Distinguishing Yourself as a Professional Nanny From Other Child Care Providers

By Anne Merchant, Author and Nanny Educator

Enhancing Parent/Child Relationships

The role of the nanny is multi-faceted, depending on the needs of the people she is working with. One of the most important responsibilities is the nanny’s role in enhancing the parent/child relationship. This is one of the most significant ways in which a nanny distinguishes herself from other child caregivers.

To enhance the parent/child relationship the nanny must value and gain satisfaction from making a difference in someone else’s life. There are some people who go to their jobs and function well enough. They sometimes enjoy aspects of their job and other times they may watch the clock waiting for the day to end. But, there are nannies who gain a lot of personal and job satisfaction by looking at their job from a different perspective. They step back to look at the big picture and see where a little extra kindness can make a difference. They look to see what they can do to help enhance the quality of the lives of the people they care and work for. This doesn't mean that they don’t have bad days, or that they always put other’s interests before their own. A great nanny learns that it feels good to do a little extra to make life easier for the people around them. They find it gratifying to know that their actions make a difference in others lives. These people gain great self-esteem and confidence. They in effect, do as much for others as they do for themselves.

Examples of how this responsibility is realized:

Example 1:

You notice that each day upon Ms. Low’s arrival home from work her two children, ages three and five, surround her simultaneously asking questions, telling her about their day, and complain to her all before she has had the opportunity to relax. You realize that she has a stressful job. You are sensitive to the fact that it is difficult for her to leave her office, then directly enter into caring for her children. As a result, you ask her if she would like you to plan an activity for her children, either at home or away from home, during the time she usually returns home from work to give her the opportunity to catch her breath before caring for her children.

Example 2:

You notice that Jimmy, age four, acts-out as soon as his father comes home by whining, complaining, and arguing with everyone. You suspect that this is an attention seeking behavior directed at his father. You suggest to your employer that arranging a special time for just the two of them, (even for as little as five minutes), may help reduce...
Inside Tips from the Nanny of the Year (cont...)

Nannies and the National Association of Nannies that requested Nanny Recognition Week be declared in Massachusetts. Our request was granted and this September 25 - October 2 will be Nanny Recognition Week in Massachusetts and we are thrilled that Boston will be the host city for this year’s National Association of Nannies “We Care for the Future” Conference. This will be the third major educational event that Boston Area Nannies has brought to Boston in the past three years.

Of all the awesome experiences this past year, the most rewarding was hearing my twin charges, Daniel and Ryan, echo daily, in stereo, “Shell you are the best nanny in the world!” At the end of the day, at the end of the year, at the end of my life – that is what truly matters – that I have made a difference in the life of a child.

Thank you again for selecting me as the 2004 INA Nanny of the Year and allowing me to be a spokesperson and role model for our industry. I can only hope that you are as proud of me and my accomplishments, as I am of being associated with you, the industry cream of the crop, and your accomplishments as members of the International Nanny Association. 

Michelle Larowe, 2004 Nanny of the Year

Print Features
- May 12, 2004 – Newton Tab – “Newton Nanny Named Nanny of the Year”
- September 1, 2004 – Twins Magazine – “Nanny, Nanny of the Year”

Television Appearances
- Newsnight: Live with Barry Nolan – CN8 the Comcast Network
- Nitebeat – New England Cable News
- Fox Morning News – Fox 25 Boston
- Women's View with Lisa Hughes Channel 4 CBS Boston

Personal Appearances
- January 2004 – “Nanny 911” – Casting Call Appearance – Cambridge, MA

Distinguishing Yourself as a Professional Nanny (cont...)

this acting-out behavior. You suggest activities such as providing books, a board game, or specific ideas about what keeps Jimmy happily occupied. You mention that if Jimmy can count on having this time with his father you would be happy to organize an activity to keep him stimulated while his father is getting home at the end of the day.

Example 3:
Sometimes at the end of the day your employers are involved in discussions when you enter the room with their three year old son. Today it is obvious that they are talking about something important. Although you are no longer on duty, you tell their son that the two of you should go down to the playroom and check out the new computer game you just borrowed from the library. This gives your employers time to talk privately without interruption.

Example 4:
Your employer, Mrs. Woodworth, has just returned home from the hospital with her newborn. Although she denies it, she appears tired, worn out, and irritable. She is also breast-feeding and getting up every few hours to feed the baby around the clock. You suggest that she consider expressing breast milk so you can use a bottle to take care of some of the night feedings or that she consider giving the newborn formula every other night so she can get a full night’s rest.

By maintaining a professional attitude, knowing you are an important role model for the children you care for, and by enhancing the parent/child relationship will distinguish you as a professional nanny from other ordinary child care providers.

Anne Merchant, is the author of The Nanny Textbook, founded the Professional Nanny Training Program in 1981, and developed the first Weekend Associate Degree Program for nannies in conjunction with Wheelock College in Boston. She also developed the first distance training program and in-service program which offers free online nanny training courses at: ProfessionalNanny.com.