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In Family & Parenting



Viewing the Nanny as an Addition, Not a Replacement

Five tips for facing your fear and hiring a sitter

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As a parent, you often encourage your children to face their fears—whether it be the first day of school or that scary monster living under their bed. Now, it's time to heed your own advice: as nervous as you may be, you must overcome the thought that you will become less important in your child's life if you employ a nanny or baby-sitter.

The fear of being "replaced" due to the presence of a nanny sometimes prevents parents from hiring a regular sitter. Unfortunately, this refusal of outside help can make each day more complicated: no matter how hard a parent may attempt to be in two places at once, it is impossible to fulfill all the duties in both the home and the workplace. And let's face it: you deserve a break!

From your perspective, try to view the nanny not as a replacement but as an additional source of attention, guidance, and love for your child. For your children, a nanny will be seen as someone who fills the day with fun, takes them on adventures, and just spends time with them until Mommy and Daddy get home from work.

Here are some ideas for maintaining that sacred position in your child's life—and for reassuring yourself that your role will not soon be forgotten.

- **As always, leave your nanny with specific guidelines for your child's daily (and perhaps nightly) activities.** By keeping the same routine, your children will be reminded of previous times that you spent with them. In doing so, they will view the nanny as an alternative (rather than vice versa) for when you are busy with grown-up responsibilities.
- **Additionally, be sure to have specific activities for your children to do with the caregiver and separate activities for them to do with you.** Having special activities will encourage your child to look forward to spending time with both you and their sitter. Work with your nanny, and try to come up with ideas that can include you after the nanny's day is done. For example, as the holiday season approaches, suggest that your sitter helps your children cut out snowflakes to tape to the kitchen windows. This winter wonderland is something that you can enjoy as well!
- **Regardless of when your working day is finished, be sure to devote the time immediately after you get home to your children.** As long as the day may seem to you, it seems even longer to your child—especially when his or her parents are not around. Let your children know how important they are by making them apart of your first moments at home each evening. If you get home after they have gone to bed, set aside time first thing in the morning to devote just to them.
- **Make an extra big attempt to tuck your children into bed each night.** Sometimes, it will be impossible to be home in time, no matter how much effort you exert into rearranging your schedule. On those nights, be sure to call your children and talk to them as if you were there. Ask about how their day turned out, what bedtime story they want to hear, etc. And always remind them how much you wish you could be there with them!
- **Try to view the weekends as the opportunity for family time.** It is unavoidable that some jobs require attention each day, but you cannot forget the parenting is one of them. By making personal one-on-one time with your child a priority on Saturday and Sunday, you will feel more confident when leaving them with a nanny once the work week begins again.

If you have any questions about finding a nanny or maintaining the relationship with your nanny, feel free to contact Heather Dubuque at heather@LillianNannyAgency.com.

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