

Finding Mary Poppins

Your Guide to Child Care

By Jacalyn S. Burke

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Smashwords Edition

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## Introduction

My name is Jacalyn S. Burke and I'm a former nanny with 12 years' experience working in Manhattan. I'm also the author of a comprehensive book on child care: *The Nanny Time Bomb - Navigating the Crisis in Child Care*, available on Amazon Books.

This *Guide to Child Care* is all about you, the new parent looking to go back to work after pregnancy and the birth of junior, or you the mom who needs an extra pair of hands with your growing brood.

Consider my Guide as a series of hacks or short cuts, tips or tricks to navigating the complex world of in-home, private child care. In this Guide I'll be addressing some common myths and issues that can affect parents when they enter child care situations. This is your Guide to making child care choices a more seamless experience.

Let's start at the beginning. You discover that you are expecting and you realize that you require child care along with a crib, a good pediatrician and a bunch of other really important stuff. It's a bit like needing a lawyer. You don't give it much thought until you absolutely need one, and then there's a sense of urgency, or even blind panic.

## **Hack #1: Keep a Cool Head**

The most important attribute you will need when sourcing good child care is a cool, calm head. Leave your emotions to one side and concentrate on the task at hand as though you were looking for a nanny for a client or a close friend. Like everything else in life there are a bunch of websites devoted to finding a good nanny and a mountain of books.

## **Hack #2: Ask the Herd**

If you're looking for a needle in a haystack, you'll want to start by asking someone in the know where they found their nanny. The alternative is sifting through nanny listings or agency websites. Peer to peer recommendations are worth a thousand online searches.

Yeah but ... "What if my friends found their nanny in different places?" Sure, finding a good nanny is like comparing with friends how we found the loves of our lives. We didn't all go online, or bump into our beau at the coffee shop. The same is true in child care. But at least you will have narrowed down your search matrix, and that's huge.

***Your list might look something like this. We found our nanny:***

*Friend A - On a listing site*

*Friend B - Through a friend*

*Friend C - Via a nanny agency*

***The next questions to ask are:***

*"Which listing site, which friend, which nanny agency?"*

*"Are you happy with those choices?"*

*"What would you do differently next time around?"*

Our best learning as a species is done human to human. For example, babies most effectively master a language directly from a parent or caregiver, someone who they have an emotional connection with, and not a language program or DVD. Our brains are hard-wired to observe and learn from our peer group. Your friends and mommy peers are your greatest resource.



### **Hack #3: Set Your Needs and Your Budget**

*So now you have a list of resources to work from. But before you even begin to reach out to prospective nannies, you will want to figure out:*

*When will your nanny start?*

*How many hours of child care a week will you need?*

*Will you pay on the books or off the books? (What are the pros and the cons?)*

*How much can you afford to pay your nanny? (Will you provide paid vacations, sick pay?)*

*How do you calculate wages?*

*What are the legal ramifications of employing someone in your home?*

## **Hack #4: Create an Employer Game Plan**

It might feel natural to begin with a start date and to figure it out from there, but that can be a recipe for unmet expectations, misunderstandings and domestic chaos. You probably need your new nanny to start yesterday and I get your sense of urgency but until you have your Employer Game Plan figured out it could be an act of sabotage to hire someone immediately. So try to buy yourself a few weeks or months before outreach.

*The two most important things in your Employer Game Plan are:*

1. (a) *How many hours a week will you require child care?* (b) *Will that change frequently?*

2. What are you willing to pay per hour or as a weekly wage for that labor?

Hours = a schedule with set days and times. Write down the blocks of time you'll need your nanny to be available to work. If that includes weekends or evenings, include that too.

“What if my hours fluctuate because I am a freelancer?” You might ask. As a freelance worker you understand the need to bring in a certain amount of income per month to manage your bills. The same is true of your nanny.

If you have a situation where two weeks a month you require 10 hours weekly in child care, followed by two weeks of 40 hours weekly in child care, you could, for example, offer your nanny a basic block of 25 hours per week so that she can budget both her time and her income. This would need to be balanced out fairly to compensate your employee for the total amount of hours she will be expected to work during a calendar month.

## **Extras**

If your schedule changes frequently and you expect your nanny to drop everything and step into your shoes and perhaps even sleep over (if you have to travel for your business), again you must be prepared to compensate her for 24-7 accessibility. A sleep over is extra. Don't assume your nanny is off the clock when the kids are sleeping because she's not. She is on stand-by duty, ready to awaken and deal with a sick infant or a child recovering from a nightmare. So set a flat overnight rate and add that to her weekly salary.

## **Rates**

*The bottom line on wages is what you can afford to pay for a nanny, but you should also be aware of the minimum wage in your state. Rates also vary based on these factors:*

*Location*

*Experience (at least 2+ years and 2 local references)*

*Education*

*Skill-sets (talent)*

As with all sectors some workers are more valuable than others because of what they uniquely bring to the job. In child care you will want to look first for experience before a glowing resume, and experience must be verified by at least two previous employers.

Experience is vital because it means that the candidate understands how to care for children properly, and that she is confident, trustworthy and competent. Education that is pertinent to our child's needs will also raise a nanny's salary. Advanced college degrees in child development or early childhood education are two good examples.

Skill-sets and talent: if your nanny can speak two or three languages, or is musically talented or artistic, or is a math or science whiz, that's an added enrichment value for your children and that's worth more compensation.

We have explored the nuts and bolts of what exactly you need from a nanny in terms of hours and duties. We also discussed whether it's better to pay a flat weekly wage or an hourly rate. Now let's look at payroll.

## **No 1099**

The IRS does not consider nannies as freelance workers or independent. They are classified as 'employees' and they require a W-2 form at the end of the year. This means that you – as the employer are required to report your nanny's income, as well as pay his or her social security and income tax. Some nannies prefer to be paid cash, but bear in mind that you run the risk of running afoul with the IRS should your nanny ever seek unemployment insurance in the future and you're listed as the last employer.

It's better not to guess the tax contributions you'll need to make on your nanny's salary because if you make a mistake, you are liable. It's safer to opt for an online payroll service like HomeWork Solutions or HomePay. They take care of everything for you and it's more affordable than hiring an accountant.

## **Worker's Compensation**

It is unlikely that your home insurance covers an employee working in your home against an injury or accident that results in a disability claim. You will need to speak with your insurance company to determine this. It's more likely that you will be required to purchase a Worker's Compensation insurance policy (which can run to just under two hundred dollars per year) if your nanny works a minimum of 40-hours a week. My advice is to seriously consider taking out an accident policy, even if your nanny works part-time. This will protect your family from any potential lawsuit should a domestic worker be injured while in your home.

## **Live-in Workers, Overnight Workers**

Live-in domestic workers are generally assumed to work a 40-hour week, even if the hours are arranged as less. This also applies to a nanny or house-sitter who regularly stays overnight.

## **Disability Benefits Insurance**

A nanny who works 40 or more hours per week for the same employer must be covered by Disability Benefits Insurance. The hours counted toward the 40-hour limit include all hours on premises. Disability Benefits Insurance is required for domestics four weeks after the thirtieth day of employment.



## **Hack #5: Guard Against Fake References**

It's important that you speak to at least two former employers of any potential employee. If possible ask for a professional email address, for example: [jane@lawyers.com](mailto:jane@lawyers.com) as opposed to [Jane1234@gmail.com](mailto:Jane1234@gmail.com). Try to obtain a landline and an address for a former employer. You will want to make sure that the referee is in fact a former employer and not a nanny's friend.

You might even want to Google the person to see if they are on social media. It is advisable to do the same with any prospective employee as social media can reveal a great deal about a person's aptitude and habits. When talking with a former employer you will want to listen out for any hints that he or she was not entirely happy with their nanny. For a comprehensive list of questions to ask a former employer please read my book: *The Nanny Time Bomb: Navigating the Crisis in Child Care*.

## **Hack #5: Background Checks**

Conducting an extensive background check is a mandatory part of screening a potential candidate. Your vulnerable child must be left in the company of a sentient, emotionally stable and honest person. Only a comprehensive background check will reveal if this is the case. There are numerous companies that can run a background check on a prospective candidate and most are listed online. It is also highly recommended for new employers to purchase and install a nanny cam to monitor a nanny in the home. For a comprehensive review of nanny cams and what is legal to record please consult a copy of my book: *The Nanny Time Bomb: Navigating the Crisis in Child Care*.

## **Hack #6: Sample Contract**

It is vital that you codify your working relationship with a contract. Contracts help to prevent misunderstandings later on. They also clearly structure what you as an employer will require day in day out from your employee.

As with all relationships the employer-nanny relationship can be a highly rewarding one that enables parents to maintain a career and raise happy children. Hiring a good nanny for your child is as important a decision as finding the right spouse. So do spend time and thought into what your ideal nanny should be.

## Extra Resources

Also available for download in conjunction with this Guide:

### ***(A1) A Care Giver's Guide to Emotional Intelligence***

A practical orientation to an infant's emotional development – includes activities.

### ***(B1) Employer Game Plan***

A useful worksheet for determining what type of care you will require.

### ***(C1) Child Care Contract***

A sample agreement for an employer and employee for an in-home working relationship.

**Disclaimer:** these documents are for personal use only and act as a guide only. They do not constitute or substitute definitive legal or academic papers. All employers and employees are encouraged to thoroughly research the rights and conditions of domestic workers under State law.

### ***Useful Links***

Employer Handbook:

<http://www.wcb.ny.gov/content/main/Employers/Employers.jsp>

Calculate whether your nanny is full-time or part-time worker:

[http://www.wcb.ny.gov/content/main/onthejob/CoverageSituations/domesticWorkers\\_NonAudioPPT.jsp](http://www.wcb.ny.gov/content/main/onthejob/CoverageSituations/domesticWorkers_NonAudioPPT.jsp)

## **Appendix 1: EMPLOYER GAME PLAN**

### **What are my needs?**

How many hours of child care cover do I need each week?

What days do I need covered?

Will that change week to week?

### **What can I afford?**

Lowest rate

Highest rate

Hourly, Weekly, Monthly, Flat rate

### **What do I expect from my nanny?**

- a) Hands on independent and a self-motivator
- b) An extra pair of hands, someone who can take daily directives
- c) Someone who is creative and energetic
- d) Someone who is experienced

### ***My obligations as an employer***

- a) Tax income
- b) Home insurance

c) Disability

d) Paid vacations, sick pay

### **Information I will need to ask for**

Legal identification, at least two forms

Two references

Resume

Permission to run a background check

### **Interview Availability**

Weekdays

Weekends

9am-12 noon, 12noon-5pm, 5pm-8pm

## **Appendix 2: Sample Employment Child Care Contract**

### **Employment Child Care Contract**

This is an agreement of employment between two parties, hereafter known as “employer” and “employee”. This agreement is subject to the State laws of

\_\_\_\_\_.

(Print) Legal name/s of employer/s:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(Print) Legal name/s of employee/s:*

\_\_\_\_\_

**Employee section:**



*Employee's Status: (circle one) Legal immigrant, legal U.S resident, naturalized citizen, American citizen, other: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Employee's Social Security # \_\_\_\_\_*

*Employee's: Driver's License #: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Employee: Passport #: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Employee: work visa: \_\_\_\_\_*

*Employee: Do you consent to a background check? (Please circle):*

Yes

No

**Employer section:**

*This position is: (please circle)*

Live in

Live out

*Trials: (please circle)*

1 session

2 sessions

3 sessions

4 sessions

*Probation: (please circle)*

1 week

2 weeks

1 month

3 months

*Start date & end/renewal date: (please print)*

---

*Weekly hours: (please print)*

---

*Weekly salary and/or hourly pay: (please print)*

---

*Weekly pay day: (please circle)*

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Cash

Check

*(Print) Overtime policy and rate of pay:*

\*\* Overtime begins to accrue 15 minutes past the hour, per every hour an employee works beyond his/her set hours.

*Vacation pay (please circle):*

This is expected as a full week's salary

1 week

2 weeks

3 weeks

4 weeks

*Seasonal retainer (Optional)*

The employee has offered her services for a fixed 12-month calendar period. The employee is contracted to be available to work the set hours that the employer has specified. If the employer/s do not require the employee's services on the same schedule during any part of the year because of an unexpected vacation, a vacation, a trip, due to relocating elsewhere during the summer, or because the employer's children are in full-time camp, please indicate the employer's retainer and/or compensation:

100% salary

75% salary

50% salary

25% salary

*Or indicate other arrangements: (nanny share, sourcing a position elsewhere for the employee, asking the employee to travel with the employer):*

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*Tax: Employer will you pay the employee's social security, income tax, etc. (please circle)*

Yes

No

*Sick/Health pay: how many days/weeks per year are allotted: (please circle)*

1 day

3 days

5 days

7 days

2 weeks

1 month

*Other:*

---

*Annual raise:*

Each year the employer and employee will renew this contract and a raise will be added according to:

The quality of previous service offered

The number of children being cared for

The % negotiated at the start of the original contract

*Employer: What annual raise are you offering your employee? (Please print)*

---

*Employer: What duties do you require from your employee (circle your choices)*

*Childcare:*

*General care and attention:*

Cleaning

Bathing

Feeding

Dressing

Changing (diaper)

Put to bed

Meal preparation

Travel

Sleep over

*Health:*

Basic first aid

CPR

Administer medications

***Escort:***

School/class drop off

School/class pick up

Attend classes with child

Drive child to school, class, and recreation sites

***Enrichment:***

Read to child

Cook with child

Take child on playdates

Take child to playgrounds and other facilities

Draw/paint with child

*(Print) Employer. Indicate what else you would like your employee to provide your child?*

---

---

---

*Cleaning: daily/weekly (please tick)*

Children's rooms only

Entire House/Apartment

*Additional notes:*

---

---

---

*Laundry: daily/weekly (please tick)*

Children's laundry only

Entire family's laundry

*Additional notes:*

---

---

---



*Grocery shopping: daily/weekly (Please circle)*

Children only

Entire family

*Additional notes:*

---

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*Additional errands: daily/weekly*

Employer. Please define clearly what additional duties you require. Take your time to fill (print) in this section, as new duties cannot simply be added once both parties have signed this contract.

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*Household rules:*

Employers to indicate rules (please circle) regarding care of the children and general house rules.

*Diet:*

No fast food

Gluten free

Dairy free

Sugar free

Vegan

Vegetarian

Egg-free

Peanut free

*Other: (Please print)*

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*Media: (indicate how many hours per day. Please print)*

Computer

Laptop

I-phone

Touch phone

I-pad

Screen games

Video games

TV

What TV channels are allowed?

Evenings

Weekends

*Other: (Employer. What other media entertainment rules you have? Please print)*

---

---

*Transportation: (please circle)*

If transport needs to be provided please indicate payment/expenses allotted, such as gas.

Employer's car

Employee's car

Subway

Train

Air travel

Boat

Cab

Car service

Walking

Bus

Coach

*Weekly expenses budget: (please circle)*

Yes

No

*Receipts kept? (please circle)*

Yes

No

*Other household rules: (please print)*

---

---

---

*Employer: Indicate the period of termination notice required: (please circle)*

1 week

2 weeks

3 weeks

4 weeks

*Employer's basis for immediate termination: (please circle)*

Ignoring or refusing to perform negotiated services

Disorderly appearance

Security breach

Theft

Abusive behavior

Drug or alcohol abuse

Repeated lateness

*Other: (please print)*

---

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---

*Employee's basis for immediate termination of labor: (please circle)*

Habitual lateness without compensation

Abusive behavior (employer or his/her children)

Drug or alcohol related behavior

Incorrect payment or delayed payment

Adding errands without negotiation

Inappropriate advances or overtures

*Other: (please print)*

---

---

---

*Additional notes:*

---

---

**Reference**

It is understood that if the two parties separate amicably and in compliance with the articles of this agreement, the employer will provide the employee with a written and verbal reference.

**Summary**

The two parties referred to as “employer” and “employee” have entered into this agreement lawfully under the full jurisdiction of State laws of:  
\_\_\_\_\_ and such laws governing domestic work and labor. By signing this agreement both parties affirm their obligation to faithfully fulfill all aspects of this agreement to the best of their ability for the time period agreed upon.

*Signature of employer/s:*

---

*Signature of employee/s:*

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## **Appendix 3: A Care Givers' Guide To Emotional Intelligence**

### **A Care Givers' Guide To Emotional Intelligence**

**By Jacalyn S Burke**

#### ***What is Emotional Intelligence?***

It is “...a form of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and action.” (Salovey & Mayer, 1990)

Years ago imparting emotional intelligence to our offspring was much easier. Most of us lived in communities where an extended family tree of grandparents, siblings, cousins and friends mapped out a vast emotional landscape. In this template children learned the rules. Everybody took a turn in this.

Most importantly, in this environment children experienced love expressed through touch, social skills developed through child's play, boundaries created by adult example and a sense of worth by simply belonging to a group or clan.

This wasn't a perfect system of course, but it did provide a foundation for community living and civic responsibility.

In today’s fragmented hectic world often parents and extended kin are unable to interact with a child consistently. This type of essential nurturance is outsourced to a relative stranger: a nanny or domestic or daycare worker. It is vital that such a provider of daily care be aware of the value of intelligent nurturance.

Through our collective study (as a society) of infancy and early childhood development we have come to a fundamental understanding of milestones.

***Here is a list of emotional milestones a child should be reaching at certain ages:***

### *3 months old*

EMOTIONS: **Opening up.** Infants develop deliberate responses and a calm interest in people, smiling at those around them.

SOCIAL SKILLS: **Attention and regulation.** Does your baby turn to look at you when you make sounds or facial expressions?

HELPFUL GAMES: **Look and listen.** Talk to your baby as you slowly move your animated face right or left, trying to capture his/her attention.

### *5 - 6 months old*

EMOTIONS: **Diversifying:** As they interact more with the outside world, babies display emotions like surprise, joy and frustration.

SOCIAL SKILLS: **Engagement and relating:** Does your baby seem happy or pleased when she sees her favorite people?

HELPFUL GAMES: **Smiling game:** Use words and funny facial expressions to get your baby to break into a big smile.

### *10 months old*

EMOTIONS: **Gazing:** Babies begin to follow their caregivers' gazes to understand what they are interested in.

SOCIAL SKILLS: **Emotional interactions:** Does she/he try to catch your eye or initiate engagement, such as reaching out to be picked up?

HELPFUL GAMES: **Funny-sound game:** Notice the sounds and expressions your baby makes and playfully mirror them back to her/him.

### *18 months old*

EMOTIONS: **Acting out:** Toddlers become more self-aware, and may experience complex emotions such as pride or defiance.

SOCIAL SKILLS: **Problem solving:** Does your toddler seek you out to meet his/her needs, such as asking you to hold his/her hand?

HELPFUL GAMES: **Working together:** Create a problem that your child needs your help to solve; involve her/his favorite toy.

### ***Infants and the Role of Personal Interaction***

Andrew Meltzoff, a professor of psychology at the University of Washington, noted that “gaze-following” in children as young as 10 months old was not only a precursor for emotional and social intelligence but also a good predictor of potential language skills. Other research shows that language develops more slowly in blind children and the children of \*depressed mothers (\* or substitute here ‘neglectful nannies’) where there is *little eye-to-eye, facial interaction*.

Parents who believe that stimulating bedroom materials, such as CD’s, tapes, books and DVD’s and/or activity classes will compensate for regular face to face engagement should be aware of a recent study that Patricia Kuhl (professor of speech and hearing at the University of Washington) conducted. Professor Kuhl’s original research over a decade earlier proved that very small babies have the unique ability to learn foreign languages. But time proved that playing tapes over the crib did not inspire millions of babies to pick up say Japanese or Russian. Why?

Dr Kuhl discovered that infants needed emotional context – that is – a connection to another person who spoke Japanese or Russian. Tapes of another language were simply filtered out by the infants as ‘background noise’. Professor Kuhl concluded, “... *people - at least babies - need people to learn...*”

### **Talking to Babies and Toddlers (Tools)**

Evidence of the need for “emotional context” can be found when a baby begins to attempt communication. To many an experienced seasoned nanny or parent the news

that their 'goo-goo-gooing' along with their infants actually caused them to advance linguistically, is not a big surprise. Dr. Michael Goldstein (psychologist at Cornell University) conducted a study involving two sets of babies and parents.

One set were instructed to give praise and encouragement randomly as their infants babbled. The other group was asked to specifically reward infants' language attempts with smiles and physical touch. The second group of infants was recorded as advancing faster than those who did not receive specific encouragement.

### **Mimicking Babies and Toddlers (Tools)**

Goldstein's research demonstrates that loving confirmation of a sound, mimicking a baby's gibberish and correctly responding to a baby word, empowers our infant to try harder. It is one the greatest joys of parenthood to hear our baby's first words. If we, or our nanny, are in sync with certain noises our baby makes regularly we will be able to detect our baby's efforts to form real words and to congratulate our baby.

### ***Object Permanence***

Another important fact that has emerged recently is that infants can grasp "object permanence". New research by psychologist Su-hua Wang at the University of California is demonstrating that babies as young as 10 weeks old are aware when a parent or nanny leaves the room they will not be gone forever.

Unfortunately some parents use the myth of "out of sight out of mind" to routinely replace or lay off nannies. They do not seem to realize that the infant involved will experience separation anxiety. Nannies too regularly move to better paying jobs at a second's notice convincing themselves that their infant charge will not notice. Continuity impacts a child's development and imparts a sense of security.

### ***Ways to Connect Emotionally - Floor Time***

Connecting emotionally involves 'attunement' that is literally being in sync with your child's emotions. One way you can achieve attunement is through what Dr. Stanley I. Greenspan calls "floor time". Floor time is a special time set aside for your child each day. (He advises at least 30 minutes per day) During this time you allow your child to take the lead. Your child is in control of whatever activity or game she or he wishes to play.

With younger children floor time does involve spending plenty of time on the floor on their level. It requires that parents/caregivers let go and go with the flow of their child's imagination without feeling the need to micromanage or correct. Infants may need a little prompting especially if you are introducing a new toy but generally your children should feel free to explore.

Older children might just appreciate you just hanging out with them. Activities like playing sports, pitching or looping a hoop, are relaxing and allows parents to casually connect. Passive activities such as reading a book, watching a movie, playing a board game or solving a puzzle *do not count* as floor time although these are wonderful opportunities to relate with children.

Floor time is *direct one on one interaction*. Media is turned off and you are not logged on waiting for an email. This communicates that you have showed up for your child's world. You enter their kingdom on their terms. Being in their realm, you are open to their feelings, their thoughts and their ideas. You need not worry about a lack of imagination your children will gladly carry you along once they see you are willing. During floor time your child will feel special, 'seen' by you and nurtured.

Floor time isn't a space without boundaries. Opportunities will arise demanding that limits are set. For example if your four year old son begins to whack a piece of antique furniture with his plastic sword you will want to explain to him that cushions are a more acceptable target. Play also involves a child losing her patience if something doesn't work the first time. Floor space contains problem solving, alternatives to rage and frustration and basic rules of social interaction. All of these activities teach children to develop self-expression and self- discipline.

***When Connection with Children is CHALLENGING***

It's true that some parents and caregivers may feel inadequate. Perhaps they were never really played with as children and as a consequence they don't know what to do. They might feel uncomfortable being intimate with children. With practice however connection can be both a rewarding and comfortable experience.

*Floor time* is simply an occasion to go deeper with your family. It will involve frustrations, exhilarations, resentments and inner peace. It is easier to start at the beginning with a newborn but you can catch up even with older children by showing again and again that you are interested in them.

With very small infants getting on their level is important. Being in tune lets your baby/child know that their emotional state has been understood, comprehended and acknowledged. You can do this by responding. *Then you play back your infant's feelings another way.* It is an interaction of *empathy*.

**For example:**

Baby drops her favorite toy, expresses frustration, parent picks the toy up and hands it back. Parent makes a 'happy' face and says 'Daddy got your toy?

That's better right?' as baby gurgles contentedly.

***Attunement***

With repeated attunement your infant discovers that those around him/her can understand her/his feelings. At around 8-months old infants recognize that they are separate from their parents and this recognition continues to evolve through intimate relationships with others, such as siblings, relatives and their Nanny.

Failure to attune successfully with an infant impedes that infant's emotional development. When a parent or nanny fails to show empathy with an infant's range of emotions - sadness, pain, joy and respond appropriately - hugs, kisses, acts of elation, *the infant may begin to avoid expressing those emotional states entirely.* The consequence of this withdrawal isn't just experienced between the infant and the

parent/nanny. A withdrawal of emotional expressions can be experienced in all intimate relationships and *throughout life*.

In addition to miss-attunement, a child exposed to a range of negative emotions: anger, depression and sadness can absorb and *express these emotions throughout life*. In other words, if the parent or the nanny is a depressive, negative type the infant will reciprocate their parent's/nanny's moods.

Being emotionally present in your children's lives is challenging. It takes a certain level of sophistication. For example, how can a parent or a nanny teach their child the many faces of sadness? If you as an adult are not comfortable with sadness to begin with you might struggle when your child loses a cherished pet, or when your child hears about a natural disaster or when your child breaks down because a character dies in his/her favorite movie.

### **The Power of Listening**

Your children are talking to you all the time. It might be your newborn's smile, your teenager's scowl or your toddler's silent glance. Your children come into this world talking. The question is who is listening? Working parents cannot be home to listen 24-7 but they can find someone who will listen effectively and consistently.

### **Additional Tools**

Create an observation journal for your nanny. Offer a digital camera, an I-pad or cell phone to record and monitor new sounds/noises that your baby makes, and new developments, such as grabbing an object, or attempting to roll over. You will be able to review this data on a weekly basis identifying your infant's needs, responding to those needs and directing your nanny accordingly. You will also be able to engineer your infant's progress intellectually, emotionally and mechanically through a videoed schedule and real-time observed floor time exercises using video applications.

## **Daily Practice**

Set aside time each day to mindfully connect with your children. Prioritize your nanny's time with your children and not her other tasks such as cleaning up or running errands. Keep a journal of your interactions with your child and stay present to their changing cycles. Limit media and consumer consumption and increase activities and experiences. Eat together as a family at least twice a week. Strive to get home and tuck your child up in bed with a story at night. Cook together, take walks together and play games together. Stay connected.

## **RESOURCES**

*Your Baby's Brain New Research* From Jealousy to Joy: How Science Is Unlocking the Inner Lives Of Infants. Newsweek, August 15, 2005, pages 32-39. By Pat Wingert and

Martha Brant

The Four-Thirds Solution: Dr Stanley I Greenspan

Social Intelligence: Daniel Goleman

NICHD Early Child Care Research Network 2005



## About the Author

Jacalyn S. Burke is a British-American writer and child care consultant. She is also the founder of Baby Does NYC (.com), a website focused on events, products, and services for parents of 0–24 month-old children. Jacalyn has been featured in *The Daily News*, *NEWS12*, *I Saw Your Nanny*, *Best Nanny Newsletter*, *The New York Times* and the *Nanny News Network*.

Jacalyn spent a decade working among Manhattan's nannies from 2004-2016, and her book: *The Nanny Time Bomb Navigating the Crisis in Child Care*, is a definitive guide for new parents searching for good child care, now available on *Amazon Books*. She is a graduate of *Middlesex University*, London, UK. Jacalyn lives and works in NYC and offers a variety of writing services. [www.jacalynsburke.com](http://www.jacalynsburke.com)

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