

*Start your journey to becoming a*

# CERTIFIED NANNY

*Today*



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# ***Start your journey to becoming a Certified Nanny Today***

***Certification guidebook***

***for***

***[www.InternationalNannyTraining.com](http://www.InternationalNannyTraining.com)***

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## PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

Being a good nanny requires more than an honest genuine love of children. Nannies sometimes do work long hours in people's homes and most often work no supervision or daily oversight. Parents learn to depend on their nannies to keep their children safe and well-cared for, and to provide the highest level of childcare so that they can fulfill their personal or professional commitments.

There are alternatives including Daycare centers, which only offer childcare within certain hours of the day. Nannies are often live-in additional support people that play a large role in the lives of the children they take care of. Nannies are so much more than just childcare workers. They often act as personal chefs and general house keepers. Because of this, they are generally paid very well and are given lovely living conditions in return for their hard work.

## THE NANNY GUIDE BOOK

In many ways working with children can be fun and exciting. In many other ways, it can be a challenging prospect. As a prospecting nanny this tale of two divides – on the one hand, fun and excitement and, on the other hand, challenge, in dealing with children – describes what a career in Nannying is about.

Parents will entrust the livelihood of their kids to you. You'll be in charge of catering for their welfare, guaranteeing their safety, and promoting learning and mental development. In practice, it's a job of many responsibilities and given the fact that the children are not yours, there's an even higher bar of expectation to measure up to.

Living up to this bill is a factor of the right mindset and the right training. This coursework is designed to provide you with the training you need to excel as a nanny. You'll learn what it takes to be a professional nanny, the roles you have to play, and how to connect with both the child and their parents.

In the end, you'll be treated to a treatise on how to go about finding and securing the right nanny job.

## WHAT IS A NANNY?

Before we delve into the nitty-gritties, it's essential for you to develop a full understanding of what a nanny is. Firstly, a nanny is a childcare provider, and a childcare provider is someone that 'cares' for children. In caring for children, a nanny must ensure that the right environment fit for healthy child development is maintained at all times.

That takes us to the second point; a nanny is someone that connects with children and collaborates with the parents to provide a healthy living environment for all parties to thrive.

So, being a nanny is not just about taking care of children. It's about maintaining a healthy and since we're talking about children, fun and engaging environment, that is beneficial to the child, their parents and you the nanny.

## WHAT DO YOU NEED TO BECOME A NANNY?

Unlike many other childcare fields, becoming a nanny requires no standing educational qualifications. That said, an associate degree and/or certification in any childcare or child development course is a huge plus. Knowledge of CPR, first aid (and certifications where applicable) also provide an advantage when you're searching for a job.

In most countries, you need to be at least 18 years old to qualify for a paid nanny job. Many parents will also require a clean bill of health and an unscathed criminal record to hire you.

*With the groundwork out of the way, let's move on to the process of becoming a nanny, starting with the traits you should possess.*

## THE TRAITS OF AN IDEAL NANNY

The starter requirement for anyone looking to become a nanny is a genuine love for children and the company they bring. As a nanny, the major bulk of your time will be spent with children. You must be comfortable with interacting with them and contending with their so many non-adultlike behaviors.

Moving on from this start point, as a nanny, it is expected that you must:

### **Be patient**

Children are not as calm and collected as adults. To be a successful nanny, you must be patient. You must learn to deal with the many moods, attitudes, and temperaments of children without becoming visibly irritated or annoyed yourself.

### **Be responsible and reliable**

When parents entrust the welfare of their wards and home to you, they expect you to do your job with little or no supervision. As a nanny, you must be responsible enough to carry out your duties in the best manner possible and reliable enough to perform these duties on time, every time asking.

### **Be a sound decision-maker**

Throughout your nannying career, you will be required to take decisions on behalf of parents. In those situations, you must hone in on your decision-making skills to make sound decisions that are in the best interests of your charge, their parents and you the nanny.

### **Morally upright**

Practically all parents want to raise kids that understand the basis of morality and uphold it in their day to day activities. As a nanny, your moral compass must be optimally tuned and set up to groom morally upward and empathic children.

## **Energetic**

The average child is bustling with energy and on the campaign to catch their next dose of fun and excitement. Supporting this active and inquisitive nature of children is vital in promoting their mental and physical development. Exactly why you must be able to match their energy levels.

## **Well versed with the fundamentals of child development**

To succeed in your charge of nurturing children in the best way possible, you must be up to speed with the basics of childcare development. You must also know how to implement its provisions in the real world.

The next segment describes the foundations of child development critical for effective nanny care.

### GUIDING THE CHILD ON THE RIGHT DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAY

Children are pragmatic learners often preferring practical, hands-on approaches to didactic methods. As a nanny, it is your job to create an activity-based learning template that captures the imagination of a child and promotes healthy development. This developmental plan should be tailor-fit for the child in question and finetuned to emphasize their abilities.

*On the fundamental level, it should contain elements of:*

- Overall health and safety
- Cognitive development that will help the child understand the mechanisms and dynamism of their environments. This aspect of the child development plan will serve as a primer to prepare the child for topics in science, math and language comprehension.
- Social development aimed at nurturing and facilitating social maturity in children. They will need this when they begin to interact with others and function in the real world.

- Emotional development which helps the child develop a feeling of the self. Emotional development cues are essential in helping the child build self-confidence and the right mindset to approach real-world situations.
- Physical development that's geared towards helping the child develop and sharpen their large and small motor skills.

When you're starting, you should create a written developmental program usually presented as a day-to-day action plan that touches on all the aforementioned areas of child development. This is important because it keeps you objective and result-oriented. More so, parents will appreciate it if they can see your plan for their child and how you plan on achieving your stated goals.

As a boilerplate reference let us proceed to describe what the ideal child development plan for infants and toddlers and preschoolers look like in the real-world setting.

## INFANTS AND TODDLERS

The first step in caring for a child is creating a connection and personal bond that exudes safety, trust, and concern. As a nanny, it is your duty to function as an outlet of relief, someone who's there to provide an empathic environment where children can outwardly express themselves without any fear of reprimand.

### ESTABLISHING THE EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

You should actively promote and engage in activities and acts of affection, trust and wholesome love with the child, regardless of the sex. Activities in this sense include everything from hugging, cuddling, and holding. Note, however, that the wishes of the child come first. If a child expresses discomfort or is opposed to the idea of physical contact in whatsoever form, you should respect his/her nature.

### INTERACTING AND PROMOTING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

It is your job to consistently provide your charges with an invitation to speak, a listening ear to hear, and an environment to facilitate reciprocal interaction. As a child develops, their language, manner and nature of expression play a critical role in how they succeed in the social and economic context of life. When you actively communicate with and listen to children, you're providing an avenue to sharpen their communication and language skills.

The emphasis here is active communication with you leading the way where necessary. For instance, reading from a children's book and soliciting inputs from the child or a day spent outdoor identifying and naming objects with the child both go a long way in improving communications skills and language development.

### SHARPENING COGNITIVE SKILLS

For most children, the pathway to learning and cognitive development is through fun and playful activities. Your job as a nanny is to work with the parents to create a fun, interactive and engaging environment that facilitates creativity and grooms the imaginative spirit of the toddler.

Where a child has a dedicated playroom, it should be designed in such a manner that allows for a fun and engaging experience. You should work with the parents to infuse this environment with age-specific obstacles, puzzles, and risks that introduce the child to the concept of problem-solving.

Again, everything must be tuned to correspond with the child's age and stage of mental development.

#### A NOTE ON TOILET TRAINING

Many a time you're going to work with children that are not toilet trained and the responsibility to toilet train them might fall on you.

The standard for toilet training per the American Association of Physicians is a modification of the Brazelton Child-Oriented toilet training approach. It specifies that:

Toilet training should begin only when certain psychological and physical milestones have been met. Usually, this happens after 18 months of the child's life. There should be a verifiable presence of cognitive and motor functioning capabilities. For example, the child should be able to sit comfortably on a toilet/potty-chair. He/she should also understand the concept of stooling and be able to process the sense of urgency that comes with it.

Once a child is ready for training, you should begin by introducing him/her to a potty-chair.

#### **Method**

- Ask the child to sit on the potty chair. He/she should do this fully clothed for the first one or two weeks. During this period, the child can sit on the potty chair in any room and should be free to get off it at any point. You can listen to the child talk or read a story to him/her while they're seated.
- After the initial one or two weeks, remove the child's clothing (and diaper) and have him/her sit on the potty chair. The child is still getting familiar with the whole potty-training situation at this point, so don't force them to use the potty chair.
- Since the child is still on diapers, he/she is still bound to soil them. When this happens, take the child and the soiled diaper to the potty chair before emptying the diaper into the chair. Make sure to explain to the child that that's where stool is supposed to be deposited.
- Once the child develops an understanding of this concept, increase the frequency of potty-chair sessions. Remember, depending on the individual; this might take some time and series of explanations.
- With time and as the child displays more confidence, remove his/her diaper for specific periods during the day while placing the potty chair nearby. Encourage him/her to use the chair independently.
- Once the child has mastered the whole process, you can make the switch from diapers to training pants. You'll need to guide the child on how to put on or remove the training pants.

### **Few things to note;**

- Toilet training must be coordinated in collaboration with the parents. You should inform the parents of the procedure and ask that it be adhered to even in your absence.
- There are certain cultural considerations in toilet training that may be present depending on the background of the parents. Where present, you should respect them and modify the toilet-training template to fit.
- Some children with special needs require concurrently unique variations of toilet training to get the desired results. In this case, you should work in concert with the child's healthcare counsellor to

develop a strategic plan. Where unavailable, establishing clear-cut toilet usage routines can be beneficial.

## PRESCHOOLERS

Unlike toddlers, preschoolers have a much more developed mental capacity. They're also physically more active. As a result, the approach to nannying this group differs considerably.

### *Establishing an emotional connection*

The emphasis with preschoolers is fostering a relationship based on trust. For these individuals, you won't just function as someone who shows love and affection but also as someone who respects them, their personality and their opinions.

You will be a guide and not an instructor, a facilitator and not a commander, a supporter and not an overbearing influence. Children learn best in environments where their opinions are validated. Your job is to be that adult figure that knows them, supports them, and respects them.

Effective communication with all definitions of active listening and constructive reinforcement play a critical role in achieving this goal. Unlike toddlers where you act as more of a place of solace, with preschoolers, you should contribute actively in the conversation providing both verbal and emotional reinforcements, where necessary.

### *Promoting cognitive development*

As was the case with toddlers, the pathway to improving cognitive capacity must be littered with fun and excitement. For preschoolers, however, and in line with the central theme of promoting independence, children should be encouraged to explore and create their own experiences, rather than settle for routine activities. To quote the National Health and Safety Performance guidebook for childcare; the most impactful learning for kids is rooted in those activities initiated by the child themselves.

It is your duty to lead children towards, or where the need is, create environments that can generate these sort of experiences. Specifically, these environments should invoke the sense of observation, exploration, problem-solving and imagination in the child. Environments that fit the bill include trials, playgrounds, walkways, and everything else that has the capacity of stimulating active play.

The fact that most of these options are facilities you'd find outdoors emphasizes the importance of the outdoor environment to the development of a child. Indoor activities are no less important, but you must find time periodically to take your charges out, even if for a routine walk.

Indoor activities that promote cognitive development include drawing, painting, singing, dancing, play-acting and storytelling. These activities work to bolster the child's capacity for ideation, expression (in terms of language development) and socialization. You should set out a specific schedule for rotating these activities in the daily plan for your charge.

#### PROMOTING SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

As children grow older, their focus turns from you, their caregiver, to their peers with whom they interact and form experiences. This is a good thing, and your job now turns from fountain of solace to provider of guidance. In other words, you should guide and monitor these interactions and steer them in the right direction when needed.

If a child has siblings or when they interact with other children, the emphasis should be on cooperation rather than competition. Avoid making child-to-child comparisons. If you notice any errant behavior, stick to providing direct support rather than shaming the child.

More importantly, ensure that there are rules when the child interacts with his/her peers and that the child understands them. Rules are essential in helping the child develop a sense of responsibility. So implement things like

no pushing or fighting or generally just set reasonable and straightforward ground rules.

Through this section, we've talked on activities that require interaction with the child. The focus has been on creating a connection and ushering the child through activities that promote healthy development. In the next section, we will consider what you should do when you're not actively interacting with the child.

## SUPERVISING AND ENFORCING DISCIPLINE

Supervising is what you do when the child is not directly under your stead. Remember that promoting independence is a critical feature of effective nanny care. While you encourage independence, it is, however, vital that you continue to watch over your charges and all the activities they partake of, from a distance.

Supervision is an active endeavor. Kids are, by nature, adventurous and prone to experimentation. You must ensure that this adventurous spirit doesn't lead them into a path of danger.

The start point of supervision is creating ground rules. These rules should be focused on ensuring the safety of your charges without overly stifling their opportunity to have fun and experiment. Think of something like slow speeds on a swing rather than outrightly banning swing usage.

The next step is being situationally aware. As a nanny, you should be well aware of any existing hazard and be on the lookout for new hazards in the environment around your charges. Keep your charges in sight and when this is impossible, make sure you're easily reachable.

Additionally, you should educate the child on how to use both everyday objects and play equipment correctly. Make sure to point out items that they shouldn't be using with an explanation as to why. Of course, all this is assuming the child is old enough to grasp the concept of danger and its effects. For toddlers, the best practice is to keep them away from all potential sources of physical hazard.

### *A note on screen time*

Children are being introduced to TV, computers and social media at earlier times than in the past. There's a growing body of evidence that this eventually plays out to have negative repercussions on the child. For instance, it has been shown that watching TV can negatively affect a child's

cognitive development. There's also evidence linking childhood obesity to excessive TV viewing.

Your goal as a nanny is to limit screen time for your charge to the barest minimum. Children are supposed to focus more on interacting positively with their peers (and adults) rather than spending time in front of digital screens.

As a base reference, the American Association of Physicians recommends no more than 2 hours of screen viewing time for children under four in any 24-hour period. For children aged three or less, the resolve is no screen viewing time at all.

Enforcing this might prove tougher with older children. But, acting as a role model and reducing your screen viewing time, especially in the presence of your charge can make them more conforming.

## DISCIPLINE – THE RIGHT AND EFFECTIVE WAY

If you were taught that discipline involves causing pain to a child, now is the time to forget that teaching. For all purposes of clarity, discipline is an affirmative and proactive process that involves teaching self-control and responsibility to the child in the light of socially acceptable behaviors. It also involves identifying errant behaviors in children and supportively steering them away from these habits.

How do you do this:

- Connect with the child

Through the course of this material, the emphasis has been on connecting with your charges. When children connect with and trust you as their nanny, it's easier for them to follow your instructions.

- Define simple, clear cut rules

Children have a hard time following complex directives, so keep it simple and direct – 'twelve o'clock is time for your afternoon nap' as opposed to 'you have to sleep in the afternoon (afternoon is a broad term).'

- Positive reinforcement

Praise and encouragement over condemnation and criticism is the best way to go with children. In giving praise, avoid being vague, instead, be as descriptive as is possible. So, rather than saying 'you did well today,' say something in the lines of 'by taking your nap you're helping your body stay healthy, and that's a good thing.' This helps the child develop a definitive sense of what counts as good behavior.

- Provide an alternate route

When you identify a bad behavior in a child, resist the urge to criticize and instead attempt to point them to other activities. This is the redirection and

ignoring technique, and it works well for subtle deviations from normal, acceptable behaviors.

If the behavior is, however unignorable, then you should actively instruct the child to perform a more appropriate activity. If he/she complies, make sure to provide positive reinforcement.

- Time-out where necessary

When a child continues with bad behavior, even after deliberate attempts to steer him/her off that path, you can ask them to take a time-out. This is synonymous to grounding for teenagers, albeit on a much more toned-down level.

*A few things to note:*

- Time-outs should be used sparingly and as a last resort for unacceptable behaviors a child persistently engages in.
- Before using the time-out strategy the first time, you should explain how it works and what it entails to the child.
- When in time-out, avoid talking to or making eye-contact with the child. Still keep an eye out for them though, supervision is an active process, remember?
- There's no rule stating that time-outs should be for extended periods. It can and under normal circumstances should be short.
- A time-out should end on a positive note for the child. Do this by explaining why they got sent to the time-out location with reference to the fact that you did it to help them learn what's right and what's not.
- If a child offers resistance after all this, you should involve the parents.

## GUARANTEEING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF YOUR WARD

Asides from facilitating proper mental and physical development for your wards, one other fundamental responsibility you're going to take up is guaranteeing their health and safety. Your job in this context is to:

- Ensure that your charge is in the best health condition possible.
- Ensure that he/she is taking the right steps to preserve this state of optimum wellness.
- Ensure that he/she is in the right environment to remain well.
- Identify ailments or potential sources of illnesses.
- Act to return your charge to a state of wellness when they are ill or exposed to potential sources of ailments.

To put simply, for your charges, you will be an on-demand health and safety assistant.

## THE ROUTINE HEALTH CHECK

Performing your duty as a personal health care assistant requires that you start the day with a routine health check of your ward. This health check will serve to identify illnesses or any other noticeable change that is a deviation from an established norm.

The established norm is your wards' state of physical and mental fitness, and it differs from child to child. Some children are very active and vocal; others are reserved and averse to physical activity. In some cases, your ward might be a child with special needs. So it's essential to have a firm grasp of their 'normal' before attempting to identify any deviation from this normal.

Observation is key to developing a firm understanding of your charge's normal physical and mental behavior. And ideally, it's a picture you should have drawn up in the first few weeks of interacting with them.

Now back to the routine checkup. The checkup should be performed on your first contact with the child every day. If you're a full-time, live-in nanny, this will be when

you wake up daily to meet the child; otherwise, it will be when you resume work for the day.

- Start by accessing the child. Check to see if there are any injuries or visible illnesses that were not there at your last contact with the child.
- Is the child sad, or are there any other noticeable changes in his/her behavior? A tired or unusually irritable demeanor, for instance, might mean your charge didn't get enough sleep.
- Observe for more definitive signs of illness: skin problems, runny nose, diarrhea, or anything in that territory. If you notice any of these, proceed to conduct a temperature check.
- A raised body temperature, either singly or in combination with any other deviation from the norm is a surefire indicator that the child is sick. At that point, you should communicate with the parents or schedule a doctor's visit if you have the parent's consent to do so.

#### PROMOTING PHYSICAL HEALTH

Before now, we've talked about physical activity with respect to how it improves cognitive capacity. It's also vital for promoting physical health, but you already know that. What you might know, however, is that despite the heightened emphasis on physical activity for children, many (over 80% of children aged 11 – 17, according to the WHO) don't get enough of it. It is your job to make sure this isn't the case for your charges.

The approach to promoting physical activity differs and depends on the age of the child. In addition to what we've already talked about, here's what you need to know:

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#### FOR INFANTS

Encourage and promote physical activity for as much as is possible throughout the day. There are many ways to do this.

- You could simply provide ample safe space for them to crawl about and explore their surroundings, of course, with your supervision.

- You can add some safe toys into the mix so they can push, pull, tug, or grab. The simple goal is for them to move their body – hands, legs, head all-inclusive.
- Or you can do a bit of tummy time. The United Kingdom’s National Health Service (NHS) recommends at least 30 mins of tummy time for infants every day. Place the child on his/her stomach and let them to themselves.

Tummy time facilitates the development of the muscles that’ll help the child control their head, and in good time, help them sit, crawl, and begin walking.

- You can also place a toy within their reach to induce movement, or you can put the child on your chest – your face will be their improvised toy, so expect some bit of grabbing and poking.

Encourage outdoor activity. There’s a strong correlation between time spent outdoors and the level of physical activity for children. For infants, routinely taking them outside just for the fresh air and open space is enough. At this age, they’re mostly incapable of engaging in any serious outdoor activity.

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#### FOR TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

Like infants, toddlers, and preschoolers also require a great deal of physical activity. While the theme with infants was sort of free-to-roam, with toddlers and preschoolers, a little bit of structure goes a long way to improve both the levels of physical activity and the proscribed benefits of it.

To summarize:

- Physical activity for this age group should be structured to provide alternate light, medium, and vigorous activity schedules. For example, you can start in the morning with a bit of toy-play. Later at noon, you can introduce dancing, and in the evening, a bike ride or a jog should suffice.

- Indoor play and activity should be well complemented with those set in outdoor environments. As we've already established, outdoor play is critical to improving the level and effectiveness of physical activity for children.
- Structured and fun activities, the likes of dancing, games (both indoors and outdoors) should be thrown into the physical activity mix as well. Recall that these work to improve cognitive function.

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#### FOR YOUNG ADULTS

The NHS recommends at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day with an emphasis on aerobic and muscle-strengthening exercises for young adults aged five to eighteen. To keep up with this recommendation, you can adapt the toddler/preschooler guidelines described above but with a switch to more of activities that fall within the spectrum of moderate to rigorous.

## GENERAL CLEANLINESS AND HYGIENE

Cleanliness and good hygiene are learned processes. If you're dealing with young children it's a habit you'll have to show and teach them. For older kids (teens), you'll be building on their previous experiences to improve what they've already learned in their formative years.

Whether it's for younger or older kids, staying clean is very important. There's a direct correlation between cleanliness and good health. More so, good personal hygiene is critical to helping your charges build confidence and self-esteem.

In the following subsections, we will describe your roles as a nanny in ensuring your charges stay clean and healthy.

### CLEANLINESS FOR INFANTS

Because infants are still at the very early stages of mental development, your job here will be more of keeping them clean rather than teaching to be clean. Thankfully, it's relatively easy to keep infants clean.

#### *Infant baths*

The basic infant cleanliness routine is given them baths at scheduled intervals. For the first year of their lives, about three baths a week – not every day – is enough. Too much of bath time can cause skin dry outs.

In the first few months of their lives, as the umbilical cord heals, you should bathe the infant with a wet sponge as opposed to a full regular bathe. Regular baths can commence once healing is complete, just make sure to keep bath time short during the first few weeks.

For more information on bathing for infants refer to the guide available at <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/bathing-skin-care/Pages/Bathing-Your-Newborn.aspx>

#### *Changing diapers*

You'll be doing a lot of diaper changes in the first few years of an infant's life, but that's no cause for worry. Changing a diaper is akin to changing a brief; only this time, you have to be wary of the baby's poop.

Some tips:

- Keep baby wipes nearby when performing a change. You'll need it to wipe off any remaining poop that doesn't come off with the diaper.
- Some babies pee when you attempt a diaper change. With this group, the best approach is to keep them covered, preferably with a towel or washcloth, as you do the change.

### *Infant laundry*

An infant's skin is very sensitive, and this calls for special attention to their laundry items. Ideally, you'll want to set their clothes aside from general laundry. Some experts also recommend using special detergents formulated for baby clothes as these supposedly reduce residue deposits on washed clothes and, as such, are less prone to causing irritation. There's no clear-cut evidence, however, to validate this claim – many nanny and parents alike use regular detergents, and their babies do just fine.

## TODDLERS, PRESCHOOLERS, AND TEENS

With toddlers and preschoolers, you'll be doing a lot of nurturing in addition to the basics. The basics here includes everything from washing clothes to helping with cleaning their room and immediate environment. Beyond the basics, this group needs to be familiar with the essential etiquettes of personal hygiene and other good habits that promote cleanliness.

You can start by introducing them to the concept of hand hygiene.

### *Hand hygiene basics*

Clean hands are an effective way to stop the spread of diseases. Throughout the day, children will be exposed to many disease-causing agents. Thorough

knowledge of hand hygiene can help reduce the rate of infections from these exposures.

First of all, children should know when to wash hands, and practically, that should be as frequently as possible. Since children fare better with direct instructions, however, instruct your charges to wash their hands:

- Before eating.
- When it looks dirty.
- After coming in contact with urine, blood, or any other bodily fluids.
- After coughing or blowing their noses.
- After using the restroom.
- After touching raw meat or other unprocessed edibles.

The general recommendation is that hands should be washed under warm running water with soap for at least twenty seconds. When washing, both hands should be vigorously scrubbed with one hand scrubbing the other. If disposable towels are available, then they can be used to dry off the water. Otherwise, simply letting the hands dry off by themselves works just fine.

This whole procedure will take some getting used to for kids. Offer assistance where necessary and do well to be a good example in as many real-world situations as is possible.

### *Coughing etiquettes*

Children should learn to cover their mouths and nose while they cough or sneeze. As was the case with hand washing, this simple procedure can prevent infections and stop the spread of would be contagions like the coronavirus.

You should teach your charges that the proper way to cover their nostrils and mouth is using a tissue or their upper elbow when the former is unavailable.

### *Oral hygiene*

For all children with teeth, oral health is an integral component of general hygiene. Good oral hygiene on its part starts with regular teeth brushing.

- Teeth brushing basics

For children aged two and under, fluoride toothpaste should be used sparingly – just a smear on their toothbrushes would do. A pea-sized cut of fluoride toothpaste should be well enough for older children.

Children tend to swallow while they're brushing. If they consume too much fluoride, it can cause a condition called fluorosis. Your job is to facilitate proper mouth rinsing after brushing, in addition to limiting the amount of fluoride toothpaste used in the first place.

Kids will need assistance as they learn how to brush; in fact, most of them will not develop the necessary eye-hand coordination to brush by themselves until they're about six years.

Your job is to guide them through the process. Correct them if they're doing it wrongly and for younger kids, thoroughly brush their teeth after they're done with their own tooth brushing episode.

Teeth brushing is best done after a meal, and the frequency should be twice a day, once in the more and another at nighttime. Experts recommend teeth brushing sessions to last two minutes on average.

#### A NOTE ON ENVIRONMENTAL HYGIENE

As a nanny, it is your job to keep your immediate environment and that of your charges clean at all times. Usually, the best way to do this is to establish a defined cleaning routine that accounts for cleaning the general environment, kids' toys, and basically every other material they come in contact with – that's including beddings, dishes, and other household items.

When the environment is clean, performing all your other nanny duties becomes much easier.

With all that said, let's now turn our gaze to nutrition, another important nanny care component for guaranteeing the health and well-being of your charges.

## NUTRITION 101

Nannies are nutritionists by mandate. Through the course of your career, you'll be responsible for providing healthy and nourishing food to children from different backgrounds. While the job of determining a dietary plan doesn't usually fall to the nanny (most parents will handle this), the task of turning foodstuff into healthy meals for kids is almost entirely your responsibility.

It is also your duty to ensure that kids are eating right and well. Overfeeding and the associated problems of weight gain and childhood obesity are a growing cause of concern for parents and nannies alike. On the flip side, poor nutrition could hinder the proper development of your ward. You will work with the parents to make sure this is never the case for your charges.

### ESTABLISHING A HEALTHY PATTERN

#### *Age six to eight months*

Children eat more frequently than adults. From age six to eight months, the average infant will need to eat about four to five times daily. At this age bracket, most kids will be on breastmilk with added formula feeding for supplementation.

If formula feeding is used, about six to eight ounces of formula feed is recommended per serving. Infants should be fed once they indicate that they're hungry. Care should be, however, taken to prevent overfeeding. Just as infants will provide cues to indicate that they're hungry (an open mouth, suckling sounds), they will show that they're full in most cases.

#### *Age eight months to six years*

Children older than eight months but under six years must be given food at every two to three-hour interval. At this stage, their rapidly developing bodies have a huge nutritional requirement. It is your job to plan a schedule that provides nutritious meals at these intervals throughout the day.

### *Over six years of age*

Like adults, kids over six years old will do well with three meal sessions per day. An additional one or two snack servings is also recommended. But snacks served to kids must be packed full of nutrients as opposed to being highly calorific.

Aside from infants, for every other child group, structure and routine are essential. Whatever feeding habits children develop in childhood will most likely carry on to adulthood, so it's important to teach kids to eat at scheduled times and never beyond satiety.

### *Infant feeding*

The standard feeding protocol for infants aged six months and under is exclusive breastmilk. Sometimes, however, breastfeeding might be unavailable. In such cases, you might be required to supervise the provision of alternate nutritional sources for your charges.

#### **Human milk**

A mother might express her breastmilk to be fed later to her infant. Expressed milk should be stored in a bottle that's clean and sanitary. The bottle should have a correspondingly clean nipple for feeding the infant.

At the time of feeding, make sure to inspect the stored breastmilk for any signs of spoilage.

- Keeping breastmilk safe

Stored breastmilk doesn't need any special preservation protocol if it's only going to sit for a few hours, six to eight hours, to be precise. Keeping it away from direct sunlight in a cool spot and at room temperature will suffice.

If it's going to sit for a day, you should place it in an insulated cooler with icepacks to keep the temperature regulated in a 4°F to 5°F range.

Stored breastmilk meant to be used within a one-week window should be kept in a refrigerated compartment at a temperature of 4°F.

For stored breastmilk that's intended to stay longer than two weeks, place the container in a freezer and allow to sit in sub 5°F temperatures.

### **Formula feeding**

Parents should, in conjunction with their nutritionists, provide you with the appropriate formula for feeding. Ideally, they should also provide the standard procedure for preparing the formula, but in the case where this is unavailable, please refer only to manufacturer-provided guidelines obtainable from the product packaging.

As was the case with human milk, safely preparing, and if the need is, storing the prepared formula is critical.

Before attempting to prepare any baby formula, make sure your environment is clean and thoroughly sanitized. Wash your hands, cups, spoons, and everything else you will use to prepare the formula.

Use only clean and verifiably pure water throughout the entire process. Remember, the formula feed is only as safe as the water used in preparing it.

If the formula is powder-based, make sure to use only the scoop provided with the packaging. Do not interchange scoops for different formulas.

### *Feeding the infant*

Apart from safeguarding the health of your charge, proper bottle-feeding etiquettes helps facilitate the development of age-appropriate eating habits

through life. The goal with bottle feeding is providing nutrition in a manner that simulates the natural process of breastfeeding to maximum effect.

To do this, you need to:

- Start bottle feeding and likewise stop when you notice any infant feeding cues. Remember our earlier discussion of infant feeding cues?
- Place the infant on your thighs and hold him/her as you bottle feed. Follow their eye movements and respond to other visual/movement cues.
- Switch the infant between your laps as you bottle feed.
- Pause intermittently to allow the infant burp.

As the infant comes of age, he/she might be able to switch to using a cup in place of a bottle. Some children will possess the motor competence to do this by just six months of age; others take much longer. Regardless of the case, the switch from bottle to cup is not a signal to pause on the emotional aspect of infant feeding. Keep holding and burping your charges until they make the transition from formula feed to solid food.

## CONNECTING WITH THE PARENTS

The relationship between parents and nannies is inherently unique. You're going to be 'living in' with your boss and maintaining what should be a moderately casual relationship in a professional way. Doing this requires the right mindset and a great deal of commitment on your part.

### *The right mindset*

Respect and a selfless orientation are two core personality traits correlated with successful nanny-parent relationships. Through the course of your career, you're going to come across different parents with different personalities.

Connecting with each one of them requires that you approach the relationship from a point of respect and understanding. Understand that people have different characters and different personalities, then work to accommodate the excesses of these differences within a healthy limit.

To further promote a frictionless nanny-parent relationship, you can resort to the following best practices in your dealings with parents.

- *Know who you're working with*

Get to know your family and not just their names. Most parents will provide some sort of introduction or orientation when you take up the job. If they don't, request to meet the family 'officially' and try as much as possible to understand the personas of each member.

- *Privacy is important for both parties*

Respect the privacy of parents and make your expectations of privacy (as it concerns you) clear from the onset. When boundaries are created and respected, it leaves less room for friction.

- *Be expressive*

Don't bottle up your concerns (or feelings) about anything related to your job. As a nanny, it is your job to speak out on issues bothering you or the family (again, within the purview of your job description) regardless of the standing circumstance. Don't be afraid to hurt peoples' feelings. Remember that keeping issues bottled down broods resentment and ironically escalates the problem.

- *Be committed*

As a nanny, the expectation is high for you to perform professionally and diligently. When you fail on your duties, it gives room for doubt and mistrust, two things that can rapidly disintegrate parent-nanny relationships. Being professional and committed at all times gives parents the reassurance that their wards and, in extension, their homes are in the hands of a capable caregiver.

- *Finally, never settle for less*

Motivation is key to delivering on all that's expected of you as a nanny. Being motivated on its part is a function of working in the right environment, so it's vital that you only settle in an environment that's both emotionally conducive and financially rewarding.

We will now consider what it takes to find the right nanny job in an emotionally suitable, financially rewarding, and productive environment.

## GETTING YOUR PREFERRED NANNY JOB

Openings for nannies have been traditionally advertised in newspapers, magazines, and other print media. However, with the advent of the internet, your next in need parent can be found hanging about the pages of social media.

That's to say, don't take social media and online job boards for granted. It pays to create a dedicated caregiver profile that highlights your core skills and professionalism. Three social media platforms stand out in this regard – Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, but don't stop at creating nanny profiles, engage with the audiences on these platforms.

A proven strategy for driving engagement is creating relevant content. This route can be resource-intensive, however. If that's a problem, you can resort to sharing and commenting on appropriate nanny and childcare related content created by other users and authors. Make sure to follow these authors and profiles to get first-hand access to relevant content and materials once they're released.

Whether you stick with traditional print media or go the online route, any advertisement for a nanny position will come details about the job, including how to apply. Since you're not the only one applying, you should put in the extra effort needed to stand out from the crowd.

Here's how to go about that;

### **Start by brushing up your Curriculum Vitae (CV).**

A CV is a concise summary of your person with an emphasis on your skills and previous work experience. You can find CV samples and templates to create yours on resume builder sites like zety.com. The general recommendation is to tailor your CV to match the position you're applying to, that is, edit it to emphasize the requirements, experience, and strengths highlighted in the job ad.

Some general points to note:

- Keep it short and straightforward. Two pages is the recommended maximum.
- Proofread your CV several times to identify and correct grammatical errors. Before turning it in, have a friend or family go over it as well.

Your CV should include:

Your personal details, educational qualifications, career and work experience (if any), hobbies and interest, additional relevant details, and your referee details, in that order, preferably.

### **Acing an interview**

Parents will usually want an in-person interaction with any prospective nanny candidate before committing with a job offer. Scaling an interview successfully, assuming you possess all the requisite skills, is, in most cases, a function of adequate preparation.

Parents will ask questions related to childcare and child development. Attempt to predict these questions and make sure to refresh your memory on the basics before heading out for the interview.

If the job ad specifies any particular skill, trait, or requirement, prepare yourself for an assessment to test your competence in the said requirement. For an ad that says knowledge of CPR is a requirement, for instance, being asked to perform CPR in person is very likely.

As they say, first impressions matter. On the day of the interview, the image you create for yourself will go a long way in determining whether you'll be hired.

- You need to be bold and confident

You will be responsible for the welfare of someone else's kid; of course, you need to be confident and bold. Parents will assess your confidence level from your body language, mannerism, and speech.

Try to exude a calm and collected demeanor. Smile, listen attentively, maintain eye contact, and respond to questions when they're asked. It's okay to get some interview jitters, exactly why you should take your time to settle in before the interview commences officially.

### **Take your time**

If the interview is successful, you'll get a job offer. Don't be hasty in accepting it; instead, access the offer to see if it's the right offer for you. If it's a fit, you can maybe schedule a second appointment to meet the family.

A mistake many nannies make is jump on a job offer even though it's not the best fit for them. Is the environment (recall our discussion on right environments) good enough for you? Are there potentials areas of conflict with respect to parent ideals and beliefs? Do the actual job requirements fit with your personal work-life balance? All these are considerations you have to make before saying yes. Remember, there are more people out there looking for nannies than there are nannies available to take these positions.

### **Ask for a detailed job description**

Your potential employees will have to come up with a complete outline of all you're supposed to do as their nanny. This outline will contain your duties, responsibilities, and the way you're expected to conduct yourself.

Go through the job description and make sure you consent to all its provisions. The job description is binding, and your employer must contact you for consent before making changes to its specification.

### **A contract is important**

After going through the job description and after reaching an agreement on what your pay should be, it's time to enter into a contract. The contract will specify the exact conditions of the agreement between you and the parents (the employer).

A contract is legally binding, so make sure to understand all the terms, conditions, and agreements specified within it.

Once you sign the contract, congratulations, you're now a nanny in practice.

Remember what we've covered in this course, and don't shy away from revisiting specific segments when you're confused or in doubt. There are other materials available online as well that can serve as a reference point and help you with providing the best quality of childcare. Read, research, apply, and remember the best nanny is the one who's competent at their duties and sensitive to changing trends.

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