest nanny industry myth?

That being a nanny is easy and anyone can do it. If you are a career nanny, then you know that our job is far from easy. It takes special people to do what we do every day. That's why it's so important to be proud of your work as a nanny.

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

To appreciate your nanny and all that he or she does. Nannies sacrifice a lot to help raise your little ones. Nannies appreciate knowing that their work is valued in your family.

### Anything else you want us to know?

Subscribe to our YouTube channel to keep up with latest news in our industry by going to <https://youtube.com/enannynews/>, and follow us on Instagram and TikTok @thenannynews.

### You Are Not Alone!

The time and dedication required to create new habits are hard. Like, really, really hard. It won't be a revelation on day one of building. And while it may be tough, do you know what is guaranteed to make it kind of, pretty much, a little bit easy-peasy? An accountability partner! Ask a friend or family member or put a call out on your social media; maybe someone in your book club would be into it. You can even join or create a group. When it's not just about you, you can lift people up and bring people together all while helping yourself. Who wouldn't love those warm and fuzzies right about now? The point is that most people find reassurance in leaning on and learning from others who are in the same boat.

Once you have mastered living in accountability every day, you will feel like a bazillion bucks. This newfound confidence will ring out, enriching all areas of your life and deepening your happiness. This is good stuff, people. Give it a go!

### Joy Colino

A natural connector with over thirty years of experience as a professional nanny and agency owner, Joy's mission is to honor and balance the needs of the families and candidates she works with and to elevate the domestic staffing industry. She is the 2022 recipient of the Association of Premier Nanny Agencies Rising Star award and leads a weekly agency owners' accountability group. Joy built her agency, Nannies Plus, from the ground up, holding true to the belief that practices grounded in integrity and transparency, while not always a path of ease, are the only way to operate. Nannies Plus proudly holds membership to the Association of Premier Nanny Agencies and the International Nanny Association.

Her favorite pastimes are sharing meals, stories, and songs with friends, seeing live music, theater and comedy, business networking, and connecting people. Raised in San Francisco, California, she was a nanny in San Francisco, Oakland, and Seattle.

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