

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A PROFESSIONAL NANNY

Skilled, structured, essential

Being a nanny is sometimes reduced to “just looking after children”, yet the day-to-day reality is skilled, accountable and rooted in early childhood practice. Professional nannies provide consistent, relationship-based care that supports children’s learning and development, promotes wellbeing and helps families to function in busy modern life. With more parents balancing demanding roles, the quality and professionalism of in-home childcare have never been more significant.

At the heart of the role is a deep understanding of child development. Each day, nannies make informed decisions that influence children’s physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional development. Supporting early communication, modelling

respectful interactions, guiding behaviour and encouraging independence all require more than instinct: they rely on knowledge, experience and reflective practice. A professional nanny observes carefully, adapts responsively and plans intentionally around each child’s individual interests, needs and stage of development.

This shows up in purposeful practice: planning learning through play, creating supportive routines that provide structure and security and providing rich opportunities to explore. That might be a sensory activity for a toddler, a story and rhyme session to build vocabulary, a park visit planned around gross motor development, or calm homework support for an older child. These everyday moments are not passive care, these are the building blocks of curiosity, confidence and resilience

requiring active, thoughtful and skilled work.

In a fast-paced world, nannies often provide the continuity children need. A familiar, attuned adult can help children regulate emotions, manage transitions and feel secure throughout the day, offering reassurance, guidance and emotional support. This sense of security is essential for healthy development and cannot be underestimated. Professional nanning also supports parents: clear communication, shared routines and aligned expectations give families peace of mind and confidence that their children are safe, understood and thriving while the parents are at work.

Despite the skill and responsibility required, nanning is still not regulated in the same way as other early years professions. There is no



universal requirement for qualifications, background checks or ongoing training, and this can contribute to variable practice and the profession being undervalued. At an absolute minimum, nannies should be required to hold an Enhanced DBS check, a valid Paediatric First Aid certificate, two recent references and some level of childcare training to help ensure safe and competent practice.

Regardless of the absence of consistent regulation, professionalism can also be demonstrated through the standards we choose to uphold – individually and collectively. At Norland, we require all of our students, Newly Qualified Nannies and

qualified Norlanders to uphold our Code of Professional Responsibilities no matter what role they are playing in the care of young children. We believe it is vital to have a set of standards which nannies can use to be held accountable to.

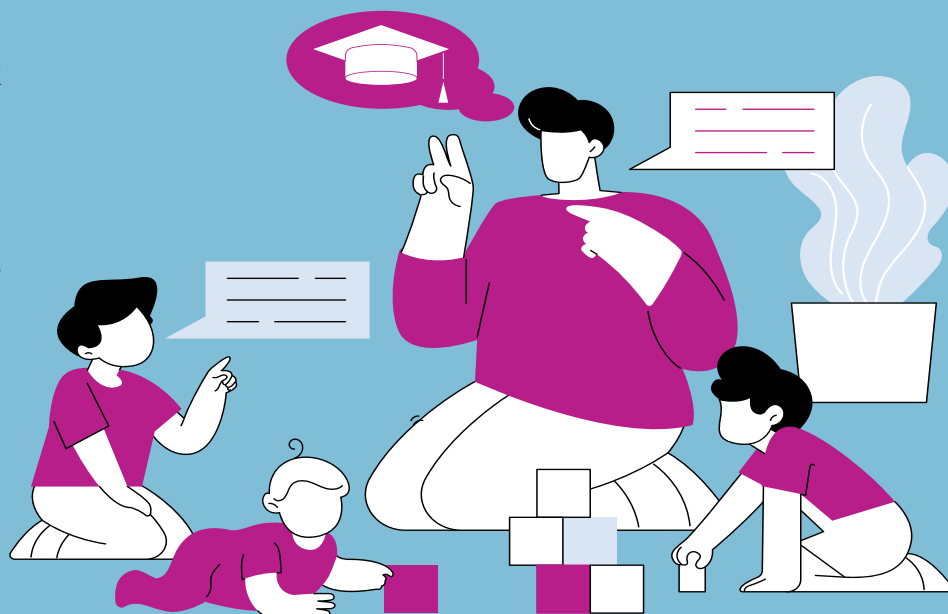
Continuing professional development (CPD) is one of the clearest ways to evidence commitment. Engaging in CPD shows a commitment to growth, learning and maintaining best practice. This might include accredited training, online learning, supervision or mentoring, and engaging with professional networks. Practice in areas such as safeguarding, health and safety, behaviour guidance, inclusion and supporting social and emotional development

continue to evolve; staying informed ensures that practice remains safe and effective, protecting children and strengthening outcomes. CPD is not simply about collecting certificates - it builds confidence, supports reflective practice and signals to families and the wider sector that nannying is a professional discipline. Nannies should ensure they are choosing reputable providers and, where possible, learning that is evidence-informed and aligned with early years guidance.

Safety cannot be assumed. It must be planned for, practised and regularly reviewed. Nannies are the sole adult responsible for children across a range of settings – at home, on outings and

in the community – so risk assessment, vigilance and sound judgement are essential. Maintaining an up-to-date paediatric first aid certificate is a baseline expectation, alongside regular safeguarding training. Knowing how to respond to accidents and incidents, recognise signs of abuse or neglect, knowing reporting pathways, and recording and sharing concerns appropriately are all vital components of safe, professional practice.

High standards in daily practice are what truly defines a professional nanny. That includes reliability and punctuality, clear written and verbal communication with parents, as well as being organised, prepared and proactive in the role. Professionalism also extends to how the nanny conducts themselves within the home. Working in a private family environment also requires discretion and strong professional boundaries, underpinned by trust and respect. The nanny is part of a team, working in partnership with parents while also advocating for the child's best interests. This balance requires emotional intelligence, strong communication skills and a clear understanding of



professional boundaries. High standards also involve reflecting on practice – considering what works well, what needs adapting and what further development would strengthen professional practice.

Taking pride in the role is part of raising standards across the profession. When nannies identify as early years professionals, they are more likely to invest in learning, set clear expectations and value their work appropriately. That professionalism also shapes public perception: consistent, high-quality practice helps families and the wider sector recognise nannying as a skilled career – not an informal arrangement.

There is a growing movement within the nanny community for greater recognition and clearer, professional standards, and change

often starts with what we model in everyday practice. By prioritising developmentally appropriate care, safeguarding, CPD and reflective partnerships with parents, nannies protect children, support families and contribute to the wider professionalisation of the industry. Put simply: professional nannying is skilled, responsible and essential. It is high time it was widely recognised as such. **CP**

Resources

- Coram PACEY | Careers in childcare - Nannies: bit.ly/4sWAlbT
- Member resources | Being employed as a nanny: bit.ly/4tl9hTT
- Norland Nanny training and employment agency: bit.ly/4tIqzvp