

40 - The Role of the Nanny in the Home Setting

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Audience: Current Active & Enrolled Students

Episode Transcript

Host Dr. Shipley Speaker: Hello everyone and welcome to Early Childhood Chatter with Dr. Shipley and Dr. Heald. We will upload a new episode every other week on Wednesdays.

Host Dr. Heald Speaker: Twice a month, we will come to you with a 10-minute professional development that you can quickly listen to for new ideas to try.

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Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Today, we want to welcome with us Candy Vajana. She is an award-winning International Nanny of the Year in 2017, newborn care specialist and nanny.

So exciting. She has traveled and varied her career journey and has loved every minute of it. To anyone reading her resume, her career choices may seem a little disorganized or lacking in direction, but it has always been clear to her.

However, when she was building upon her experiences from the lessons, she learned traveling and living overseas and contacting with other cultures around the world, she has worked as a nanny in so many capacities, looking after children and has gained so many different perspectives. She's worked with newborns all the way to 16 years of age, and she has also worked in schools and daycares. So, Candy, welcome to Early Childhood Chatter.

Candy Vajana Speaker: Thank you very much. Thanks for having me.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Yes.

The title of your session is The Role of the Nanny in the Home Setting.* So why is this important to you? What can our listeners get from this today?

Candy Vajana Speaker: Well, I believe that there are quite a few misconceptions about the role of a nanny in the home setting. So, I thought it would be a good way to actually share some of my thoughts.

Some of them might not be very popular, but I think it's important for both families and nannies to understand that nannies are not just people who are there to keep their children safe, in their quarters. We are there to actually help and to navigate the childcare world and to share our knowledge and expertise. And I also feel that the nanny and parent partnership is extremely important.

And if we are looking just for people who are going to keep our children safe, then we might want to reconsider our childcare options and not have a nanny in the home.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: You bring up a really great point. We really want to make sure our nannies have the training and experience and knowledge, because they're playing such a vital role in the homes.

So, what sort of training should nannies actually have?

Candy Vajana Speaker: Well, being a nanny is a huge responsibility because we are looking after other people's children. And so, first aid and CPR are just the basics. But it's important for the nannies to have the qualifications, but also to know how to use them in case of an emergency.

Ideally, in my view, a nanny would be qualified. However, this is a little difficult depending on which country you live. There are nanny schools in the UK.

I think everybody's heard of Norland. But I'm not sure that there are any nanny schools in the US or Australia or any countries in the world. I believe that the sort of training that a nanny should have is something that the nanny will have to find on her own.

So, attending classes at local universities or online, attending conferences, reading as much as possible about the child development milestones, and actually finding a mentor, somebody who has worked in childcare for a while who can actually help navigate how the nanny world works.

Most families nowadays also require nannies to be a little bit of an admin assistant. So, knowing how to prepare spreadsheets, planning lessons, and having all aspects of a child's life at the tip of their fingers is also very important.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: So, Candy, I think I'm just curious, but what made you want to be a nanny? Like how did you decide that this was going to be your profession?

Candy Vajana Speaker: So, I always enjoyed being around children and babies when I was younger. And my parents actually fostered a little girl when I was 16 years old. She was two when she came to stay with us, and she was with us for two years.

And that really cemented in me the fact that I wanted to work with children and that I didn't want to be a teacher. I wanted to work with children either one-on-one or two-on-one or three-on-one. And so, I went down the route of becoming a nanny.

And I actually, I was living in Italy at the time because I'm half Italian. And I did some research and found a nanny school in the UK. And I actually moved to England by myself when I was 18 and did my training there and then started working right after.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: Candy, this is so interesting. Early on, you talked about the partnership that you create with the parents, which obviously is so very important. And I'm imagining you create just as special a relationship with the child.

So, can you talk specifically a little bit about those relationships that you're creating, those bonds?

Candy Vajana Speaker: Yes, I think the relationship actually starts before you accept a position because the whole interview process is extremely important. When you interview for a nanny position, you're not interviewing for a desk job where you're dealing with papers. You're interviewing for a position where you're going to be in somebody's home.

And you're going to be looking after their most treasured possessions, the children. So, it's important to really delve quite deeply into what the parents' views are, what they want the outcome to be. Because having a nanny means lots of things to lots of different people.

For some people, it means, you know, I can go to work, and I know my child's looked after. But to other people, it might mean I have somebody here who can actually help me spend more quality time with my child because they can deal with the other aspects of childcare. So, it's important to find out what the parents want and if that lines up with your views.

There's no point in taking a position where, you know, the parents want you to, I don't know, punish the child if that does not go along with your views and your philosophy. So, starting from the interview, you start to create your partnership. It's important to have that partnership with the parents, with the child and as a family as a whole.

Because as a nanny, you're kind of a buffer between all the different parts in the household. I have been in positions where the families, for example, are so out of touch with each other that the children don't really even know who their parents are. And it's important at that point not to mix the lines and not to blur the lines in the sense that as a nanny, you come in and you're going to give your all to the child.

But you don't want the child to be confused about who is their parent and who is their nanny. And if you do have a partnership with the parents, the roles are very clear. Mum does this, dad does this, nanny does this.

But together, we are actually achieving the goal that we've created for ourselves. With children, it's very different. I connect very easily with children and creating a bond comes quite easily to me.

I think with parents, it's a little bit harder because you actually have to get the fact that they are your employer. But you might actually have more skills and knowledge in your field than they do. But you always have to keep in mind that the parents are the parents, and the children belong to them and not to you.

So, you need to actually follow what they would like you to do.

Dr .Tisha Shipley Speaker: Candy, this is amazing. This is so interesting.

We've never had a nanny on here before. So, I can hear that passion in your voice for what you do and these families that you work with. So how does a nanny contribute to a child's life, learning and their emotional stability?

Candy Vajana Speaker: It's a very good question because having a nanny in the home can have positive and negative effects, in my view.

So, the positives would be that the nanny is there, and she is providing the love and care and attention that the child needs. And hopefully the nanny is in the household and is able to model the kind of behavior that they want the child or the children to have. Emotionally, I think as a nanny, you have to be a very stable person because you're giving a lot.

You're receiving a lot as well because children do love, and they love hard. And so, you get all their love. But you're also giving a lot of yourself.

And if you're not emotionally stable, then the children can pick up on that. And I feel that, you know, in all aspects of a child's life, so the learning, the emotional, the developmental, the nanny can contribute in so many positive ways. So, for example, if I am working with a family and I see that a child is, let's say, ready to learn to read, but they're three years old.

But I can see the signs are there. As a nanny, I can actually help them develop the skills to learn how to read. And maybe I don't do it with a book.

I do it through play, so they don't actually know that they're learning, but it's actually happening. As a nanny, I can also make sure that emotionally they are learning to deal with their emotions, that it's okay to have emotions, positive and negative ones. And, you know, a nanny is there 100% of the time so they can actually walk the child through the developments.

I have, however, seen children who have been affected negatively by the presence of a nanny. And this is very sad to me. I walked into a situation where some of the children in my care thought that the nanny was actually their mum.

And emotionally, that was awful. And basically, I had to go back with them through their childhood to teach them who their parents were. And that, in a way, is not what a real nanny would do.

And like I said, it can have positive and negative effects. But again, if the family and the nanny have that partnership, then it should only have positive effects.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: So many things in education really come back to the partnerships that we create, those relationships that we have.

And this is another example of that. So, I think it's really great that you highlighted that. I think it's also great for us to understand that, as with everything in early childhood education, there are challenges and difficulties that we have to find a way to overcome, adversities to overcome.

But a lot of our listeners are early childhood education-focused students who are either in the settings currently or looking for care.

So, for someone who is wanting to become a nanny, what would you recommend as the first steps for them?

Candy Vajana Speaker: I would say that getting as much experience and exposure with children as possible is the first step. So, start with babysitting or part-time nannying, spending time with children, and then maybe getting a mother's helper's role.

So, somebody where the mum's at home, but you're helping out. And then join professional organizations like the International Nanny Association, network, meet other nannies, get a mentor. That's very important, because as a new nanny in the field, it's a very lonely job.

You're with children all day, and then you're on your own. And so having somebody who you can share what happened during your day with, somebody who understands what you're going through, is very important, because most people don't understand what nannies do. And sometimes nannies also have NDAs that they've signed, so they can't actually share what happened during their day in detail with, let's say, a spouse or a partner.

So, I would say start networking, find a mentor, get as much exposure to children as you can, get your first aid and CPR, and then start with nanny jobs that maybe are not full-time, so that you can continue to develop your learning and understanding of child development.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Candy, you've given so much great insight and ideas for people, because some people just want to work with children like you and don't actually want to be in the classroom. So, thank you so much for that.

As we wrap up, I want you to give our listeners three takeaways for them to think about after this podcast is over.

Candy Vajana Speaker: All right, so the three takeaways that I have are basically think about working with children, but don't think about it as an unregulated profession. Think about it as a profession that is recognized by people all over and see what things you might change of the industry.

So basically, nannying is not regulated in this country, so anybody can wake up and become a nanny. But it's not that simple, and it's not an easy job. So, I would like to ask the listeners to think about how the world would be if nannies were recognized as a profession.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: Okay, and so as we leave, one challenge for our listeners, one thing that we can just put out there and really hope that they can try to achieve.

Candy Vajana Speaker: Wake up in the morning and think that you are a captain of a ship, but you have no training, and translate that into the nanny world. Translate the fact that you have decided you're going to be a nanny, but you have no training and don't know where to start.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: That is awesome. Candy, do you have anything as we wrap up that you want to ensure that our listeners know?

Candy Vajana Speaker: I would like to say I'm available if anybody wants to reach out and talk more about the nanny world, and if anybody wants a mentor, I'm happy to help out.

Dr. Tisha Shipley Speaker: Well, thank you so much, and thank you so much for being here today, and we hope to talk to you soon.

Candy Vajana Speaker: Thank you very much. It was lovely to be here.

Dr. Stephanie Heald Speaker: Thank you, Candy.