

**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
WORKING MOTHERS AND THEIR NANNIES**

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Clinical Psychology in partial fulfillment of  
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**Abstract**EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN  
WORKING MOTHERS AND THEIR NANNIES

by

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This qualitative study explores working mothers' relationship with their child(ren)'s nannies (paid domestic caregivers who care for the child in the family home). The purpose of this study was as follows: 1) to shed light on aspects of the mother-nanny relationship that have not yet been explored in the existing literature; 2) to discern important issues regarding this relationship to inform clinicians who work with this population; 3) to illustrate salient themes that will inform further research with working mothers like those interviewed for this study.

The participants included 11 women between the ages of 31 and 40 who worked full-time (at least 40 hours per week) and had at least one child less than 12 months old being cared for at home by a nanny. Data was collected through an in-depth, semi-structured interview that averaged 52 minutes in length. The instrument was developed to focus on the experience of working mothers along four domains: (1) What is a mother's conception of herself as a mother and as a professional, and how does this affect the relationship with her nanny? (2) What is the nature of mothers' relationships with their nannies and how and why do mothers maintain these relationships? (3) What is the relationship between each mother and her own mother, and how does the nature of this relationship affect the mother's

relationship with nanny? (4) What is mother's understanding of nanny's relationship with the child and how does this impact the mom and her relationship with her nanny? In addition, a demographics questionnaire was administered.

The interview was designed to elicit information regarding women's thoughts and feelings about their relationship with their nannies. Topics regarding women's professional lives and their relationships with their own mothers were also explored. Using grounded theory, major themes regarding aspects of the mother-nanny relationship were derived from close examination of the interview transcripts. These themes were organized around the four domains described previously. Discussion centers on describing prominent issues in the mother-nanny relationship and how these relate to the caregiving behavioral system, the mother's relationship with her mother, as well as cultural considerations.

The small sample size and homogeneity of participants limits the application of these findings to the broader population of working mothers. However, this research suggests new ways of thinking about women's struggle to balance work and family both practically and intrapsychically. It looks at the mother-nanny relationship as it relates to theories of attachment, points out possible gaps in the literature regarding motherhood, and suggests areas for future research.

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## Chapter I: Introduction

The transition to parenthood has been the subject of scores of research studies which support the now generally accepted notion that this transition is extremely stressful, often transforming a woman's sense of self and unsettling the couple's relationship. Longitudinal studies consistently concluded that a majority of couples reported decreased marital satisfaction in the three years after the birth of their first child (Cowan & Cowan, 1988; Belsky et al., 1983; Cox & Paley, 2002). Antonucci and Mikus (1988) write in their article on personality and attitudinal changes during the transition to parenthood that, "the birth of the first child ushers in a period of disequilibrium and reorganization; it is a period that includes disengagement from selected roles and relationships as well as the definition, creation, and integration of new roles and relationships" (Antonucci & Mikus, 1988, p. 63). It is a crisis that is not resolved by returning individuals to previous roles, but by urging them into new ones.

While studies have looked at how this transformation and transition impacts parents as individuals, the marital relationship, as well as the parent-child relationship, an area of research that has not yet been thoroughly explored is the relationship between new mothers and the women whom they hire to care for their children – their nannies. Many women who return to work, as well as women who do not, decide to employ a nanny to help care for their children full- or part-time in their family's home. (In using the term "nanny" I mean generally a person who is hired to care for children full- or part-time in the family's home. I am not referring exclusively to live-in caregivers.) For so many mothers, the relationship is unlike any other they've had, and it is often fraught with powerful emotions typically reserved for spouses and immediate family members.

Mothers form a relationship in which issues of trust, dependency, jealousy, and class differences are at the fore.

### **Birth of a Study: Reflections on my First Experiences with a Nanny**

As I made the transition to parenthood, I personally experienced much of the phenomenon described in the literature. However, while I experienced shifts in my relationship with my husband, the impact this had on me was much less powerful than the developing relationship I had with the woman I hired to care for my daughter while I went to graduate school. I had strong feelings about this upcoming nanny relationship before I even knew who would fill the job. Just the notion of trusting someone enough to care for my infant daughter (Aliya) filled me with anxiety. When I eventually did hire a nanny (Dora), I hired the woman who had cared for my two nephews for four years, since their infancy. Before hiring her, much of my anxiety had been free-floating; however, once Dora began working for me my anxiety became focused on my relationship with her.

Dora gave birth to her own son five months before the birth of my daughter, and that was when she stopped working for my sister-in-law. Therefore, when she came to my home to care for my four-month old daughter, she was leaving *her* nine-month old son with her sister-in-law. Before I had a chance to get to know Dora as a person, I was already filled with feelings of guilt about her need to leave her young son. I was also wary that because she had her own young child, she would not be interested in providing the best care for my daughter. I found comfort in the knowledge that at least our children were different genders, as if caring for a baby girl would be separate and different than

caring for her son.

The emotional tumult was most intense during the first few months of our relationship. A certain level of anxiety was always present in varying degrees of magnitude. My daughter was only six weeks old when she began to express her desire to be held only by me. She was not a baby who enjoyed strangers, or for that matter, even tolerated them. My daughter's nature thus made it more difficult for her to forge a relationship with Dora, though eventually she did. My daughter's temperament also exacerbated my own difficult feelings about leaving her. Finally, after three months of working for us, Dora developed a rapport with my infant daughter, despite my daughter's protests whenever I left the house.

An incident occurred about four months after Dora began working for my family that made it plainly obvious how dependent I was on a woman who had her own complicated life and family to care for. I will never forget the night that Dora called me and said in her broken English that she had had a miscarriage, and yet she hadn't even known she was pregnant. She had gone to the emergency room and the doctor told her to rest for two weeks, which meant I had no one to care for my daughter while I went to class, patient appointments, and supervision. Of course I was concerned for Dora and her physical and emotional well-being; however, I was also in a state of near panic about who was going to care for Aliya. Aliya was so particular about who held her, let alone who cared for her, that I couldn't, in that moment, fathom leaving her with a stranger. And even if I could, who would that stranger be? My anxiety was in part related to a lack of perspective. I was so distressed about the immediate impact Dora's absence would have on my daughter, that I couldn't see that in the long run, it would be meaningless to her.

Now that I am the mother of two daughters, and Aliya is much older, I have much more perspective than I did when she was seven months old.

This incident had a great impact on me and was seminal in my thinking about the relationship between mother and nanny. Not only was I extremely anxious about who to leave Aliya with, but I also had feelings about Dora that had not existed earlier. I worried about her carelessness in becoming pregnant and not realizing it. I had a difficult time believing that she needed two weeks to recover from a miscarriage and this thought then led to questions about whether or not she cared about her job, and if she did, how much. I then also felt guilty for doubting Dora's need to recover. When Dora returned to work, I never uttered a word to her about my reaction to her miscarriage, however I found myself secretly wishing it were appropriate to discuss the benefits of birth control with her. I knew this was completely inappropriate, but more importantly it was a reflection of my intense dread of something derailing my working relationship with Dora.

After Dora returned to work and things settled back into a predictable routine, I still had flashes of intense anxiety that arose out of feelings of distrust. Dora would regularly arrive late, and occasionally she would arrive very, very late. I would have an appointment to get to and instead of waiting for Dora at home, I would pack up Aliya and the stroller and go to meet her outside the subway station. On these occasions, my mind would wander to places that were beyond the borders of reason. I would think Dora was simply never going to show up again. I would dread the possibility that she might be angry at me about something. In sum, I would return to the panic I felt when she had called about her miscarriage. I am not a person who worries excessively about things in general. That was what was so remarkable to me about these moments of anxiety. Dora

had the ability to disrupt my emotional equilibrium like no one else, not even my husband or immediate family.

As a new mother, I was utterly committed to caring for my daughter as best as I possibly could. I felt guilty about leaving her to go to school, and it took many months before I could openly admit to myself and others that I liked to get out of the house and go to school and work on the related commitments. My inability to acknowledge that I enjoyed going to graduate school was intertwined with my dependence on Dora and the fear that I might lose her. I had not been so completely dependent on someone since I was a very young child with my mother and father. The feeling that I could truly depend on them was shattered at the age of five when they divorced and both became very needy themselves. Thus, my own history and relationship with my parents mingled with and influenced my relationship with Dora. I began to imagine that the nature of this dynamic varies from individual to individual, but the paradigm exists for everyone.

Once I began to consider doing my dissertation on the relationship between mothers and nannies, I started to explore the subject with other new moms. I quickly found that the intensity of feelings I experienced related to this relationship were not unique. Again and again, I heard stories that were fraught with anxiety related to guilt, trust, dependence, fear, anger, and other serious concerns. What became very apparent to me was that women were rarely nonchalant about their relationship with their nannies. Instead, they had powerful feelings and typically their emotions relating to the topic were expressed with great intensity.

*Searching for Mary Poppins: Women Write About the Intense Relationship Between Mothers and Nannies* (2006) is a collection of essays written by women on a

variety of topics related to their relationships with their nannies. Many of the essays echoed my own experience and portrayed the relationships as being very emotionally challenging. The book's editors, Susan Davis and Gina Hyams, write in the introduction about general trends they observed in the essays. They are addressing mothers as their readers when they write that "We become emotionally involved – whether through deep dependence on our nannies to take care of us as well as our children, our sense of obligation to take care of them, lend them money, and help them navigate the American governmental systems, or through the jealousy we feel when, at the end of our work days, we come home to find our babies clinging to their nanny... It's this raw emotion, the kind that keeps us up nights crying or fuming, that is the pitfall of every mother-nanny-child relationship we know" (Davis & Hyams, 2006, p. *xxi*). They continue in their next paragraph to write about the impossibility of making peace with many of these emotional issues – primarily guilt and anger. They found that "among professional and middle-class mothers, emotional loss of control over childcare is almost impossible to talk about" (*ibid.*, p. *xxii*). Their book thus grew out of a desire to understand why having nannies in their homes makes women think so hard about who they are and what they want. In other words, it forces women to experience a number of difficult feelings and to hopefully gain a stronger understanding of themselves and their identity as mothers.

The essays in the book illustrated the intensity of emotions that the editors referenced and this corroborated my burgeoning theories about the intensity of these relationships. In addition to this book I looked at very informal discussions in which women engaged on an anonymous online message board called *urbanbaby.com*. Since it is anonymous, this message board allows mothers to be blunt and say things that they

otherwise would not divulge. Almost all of the women who use this particular message board live in New York City and the surrounding suburbs. Some of the women are stay-at-home mothers, and others work in or out of the home. The message boards have a search feature which allows users to search the archived message boards for any posting that includes the words that are searched. When I searched the word “nanny” I found a plentitude of conversations that cast light on the emotions I have been describing.

### Preliminary Qualitative Study

In order to better understand this body of data, I conducted a small qualitative study for a class I was taking on qualitative research. Using a grounded theory approach, I took three complete online conversations and coded them using line-by-line analysis. Before I coded the data independently, I spent time on a number of occasions writing down my ideas about this topic in order to become aware of my presuppositions and biases. In understanding my own perspective better, I aimed to code the data with an exploratory eye, rather than trying to prove any hypothesis. After first compiling a list of the codes and taking theoretical memos as I went, I then looked over the codes to pull out the larger themes.

The results of my qualitative study revealed that the relationship between mothers and nannies can be laden with very strong feelings. These feelings were related to a mother’s sense of herself, her nanny, and her child(ren). What emerged was the sense that mothers who employ nannies often feel they have placed themselves in a serious bind. In the data I coded, mothers often exhibited feelings of guilt, fear, anger, distrust, and denial. It seemed that something about the mother/nanny relationship itself generated

strong feelings in mothers that were skewed when compared to other relationships a mother may have. When I say skewed, I mean that women's opinions seemed to be on the extreme end of a continuum and often lacked balance or moderation.

The women who engaged in the online discussions I coded tended to be very judgmental and opinionated in their comments, and there was a level of anxiety present in the data. The codes bespoke of a fear in mothers that their children were not being properly cared for and there was a feeling of powerlessness in the relationship. This preliminary study confirmed that this topic would be appropriate for further exploration in an effort to gain deeper understanding of the relationship between mothers and nannies.

Daphne de Marneffe eloquently explored aspects of motherhood in her 2004 book, *Maternal Desires*. In her chapter devoted to the subject of childcare she writes:

When child care arrangements work, life feels like it makes sense, even sings with balance and purpose. When they don't, we are pitched into a sense of desperation, where the very foundations of life feel askew. When it goes well, we easily, even sometimes a bit smugly, take credit. But when it goes badly, the precariousness of the entire system is revealed, and we often want more than anything not to have to deal with it anymore. (de Marneffe, 2004, p. 148)

de Marneffe speaks to the general emotional arousal that women experience in regards to their childcare arrangements and nanny relationships. The present study focuses on the mother-nanny relationship as it is experienced by women who are navigating their careers, while also striving to be caring and involved mothers. This research utilizes in-depth interviews of career-oriented, working women who also have a small child who is

in the care of a nanny while the mother is at work. The narratives are analyzed in an effort to gain further understanding of a woman's relationship with her nanny as it relates to four domains: (1) What is mother's conception of herself as a mother and as a professional, and how does this affect the relationship with her nanny? (2) What is the nature of mothers' relationships with their nannies and how and why do mothers maintain these relationships? (3) What is the relationship between each mother and her own mother, and how does the nature of this relationship affect the mother's relationship with nanny? (4) What is mother's understanding of the nanny's relationship with the child and how does this impact the mother and her relationship with the nanny?

The following chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant to this investigation. This review includes the following: a general survey of literature regarding women's involvement in the workforce and its relationship to child outcomes; women's attitudes towards employment after the birth of a child; a discussion of how women choose their childcare arrangements; maternal separation anxiety, adult attachment and the mother-nanny relationship; the intersection of adult attachment and maternal separation anxiety; the caregiving system. The research presented in the literature review provides a foundation for understanding the review of data as it will be presented in the methodology, results, and discussion chapters.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

### Women in the Workforce

According to data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of women with children under 1 year of age who returned to work was 57% in 2008. In that same year, the number of employed women with children under the age of 6 was 64%. These statistics represent a significant increase since the 1960s, when approximately 20% of mothers were employed (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 2009; Hill, et al., 2005, p. 833). As the number of employed women with young children has increased, a vast body of research was done to look at the effects of maternal employment and early childcare on children's development. The broad finding across the research is that maternal employment and early child care does not have deleterious effects on children. There are some exceptions to this, but the results tend to show that a good mother is a good mother whether she is employed or is staying at home, and an unfit mother is unfit whether employed or at home.

One of the most prominent research endeavors was undertaken by the NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, which has funded and authored numerous articles on topics related to early child care, including a 1997 study on the effects of early childcare on infant-mother attachment. With a large sample size of 1,153 subjects from 31 sites around the country, they followed infants from birth to 3 years. Home visits occurred when the infants were 1, 6, and 15 months old. Observations of the childcare arrangements took place at 6 and 15 months, and Strange Situations were conducted at 15 months. Their results showed that "there were no significant differences in attachment security related to childcare participation. Even in extensive, early, unstable, or poor-

quality care, the likelihood of infants' insecure attachment to mother did not increase, nor did stable or high-quality care increase the likelihood of developing a secure attachment to mother" (NICHD Early Child Care Research Network, 1997, p. 875). They found that there was no difference between infants who received less than 10 hours of nonmaternal care per week and those who received more than 30 hours of care and therefore, childcare constitutes neither a risk nor benefit. They did find, however, that poor quality childcare added to the risks created by poor mothering alone. The combined effect of low maternal sensitivity and inadequate childcare constituted risk factors in children, not childcare (of varying qualities) on its own.

There have been other NICHD studies, including one conducted by a research team led by Jeanne Brooks-Gunn that looked at the impact of maternal employment on cognitive outcomes. When controlling for quality of childcare, home environment, and maternal sensitivity, negative effects of a mother working more than 30 hours per week during the child's first 9 months were linked to lower Bracken School Readiness scores at 36 months (Brooks-Gunn, et al., 2002, p. 1052). The effects of any maternal employment by 1, 3, 6, or 12 months were negative, although the only group where the findings were statistically significant was in the group of children whose mothers went to work between 6 and 9 months postpartum, only 5% of the total sample. As was true in the NICHD study that looked at attachment outcomes in children with employed mothers, results showed that effects were "larger" for children whose mothers were found to be "insensitive" at 6 months. The authors comment in the discussion section that "Good-quality care at home, and good-quality child care, can go a long way toward buffering the negative links between early maternal employment and later child outcomes" (ibid. p.

1068).

Another study led by Anne Borge looked at early childcare and physical aggression and found that children in the care of their own mothers were more aggressive than their counterparts who attended daycare. Analysis was conducted on 3431 subjects who completed self-report questionnaires regarding their children's behavior. They found that "the proportion of children with high physical aggression was nearly one and a half times as high in the homecare group as in the day-care group" (Borge, et al., 2004, p. 370). However, the results were influenced by children from "high-risk" families, and no difference in aggression was found between children in childcare and those from "low-risk" families who were cared for by their mothers (ibid., 2004, p. 367). The findings suggest that for children in "high-risk" families, attending daycare outside of the home can have protective effects. As was highlighted by the previous two articles, childcare influences child outcomes, however, maternal and family factors trump the effects of childcare.

As part of a large follow-up study conducted by NICHD on their previous findings, they looked at the relationship between early childcare and aggression with findings that were different than those found in Borge's study. They found that more hours spent in center based childcare predicted higher levels of mother-child conflict, as well as more teacher-reported externalizing behaviors, and lower levels of teacher-reported externalizing behaviors (NICHD, 2005, p. 565). Unlike the self-report data in Borge's study, NICHD had longitudinal data that included mother-reported, as well as teacher-reported data. One can comb these and other research articles without ever finding one clear answer to whether or not a mother's decision to work negatively affects

child outcomes.

Penelope Leach, renowned for her child development manuals, has more recently turned her attention to researching childcare, and published a book entitled *Child Care Today, Getting it Right for Everyone* (2009). She expresses a refreshing perspective when speaking about the NICHD research findings. She writes that:

We are brought up to respect scientists as people who make objective inquiries after some kind of truth, and therefore to believe that if a body of scientific research is accepted for publication by other specialists in its field, then it should be taken seriously, probably even “believed” by the rest of us. Unfortunately it’s not that simple. Even the best-funded, and most extensive study, carefully designed, conducted, directed, and analyzed by respected researchers, can leave some question marks, even contradictions. (Leach, 2009, p. 34-35)

In this small sampling of articles on the impact of early childcare on various dimensions such as attachment, cognitive outcomes, and aggression, the results are not especially clear. For parents who are contemplating different childcare options, or whether to use childcare at all, reviewing the literature may leave one without a clear sense of what is best for children. Many mothers and fathers have thoughts about the effect that infant childcare will have on their new babies and make choices that are often influenced by their beliefs. It is unclear what, if anything, the average woman knows about current research on childcare, but it is likely that a mother’s understanding of how nonmaternal care will affect her child is largely borne out of emotional preconceptions. Additionally, a woman’s decision to return to work is not simply based on how it will affect their child, but is also grounded in her general attitude towards employment.

### **Women's Attitudes Toward Employment After Birth of Child**

Decisions regarding childcare also relate to an inherent belief held by many women and men that mothers *should* be caring for their children. The work of Rosalind Barnett has focused on gender myths and their impact on women's relationships and careers. She writes that "being female doesn't automatically give you a talent for weaving. Rigid cultural norms, not biology, are operating here" (Barnett, 2004b, p. 6). Societal norms are also raised by Robert Drago in his book entitled *Striking a Balance: Work, Family, Life*. Drago uses the term "motherhood norm," describing it as a societal belief that women should be mothers and should provide unpaid family care (Drago, 2007, p.7). The societal norm described by Barnett and Drago is a powerful belief structure that women can rationally refute - however, the emotional tug of these beliefs is difficult for many women to shrug off. In addition, the flipside inherent in the "motherhood norm" is that working is negative and has negative effects on children. In this vein, Barnett writes that:

Strong beliefs persist about negative effects of maternal employment on women, their marriages, and their children, in spite of considerable systematic research indicating that, on average, employment has positive effects. The underlying assumption is that the roles of wife and mother are "natural" roles and are therefore performed without undue stress. In contrast, the role of employee is seen as "unnatural" and therefore highly demanding. (Barnett, 2004a, p. 158)

In addition to cultural beliefs that women should be mothers, not employees, there are also women who make the choice to stay at home because of their fear and negative

impressions of non-maternal care.

A qualitative study by Susan Walzer published in 1997 in which she interviewed 25 couples after the birth of their first child revealed similar findings regarding beliefs and fears about the negative impact of maternal employment. Walzer found that:

Negative imagery related to child care fueled questions about whether maternal employment is harmful to babies. For couples in which mothers stayed at home, the images of baby-sitters and child care centers were negative pictures of neglect, sickness, danger. For couples in which mothers worked, societal discomfort with non-maternal child care was felt in two ways: finding it in the first place, and then worrying about whether babies would be harmed and/or mothers supplanted by their not being together full-time. (Walzer, 1997, 225)

Walzer's study highlights the stress experienced by women regarding their employment and childcare decisions, whether they decide to return to work or stay home. Women who decide to return to work are forced to reckon with the societal pressure and fearful imagery of childcare arrangements. As increasing numbers of women return to work after having children, these norms and beliefs are slowly being reshaped. Research has also shown that there are demographic differences between women who believe that being a working mother is not only okay, but healthy, and those who believe it is ideal to be a stay-at-home mother.

A 1993 article by Brenda Volling and Jay Belsky sought to understand some of the determinants of maternal employment. Their sample consisted of 164 Caucasian women, their husbands, and their firstborn infants in a central Pennsylvania college town. The results reported in this study are just a portion of a larger longitudinal project that

began before the mothers had given birth. For this study's purposes, they only included mothers who reported either "yes" or "no" during their prenatal interview when asked whether they planned to return to work. Women who were uncertain were not included in these analyses.

Results of the study revealed that women who planned to return to full-time work after the birth of their baby had a significantly higher income than those women who planned to work part-time or not work at all (Volling & Belsky, 1993, p. 7). They also found that women who planned to be homemakers differed from their more employment oriented peers in that they were less committed to their work roles, and more committed to their role as mother. Financial concerns were "absolutely essential" to 66.7% of women who returned to full time work within the first 3 months after their child's birth, and to 61.5% of women who returned to work part-time. Fifty-four percent of women who returned to part- or full-time work rated personal enjoyment of working as very important to their decision. This data suggests that there are women who must return to work for financial reasons, and of these women, many also derive personal enjoyment from working, while others do not. More educated women, as well as women with a high level of ego strength (as measured by the 16 Personality Factor Questionnaire) were likely to value career development and personal enjoyment as important reasons for returning to work. Women with low self-esteem and low interpersonal affect were more likely to view the family's need for income as an important reason to return to work (ibid., p. 8). All of the women in the sample stated at their prenatal interview that they were more committed to their role as mother than their role at work. What separated the working from non-working moms was their need and/or desire to balance that role with

their commitment to work.

In sum, Volling and Belsky found that “the transition to parenthood is determined by multiple factors, including socioeconomic, interpersonal, and contextual characteristics” (ibid., p. 10). The data presented in this article reveals the clear differences between women who want to continue to work after becoming a mother, and women who prefer to stay at home and be the primary caregiver for their children.

A 1984 study by Hock, Gnezda, and McBride also explored the attitudes towards employment after the birth of their first child, and differences between women who chose exclusive maternal care and women who were more oriented towards their careers. They administered questionnaires to mothers shortly after the birth of their first child while still in the maternity ward, and then 3 months postpartum. On both questionnaires, most mothers believed that they could meet their children’s needs better than anyone else. Only 9.1% at the first sampling and 6.0% at the second sampling believed that it “was not good for their children to be cared for by someone else because the children could be exposed to values and attitudes with which the mother disagrees” (Hock, Gnezda, and McBride, 1984, p.427). On both questionnaires nearly 80% of mothers reported that motherhood was “the major way of fulfillment in a woman’s life” and if given a choice, a majority of participants said they would rather stay home than work. Similar to the results of Belsky and Volling’s research, Hock and her colleagues found that women who did not plan to return to work held stronger beliefs in exclusive maternal care. More highly educated women were thus believed to follow less traditional adult roles. They wrote that “it is not surprising that less educated mothers in this sample reported preference for home over outside employment and that less educated women considered

motherhood as their primary source of fulfillment” (ibid., 430). To summarize, women with more education are more likely to be career oriented and open to non-maternal care of their infants. However, when also considering the cultural norms that women across education and employment lines believe regarding the importance of maternal care, it would make sense that women who return to work would be more likely to feel conflicted about their decision to work.

A 1984 article by Nancy Pistrang looked at women’s work involvement and its association with experiences of motherhood. Pistrang found that nonworking mothers associated high work involvement with less positive experiences of motherhood. However, nonworking women who had been highly involved in work prior to the birth of a child tended to feel more irritable, less important, and more depressed. “They had lower self-esteem and reported greater costs of motherhood, less intrinsic satisfaction from motherhood, and more negative changes in their marriage” (Pistrang, 1984, p. 442). These same women had decided to stay home because despite their personal desire to work, they felt they should stay home because it was “best for the baby.” This conflict thus contributed to their negative feelings related to motherhood. Pistrang, in general, found that women who had not been very involved in their careers prior to becoming mothers generally had a smoother transition to parenthood and were more content to stay home. Pistrang’s findings highlight the often difficult feelings that career oriented and career devoted women experience when trying to balance their professional pursuits with motherhood.

## **How Women Choose Childcare Arrangements**

A woman's decision to work leads directly to decisions about childcare: where care will be provided, and by whom. This decision is influenced by a number of factors, including affordability, convenience, and socioemotional considerations. With increased numbers of mothers returning to work, navigating the variety of childcare options has become a stressful necessity. Census data from 2005 reveals that for children aged five and under with employed mothers, the most common childcare arrangement (25.8%) is care by relatives, primarily grandparents. The least common childcare arrangement (3.6%) is nonrelative care in the child's home (Loughlin, 2010).

Elizabeth Pungello and Beth Kurtz-Costes have published two articles examining childcare decisions. Their first article, published in 1999, was a review of the limited existing research on the topic. Unsurprisingly, they found that "...mothers' decisions to return to work and to search for care and care selection are associated with demographic characteristics of the mother, contextual factors, maternal beliefs, and child factors" (Pungello & Kurtz-Costes, 1999, p. 91).

Their subsequent article, published in 2000, was a prospective study that also looked at employed mothers' selection of care for their infants. They first interviewed women who were pregnant, and then interviewed them again after they had given birth and made decisions regarding childcare. Their results indicated that "already during pregnancy, women who eventually choose nonparental care for their young infants differ in important ways from women who will later rely only on parental care" (Pungello & Kurtz, Costes, 2000, p. 252). Mothers that chose nonparental care expressed a strong commitment to their careers and a desire to return to work, while also maintaining a

belief that mothers “do not necessarily need to quit their jobs and stay home with infants” (ibid., p.252). In contrast, mothers who later selected parental care for their infants held less positive attitudes towards employment and expressed a stronger preference for parental care. They also found that those women who were committed to their careers and who did not have negative attitudes towards nonparental care experienced little conflict regarding childcare selection. Mothers who needed to return to work for financial reasons, but would have preferred to stay home with their child, experienced more conflicted feelings (ibid., p. 254).

A 2002 article by Lisa Riley and Jennifer Glass entitled “You Can’t Always Get What You Want,” focused on what facilitated a match between mothers’ preference of infant-care, and what mothers actually arranged. They found that 83% of employed mothers of newborns expressed a preference for child care by a family member; however, 78% of these women were not using relative childcare at 6 months postpartum, most likely because it was not possible. Another interesting and relevant finding was that mothers who had older children “appeared to alter their preferences toward nonfamilial care and hence were better able to match their preference to their actual choice of provider than other mothers” (Riley & Glass, 2002, p. 15). In short, mothers of newborns may initially express a preference for childcare by a family member, but they eventually become accustomed to non-relative care, and this becomes their new preference. This finding suggests that many mothers of newborns do not prefer non-relative care, but they actually have very little basis for judgment as they don’t have any experience with non-relative care. Subsequently, after mothers try non-relative care and become accustomed to it, their attitudes and beliefs change.

The women in the present study all used non-relative care from immigrant women, some of whom were undocumented. This ethnic and socioeconomic discrepancy adds a layer of complexity to the relationship between mother and nanny. In her 2001 book, *Doméstica*, sociologist Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo looks at the world of immigrant domestic workers employed by affluent, primarily White Americans. She notes that there has been a recent expansion of paid domestic work, in part because of women's increased participation in the labor force, especially in professional and managerial jobs. "The relatively underdeveloped nature of day care in the United States – as well as middleclass prejudices against using day care; and the mass immigration of women from Central America, the Caribbean, and Mexico -- have contributed to the increase in domestic labor" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001, p. 27). Hondagneu-Sotelo further argues that when middle-class American women hire private domestic workers, they are buying freedom from domestic responsibilities, including childcare. More often than not, the women they hire are "distinct and subordinate by race and class, and are now also made subordinate through language, nationality, and citizenship status" *ibid.*, p. 22). This reality is sociologically significant, and it has psychological and dynamic repercussions on the mother-nanny dyad. It is an aspect of the mother-nanny relationship that is often situated in mothers' cultural and emotional blindspots, but can be at play in the relationship.

### **Maternal Separation Anxiety**

In considering the notion that some women may choose to return to work while others feel they have no choice, it is important to think about the emotional impact of these decisions on the mother. Therese Benedek's 1970 chapter article explored the

concept of maternal separation anxiety. Benedek believed that excessive amounts of separation anxiety cause mothers to become overprotective to the point that the child's attempts to become autonomous would be undermined. Conversely, a mother with very low separation anxiety may increase the likelihood of the child feeling emotionally abandoned and the mother not becoming appropriately attached to her child. Benedek thus proposed that a moderate level of separation anxiety promotes a healthy relationship between mother and child. Subsequent research supports her theory.

Ellen Hock and colleagues developed a measure intended to evaluate a construct they labeled maternal separation anxiety that generally assesses the level of anxiety a mother experiences as a result of separating from her child. They state that "maternal separation anxiety is defined as an unpleasant emotional state tied to the separation experience: it may be evidenced by expressions of worry, sadness, or guilt" (Hock, et al., 1989, p. 794). (The measure had been used by several researchers prior to the publication of the article that officially introduced the measure.) Maternal separation anxiety is normative in new mothers and serves an important purpose in establishing the mother-infant relationship. However, some women may experience levels of anxiety that are either below or above the average, and this can influence anything from the mother-infant relationship, a mother's psychological health, as well as a mother's relationship with nanny.

The Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale (MSAS) measures three distinct dimensions using a 35-item self-report questionnaire. Subscale 1 measures the general anxiety a mother feels about separation and the extent to which she feels sad or nervous about separation. Subscale 2 measures a mother's perception of how she believes

separation will impact her child. Subscale 3 assesses maternal concerns about separation as they relate to employment. (ibid., pp. 795-796)

A 1988 article by McBride and Belsky sought to thoroughly understand the nature of the phenomenon. Their subjects consisted of 63 primiparous women who completed the MSAS self-report exam at 3-months and 9-months postpartum. 52% of the mothers were employed either part- or full-time at some point during their infant's first nine months. To better understand *determinants* of MSA, they looked at 6 different variables, 4 related to mother, and 2 related to infant. These determinants included maternal demographics, prenatal employment plans, employment status, maternal personality, neonatal behavior, and infant temperament. Then, to understand the *consequences* of MSA, they administered Strange Situations when the infants were one year old to assess attachment status.

McBride and Belsky found that mothers who were anxious at 3 months remained anxious at 8 months. However, when their anxiety was assessed as a function of maternal employment, they found that nonworking mothers' experiences were more stable while working mothers' levels decreased (McBride & Belsky, 1988, p. 410). With regard to general separation anxiety, mothers of secure infants (as assessed by the Strange Situation) experienced a moderate amount of anxiety, whereas mothers of avoidant infants experienced more, and mothers of resistant infants experienced less. Interestingly, mothers of secure infants expressed the most employment-related separation anxiety, significantly more than the mothers of insecure infants (ibid., p. 411). In other words, higher levels of separation anxiety that were related to employment were in some way beneficial, possibly, to the attachment relationship between mother and

infant. Perhaps women who were anxious about separation but did not have a choice were able to modulate their anxiety better than those who did not work. It is also interesting to consider the ways in which the mother-child relationship, as well as a child's temperament, influenced the separation dynamic. Women who determined prenatally that they would stay at home after giving birth expressed the most employment related separation anxiety which implies that their decision to stay home may at least in part be based on this anxiety.

The authors surmise that because mothers of securely attached infants experienced moderate levels of separation anxiety, mothers with very low levels of separation anxiety may have more problematic attachment. On the other end of the spectrum, very high levels of anxiety may "result in overprotective behavior which fosters an enmeshed relationship that interferes with individuation" (ibid., p. 413). Therefore, too much or too little anxiety may negatively impact the attachment relationship.

A 1986 study by DeMeis, McBride, and Hock focused on how a woman's decision to work affected the development of their maternal separation anxiety. They studied 62 women, 26 of whom, a few days after the birth of their child, expressed a preference to work, and 36 of whom preferred to stay home. Later analyses also compared women who preferred to stay home and could, versus those who had to return to work. Thus, there is a comparison of women who return to work and those who do not, as well as those who prefer to return to work, and those who do not. The sample was generally comprised of older, well-educated mothers, and measures were administered when infants were 2 days old, 7 weeks old, 8 months old, and 13.5 months old. Subjects

were given the MSAS, the Career Salience Questionnaire, and the Maternal Role Investment Scale (DeMeis, McBride, & Hock, 1986, p. 628).

Demographically, the group of women who preferred to work was very similar to the group of women who preferred to be at home with their kids. In the group of women that preferred work, all of them were employed within 12 months of giving birth, and most (24 of 26) were employed within 4 months. At 13.5 months they were asked their primary reason for working. 11 of 25 cited financial reasons, 10 indicated they liked to work, and 4 stated they valued their careers. The home-preference group (36) had 16 who returned to work by 13.5 months. 13 of 16 cited financial need.

The researchers found that mothers who preferred staying at home were more strongly invested in the maternal role than were employment-preference mothers, and were less committed to jobs or careers. At 2 days and 7 weeks postpartum, MSAS scores were similar between the two groups. However, at 8 months and 13.5 months, employment-preference mothers had significantly lower MSAS scores (*ibid.*, p. 629). In contrast, mothers who preferred to stay at home, but were working outside the home despite their preference, did not experience significant drops in MSA. The authors admitted surprise at their results. “We had thought that routinely separating from their infants for employment would decrease their anxiety. However, these mothers’ feelings about separation may not have changed because they really did not want to be employed but were working for financial reasons. Thus, the experience of leaving their infants to go to their jobs may have maintained these mothers’ feelings of sadness and guilt, rather than ameliorate them” (*ibid.*, p. 631).

The results thus suggest that a woman’s employment preference is just as

important as her employment status in influencing levels of MSA during the first year of motherhood. After reviewing this study, I am curious about whether or not employment preference influences a mother's relationship with her nanny. I would surmise that women who prefer employment may have a smoother relationship with their nanny in general because the presence of the nanny enables them to continue with their career. However, for those mothers who feel consciously or unconsciously unsure of their "maternal instincts", having a nanny may result in a perceived competition as the nanny may be viewed as a more adequate maternal figure than she is herself. Conversely, a woman who prefers to stay at home but needs to continue working despite her preference may have a more difficult relationship with her nanny. Perhaps she feels no one can better take care of her child than she can, and as a result her child is not getting the best possible care. Or perhaps she is jealous of her nanny for developing a close relationship while she must work.

Cynthia Stifter, Colleen Coulehan, and Margaret Fish (1993) explored the ways in which employment status and maternal separation anxiety influences mother-infant attachment. With a sample of 73 mother-infant dyads, they compared mothers who returned to work before their child was 5 months old with mothers who stayed at home until their child was at least 10 months old. They administered the MSAS and observed free play sessions in a laboratory setting. When the child was 18 months old they administered a Strange Situation (Stifter, Coulehan, & Fish, 1993).

The research team's rationale for their study was similar in nature to the questions explored in the present study. Stifter and colleagues propose that, "if a mother holds the belief that only she should provide care to her infant and feels guilty about being apart

from her infant, then she may choose to stay home with her child. On the other hand, if this same mother were to be employed outside the home, her feelings and beliefs would be in conflict with her work status, and this conflict may subsequently influence her behavior toward her infant” (ibid., p. 1452). They thus created 4 classifications that included high-anxiety employed mothers, low-anxiety employed mothers, high-anxiety nonemployed mothers, and low-anxiety nonemployed mothers.

They found that highly-anxious employed mothers were the most intrusive group, as observed in the free play sessions. While all other mothers decreased the intrusive behaviors between the 5-month and 10-month play sessions, the highly-anxious employed mothers had an increase of intrusive behaviors. They subsequently discovered that employed mothers with high separation anxiety were more likely to have children with avoidant attachments. The authors hypothesize that “it may be that working mothers who are under severe time constraints and who have intense feelings about being separated from their infants overcompensate for their absences by controlling the interaction rather than following the baby’s interests, pace, and signals (ibid., p. 1458). They determined that maternal separation anxiety had a mediating effect on the way in which employment status and attachment influence each other.

### **Adult Attachment and the Mother–Nanny Relationship**

*“There is, of course, much clinical evidence that a mother’s feelings for and behaviour towards her baby are deeply influenced also by her previous personal experiences, especially those she has had and may still be having with her own parents...”* (Bowlby, 1988, p. 15)

John Bowlby, the founder of attachment theory, proposed the notion that attachment status functions as a sort of inner structure which influences, among other things, how people interact with others and how they handle stress. Secure attachment arises out of a nurturing mother-child relationship. Mother is responsive to her child's signals of distress, and out of this relationship the child develops into an adult who understands that stressful experiences can be managed. Adults with secure attachment feel they can rely on those close to them to give support and help when needed, and they can in turn be relied upon to do the same (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Bowlby, 1988; Shaver & Hazan, 1993). Secure adult attachment can also provide a strong sense of control, increased self-confidence and self-efficacy (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Mikulincer & Florian, 1998; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Collins & Read, 1990). Mikulincer and Florian write in their article entitled "The Relationship between Adult Attachment Styles and Emotional and Cognitive Reactions to Stressful Events" that the premise of their research is the understanding that "secure attachment is an inner resource that may help a person to positively appraise stressful experiences, to constructively cope with these events, and to improve his or her well-being and adjustment. In contrast, insecure attachment, either avoidant or anxious-ambivalent, can be viewed as a potential risk factor, leading to poor coping and to maladjustment" (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998, p. 143). The transition to parenthood often being a stressful one, it makes sense that a mother's adult attachment organization would become activated during the transition to parenthood.

The ideal attachment classification is secure. Anxious-ambivalent, and avoidant

classifications are less desirable in that they hinder a person's ability to deal with stressful events productively, as well as often making intimate relationships more difficult.

Anxious-ambivalent individuals tend to have more difficulty evaluating how threatening and how out of control a situation is. They tend to exaggerate and have a more emotionally distressed reaction which then abates more slowly than it would for a person with secure attachment. Avoidant individuals, on the other hand, tend to experience others as untrustworthy, unhelpful, and possibly threatening, therefore causing them to believe they must rely exclusively on themselves. In addition, they are more likely to maintain distance in intimate relationships (ibid., p. 145).

Mikulincer and Florian's article reports on a number of studies, several of which focused on the transition to parenthood as it relates to adult attachment. Their first study looked at the association between attachment style and women's anxieties during pregnancy. To evaluate adult attachment style they administered a self-report adult attachment-style scale (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). In their second study they looked at the impact of mother's attachment style on coping with the birth of their first child. They found that attachment style affected the mother's mental health during the transition to parenthood. New mothers who were classified as anxious-ambivalent or avoidant reported significantly more psychological distress than new mothers who were secure. The authors state that their findings support their argument that securely attached women exhibit better mental health than insecure mothers during the transition to motherhood (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998, p. 157). In summing up their research on new mothers, they state that "security in attachment serves as a reliable protective inner resource that helps mothers in the adjustment to their parental role and demands. Moreover, it appears

that insecurity in attachment may hinder mothers' abilities to successfully cope with parenthood and, therefore, may serve as a valid diagnostic indicator of difficulties in fulfilling the maternal role" (ibid., p. 158).

The finding of Mikulciner and Florian's study support the notion that adult attachment is an important factor in the transition to parenthood, and thus plays a role in the relationship between mother and nanny. The attachment-based security or distress that a woman experiences as she becomes a mother will impact her relationship with her spouse and child, as well as her relationship with nanny.

The premise of the entire mother-nanny relationship is that the mother needs help from her nanny, and the nanny needs the mother. The mother needs to trust and rely on her nanny. She needs her nanny so much that she cannot work or go to school without her. Therefore, if a woman has difficulty seeking support, as described in the quote above, or difficulty trusting someone enough to depend on them, problems could arise in her relationship with nanny. It thus will be relevant in my research to look at a woman's adult attachment organization – her working model of how she behaves in intimate relationships – in order to better understand why some women fire ten nannies before finding one they think they can trust, while others tend to have an almost instinctive trust in their nannies.

For their part, nannies bring their own set of needs to their relationship with the mothers. The nannies need to work in a decent physical and emotional working environment, and must earn a steady and adequate wage. This is even more important if they are first-generation immigrants and/or undocumented; they may view this job as their sole anchor in an otherwise shaky existence. If they have children, this job may also

be central to providing those children a sense of security and give the mother a sense that she is taking good care of her family. Because of class differences, citizenship differences, and typically, ethnic and racial differences between nanny and mother/employer, the nanny may also bring a wide range of projections, hopes, and fears to this relationship that also interact with their employer's attachment styles.

Hondagneu-Soleto found that the domestic caregivers she interviewed craved contact and recognition from their employers. She found that "there is a dramatic mismatch in what employers and employees desire from their relationship. Employers... generally want some distance from the women who do the work... but the women they hire want more intimacy" (Hondagneu-Soleto, 2001, p.193). It is important to keep in mind the idea that just as for mothers, nannies bring their attachment styles, along with a host of hopes, expectations, emotions, to their relationship with their employer.

### **Adult Attachment and Maternal Separation Anxiety Intersected**

*Which brings me to my mother. Because, of course, any essay about a nanny has inextricable ties to one's own mother. Where else does one get one's definitions of caretaking, good and bad? How often do young parents take comfort in the thought, "Well, at least I'm not going to fail at this whole thing as miserably as my own parents did." (Shepard 2006, p. 83)*

Maternal separation anxiety and adult attachment classifications do not just coexist, but rather a mother's attachment working model influences her level of anxiety as it relates to parenting. There is a body of research that looks at parents' internal

working models and the quality of infants' attachment. Preoccupied mothers have been seen as more dependent on their own mothers and still engaged in a push and pull struggle with them. Some research has found that these mothers tend to feel threatened by their infants' developing autonomy and thus experience greater levels of separation anxiety (Haft & Slade, 1989; Cassidy & Berlin, 1994). A 1997 article entitled "Maternal Separation Anxiety in Infancy: Precursors and Outcomes" by Scher, Hershkovitz, and Harel explores the relationship between a mother's attachment working model, maternal separation anxiety, and her infant's attachment status. They looked specifically at the way in which mothers' relationships with their own mothers influenced their experience of maternal separation anxiety.

Their sample consisted of 58 mothers who were recruited in the maternity ward of an urban Israeli hospital. They administered the Emotional Status Index (ESI) when infants were 3-months-old in order to evaluate Maternal Separation Anxiety. When the babies were 9-months-old they gave the Interpersonal Relations Questionnaire (IRQ) to evaluate a mother's childhood representations of her childhood. At 12 months they administered a Strange Situation. 67% of participants were classified as securely attached, and 33% were preoccupied. Differences were seen between the preoccupied and secure mothers when their children were 12-months-old, but not at 3-months. Women who were preoccupied expressed much more separation anxiety than their secure peers. After the Strange Situation, preoccupied mothers also reported higher levels of distress, more concern about their child's stress, and doubts about the ability of the researcher in the laboratory to properly care for their upset baby. 87% of secure mothers reported decreased separation anxiety between the 3-month and 12-month evaluations,

while only 40% of preoccupied mothers experienced a decrease in anxiety (Scher, HersHKovitz, & Harel, 1997, p. 107). They state that the diagnostic and clinical validity of the ESI measure (different than the MSAS) has not yet been established, but they feel confident that their findings are valid.

In their discussion section, the authors write that “mothers who at the end of the first year expressed high and diffused level of concerns about a brief separation episode from the child were likely to be mothers whose childhood memories involved a somewhat negative image of the maternal care they had received” (ibid., p. 109). This statement identifies the way in which attachment working models influence maternal separation anxiety. Women who are secure are more likely to experience maternal separation anxiety in moderate levels that decrease as the baby ages, whereas preoccupied women are more likely to maintain, or even increase, their feelings of anxiety over time.

Another study that is similar in premise to the Scher et al. study was conducted by Wilma Lutz and Ellen Hock (the latter being the creator of the Maternal Separation Anxiety Scale). Arising out of their belief that Maternal Separation Anxiety must be at least partially grounded in a woman’s childhood experience, they sought to determine the degree of relationship between memories of childhood experience and maternal separation anxiety (Lutz & Hock, 1995, p. 59).

The study consisted of 49 mother infant dyads. When infants were two-months-old participants completed the MSAS. At 7-months the mothers were given the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI), as well as the Mother-Father-Peer Scale (MPF), a 70-item, self-administered questionnaire designed to asses recollections of childhood experiences

with parents and peers. They gave both the AAI and MPF in order to compare two different systems of assessing mental representations of attachment relationships. 96% of women received the same AA classification with both the AAI and MPF system. 75% were found to be secure, 8% were dismissing, and 13% were preoccupied. For the purposes of their data analysis, the dismissing and preoccupied groups were combined.

The results showed that women with secure attachment representations were more likely to remember their mothers as accepting and encouraging independence when they were children. They were less likely to remember their mothers as rejecting. Women who remembered their mothers as more rejecting and discouraging of independence during childhood were more likely to report higher levels of MSA when their infants were 2 months old (*ibid.*, p. 62). Their results revealed a significant difference between the two attachment groups, meaning women in the insecure group were more likely than those in the secure group to report higher levels of MSA when their infants were 2 months old. The authors hypothesize that mothers with high levels of separation anxiety may be trying to compensate for their own feeling that they lacked security in childhood.

The results of this study are similar to those found in the Scher et al. study. Insecure adult attachment tends to correlate with higher levels of maternal separation anxiety. Other studies that have evaluated MSA over time have found that anxiety drops over time (DeMeis, McBride, & Hock, 1986). Two-months is perhaps too early to assess MSA when other studies have found that both secure and insecure adults have relatively high MSA at 2-months, and then among certain groups of mothers, MSA drops over time.

The constructs of maternal separation anxiety and adult attachment models will be

helpful in gaining understanding of the dynamics that are at play in the mother nanny relationship. Another component of the attachment system known as the caregiving system, provides additional insight into the mother-nanny relationship.

### **The Caregiving System and the Mother-Nanny Relationship.**

In John Bowlby's influential book, *Attachment* (1982), he describes a construct that is a reciprocal behavioral system to the attachment system that has come to be known as the caregiving system. Bowlby writes that all mammals have a system of "retrieval" by which mothers insure their offspring are in close proximity. If, for example, an infant wanders out of their mother's vicinity or begins to cry, a mother's caregiving system becomes activated and she immediately sets out to rectify the situation.

Bowlby writes that:

In primitive societies a mother is likely to remain very near her infant, and almost always within eyeshot or earshot of him. The mother's alarm or the infant's distress will at once elicit action. In more developed communities the scene becomes more complex, partly because not infrequently a mother appoints someone to deputise for her for a shorter or longer part of the day. Even so, most mothers experience a strong pull to be close to their babies and young children. Whether they submit to the pull or stand out against it depends on a hundred variables, personal, cultural, and economic. (Bowlby, 1982, p.241)

Bowlby writes that the time and effort a mother puts into caring for her infant often competes with her other responsibilities, such as doing household chores and dealing with other family members. A more modern day approach to the theory naturally

includes a mother's professional life as a source of competition. Bowlby offers that when a mother is in a situation in which she cannot be wholly available to her child, and thus cannot offer ideal caregiving behavior to her infant, she inevitably experiences conflict.

Carol George and Judith Solomon have been seminal in expanding on Bowlby's discussion of what they have termed the caregiving system. They describe the caregiving system as:

... a goal-corrected system that is organized around protection of the infant and functions in dynamic balance with other behavioral systems within the mother. We suggest that this system, once fully organized, gives rise to the compelling motivation within the mother to respond protectively to the young infant and to buffer him or her from sources of stress and harm. (Solomon & George, 1999, p.327)

Whereas the focus of the attachment literature is primarily on the child's experience, the caregiving system shifts focus to that of the mother. George and Solomon argue that because parenthood is one of the most transformational and long-lasting experiences a woman will experience, caregiving is a "major goal and great achievement of adult development" (ibid., p.328). They describe caregiving as the urgent desire to protect one's child from threat, even when it is the mother's decisions that are undermining the child's well being. The caregiving system should be activated when the caregiver perceives a situation as frightening, dangerous, or stressful for the child. An example of this could be something that is obviously dangerous, like leaving a child unattended in the bathtub in order to go answer the phone. However, arguably, leaving one's child with a caregiver could also, possibly, undermine a child's well-being. The mother who

decides to run for the phone while her child is in the bathtub feels anxious and guilty and therefore runs quickly so that she can return to observing her child. Similarly, the mother who decides to work and leave her child with a nanny might experience the same feelings of anxiety and guilt and pressure to return to the child, however, time and assessment of danger are different than in the bathtub scenario.

Solomon and George propose that the caregiving system is reciprocal to the attachment system, and the two evolve in tandem. “Thus, it is reasonable to assume that the adaptive function of caregiving, as is that of attachment, is *protection of the young*” (ibid., 330). The caregiving system relies on a mother’s continual and active assessment of the environment. However, when a mother leaves her child with a caregiver then she relinquishes her ability to regularly assess the child’s environment. This could and should, in a healthy caregiving system, then promote anxiety in the mother. Presumably this anxiety and desire to ensure her child’s safety is heightened when a mother leaves her child in the care of someone with whom she is unfamiliar, or perhaps doesn’t fully trust. When a mother does trust her caregiver and feels “...satisfied that her child is safe, she is free to pursue other goals, while continuing to monitor the infant and the environment to determine when her care will be needed again” (ibid., 338).

Mikulincer and Shaver devote a chapter to the relationship between adult attachment and the caregiving system in their 2007 book, *Attachment in Adulthood: Structure, Dynamics, and Change*. They assert that “an adult’s caregiving behavioral system is influenced, in large part, by his or her experiences with caregivers earlier in development” (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007, p. 324). In this model, attachment security provides a foundation for the caregiving system. For example, secure adults have

generally experienced good care provided by their attachment figures, and this serves as a model for their own behavior (ibid., p. 330). Secure individuals are more likely to be attuned and effective caregivers than insecure adults who, in contrast, are likely to have difficulty in providing care. For example, anxiously attached adults are often vulnerable to personal distress which can thus interfere with their ability to sensitively care for their child. Avoidant individuals may be more likely to react coolly to distress signals from their child. This premise is in line with the previously presented literature on adult attachment and its relationship to a woman's experience as a mother, as well as her ability to be a caregiver.

The caregiving system and its many facets provide an excellent lens through which to understand the mother-nanny relationship, specifically in relation to feelings of trust and guilt that are common among working women.

## **Summary**

The topics explored in the literature review section provide a foundation for understanding the collected data and the subsequent results as these will be presented in the discussion section. The goal of this study was to gain a detailed understanding of a mother's relationship with her nanny by interviewing working women who currently had a child being cared for in their home by a paid caregiver, a nanny. The methods used to collect and analyze the data will be described in the following chapter

## Chapter III: Methodology

### Overview of Study Design

The goal of this study was to explore the nature of the relationship between mothers and their nannies, and to understand how this relates to a mother's conception of herself, her relationship with her own mother, as well as her relationship with her children. Because this is a new area of research, it made sense to use a qualitative research method which allows for an exploratory, open-ended inquiry. The study did not set out to test hypotheses, nor did it attempt to reduce the data into quantifiable results. The data were collected using an open-ended, semi-structured interview which allowed for the generation of codes and themes to help organize and explain the interview responses. The average length of the interview was 52 minutes, however, two participants completed the interview in 45 minutes, and one participant's interview was one hour and 45 minutes. The interview was designed to explore four domains: (1) What is mother's conception of herself as a mother and as a professional, and how does this affect the relationship with her nanny? (2) What is the nature of mothers' relationships with their nannies and how and why do mothers maintain these relationships? (3) What is the relationship between each mother and her own mother, and how does the nature of this relationship affect the mother's relationship with nanny? (4) What is mother's understanding of their nanny's relationship with the child and how does this affect the mother's relationship with her nanny? In addition, a demographics questionnaire was administered.

## Participants

The average age of the 11 participants was 36 years old. The youngest participant was 31-years-old and the oldest participant was 40-years-old. Every participant was married and the average length of time that participants had been married was 7 years. Ten out of eleven participants had earned a degree higher than a bachelor's degree. Three participants had earned masters-level degrees and seven participants had earned a terminal degree (these included: M.D., D.O., Ph.D., and J.D.). In response to a question about how invested they were in their careers prior to pregnancy, nine participants said they were "very" invested and three participants said they were "extremely" invested (on a scale that ranged from "not at all" to "extremely"). Every participant worked full-time (at least 40 hours a week) prior to having their first child, and seven participants reported working more than 40 hours a week prior to having their first child. All but one participant worked 40 or more hours a week at the time of their interview, per their response on a demographics questionnaire. Every participant returned to work full-time when their child was between three and nine months old. All but one participant had planned to return to work, and the one participant who planned to stay home changed her mind and began working when her child was between 6 and 9 months old.

Three mothers had only one child, and eight participants had two or more children. Every participant had at least one child who was less than 12-months-old who spent the majority of their day at home with their nanny while mother went to

work. The two youngest children of mothers in the study were four-months-old. The average amount of time that the only child or youngest child spent at home with nanny each week was 40 hours. One child spent 60 hours a week at home with the nanny, another spent 30 hours a week with the nanny, and the rest of participants reported 40 to 45 hours a week.

Nine participants found their nannies through word-of-mouth references, one found her nanny through an agency, and one found her nanny through an advertisement on Craigslist.com. Eight participants had employed more than one nanny since their first child was born, and three participants had only employed one nanny who still worked for them at the time of the interview. For those participants who had hired more than one nanny, the average number was three nannies. One participant was an outlier and had hired eleven nannies over a span of seven years. The average age of the nannies was 45-years-old, with a range from 21 to 58 years old. Every nanny had children of her own. Some lived with their children and some were separated geographically from their children.

## **Research Materials**

### **Semi-structured Interview.**

The primary research instrument was an in-depth, semi-structured interview (see Appendix A). The instrument was developed to focus on the experience of working mothers along the four domains described above. Interview questions were open-ended and devised to avoid leading participants to answer in a prescribed way, but rather to allow for the generation of spontaneous and unexpected material.

Although the questions followed a set sequence, the interviewer remained flexible and when interesting material arose, the interviewer asked follow-up questions that furthered exploration of the topic being discussed. The investigator asked all the interview questions, but the participant controlled the direction and flow of information.

### **Procedures**

After obtaining approval from the Institutional Review Board at The City College of the City University of New York, recruitment was initiated in the Boca Raton, Florida area. Initially, participants were recruited to participate from local Mommy & Me programs. However, only two participants were recruited from this source. Most mothers attending these programs did not work and therefore did not qualify for the study. Two of the eleven participants were found through word-of-mouth referrals, and six responded to an announcement posted on an online message board for mothers in the Miami area.

Participants were scheduled for a single interview session which lasted an average of one hour. Most interviews were held in the participant's office, one participant was interviewed in her home, and one was interviewed in a private room at a local pre-school. The interviews were recorded with a digital recorder and then transcribed verbatim. Four interviews were transcribed by the principal investigator, and the remaining seven were transcribed by a professional transcription service. Participants volunteered their time and no remuneration was given.

## **Data Analysis**

The qualitative research principles of grounded theory, developed originally by Glaser and Strauss (1967), guided analysis of the data. Using grounded theory, many themes regarding women's relationships with their nannies were derived from close examination of the interview transcripts. The intention behind the qualitative analysis was to gain detailed understanding of participants' thoughts, feelings, and experiences in regards to being a working mom and employing a nanny. As Kathy Charmaz has noted, "We can know about a world by describing it from the outside. Yet to understand what living in this world means, we need to learn from the inside. Starting from the inside is the initial step to develop a rich qualitative analysis" (Charmaz, 2004, p. 980). In this study, an attempt was made to truly get "inside" the participants' experiences.

Particular sensitivity was given to the possibility of bias in the coding process. Because I was the only person coding the data, and I had also been the only person to conduct the interviews, I paid close attention to potential biases during the coding process and made every effort to assign codes that were an accurate reflection and representation of the interview data. In a recent article on criteria for excellent qualitative research, Sarah Tracy discusses the importance of self-reflexivity: "One of the most celebrated practices of qualitative research is self-reflexivity, considered to be honesty and authenticity with one's self, one's research, and one's audience" (Tracy 2010, p. 842). Self-reflexivity was an integral part of the coding process and data analysis, and every effort was made to be honest about my perspective and the influence of my own

experiences which were often similar to those of the participants. For example, one of the participants told a number of very upsetting stories in which her nannies were neglectful and deceitful. My initial reaction to these stories, while conducting the interview, included doubt about this mother's judgment. I was aware of my feelings, and sensitive not to let it interfere with the coding process. Interestingly, this mother made a number of insightful, psychologically-minded comments that left me believing that her experience with bad nannies was more a case of bad luck than poor judgment. Self-reflexivity helped me look at participants more objectively.

Using the qualitative software program *Atlas.ti*, interview transcripts were analyzed by coding individual phrases and sentences, and occasionally larger sections of text. During the initial coding process, in which over 1500 codes were generated, codes were linked to one or more of the four core domains that underpinned the inquiry. After generating the codes, a higher-order coding process resulted in assigning the codes to one or more "themes." These results are presented in the following chapter.

## Chapter IV: Results

A detailed, thorough analysis of the 11 interview transcripts generated over 1500 open codes which were organized across the four domains upon which the semi-structured interview was based. The four domains were as follows: (1) What is mother's conception of herself as a mother and as a professional, and how does this affect the relationship with nanny? (2) What is the nature of mothers' relationships with their nannies and how and why do mothers maintain these relationships? (3) What is the relationship between each mother and her own mother, and how does the nature of this relationship affect the mother's relationship with nanny? (4) What is mother's understanding of the nanny's relationship with the child and how does this impact mother and her relationship with the nanny?

Domain 1, which examines mother's conception of herself as a mother and a professional, is the heart of this study, and will be discussed first. The data represent each participant's subjective view of themselves as professionals and as mothers, their relationship with nanny, as well as other members of their family. The mother/nanny relationship becomes a lens through which to better understand the modern day conflict between work and motherhood which is so common today.

Qualitative studies are by definition non-numeric and the results are not quantified. However, it is difficult to summarize qualitative data gathered from more than one participant without some use of words like "a few," "some," "many," or "most." In this results section, I will restrict use of the word "most" to those instances when a code or other theme was supported by data from at least 8 of the 11

participants. The word “many” will indicate the theme was supported by at least 6 of 11 participants, the word “some” will indicate the theme was supported by at least 4 participants, and “a few” will indicate at least 2 participants supported the discussed theme.

The data will be presented within the four domains described above. Within each domain, the data will be described in terms of the “theme” it supports, and the theme will be the heading of sections of presented data. On occasion, if there are sub-themes within a theme, they will be indicated by a sub-heading underneath the heading that indicates the theme. Within each theme, codes will be embedded in the prose but marked by quotation marks. Quotes from interviews will be used to help illustrate and further support the codes and themes. When providing quotations I will indicate in parentheses the source interview and line of text in the *Atlas.ti* program. For the sake of clarity I will walk the reader through the first section of presented data.

### **Domain 1: Mother’s Conception of Herself as a Mother and as a Professional**

**Mother likes and wants to work.** (This heading is a theme that was derived from the codes.)

Because this study interviewed only mothers who work, a participant’s decision to work necessitated their employing a nanny. The sample was homogeneous in that at some point during their interview, every participant expressed a desire to work, as well as a commitment to their careers. The general sentiment among participants was that they “love being a mom but get satisfaction from work.” (This short quotation is a code).

Participants saw working as an important part of their identity, as “something mom has

for herself,” that they did not want to lose when they became mothers. One mother of three children described her love of work [To illustrate the codes, short quotes from interviews will be presented with surrounding quotation marks and a reference. Longer quotes will be formatted in an indented block without quotation marks.]:

I just -- I've always loved like just practicing law and, you know, being in the court and helping people. I just -- I can't imagine not doing it. I wake up in the morning, I'm like excited to be here. (Interview 6; 239)

Another participant stated, “Yeah, like it's supposed to be this heart-wrenching separation, and I'm sort of like, you know, I get to go be me, the me that, you know, I was for 30 years before I got married and had her...” (Interview 9, 391). Most participants said their decision to return to work was “more want than need” and their family did not need their financial support. “I had a choice. I did, I had a choice...Um, but I had a great, I love my job, and I've always worked” (Interview 2; 93).

Three participants, however, reported feeling that they did not have a choice to stay at home. One reported that she did not have the option to stay home because:

I've been like the breadwinner. So now I sort of feel like I have to work because, I mean, if not, we can't pay the bills. But, I mean, do I have to work as excessively as I do? Probably not. But I just love ... I just love what I do. (Interview 6; 235)

Two participants were in medical fellowships that only allowed them a 6-week maternity leave. While both expressed a commitment to their careers, one of the two (I will refer to her later as Mother 10) had a four-month-old baby and was still adjusting to motherhood. For her, the conflict between staying home and working was very fresh.

Well, I work hard. I describe myself as a physician. I like my job. I like to be a doctor, I like to take care of my patients. I don't mind working long hours. But

now, I enjoy being home, I enjoy being a mom. I don't think I would mind being a housewife. I would be happy doing that. I have a lot of respect for housewives (laughs). (Interview 10; 54-56)

The conflict is emphasized, however, when the same participant stated a few minutes later:

I actually felt relieved because I'm not a housewife, and I needed to get out for a few hours... And I'm happy, I don't like leaving him, but I don't feel bad actually. I like to work, I like being a physician. I don't feel bad, actually. (ibid.; 193-197)

It is noteworthy that this participant, Mother 10, was the only one who said she wanted to be a housewife, but then as we see in the above quote, she effectively retracted this statement a few moments later. While most participants were not as blatant as this mother, ambivalence and anxiety regarding the decision to work was peppered throughout every participant's interview.

Most (eight out of eleven) participants said they "do not want to be a stay-at-home mom." As one woman said, "...it's a hard -- that's a really hard job, um, and I'm not sure I could do it (laughing)" (Interview 5, 541). Some said they felt "stir-crazy" or "inefficient" when they were at home for long stretches of time. Another woman said, "I could stay home, I know that it -- one, I wouldn't be so happy, a happy person, because I know I'm the type of person that can't be stuck at home all day long" (Interview 9, 397).

Four mothers reported feeling guilty about their decision not to be stay-at-home mothers and expressed a belief that "it's good for kids if mom stays home." Their guilt was clustered around two separate but intrinsic beliefs. Mother 10, whose conflict was

highlighted in the paragraph before last said that "...if a woman decides to stay home and just take care of the children that's very very beneficial for the kids" (Interview 10; 78). Another mother said, "So the guilt is that I'm hiring someone to watch my children where I feel that that's - that's what I should be doing. You know, I should be home with 'em" (Interview 7; 771). The notion that staying home with one's children is either better for kids or what a woman *should* do was echoed in other participants' responses. It is a belief that influences how a mother feels about her decision to work, because it reveals a mother's feeling that she is choosing something that is right for her, but not best for her child.

**Mother's belief that working makes her a better mother.**

Several participants (5 of 11) explicitly stated a belief that "working makes her a better mother." "...Somedays I think that work is my sanity. Sometimes I think that I'm a better mom and a better wife for going to work" (Interview 2, 149). One participant said that "working helps create quality time with kids" and spoke to the quality vs. quantity balance.

...there's more quality time when I work. When I come home, I'm really there.

When -- I remember when I was on maternity leave and I was home all day, it's like I try to fit in everything I can during the day, whether it's, you know, doing laundry or -- or picking up or -- and I try to do all these other things, and the kids are just there. (Interview 7, 775)

Another participant reported that working functions as an emotional regulator for her.

I think I'm a better mother because I work. Because when I'm with the children

night and day I find I have a shorter fuse, shorter temper. Where now, when I'm working, when I come home in the evenings, or on the weekends, I feel totally dedicated to them. I think that for me personally it's a good thing. (Interview 1, 49)

The subtext of these statements is that staying home with one's kids can be very difficult, and going to work is in some ways easier. However, the women in this study contradict this notion when they describe the tremendous effort they put into their job as mothers, despite working and the concomitant time constraints.

### **Mother's thoughts on time management.**

Many of the participants in this study spoke about the feeling that they "have zero time," are "spread too thin," and are "juggling a hundred things at the same time." One mother described the need to be extremely organized, and expressed her belief that stay-at-home mothers are not as efficient as working mothers.

As a working mom, you become very -- like I have zero time, like I was saying...I am extremely efficient with my time. I come to work, I work, I don't waste time anymore. I used to, you know, chitchat with my - I'd go out to lunch, whatever. I come to work, I leave. I need to run errands, I book it into my calendar, "Okay, I need to leave a half-hour early, so I can run by the grocery store"; I mean, I get more done in my week as a mom than [my non-working friends] who, are like "I don't have time because I have to go -- I have to go to Target" or whatever; it's like their whole week is blown because they have to go to Target (laughing). (Interview 8, 45)

There was an aura of stress and pressure around participants' descriptions of their time constraints. The feeling that time is a scarce commodity means that working mothers inherently must make difficult choices about how they choose to spend their time.

**Mother's effort to spend time and be involved with kids despite working.**

Participants' commitment to being involved parents despite their careers was mentioned by most of the mothers in the study. Several participants spoke about their effort to spend time with their children in order to ensure that they are seen as a "primary caregiver." A few mothers expressed a belief that "it's important to be there for daily events like bedtime." Three mothers spoke specifically about bathtime and bedtime as being activities they felt were "their job." Another mother said she "doesn't give up some household chores because 'she wouldn't feel good about herself as a mom.'" One mother was an outlier in that she spoke a great deal more than other mothers about her effort to be involved in her children's lives, the stress it causes her, and the fear that if she were not as involved as she is, it would impact her maternal self-esteem. Mother 5, as I will refer to her, has a full-time academic position at a university, two young children, and two nannies. She described numerous examples of doing tasks that she could delegate to one of her nannies, such as taking an hour out of the middle of her day to pick up her daughter from school, packing her daughter's lunch, and signing up to bake something for a class event instead of bringing something simpler, like napkins. Mother 5 reports that:

[my nannies] could take on the responsibility, and I'm sure for another person in another household life would go on. But it would take away something that I

think I get value from as far as my self-esteem and my identity as a person.

(Interview 5, 511)

Like mother 5, when participants spoke in general about their efforts to be involved with their children, there was an underlying sentiment that doing so was stressful, but it helped support the feeling that they were good mothers despite working and having a nanny.

### **Mother's thoughts on how working affects her child(ren).**

The mothers who participated in this study all had thoughts regarding how their working impacts their children. Aspects of this theme have already been presented in this results section in regards to participants' belief that working makes them better mothers. One mother reported that her pre-school age "daughter is proud that mom works" and said she believed this was a positive result of her working. And while most mothers reported feeling that working makes them a better mother, a few participants also expressed feelings of doubt regarding the impact of their work on their children. One mother "worries that child's [developmental] delays are related to having nanny." Another participant became tearful when speaking about how her "child doesn't do many afterschool activities because mom works." It was the only time during our interview that this mother became tearful, and it identified her serious concern that her working is limiting her child's opportunities to do certain activities. At a different point in the interview, when this same mother was asked the question "Can you describe your own mother?" her initial response was "Well, I think when I grew up my mother, I mean, my mother was wonderful. She took me, she drove me swimming. I did a lot of extracurricular activities" (Interview 1, 53). This description of her mother as

“wonderful” because she enabled her daughter to do extracurricular activities, elucidates why this mother became emotional when speaking about her child’s extracurricular activities. In her experience, a good mother helps their child do activities, and she is not living up to this ideal.

Another participant’s view of an ideal mother was also influenced by her experience as a child. She said, “I think I’m an okay mom. I don’t think working makes me less of a good mom. I think I was worried about that at the beginning, ‘cause my mom worked to the point where like we didn’t know each other. (Interview 9, 63) This mother attempts to maintain a positive conception of herself as a working mother while wrestling with the memory of her own mother working so much that she was a stranger.

#### **Mother’s feelings of guilt related to working and leaving child with nanny.**

A theme that emerged in the context of a “mother’s thoughts on how her working impacts her child” was that of guilt regarding working and employing a nanny. Feelings of guilt related to hiring a nanny and working was a topic that emerged in every participant’s interview. Mothers expressed guilt that was specific to how their working impacts their children, as well as more generalized feelings of guilt related to working and leaving their child with a nanny. One mother said she “feels guilt that she should be the only one ‘impacting’ child.” Several mothers said they “feel guilty about missing out on things with child.” Most mothers described a nagging feeling of guilt related to the amount of time they spend with their children, what they are missing while they are at work, and choosing to work and hire a nanny in general.

One mother described feeling “guilty about missing out on time with

child and choosing to work.” Mother 5, who was highlighted earlier regarding her effort to be involved despite employing two nannies, corroborated this feeling, but also spoke to her desire to “forgive” herself in order to lessen the feelings of guilt.

“...I feel guilt all the time ... all the time. Sometimes it keeps me up at night, and sometimes I just realize that if I wanna be able to do all these things, I'm just gonna have to forgive myself and either feel the guilt, and then not let it eat me up inside, or try not to feel the guilt in the first place, try not to be guilty, feel guilty about it (laughing). (Interview 5, 751)

Mother 5's feelings of guilt are related to her efforts to be involved with her children; her feelings of guilt are, to an extent, mitigated by her attempts to be very active and involved. The chronic nature of Mother 5's guilt is echoed by another mother, who questions why she feels guilt when her husband does not.

So the guilt is that I'm hiring someone to watch my children where I feel that that's - that's what I should be doing. You know, I should be home with 'em...So there is guilt in a way. I mean, I think as soon as I had my first child I felt guilt from that moment on, you know, from ... from that second. And then the guilt, I mean, goes through to ... you know, you wonder sometimes also like where it comes from and why, you know, my husband doesn't feel it the way I do, you know, and why is that...he's definitely able to balance, you know, work and - and family and a social life and without ever feeling any type of guilt... (Interview 7, 781)

Another participant also questioned why she felt guilty and her husband did not. Several

women expressed an inherent belief that they “should” be home with their children, even though at other points in the interview both women spoke with confidence about their decision to work rather than stay home. The confidence regarding work and the feeling that a mother “should be at home” fundamentally conflicts and contributes to feelings of maternal guilt.

**Mother feels conflicted/torn between work and child(ren).**

Nine of eleven participants reported feeling conflicted between working and caring for their children. Many of the participants expressed their feelings in terms of guilt, specifically feeling guilty about missing out on activities with their children while also “feeling a lot of guilt about not doing more at work.” Several mothers recalled “feeling constant urgency to get home to baby.” One participant described how she “feels guilty about work when with kids, and guilty about kids when at work.”

Yeah, but a lot of guilt also, like 'cause I work so long, you know. Sometimes I want to, you know, pick 'em up from school and they're like, "Can we go to the park?" So I always carry that guilt hat; like when I'm at the park, I'm not there 100%, 'cause I'm checking my messages, you know. I wanna be here [work], and when I'm here I wanna be over there. So I'm always like torn. (Interview 6, 105)

Mother 5 also expressed the frustration that accompanies her feeling of not being able to give herself fully to either her career or motherhood.

You know, like I just feel like I'm doing everything 70%, you know, and the 30% that I'm not doing at work and at home, I beat myself up over. I mean, it's a chronic problem with all working moms (laughing). (Interview 5, 205)

One mother expressed her feelings of conflict in terms of a lack of balance, and a desire to “strive for balance between work and motherhood.” The flipside of feeling pulled in two directions between career and motherhood, is a desire for more balance and therefore less stress. The participants in this study unanimously stated a desire to work and pursue their careers, however, the pull to be with their children tended to disrupt this sense of balance.

**How having a nanny affects mother’s feelings about herself as a mother.**

Four participants spoke directly about how the simple fact of having a nanny affects their sense of themselves as mothers. One mother said that her nanny “is reassuring and makes her feel more confident as a mom.” She described being unsure of her mothering abilities when her daughter was first born, but found that her nanny, who was an experienced mother in her own right, boosted her maternal self-confidence. The three other mothers who spoke about nanny’s impact on their feelings about being a mother described the opposite, and expressed that “having nanny negatively affects maternal self-confidence.” One participant said that,

It’s sort of like having a third observer always around...So I think I do tend to doubt myself or question things or ask her opinion maybe more than I need to or should or would if I didn’t have that other person. You know, it’s like having that, uh, superego almost like perched in front of you and, ‘Am I doing this right? Would you do it that way? What do you think?’ you know. (Interview 4, 363)

For some mothers it appears that the simple fact of having a nanny can affect their sense of self as mothers. This notion of impacting and preserving maternal self-esteem ties into

the previously discussed theme of mothers making an effort to spend time with children despite working. As will be explored throughout the results section, maintaining maternal self-esteem is associated with mother's relationship with nanny in a variety of ways.

## **Domain 2: What is the nature of mothers' relationships with their nannies?**

This portion of the results section will explore the mother-nanny relationship in great detail. It will also cover aspects of the mother-child relationship, as it relates to employing a nanny. After participants made a decision to return to work, there was a process involved in deciding to hire, and then hiring a nanny.

### **Mother's belief that nanny is better than daycare.**

Many of the mothers in this study "didn't consider any other options" when they decided to hire a nanny. Some of the reasons participants gave for choosing a nanny included the following: "mom felt better leaving child at home in own house," "mom didn't want daycare because it's not as flexible if child is sick," and "mom preferred nanny to daycare because [there would be] more social interaction and [it would be] cleaner." Having a nanny typically costs more than daycare, but the sample was homogenous in that everyone believed a nanny was preferable to daycare, and everyone could afford to hire a nanny.

### **How mother hired nanny.**

Participants found their current and former nannies in a variety of ways, though

the most common was through word-of-mouth. Other methods of finding a nanny included using an agency, placing a listing on Craigslist.com, and one mom “found nanny in the park” while she was working for another family. Most mothers found it important that their “nanny had references,” but also “gut feelings went into mom’s decision to hire nanny.” The only mother who had used an agency found that “a lot of the nannies were ‘terrible’” and decided this was the least reliable route to finding a good nanny.

### **What mother wanted her nanny to be like.**

One of the questions in the semi-structured interview asked participants, “How did you imagine your nanny would be?” Three mothers had no pre-conception of what they wanted in a nanny. One of these three mothers, Mother 10, was highlighted earlier in the results section regarding her ambivalence regarding working vs. staying home with her baby.

I had nothing in my mind. I didn’t even know...I don’t know. When I had my son it was my first son. And uh, I had no idea how it was going to be. Um. I didn’t think of the nanny, I just thought of myself. I didn’t even think of a nanny.

I just was anxious for having a nanny. (Interview 10, 130)

This mother ended up learning very quickly what she did not want her nanny to be like, because she found that her first nanny “didn’t make me feel comfortable in my house. It was like she didn’t care. It was strange. She didn’t want to talk to us. It was like she was an employee” (ibid., 007). This nanny ended up quitting after one month, and then Mother 10 hired a nanny through word-of-mouth with whom she was happier.

The mothers who did have thoughts about what they were looking for in a nanny

gave varied responses regarding what was important to them when going through the hiring process. One mother imagined that “nanny would push child towards goals,” while another “envisioned nanny to be an ‘extension of herself’.” One mother who had a live-in nanny was focused on wanting someone who could give her freedom to go out at night. Two mothers said they wanted “nanny to be part of the family,” and as one participant said:

Well, as long as you care about my kid ... and me. I wanted the person to care about us, also, ‘cause I think it's hard to love a baby and not care about the parents that are in charge of that baby (laughing). (Interview 9, 225)

Several participants spoke about wanting a nanny who could help them manage the house and take care of housework. Some other adjectives mentioned by participants were what one would expect, including “loving,” “smart,” “honest,” “reliable,” and “have common sense.”

### **The adjustment to having a nanny.**

When participants spoke about the adjustment to having a nanny, responses fell into one of three categories: initial anxiety about nanny, the need to build trust with nanny, and how quickly they formed a bond with nanny. One participant took two weeks “off work to be home with nanny and build trust.” Several mothers spoke about how quickly they bonded with nanny and said “because you leave child with nanny you develop an immediate bond.” They expressed a belief that the nature of the relationship with nanny and how it progressed was different than other relationships because nanny is taking care of their child.

A few mothers spoke about the anxiety they felt during the period after which they initially hired their nanny. One participant remembered:

It was a little bit, especially with your first child, I watched her like a hawk. Even though my girlfriend had her, as a first mom the way she held him, I mean, I can remember, cause we have one of those rocking chairs, and I can remember she would be in the rocking chair with him like just rocking him rocking him rocking him and I would be like, she's gonna give him whiplash! She's gonna hurt his neck (laughing)! But I never said anything to her because I always felt like she's a mom of three. She's been a nanny for over 15 16 years... But I was kind of apprehensive, I mean, and plus someone's in your house. And you're not used to having somebody in your house all the time. And, so first it was a little bit uncomfortable, and just kind of a growing period where we were getting to know each other. (Interview 2, 97)

This quote addresses the range of emotions experienced by moms soon after hiring a nanny, including anxiety about the nanny's ability to care for your child, and the awkwardness of a virtual stranger being allowed into your home. Another participant spoke about the surprising immediacy of the bond she formed with her nanny:

But I guess that that's the surprising thing that happens: how quickly this utter stranger can be assimilated into your life and you into theirs, and it's totally different backgrounds; you know, she's from Colombia, you know. She speaks very, you know, good English; but it's just very interesting, total stranger, but yet they're taking care of your kid and somehow in that bond you become very close with them. (Interview 4, 497)

The transition to having a nanny is unique and often stressful because of the intimacy and vulnerability experienced when someone is in your home taking care of your child.

**Mother's anxiety about separating and leaving child with nanny.**

Another aspect of the adjustment to having a nanny is the adjustment to separating from one's child. Once a nanny has been hired, the mother must go through the process of leaving their child with the new caregiver, at the same time that the mother and nanny are developing and building trust.

*Mothers with low maternal separation anxiety.*

Three mothers reported feeling little or no maternal separation anxiety when they first left their child with their nanny. Two of the three expressed some self-consciousness when expressing this sentiment, as if a "better" mother should experience more separation anxiety. Here is a brief excerpt from an interview with one mother:

AG: Can you tell me a little bit about the process of leaving your child with your nanny each day? Has this changed over time? I know you said now it's not such a big deal. Was it ever difficult for you?

M9: Not really.

AG: No?

M9: Don't think I'm a bad mom (laughing).

AG: No, not at all. Everybody is different.

M9: Yeah. No, it's never been so terrible, I think 'cause I have so much confidence in R\*\*\* that I'm like, "You're fine". (Interview 9, 535)

This mother links her comfort level in leaving her child with nanny to her confidence in

her nanny, which is exactly what the other two mothers with low maternal separation anxiety did. Another mother responded to a question about leaving her child by saying, “Well in the beginning, No. No (laughs) I guess I was scar... No. Maybe the first day was weird. And then I got used to it. I knew they were in such good hands” (Interview 3, 289). The laughter in the middle of the quote could be interpreted as self-consciousness about her acknowledging that she did not have difficulty leaving her child. And then, like the previous mother, she attributes her easy separation to her confidence in her nanny.

Mother 10 also reported experiencing little separation anxiety which she attributed to feeling confidence in her childcare situation.

First, when I first left, I actually felt relieved because I’m not a housewife, and I needed to get out for a few hours. I needed to start working. My mom told me that I will cry, when I left home, because she heard from other people who were working moms who cried when they left home. But I actually never did, because I left my son with my husband. You know, he’s working there. That makes me feel very safe. (Interview 10, 193)

Mother 10 expressed that she was “relieved” to leave and go to work, mentions that perhaps she should have been upset, and then says that she was able to feel confident in leaving her son because her husband was home with nanny. It is impossible to know whether or not the three women who expressed low maternal separation anxiety would have felt differently if they did not have confidence in their child care situations, or whether their low-separation anxiety naturally helped them feel more confident. It is noteworthy, however, that they all followed their mention of low separation anxiety by

talking about their trust and confidence in their child care situations.

***Mothers with high maternal separation anxiety.***

The eight mothers who did experience maternal separation anxiety described experiencing feelings that contrasted significantly from the three women who did not. Some of the eight had the experience that “over time leaving child has gotten easier,” however, their memories of first leaving their child with nanny were stressful and often fraught. One mother spoke a great deal about the process of leaving her son and how her anxiety has waned as her son has become more comfortable being left with nanny.

As I said, as it got easier for him, it got a lot easier -- there were definitely mornings where I literally was hysterical driving to work because I left him and he was crying, and I called my husband hysterical and, um ... and then, you know, I would call the house 10 minutes later to see and she was like, "Oh, yeah, he was okay a few minutes after you left, no problem". And -- but I, it took me like hours to recover from it...I remember what that felt -- I mean, it was just the -  
- the worst feeling in the world. (Interview 11, 559)

This intense maternal distress was mentioned by other mothers, as well. One mother remembered that “...especially when he was a baby, um, I would – when I first went back to work I was like crying every day going to work” (Interview 8, 223). One participant “felt constant urgency to get home” when she first returned to work, and another remembered, “it was a terrible time. I had a lot of anguish about leaving the babies there” (Interview 7, 221).

A couple of mothers experienced something quite different and found that it was

easier to leave their child when the child was a baby, and more difficult as the child got older and became more aware that mother was leaving.

M1: When they're older, like the 2 year old, she actually knows I'm going, I see she's physically upset, you know, that's what makes it hard. That's how it was with M\*\*\*, the older one, as well. Going out in the evening and having him cry and not wanting us to go, that's what's hard.

AG: Could you name the feeling the feeling you're having when this happens?

M1: It just hurts. It's not so much guilt, it's just more, I don't like to see them hurt, I don't like to see them upset. If it didn't bother them, I'd be okay. It wouldn't bother me because I know I'm going to come back and see them, but I just don't like seeing them upset. (Interview 1, 237)

Maternal separation anxiety was almost always linked to mothers understanding that their child was experiencing stress when they left. The mothers who experienced diminishing maternal separation anxiety over time had children who experienced initial distress that improved as they became accustomed to the separation. The reverse happened for the women who experienced increased anxiety over time. As their children grew older and became more aware and upset by separation, mother's maternal anxiety increased, as well. It is thus clear that there is a link between child's and mother's separation anxiety.

### **Negotiating the line between employee and family.**

Ten out of eleven participants spoke about their nannies and the line between employee and family that can become blurred. Many of them described the intimacy mentioned earlier that comes quickly and naturally when someone is working in your

home and caring for your children. And yet, there is a balance between employee and family that nearly every mother in this study described. “It’s hard, because she’s not quite a family member, she is an employee; but she’s in your home.” Many participants mentioned the word “family” when describing their nanny, for example: “mom considers nanny family,” “mom loves nanny and loves that she has let us into her family,” and “mom is surprised that nanny is ‘part of the family’.” However, this tendency to think of nanny as a family member often creates a “‘tricky negotiation’ between friend and employee.” Three women specifically stated that they do not treat their nanny like she is part of the family because “mother believes that problems can arise if you become too friendly with nanny.”

And for three participants, difficulties did arise in part because nanny “felt like family.” One mother, who expressed wanting and appreciating that her nanny felt like family also spoke about the flipside of this level of closeness.

Um, in terms of negative, I guess my idea of wanting a friend/nanny instead of an employee/nanny has gotten to where she feels very relaxed with us in terms of saying, “Oh, can I have, you know, \$500 extra now and you can take it out of my salary over the next 10 weeks?” So she ... I mean, I don't think she abuses us; but I'm like, “You know what? Whatever you want (laughing) ... because you do a great job with my kid. So if you need this, I'm happy to get it for you”... but I feel like maybe she's a little too familiar with us sometimes in asking for things.

(Interview 9, 351)

This mother refers to feeling so grateful to nanny for taking good care of her child, that she feels indebted to the point of possibly doing more for nanny than might be

comfortable.

Another mother described how she quickly learned that she needed to maintain boundaries with her nanny in order to maintain a relationship in which she didn't feel she was being taken advantage of.

So there were like six of these things that happened in a row [in which mother gave nanny extra money for unexpected personal expenses], and finally I was like, "All right. I am kind of asking for it, because I'm asking her what's wrong and what's the matter and then she tells me, and then I feel like the only solution is either, A: she's looking for money, or my solution is to give her money. I don't want that to be our dynamic. You know, we pay her a salary to come here and to work; but I don't have extra money for all these random family members that she has with issues...So I learned kind of very quickly to, like, don't ask unless I'm prepared to...back away from the story without doing anything or ... or do something. (Interview 11, 193)

This mother's initial tendency was to help her nanny when she had personal problems, but she soon learned that she was beginning to feel uncomfortable. She was able to ameliorate the situation by creating boundaries. Two other participants mentioned a similar sort of "it's better not to ask" policy in regards to their nanny's personal lives.

More than half of participants discussed "feeling uncomfortable in role of boss" with their nanny. This is related to the theme of negotiating the line between family and employee because when nanny feels "like family" mothers find it more difficult to assert their own needs. Seven participants spoke about balancing their own needs with their nanny's needs. In some cases, participants felt that their nanny's needs superseded their

own. For example, “nanny has ‘own life’ and can’t give mom as much time as needed.”

All of the participants in this study were aware of at times feeling that in their relationship with their nanny they negotiated the line between family and employee. Many mothers spoke about the speed at which they formed a close bond because their nanny was in their home taking care of their child. Some mothers embraced a close relationship with their nanny, while others consciously decided to maintain a more professional distance.

### **Mother and nanny are a parenting team.**

More than half of participants described their nanny as “a childrearing teammate.” In a couple of instances, participants said they “defer to nanny a lot about childrearing decisions,” and “mom respects nanny’s knowledge of child.” One mother said she is “happy nanny prepares good food for kids that mom cannot prepare.” There was generally a positive sentiment expressed by the mothers who felt they were part of a parenting team with their nanny. They appreciated and respected their nanny as a third parent, of sorts, who was knowledgeable about the child they cared for together.

### **Mother’s appreciation for nanny’s job.**

Five participants articulated their appreciation for the challenges of their nanny’s job. They thought their nannies worked hard and appreciated certain qualities they saw in their nannies. For example, one mother admitted, “And quite honestly I think that she has more patience than I do” (Interview 2, 105). Another mother said:

And I think she’s got a really hard job. I’m exhausted by the end of the weekend.

I mean, at least she has them at school until noon; but then she's got solid, no backup for five hours. And then my husband and I have a tradeoff, you know. She's got herself and that's it. That's exhausting. (Interview 8, 329)

Another participant described a similar sense of appreciation for how hard her nanny works. When describing part of her nanny's work day she said:

Um, she ... you know, she'll draw with them, if they want to ride bikes she'll take 'em outside. And then she starts like at 6:00 o'clock, she puts him [the baby] like in the little, uh ... the little playpen. She takes the girls to shower. She'll make dinner. I mean, it's a lot going on for three kids (laughing)...and then when I get home, like all -- you know, she'll have picked up all the toys...dinner's ready or the girls have been fed. The baby's bathed, eaten (laughing). Yeah. It's a lot. For what I pay her, it's a lot (laughing)...Yeah. When I think about it, she needs a raise (laughing). Wow. (Interview 6, 557)

Only one mother in the sample demeaned a nanny's job, in general. She was speaking about a former nanny who she had fired for being generally lazy and showing a lack of effort in her job. In reference to the fired nanny, this mother said:

I mean, here she was like 26, she dropped out of college; very, very smart, had been home-schooled, no ambition at all. So it was like -- I was like, "What the hell? What does she want to be a nanny for?" I mean, not that there's anything wrong with being a nanny; I think it's, you know ... I don't mean it like that, the way my tone said it (laughing). (Interview 11, 515)

The implication made by her tone of voice (which she references), and her protestation, "not that there's anything wrong with it" is that the job of nanny was beneath someone as

“smart” as her former nanny. This mother, however, was an outlier in that she was the only participant to belittle the job of a nanny.

### **How nanny is helpful to mother.**

More than half of participants spoke about how their nanny is supportive and helpful to them, and how “nanny makes family life easier.” Many of the comments regarding helpfulness related to housework. Every nanny helped with housework in addition to caring for children. Most mothers expressed a great deal of gratitude for their nanny’s help with housework. One mother said that her nanny helping with housework enables her be the mother she envisioned.

The fact that she cleans and does our laundry and irons certainly frees up a lot of my time to be the playful mom, as opposed to, you know, making my kid sit there while I’m folding the laundry (laughing). Um, so I feel like she takes the load off so that I can try and be the mom that I want to be. (Interview 9, 377)

Other mothers corroborated with this sentiment. They expressed appreciation that “nanny runs the house” and mother can “come home to a clean house and dinner.”

Three participants expressed frustration regarding their nannies’ lack of cleaning ability or lack of effort. For these three mothers, they were willing to accept that their nanny did not clean as well as they might like because “nanny is great with kids but not housekeeping.”

### **Cultural and socioeconomic differences between mother and nanny.**

Six participants mentioned cultural and/or socioeconomic differences between

themselves and their nanny and how this impacts their relationship. The most commonly mentioned difference was related to language barriers and difficulty communicating. For example: “mom worries language barrier will make confrontation less ‘gentle’,” and “mom gives nanny benefit of the doubt because of language barrier.”

One mother spoke about the socioeconomic difference between herself and her nanny and how she thinks her nanny perceives her:

M3: ...I think she views me as not necessarily a peer, obviously not a peer ‘cause she works for me. But, um, and it was funny ‘cause I was describing how I used to live in New York and I had a roommate and she was shocked that I could have a roommate. She couldn’t believe that I ever had a roommate.

AG: Why do you think?

M3: I think because, she didn’t think I ever needed to...she probably thinks I’m in such an economic status that I wouldn’t ever need to like live with someone. I think that was like the reaction I got. (Interview 3, 33)

Interestingly, this same mother experienced a period of contention with her nanny regarding a pay raise, and she generally felt she pays her nanny too much. The theme of paying for nanny and negotiating financial arrangements will be explored later in the results section, but it is noteworthy that the only mother to mention socioeconomic differences with her nanny was also the only participant who felt she overpaid her nanny.

Another participant, originally from Spain, attributed her feeling that her nanny perceives her as “blunt” to cultural differences.

I’m sure like sometimes she feels that I’m a little bit blunt, like I said, you know, because she is -- being from South America, you know, they like sugarcoat

everything, you know, the way they speak to each other and -- and in Spain we're not like that at all; everything is like very to the point, you know. So sometimes I feel like she may get the impression that like maybe I speak harshly. (Interview 7, 543)

This mother has clearly experienced moments with her nanny where she feels their communication styles are very different, and she attributes this to their different cultural backgrounds.

### **Mother's feelings about nanny's life and nanny's family.**

Although most participants did not discuss cultural and socioeconomic differences in much depth, seven participants spoke about their nanny's life and family. In general, mothers expressed sympathy for the often difficult situation their nannies were in, including being undocumented and estranged from their children/families. As was touched upon in the section on how mothers negotiate the boundary between family and employee, a couple of mothers said they preferred not to know the details of their nanny's lives.

For a while there like I wasn't sure, like - now that she's married and getting her green card and stuff, that makes me feel better, I think. For a while it was, I think there was a period of time where her visa- something expired, I didn't want to know too much. (Interview 3, 233)

One mother wondered if her nanny's having left her own children in another country would impact how she cares for mother's children. She was also the only mother to wonder about how a nanny's upbringing and life experiences might impact the way in

which she “brings up” the children she is paid to care for.

And, and I think the way these people have been brought up also has a lot to do with...how they're gonna bring your children up...And then another thing is, a lot of them -- not this one because her kids are here -- but a lot of them that I've had, you know, that I've had problems with, you know, like I just said is they have left their country and they've left their children behind. You know, so what makes you think that they're going to love your kids? I mean, they -- their love is back home. You know, they have left their children; imagine what that's like. And you expect them to, you know -- if they can -- they're willing and -- and capable of doing that, you know, you can't expect them to have that kind of connection with your children. (Interview 7, 767)

While other participants spoke about their sympathetic feelings for their nannies who have left children and families behind in other countries, this mother was unique in her consideration of the psychological impact of a nanny's possibly traumatic past and the implications this may have on her abilities to be a good caregiver.

#### **Mother's feelings of trust in nanny.**

When speaking about the relationship with their nanny, participants spoke about issues related to trust more than any other feeling. A majority of mothers said they “trust nanny completely” and “trust nanny's care of child.” But once we began to explore the topic more deeply, it became clear that it wasn't necessarily easy to develop or maintain trust. Mothers, in a sense, need to feel trusting in order to feel comfortable leaving their children, but many participants approached this aspect of their relationship with nanny

differently.

Mother 10, who was introduced previously, had a 4-month old baby and was still adjusting to leaving her child with a nanny. She was unique in this sample because her first baby was still so young, so the feelings that other mothers remembered having when they were first returning to work, but that had diminished over time, were still being experienced by Mother 10. She was also the only mother who unequivocally said she did not trust her nanny, but her husband worked from home which reduced her anxiety level.

M10: I think she...it's difficult to know. Um, she likes my son, and I think she is, she's sincere. She hugs him, and when she comes and says hello to the baby, I think she is sincere when she treats him the way she does. Um...How much of that is fake and how much isn't...Do I trust her completely...with my son? No. I told my husband not to let her walk my baby.

AG: Outside?

M10: Yeah. I'm scared of losing my son. You know, I like her. I don't know.

At the end of the day, if something happened to him, I don't know what I would do. I think I can trust her, I think so, but... (Interview 10, 212)

This quote illustrates how fear is often linked to not trusting nanny. If one has trust, then there is nothing to be afraid of. If you don't have trust, you have anxiety and fear.

Mother 10 is so fearful and mistrustful, that she limits her nanny's freedom by exerting a great deal of control over what she can do with the child. The theme of control, which is also closely tied to the theme of trust, will be explored in greater detail in the next section.

Some mothers "test" their nannies for a period of time in order to build trust. One

mother took time off from work so that she could be home with her new nanny for the first two weeks.

...[with] my first nanny...I was home for like almost five months -- I really trusted her and everything -- so it made it a lot easier. And then when I... had to hire this one, I was like, "Oh, my god, I'll never trust her while I'm gone." So we had nanny cams installed, and I had my mother-in-law come down and spend a couple of days. I took two weeks off of work, and by the end of that I felt confident. (Interview 11, 007)

Two participants installed nanny cams (hidden cameras that monitor activity inside the home) in order to feel more comfortable leaving their child with a new nanny.

So the nanny cams were a decision that made it much easier for me to come back to work ...I told her [about the cameras], absolutely, absolutely. Yeah, I felt like if you have a problem with nanny cams, then I definitely don't need you in my house. Um, and so we definitely told her, and I was very honest. I said, "Listen, I'm -- we're putting the cameras in the house because I don't -- I don't have time to know you well enough," and...she was like, "That's perfectly fine", which made me feel even better. Um, and the truth is that for the first probably two months..I looked on it a lot and I would almost always have it minimized [on the computer screen] with the volume on 'cause I could hear what was going on, and I never, ever heard anything that was out of the ordinary, and so now I pop on it once in a while just to see if he's playing or so I can kind of connect with him during the day...(Interview 11, 263)

The other mother who installed nanny cams “felt it would be easier if she had time to get

to know nanny,” but she did not. Unlike the previous mother, she did not tell her nanny about the cameras. The nanny cams were installed in order to reduce her feelings of concern and “anguish.” One day, this mother had a “gut feeling” that something was not right with her new nanny, so she decided to review the nanny cam video footage and found that:

...the nanny left the baby in the crib all day long. Like I left the house at 7:30 in the morning, and she put the baby back in the crib, didn't feed her, didn't change her and didn't pick her up until 2:00 in the afternoon...She was crying hysterically...It was torture...first of all, you see it and you're just like ... oh, you can't believe; you know, I kept like rewinding and looking at the timer to see, like this can't be... (Interview 7, 263)

After firing the nanny, this mother had a series of nannies and experienced several more scary incidents in which her children were either in danger or simply not being cared for properly. While she currently has a nanny that she feels pleased with, she stated that:

I guess 'cause I've had such bad experiences, I wonder like the authenticity of some of the things they say to me, you know, or ... or, you know, like I kind of like take everything they say with a grain of salt or ... you know, and I just wonder. Like I always wonder like are they pulling my leg, you know?  
(Interview 7, 533)

This mother believes that she will never be able to fully trust a nanny because of her experience with many untrustworthy nannies.

One mother, who I will refer to as Mother 1, when asked about what she looked for in a nanny, immediately answered “trustworthy” as her first response. However,

when describing her current relationship with her nanny she spoke about a nagging feeling of mistrust several times during the interview. Mother 1 began to feel that trust was becoming an issue because “mom will catch nanny doing things she’s asked her not to do.” And then “sometimes nanny’s story is inconsistent which makes mom mistrustful.” For example, “Once with our middle child I asked her not to give her a bottle lying down, like on the changing table. And then I’d still catch her doing it” (Interview 1, 080). Mother 1 had several more examples of incidents in which she caught her nanny in small lies, but didn’t like to focus on these problems because overall she was happy with the care her nanny provided for her children. In the next quote it is interesting that she interjects “overall she’s just wonderful” immediately after saying she has a “negative feeling.”

I think the negative feeling, is, overall she’s just wonderful, I just feel, and I haven’t been able to prove it, there’s just a trust issue. I don’t know. I always have a red flag in my mind. And I haven’t been able to prove it. She’s done nothing. I haven’t been finding anything in the house. (ibid., 189)

These small protestations such as “I haven’t been able to find anything” (ibid., 209) indicate that she is feeling a level of discomfort in her relationship with her nanny, but has little data to back up her feeling, and therefore she can tell herself that it is okay to trust her nanny. A little later in the interview, trust came up again, and I asked her the following:

AG: When you come in and she’s doing something with the baby that you had asked her not to do, does your mind take you to a place where...

M1: Not really. And if it does I stop myself or my husband stops me pretty

quickly. We remind ourselves of all the good. And she doesn't do things that often that I don't want her to. Or the television for example, I don't like the television on too much, especially when L\*\*\*'s eating. I've asked her...If she watches tv that's fine, but not when she's eating cause I don't want her sitting and eating forever, just watching tv. I don't want to get in that habit, and often I'll find the tv on while she's eating, and I'll come home. And I'll go turn it off.

Those things. It's not a reason to boot her. (ibid., 331)

Her last statement, "it's not a reason to boot her" is exactly what makes it difficult for Mother 1 to fully acknowledge the feelings of mistrust she is experiencing. Later in the results section the theme, "What mothers will accept in order to preserve relationship with nanny" will be presented. Hiring a nanny and building trust with a nanny is very stressful, and many mothers like Mother 1 find it easier to keep the "good enough" nanny who might not be great at housework, or who might not change the baby's diaper exactly as one would like. As another mother said, "the idea of starting all over again when I have two people that I trust is really horrible; I can't imagine that" (Interview 5, 647)

Not all mothers decide to keep a nanny after developing issues around trust. One mother stated that "women who believe their nannies will do exactly as they would want are fooling themselves." She believes mothers must be "actively involved with nanny and 'not stick your head in the sand'." Similar to Mother 1, Mother 4 began feeling mistrustful of her nanny when "nanny did things mom asked her not to" and "nanny acted like she knew better than mom." However, unlike Mother 1, Mother 4 decided to fire her nanny when she felt her trust begin to erode. Her lack of trust led to worry and fear.

I felt like I couldn't leave the house after that, feeling like I could relax. Like I was

constantly worried, "Oh, my god, what if something happens?" So that was like a very kind of stressful situation. Um, it was just very hard for me to let her go...especially when you have a live-in nanny...they become part of your intimate life...they're alone with your baby, it's like you -- you trust them with your -- you're trusting them with your life basically is what it comes down to.

(Interview 4, 191)

This notion of “trusting them with your life” is very powerful for a lot of mothers and puts a tremendous amount of pressure on the mother-nanny relationship. Trust is often the keystone of the mother-nanny relationship, and once trust becomes compromised, problems arise. As one mother stated:

I just have -- knock wood, have a situation now where I feel really comfortable and, um, my level of trust is high. And I'm so thankful, because I wouldn't be able to be here if it wasn't. (Interview 5, 701)

The implication here is that if she didn't have trust she would have a difficult time leaving her children with her nanny and thus it would compromise her ability to work, which is why she hired a nanny in the first place. To put it more simply, without trust, the mother-nanny relationship is not viable.

### **How much control does mother want over nanny.**

Closely related to the theme of “trust,” is the theme of “control.” Some mothers exert very little control over their nanny and instead “give her a lot of freedom.” Three mothers “call home throughout the day” and “told nanny she needs to know every detail of her day with child.” The mothers who call their nannies throughout the day and

prescribe what happens in their absence explain that this level of control is a means of maintaining trust. One mother said, "...there are very strict rules. So with the way that I've structured things, I don't really have trust issues" (Interview 5, 679). Another mother, who generally is very happy with her nanny, also questions her nanny's intelligence and judgment and therefore exerts a lot of control in order to mitigate any sense of anxiety regarding nanny's care for her children.

M8: Um, you know, she's not the smartest, like I said, sophisticated, um, or savvy person. So that definitely -- that's probably why I check in so often.

AG: You think you wouldn't do that if you had a sense that her --

M8: I don't know, but I am sure to do it, um, every -- I ... you know, like making sure that she's, uh, locking the doors during the day or - which she does, because I have to tell her. I tell her things purposefully that kind of scare her, you know; if there's a break-in in the neighborhood I'll tell her, and that - and that scares her and I feel better. I don't want to scare her, but I ... I have to be realistic (laughing). (Interview 8, 147)

This mother also describes the detailed information she likes her nanny to report on each day:

... I check in with her a couple of times a day or, you know, I'll call her and leave her a message, "Please call me back" as soon as she's put the baby down, whatever, and when she calls me she goes through absolutely everything, you know: what they ate; what time they went to sleep; I mean, somebody had to do a timeout, whatever; somebody pooped (laughing). So, a lot of information...I encourage that. (ibid., 75)

This mother is an outlier compared to the other mothers in this study, in regards to how much control she wants over her nanny's actions, as well as how much information she wants from nanny each day. Interestingly, this mother reported feeling a good deal of trust in her nanny and she appreciates that "it's very hard to find that, somebody that you trust in that regard" (ibid., 355).

### **Feelings of fear in the mother nanny relationship.**

More than half of participants mentioned feelings of fear in the mother-nanny relationship, either indirectly or directly. Fear in this context refers to a worry or concern that something bad could happen to their child while in the care of a nanny. "Something bad happening to child is always in the back of mom's mind." In the section on "trust," two mothers who installed nanny cams were presented. Their feelings of mistrust in nanny were closely linked to a feeling of fear, specifically a fear that something bad will happen to their child. In the case of one mother, something bad did happen to her child and the nanny cam helped her discover that her nanny was not caring for her child properly. One mom reported that she, "heard 'too many' stories about bad nannies," and another said she has "fear that illegal nanny could kidnap her child."

Another aspect of fear that was mentioned by four participants was worry that something bad was going to happen to their nanny, for example "mom is scared of nanny getting deported," or "mom is concerned nanny will get sick or need to leave," that would prevent them from being able to work. This is very different from having a fear that something bad could happen to your child, but it is presented here because mothers described these thoughts as fears, using words such as "scary." One mother discussed a

period when she was having a conflict with her nanny about salary and said, "...it was a scary time 'cause I wasn't sure if it was going to work, and it was like right when the second baby was going to be born and I didn't know what I was going to do" (Interview 3, 101). Again, these fears link back to the theme of "trust" because mothers are expressing a fear of losing a nanny that they currently trust.

Most mothers also expressed feelings of anxiety related to having a nanny that were similar to the above described feelings of fear, but less acute. Feelings of fear and anxiety can be similar, but the distinction here is that "fear" is a more amplified and specific form of anxiety, whereas "anxiety" refers to a more generalized worry about something negative happening to child and/or nanny. Similar to the theme of "fear," "anxiety" is also closely linked to "trust" in that the more trust one has in their nanny, the less anxiety they report experiencing.

#### **Mother's feelings of guilt regarding nanny.**

The theme of "guilt" has already been discussed at several points in the results section in regards to mother's decision to work and her feelings about leaving her child(ren). In this section, mother's feelings of guilt specifically related to her relationship with her nanny will be discussed. Four mothers spoke about guilt regarding some aspect of their relationship with their nanny. Two women felt guilt about "needing to 'let nanny go' at some point in the future." Another mother described feeling guilty when she and her nanny were renegotiating salary and nanny was unhappy with how much mother felt willing to pay her. One more mother reported feeling "guilty that nanny is illegal" and that she does not pay taxes on nanny's salary. Overall, a low

percentage of women remarked on feeling guilty about something specific with their nanny and rather, guilt was mentioned more as a byproduct of working and a mother's relationship with her child.

**Mother's feelings of jealousy and resentment regarding nanny.**

Feelings of jealousy and resentment were mentioned by six of eleven participants. If a participant did not mention jealousy during the semi-structured interview, a follow-up question specifically asking about jealousy was asked at the end of the interview. Four mothers flatly stated that they had never felt jealous of their nanny. Of the five who had experienced feelings of jealousy, all were either "jealous of the time nanny spends with kids" or "jealous of 'special connection' between child and nanny." Two mothers described feeling jealous and resentful when their child occasionally chooses nanny over mother, for example, after the child gets hurt and is seeking comfort. One mother described a period of time in which her son was first acquiring language and he called both her and his nanny, "Mama."

He went through a period where he called her mama also until he could speak her name, and then he switched to her name. Um, but there are definitely moments or days when his mood wants her more than he wants me, and so that's a little bit hurtful. (Interview 11, 313) But somehow she was momma and I was talking -- I was trying to talk to myself like, "Look, you're the one who chose to work. She's with him all day. This is -- you created this, you can't be angry about it. He doesn't know you better". And one day he just switched, and that was the end of that. So -- but that did make a lot easier, 'cause that was like a resentment that I

was holding on to that was just like ... you know. (ibid., 621)

Every mother responds to similar experiences differently. Another mother also mentioned that her child called the nanny the same name she called her mother, but it didn't bother this mother. She was happy that her child had a close bond with her nanny. And another mother spoke about how her nanny is a better cook and housekeeper than she is, but she's not jealous, but rather happy that she can provide her children a caregiver who has the skills that she lacks.

**Mother's feelings of anger and frustration towards nanny.**

Feelings of anger and frustration towards nanny were common, with nearly all participants mentioning experiences with their nannies, or personal qualities in their nanny, that frustrate or anger them. There is a considerable overlap between the themes of anger and frustration and therefore they will be presented together.

***Mother's feelings of anger and frustration when nanny is late.***

There were a number of different reasons that mothers gave for feeling frustrated and angry at their nanny. The most common source of frustration, with three participants mentioning it, was that "nanny is a little late every day."

...she's supposed to be there at 8 and a lot of times she'll arrive at 5 after or 10 after. And um, she drives an hour. So I don't really say anything to her but it really bothers my husband for some reason, 'cause I think he thinks, like, you know, 10 minutes everyday adds up. And then you know, it's not like I don't pay

her. I don't do that with her because she's taking care of my kids, but, for some reason that bothers my husband. And some days it bothers me, like when I absolutely have to be out the door at 8:30 or 8:45 and she's coming in at ten after eight because I have to get myself ready. And then, you know, get out the door. Um, but I've never said anything to her about it, so I can't expect... It's not like I said, you know J\*\*\*, you need to be here right at 8. I mean, that's the start time. (Interview 2, 266)

This mother mentions a couple of interesting topics, including her husband's frustration with their nanny's tardiness and her feeling that she cannot or should not voice her concern to her nanny because "she's taking care of my kids." The theme of how mothers handle conflict with their nannies will be explored later in the results section, as well as the commonly held belief that conflict between mother and nanny would trickle down to the relationship between nanny and child. Another theme that emerged in the data and that will be discussed shortly was that of triangulation between husband, mother, and nanny. In this example, the mother chooses to avoid conflict with her nanny, despite her husband's frustration. In addition, this mother was very effusive about her nanny in general, and said that she feels "like family." However, in this quote, she also makes it clear that she is very aware of the business aspect of her relationship with her nanny when she speaks about how "10 minutes everyday adds up."

Another mother who was angry about nanny being late handled her frustration differently. She said "nanny is always five minutes late, so I get home five minutes late." By doing this, she feels she is getting the time that is owed her. She also avoids confrontation, but somewhat passive aggressively manages her frustration.

***Mother's feelings of anger and frustration regarding nanny's cleaning ability.***

An additional source of anger and frustration for mothers included nanny's cleaning ability, including: "nanny is lazy about cleaning up," "mom wants to 'strangle' nanny when tasks take a long time," and "frustrates mom that nanny doesn't try to figure out where things in house go."

***Mother's feelings of anger and frustration when nanny acts like she knows best.***

A source of anger and frustration discussed by five mothers was a dynamic between mother and nanny in which mothers think their nannies act more knowledgeable about the child or more knowledgeable about parenting. One mother fired a nanny because she was acting more knowledgeable than the mother she worked for:

...she was giving me a lot of advice that I didn't really want. When I said, you know, "Nap times are going to be at this time and I don't want you to rock my daughter to sleep. I want her to go into the crib, and if she cries", every time I would witness how she was doing, she was doing it in a different way. You know, and she didn't think that the way that I was doing it was the right way; so we had some conflicts there, and, um, I just decided that it wasn't working out, you know...It was sort of the attitude that she had with me was like, "You're a first-time mom, you don't really know how to do this. Trust me, I'm gonna do it my way... (Interview 5, 57)

While this mother felt confident enough to fire the nanny who was making her

uncomfortable, another mother with a similar complaint has kept her nanny for years, despite a very strained relationship. I will refer to her as Mother 6, because she will be discussed later in the results section. Mother 6 did fire her nanny for a brief period of time, but decided to rehire her after her children did not like the replacement nanny.

...with my son, she's been a little more ... which sometimes like angers me, like I'll tell him -- she acts sort of like if she knows more than I do, or like she knows his needs more than I do 'cause I'm not there as much. Um, you know, like in the morning, I'll say, "Oh, give him apples, you know. You know, give him like a little apple thing." "Oh, no, he doesn't like apples. You know, if you were here you would know that" or...I mean, she won't say it like that...but she'll be like, you know, "You should know he doesn't like apples", you know, or something like that. Like that's - I don't like her stepping on me, you know, like crossing that sort of invisible line. You know, I'm the mother (laughing), you know...

(Interview 6, 481)

Mother 6 was very upset that her nanny acts superior, but she accepts this because she trusts that nanny is very good with her children. Every mother approaches conflict with their nannies differently, as will be explored in the next section.

### **How mother negotiates conflict and confrontation with nanny.**

Most participants spoke about their experiences and feelings regarding negotiating conflict with their nannies. Eight mothers said they dislike conflict in general, and try to avoid conflict with their nannies. Most expressed a timid and fearful stance in which “mom doesn’t tell nanny she’s bothered by something,” “mom is afraid

to insult nanny and ‘rock the boat’,” and “mom is unsure how to talk to nanny about things she wants nanny to do differently.” In response to the question, “What is your least favorite part of having nanny?” three mothers responded by saying managing their nanny and negotiating conflict. As one mother answered, “Having to manage them and having to, uh, confront them when there are issues, I hate that. I wish I could have someone or hire someone to do that for me” (Interview 4, 557).

However, a common sentiment among women who prefer to avoid conflict was that confrontation is less difficult when it feels imperative and concerns their child’s best interest.

Eight participants gave examples of situations in which they confronted their nannies, despite their discomfort. Every example given was a situation in which the mothers felt their child was not being cared for properly. One mother described a situation when her nanny did not give her child medicine when the child resisted, and the mother felt “really adamant about this. ‘This cannot happen again. This is a medication, and I need to know that you’re on board’, and so she was really apologetic and said she was so sorry and it would never happen again...” (Interview 5, 099). Another mother described an incident in which she came home from work early and happened to see her nanny and daughter meeting up with an unknown male friend. She decided to confront her nanny who responded well by saying she wouldn’t visit with friends unknown to mother while working. This was a significant interaction for the mother because she felt so uncomfortable confronting her nanny. She said, “I think because from the beginning I wasn’t like ‘I’m your boss,’ I was sort of like, ‘You’re part of our family, we want you to feel...that way with us.’ So then it felt uncomfortable...to be the boss” (Interview 9,

177). She also felt she learned from the experience that "...when it's in my daughter's best interest, it's easier. But - but we love her and we don't want to hurt her, and so it's hard to ... it's hard to do that for me" (ibid., 587).

One mother articulated her fear of confrontation and her concern that if she creates conflicts with her nanny then it will impact how her nanny treats her children and whether or not her nanny wants to look for another job.

Maybe... I don't want to insult her. I don't want her to, um ... yeah, it's like I don't want to rock the boat. The boat is so good right now, I don't want to rock it, um, because I, you know ... I don't want her to be in a bad mood around my kids, or I don't want her to be - you know, take it out on my kids. You know, I've gotten to the point where I'm comfortable that she wouldn't; but, um, yeah, I don't want her to be upset, start looking for something else. God forbid. (Interview 8, 287)

Three mothers expressed a fear that if they complain to their nanny about something, and then nanny becomes angry or unhappy, it will affect their child. For example: "mom 'loves' the way nanny cares for children, so tries to avoid confrontation" and "mom felt she and nanny had to have a good relationship for the 'sake of the children.'" Underlying this sentiment is a feeling of fear that mother's behavior or actions could undermine the mother-nanny or nanny-child relationship.

### **What mothers will accept to preserve nanny relationship.**

Nine mothers spoke about what they will accept to preserve their relationship with nanny and eight mothers discussed what they feel they must do in order to keep nanny. Since the two themes are subtly different, I will present them separately, beginning with

“what mothers will accept.” The process of becoming comfortable with a new nanny, as well as the fear of losing a nanny that one trusts, has been discussed previously in the results section and underscores the notion of mothers feeling compelled to do or accept what they must in order to preserve the relationship. One mother, who was dissatisfied with her nanny’s ability to handle housework and two children found “the idea of firing nanny too stressful – so hired additional nanny.” Another participant also hired two nannies because she felt they had skill sets that complemented each other, and it was less stressful than finding one new nanny.

What mothers will accept to preserve their relationship with their nanny, usually refers to many of the personal characteristics, or troublesome aspects of the mother-nanny relationship that have been discussed previously. For example, a mother who is bothered that her nanny arrives late every day, but also wants to avoid conflict with her nanny, is therefore accepting her nanny’s tardiness in order to maintain the relationship. In addition, many mothers were sensitive to the relationship that their child(ren) had formed with their nanny, and if nanny was lacking in certain aspects, mothers accepted it because they did not want to rupture the nanny-child relationship. One mother who was dissatisfied with her nanny’s housekeeping abilities, as well as her nanny’s lack of availability to work more hours, kept her nanny despite these failings.

She’s ah, she’s great with the kids...She, you know, I guess, no one’s perfect...She’s very trustworthy, she’s amazing with the kids, they love her, and they love her kids. That’s the reason why I work with her. The things that aren’t so great are, she doesn’t, she has her own life which is good for her. But for me I have to rush home from work a lot ‘cause I feel like she wants to go. Um, she

doesn't, she's not very proactive in taking care of the house. Like she's lazy about that. So yeah, ideally I would have a person that has her qualities, her good qualities plus, like, be able to stay longer and take care of things more, cause I'm so busy it just puts more stress on me. But I kind of forgive that because I feel like the important things she is. (Interview 3, 41)

Throughout this mother's interview, she expressed a level of frustration and disappointment in her nanny which was unique among the participants. However, she also repeatedly said that her nanny was trustworthy and that her children were very attached to her.

Both of the women who employ two nannies explained their decision to do so. In both cases, they had a live-in nanny who was in her fifties and not as fast or capable as they would like. One of the two mothers had two sons under the age of three and she tried never to leave her live-in nanny alone with both of them. She said, "a lot of people have told me, you know, "You're crazy, she should be able to handle both"; but I feel that it's a lot" (Interview 4, 51).

This mother hires an additional nanny to come work on the days that she is away at work all day. The second nanny, however, also had her failings. In describing the second nanny, this mother said:

But interestingly I find that as amazing as she is with the kids, she has a lot of personality issues... Like she's difficult to deal with in terms of her reactions -- interactions with adults... I think she just has one of these very kind of borderline personalities (laughing), you know, in terms of constantly needing reinforcement about the relationship, constantly needing like to be patted on the back and, you

know, has very low self-esteem, I think. And just as great as she is with kids, she just, you know, with adults is sometimes just very ... very difficult, you know, for her. So, um, that's been interesting. (ibid., 205-229)

To summarize, the first nanny is not capable of caring for two young boys and the second nanny has some personality issues that are concerning, but this mother is willing to accept their weaknesses because her needs and her children's needs are being met.

The other mother who hired a second nanny because the first was not capable of handling two young children, described the reason why she opted to hire two nannies instead of looking for one nanny who could do the job:

Yeah, definitely, there's one person that could do this whole job, for sure. I just...the stress of coming back to work after the second child...I had like extra anxiety about leaving and coming back to work and really wanted somebody who spoke English at the home. But because I was comfortable with G\*\*\* and it worked and she took care of so many other things around the house, I just -- the idea of switching it was too stressful to me...if I had gotten rid of her completely and rather than then hiring P\*\*\* had hired somebody totally new, I might have had to go through three people before I found the right person, and I just didn't feel comfortable with that. (Interview 5, 121)

The most extreme example of what a mother was willing to accept in order to keep her nanny was Mother 6, who was described earlier in the discussion of mothers who were frustrated when their nannies who act like they know better than mother. Mother 6 essentially made a choice to limit her relationship with her own mother in order to maintain her relationship with her nanny. Mother 6's nanny is her uncle's best friend's

mother. The nanny lives with the participant's uncle and cares for her sick grandmother at her uncle's home. Although they are not technically relatives, mother says that her nanny is "family." An additional complicating factor, though, is that mother's mother, who I will refer to as grandmother, intensely dislikes nanny and has powerfully influenced mother's relationship with nanny. When I attempted to better understand why grandmother disliked nanny so much, mother said:

M6: ...you're not Hispanic, so it's hard to explain it; but I'll try (laughing). Um, she came here from Cuba; my mom's Argentinean, and my dad is Cuban. But my mom has this resentment; I mean, even though she [nanny] became a U.S. citizen, she has this resentment of people that come like from another country and take up like benefits.

So my nanny came, immediately she like started trying to apply for citizenship and she started getting Medicare and all that. So my mom is -- you know, basically says she's a freeloader. She comes to our country, she freeloads off all our benefits while my mom's, you know, working and her tax dollars...

AG: But she's an immigrant herself.

M6: I know; that's the interesting part. She doesn't understand that part (laughing). But that's -- that's her beef.

AG: Do you think that she has pulled away from your family, though, because you've embraced this nanny?

M6: Absolutely...Yeah. That's why she won't -- my nanny comes Monday through Wednesday and then Friday. My mother-in-law always comes every Thursday, she dedicates like her day to my kids. So my mother will not even call

my house or step foot on any Monday through Wednesday or Friday, because she knows that the nanny's there....and the sad part is that her mother lives with my uncle and she has Alzheimer's. And my nanny basically takes care of her, you know, like once she's there at night and stuff. And my mom won't go visit her own mother, because she lives with my nanny. Isn't that sad? (Interview 6, 155-169)

The entanglement of relationships in this story goes even deeper, because Mother 6 and other members of the family generally believe that the grandmother caused the nanny's son to have a heart attack when she insulted him and his mother [nanny] at a social engagement. Mother 6 and nanny's relationship, therefore, is profoundly influenced by this very complex web of relationships. And Mother 6 says that from the start of their relationship, she and her nanny were "short with each other" and had a strained relationship. "I love the way she takes care of my children, so I just kind of like swallowed in and, you know, didn't say anything..." (ibid., 37) There was a period in which her relationship with nanny became so fraught that she fired her nanny, only to rehire her several months later when the replacement nanny did not work out. After mother 6 rehired her nanny, their relationship improved, in part because mother 6's relationship with grandmother became more estranged. As mother 6 said, "the bigger the rift with my mother, the closer I am to my nanny." Essentially, mother 6 made a decision to preserve her relationship with her nanny because she is exceptional in her ability to care for her children, but the cost is a very difficult relationship with her own mother.

**What mothers feel they must do in order to keep nanny.**

Eight mothers made mention of things they feel they must do in order to maintain relationships with their nannies. For example, “mom feels she must give nanny what she wants because she’s great with child” and “mom expends a lot of energy being thoughtful of nanny.” One mother, who was anticipating a move to another state, was planning to ask her nanny to accompany them. Since the nanny wouldn’t know anyone in the new location, this mother decided she would have to become a live-in nanny, whereas she currently was not live-in. Mother “is not crazy about a live-in, but would do it to keep nanny.”

#### **Mother’s feelings of dependence on nanny.**

A mother’s feeling of dependence on her nanny is a subtext of the previous two themes that were discussed. Every mother in this study wanted to maintain their relationship with their nanny, despite the complications and stresses of the relationship. Mothers did not want to disrupt the child’s relationship with nanny, as well as her own. Nanny’s reliability to arrive at work every day enables a mother to work. Therefore, a mother’s career is dependent on her relationship with her nanny. Seven participants spoke about their feelings of dependence on their nanny with two mothers saying they “like having people to depend and rely upon.” Others, however, said they disliked “being at their mercy.” Mother 10, who had a four-month-old baby and was described earlier in the results section, disliked having to depend so completely on a nanny, and looked forward to moving back to Europe so she could have the support of her family.

I’m finishing my training. If I don’t work...It’s tough. It’s really tough. So, that’s why we decided to go back to Spain...it’s scary every morning when she

comes late. Because sometimes there are problems with the buses. I get so anxious if she doesn't come - what am I going to do? That's a terrible feeling. A terrible terrible feeling. So...it's a scary situation, and you see that you depend completely on the nanny. And um, we need our family, big time. (Interview 10, 118)

Mother 10 was an outlier as far as the level of discomfort she experienced as a result of being so dependent on her nanny. However, in general, feelings of dependence added a level of pressure to the mother-nanny relationship that many women experienced.

#### **The cost of having a nanny.**

Four mothers said "it's expensive to have a nanny" and three mothers mentioned the cost of having a nanny as their answer to the question "What is your least favorite part about hiring a nanny?" However, they also expressed a feeling of acceptance about the cost of having a nanny and understood that once their children are in school, they will not require as much domestic help.

...it's like the price that we pay for our sanity, you know (laughing)? And it's temporary. You know, we sort of did a cost analysis and said, "Okay, this is how much it's gonna cost us over the next year", and it's worth it for us to get through that time... (Interview 5, 133)

Another mother echoed this sentiment:

It's very expensive to have her. And we, I don't mind. That's where our extra money goes, basically, is to her. And that's what we've chosen to do and we're fine with it. But we're going on, at that point, almost 4 years. (Interview 2, 186)

And one mother who was disgruntled about paying her nanny more than she felt was appropriate, said, “You know, we’re friendly, but then I have to pay her” (Interview 3, 304).

### **Mother’s thoughts on relationship with nanny ending.**

Two mothers said they “don’t want to spend time thinking about how their relationship with nanny will end,” while the rest of participants had given some thought to what might happen in the future. The general sentiment among most mothers was that their childcare needs would change as their children got older, and either they would negotiate a new arrangement with their nanny, or employment arrangement would end. One mother said, “I plan to have her around as much as I can. Even when the kids are, you know, in their teenage years, hopefully she can still be around” (Interview 6, 597). Another mother planned to try and keep her nanny even after her kids go to school and pay her the same salary for less hours.

### **Triangulation and husband’s relationship with nanny.**

Although the semi-structure interview did not include questions about participants’ husbands, data regarding nanny’s relationship with husband emerged in seven of the interviews. Two participants reported that their husbands communicated with their nanny and in some ways had more contact with the nanny than the participant. Mother 10’s husband worked from home and as a result, was the primary communicator to their nanny. Mother 6’s husband was described as having a very close relationship with nanny in which they would have “lengthy, intimate conversations” from which the

mother was excluded. Mother 6 described a strained personal relationship between herself and her nanny which was a stark contrast to her husband's relationship with their nanny. Mother 6 never sounded envious or jealous of her husband's relationship with the nanny, though, she did speak about feeling snubbed and excluded from their relationship.

I mean, when I'm not in the room, it's like she'll tell him about a dream she had or she'll tell him, you know, how there's my grandmother, something's wrong with my grandmother or my grandmother had a bad night or her cousins are coming in from Cuba or, you know, when her mother passed away...I mean, they talk like for an hour in the morning. And then she'll see me and she'll go, "Good morning" like under her breath. (Interview 6, 707)

This husband, wife, nanny dynamic was significantly different than what any other participant described. Although Mother 6 was very invested in maintaining her relationship with her nanny, she generally had a very guarded relationship with her nanny.

Three mothers reported feeling that their husbands did not want to communicate anything important to their nannies, but rather wanted their wives to be the primary employer. Two mothers specifically spoke about feeling they needed to defend or protect their nannies when their husbands brought up their misgivings with nanny. One mother described the dynamic as follows:

... my husband will say, you need to tell her, cause he won't tell her anything.

'Cause I'm the one that has, it's the woman that has the relationship. And I'll say, no I'm not telling her that. If you want to tell her that you tell her. And then I think he thinks about it and then he won't, he never really says anything to her...I

am definitely her defender, though. Because she's, you know, you know the woman always picks up more of whatever. God forbid we lost her, I would be the one who would have to find somebody new or where to put the kids. I would probably 90% of the time be the one that would have to drop them off. You know, that would be more of a stress on me than it would on my husband.

(Interview 2, 286)

This mother describes being more invested in protecting and preserving her relationship with their nanny because if the relationship gets disrupted, she will be affected more profoundly than her husband. Another mother also spoke about feeling the need to defend her nanny to her husband:

I know that that's common, all my friends talk about that; but it -- it is. I ... he immediately is like, "You don't have to go on the defensive for her" (laughing); but I do, because it's like she's my -- it's almost like she's my territory, leave her alone, because I have the day-to-day interaction with her, I deal with everything with her, and I feel sometimes like he doesn't appreciate, um, how good we have it, and he does. (Interview 8, 281)

These mothers are describing a dynamic of triangulation in which husband has a complaint about nanny but voices it to his wife rather than to the nanny directly. The wife then is in the position of either communicating the gripe to the nanny, or defending her nanny to her husband. In one case, a mother reported that her nanny would sometimes make derogatory comments about her husband and she then felt she had to defend her husband to nanny. What is evident here, is that there exists a triangular relationship between husband, wife, and nanny which can at times get activated and

cause stress.

### **Domain 3: The Relationship Between Mother and Her Own Mother.**

#### **Mother's disappointment in her mother as grandmother and support to mother.**

Several questions in the semi-structured interview were created with the intention of gaining some understanding of what participants' relationship with their own mothers (I will refer to her as "grandmother") were like, both in the past and present. An interesting trend emerged in the data, in which eight of eleven participants expressed disappointment that grandmother was not as supportive as they would like. Two of the three mothers who did not express dissatisfaction with grandmother lived in a different geographic area due to their fellowship training, and both had plans to move near their mothers within a few months when their fellowships ended. One said that grandmother was going to help with childcare once they moved, and the other described her mother as very attentive and helpful when she comes to visit. There was only one participant who lived near her mother and did not express dissatisfaction in grandmother except to comment that as a grandparent her mother is much more lenient than she was as a mother.

The general sentiment among the eight participants who were dissatisfied with grandmother was that "mom can't rely on mother a lot," "mom 'can't count on' mother for anything," and "mom experiences mother as unsupportive." One mother described an occasion when she needed to attend an event at the same time her mother was visiting. Instead of asking grandmother to babysit, she hired a babysitter.

She just, I wouldn't want to put that on her because she views coming to my house as a vacation, not as visiting with her grandkids. I love her, and at first it bothered me tremendously...She's so overworked and stressed out, that when she goes somewhere, she views it as a vacation and she doesn't want to deal with kids. To a certain extent I can see it, a little bit, but I feel like my kids get short changed because she just, you know. (Interview 2, 53)

Another mother expressed the same disappointment and concern that her children will not have a close relationship with their grandmother.

I mean, I feel like I'd like her to be more involved; I'd like her to be, um, just more hands-on. And again, I feel like she responds, you know, once I express those concerns; but there's always this like tension... I think she's not a high-energy, jump-in grandma. You know, she wasn't like that as a mother, either. So I think it's replaying itself, you know, and my frustrations, you know, sometimes come out and, you know, I'm ... I get upset with her and I say, "You know, this is ridiculous. You need to be more involved, you need to make more of an effort. You know, they're only going to be in this age once, and you're gonna -- you're gonna regret it when you don't have that close relationship". So, um, it's been frustrating. (Interview 4, 409)

This theme of feeling frustrated and disappointed in grandmother was prevalent among participants. Along with feeling dissatisfied with their relationship with grandmother, participants tied this to the feeling that they did not have a solid family support system. If mother cannot "count on" grandmother to help when needed, more pressure is placed on the mother-nanny relationship because mother must seek support elsewhere.

**Becoming a mother increased respect for grandmother.**

Five participants said that “becoming a mom has helped her understand mother” and respect for their mothers’ childrearing efforts had increased. One participant said that now that she is a mom she “understands mother’s challenges more now.”

**Mother tries to be different than grandmother.**

Four mothers said that they consciously try to mother differently than their own mothers. Two mothers said they try to be “more hands on” and another said she “tries to be more loving.” In general, these mothers did not express high levels of dissatisfaction in their own experience of being mothered, but rather, they saw their own mother’s flaws and attempted to be different.

**Domain 4: What is mother’s understanding of the nanny’s relationship with the child(ren)?**

**Nanny’s positive feelings for child(ren).**

Every participant spoke about their nanny’s positive feelings for the child(ren) they care for. Participants responses included, “nanny loves children like they’re her own,” and “nanny adores child.” Only two mothers expressed some doubt regarding the authenticity of the feelings they observed their nannies express and exhibit. The first, Mother 10, was highlighted previously in the results section because her first child was still very young and she experienced a lot of ambivalence regarding leaving her baby with a nanny. The only other mother to verbalize doubt about her nanny was the mother

who reviewed her nanny cam footage and discovered her nanny had left the baby in the crib all day. This mother had a number of “scary” incidents in which nannies were fired, and the result was a high level of skepticism regarding the authenticity of nanny’s feelings. However, these mothers, while expressing more doubt than other participants, also said they believed their nannies truly cared for their children.

Mothers commonly used words like “love” and “adore” when describing the relationship between their nannies and their children. One mother said that her nanny threw a big party for her son’s second birthday. As a surprise she made a piñata, rented a costume, and dressed up as Elmo. The mother was struck by her nanny’s efforts and said “I truly believe that she adores my son.” (Interview 11, 393). Another mother said, “She’s patient and she’s caring, and she loves them like I think they’re her own kids” (Interview 2, 133). Mother 6, who was discussed previously regarding her decision to keep her nanny despite its negative impact on her relationship with her mother, described her nanny’s loving attentiveness to her children.

She adores them like her own (laughing). That's the honest-to-God truth. I mean, like on her days off, like on weekends, if she knows like the girls had a cold, she'll call up on a Saturday or Sunday -- more than my own mother, you know?

(Interview 6, 539)

Mother 6 also said that her nanny will secretly take her daughters’ dirty school uniforms home and wash them without asking. This level of involvedness was unique, however, there was overwhelming uniformity in participants’ belief that their nannies cared for and loved their children.

### **Child's positive feelings for nanny.**

The feelings between nanny and child(ren) were reciprocal in that most mothers (8 of 11) spoke about their child's love for and attachment to nanny. This was mentioned earlier in the context of mothers maintaining relationships with nannies in order to preserve the relationship between nanny and child. Two participants said their child "calls nanny 'Mommy,'" and in general, mothers reported that "there is a lot of love in the relationship between mother and child." Two mothers said that on occasion, if child is in distress, s/he will go to nanny for comfort instead of mother.

### **Child behaves differently with nanny.**

Four participants described the ways in which their child's behavior is different when they are with their nanny. Two mothers spoke about their nanny's difficulty in disciplining the child(ren). For example, one mother worked with nanny to become a more effective disciplinarian because her "daughter knows nanny will let her 'get away with more.'" The two other participants who mentioned that their child behaves differently when with nanny gave positive example. One mother said that her "child eats better for nanny" and "child behaves better for nanny."

He eats a lot better for her, I think he behaves better for her. People have told me that that's also very typical, that, you know, the nannies have them like more trained, I guess, or something. But if I try to feed him some kind of healthy soup, he would like just throw it off the table and have a big mess. She'll sit with him, and he'll down the whole bowl. (Interview 11, 359)

Another mother said that her child speaks only Spanish with her nanny, English with her father, and Hindi with her mother. This mother described a special relationship between nanny and child in which child is very playful and her nanny understands how to follow the child's lead. The mother said, "So I'm learning from her like how to interact with children and how to sort of let her lead, because otherwise I'm always teaching..." (Interview 9, 287). This mother observed how her child played differently with her nanny and was able to learn how she can play differently with her child.

### **Mother supports child having a close relationship with nanny.**

This theme has, in part, been discussed from a different perspective in the section on "what mothers feel they must do to maintain relationship with nanny," as well as "what mothers will accept to preserve relationship with nanny." In those sections, the focus was on mother's actions and/or tolerance in the service of maintaining a relationship with their nanny. Here, the theme is focused more on a mother's wish for and support of her child having a close relationship with his/her nanny. Only four mothers expressed support of a close emotional relationship between their child and their nanny. I believe that this number is not entirely accurate, and that if participants had been asked a direct question about whether they support their child having a close relationship with their nanny, most would have answered affirmatively. However, the question was not asked directly, but for the four that truly addressed this theme, it surfaced in their responses to more open-ended questions. These four mothers did not feel threatened by their nanny's close relationship to their children. In the following quote, one participant speaks about feeling pleased to see her daughter's attachment to

nanny.

M9: ...it's nice for me to know that my daughter loves her...a few months ago my daughter just lost it and was like clinging to her and was like, "Please don't leave" (laughing), uh, which I -- I sort of liked because, um, it made me feel like, "Okay, you know, she's really attached to her and, you know, they have, uh, a healthy bond where, you know, she feels safe and she feels like she loves her. And so R\*\*\*, of course, was very guilt-ridden and was like, "I'm so sorry." You know, you know, "Please don't" - 'cause I think with her last job, the reason she left was that the children preferred her over the parents.

AG: Uh-huh. And the parents felt jealous?

M9: Yeah. And so I think she's very sensitive to those kinds of things, whereas I was like, "This is great", you know (laughing). I didn't take it as like, "My daughter doesn't love me". I just sort of was like, "Oh, she really likes her and I'm -- you know, I'm so glad that, you know, this is working" (laughing).

(Interview 9, 187)

The above quote is interesting for two reasons. This mother is not threatened by or jealous of her daughter's strong attachment to her nanny, but rather is pleased by it. The mother also describes the nanny as being nervous that she will lose her job if mother witnesses her close relationship with the child she cares for. This nanny has had experience with mothers who are quite different than her current employer.

**Mother feels threatened by child's closer relationship with nanny.**

Six mothers made statements either implying or directly stating that they have

difficulty fully embracing their child(ren)'s attachment to nanny. One mother said that "when child prefers nanny mom sometimes wonders if she shouldn't work." Another mother said that "she wants child to associate good experiences with her, not nanny." The subtext in these statements is a feeling of fear that nanny will possibly usurp or trump mother's relationship with child. Some of these same mothers also expressed being pleased that their children are close to nanny at other points in the interview. I believe both sentiments were stated honestly, but some mothers experience conflict regarding this theme.

## Chapter V: Discussion

The overall goal of this research was to gain a greater understanding of the feelings and experiences that mothers have regarding their relationship with their nannies. More specifically, this research examines how the mother-nanny experience is related to the mother's conception of herself as a mother and as a professional, her relationship with her own mother, and her relationship with her children.

This chapter will synthesize the results. To review, the data has been organized into four domains as follows: (1) What is mother's conception of herself as a mother and as a professional, and how does this affect the relationship with her nanny? (2) What is the nature of mothers' relationships with their nannies and how and why do mothers maintain these relationships? (3) What is the relationship between each mother and her own mother, and how does the nature of this relationship affect the mother's relationship with nanny? (4) What is mother's understanding of the nanny's relationship with the child and how does this impact the mother and her relationship with the nanny?

As was the case in the results section, the data will here be presented within the four domains described above. Within each domain supporting "themes" will be delineated by a subheading under the domain heading. In an effort to present the data as cohesively as possible, some of the themes that were presented separately in the results section will be combined in the discussion. The clinical implications of this research, as well as the limitations of this study and suggestions for future research, will also be addressed.

**Domain 1: Mother's Conception of Herself as a Mother and as a Professional****Mother likes and wants to work.**

Every participant in this study expressed a desire to work and it was their decision to work that led them to hire a nanny as their method of childcare. The women got pleasure and satisfaction from working. Most mothers did not need to work to contribute financially to their family, but chose to work because they wanted to. This decision engendered conflict in many of the participants about leaving their child with another caregiver.

Three mothers reported that they had to return to work both for financial reasons as well as for limitations on maternity leave established by their employer. However, these three women also reported that they enjoyed work. Two of these women said they would have preferred a longer maternity leave, but they both made it clear that they take pleasure in their work and their work identities.

Most participants reported that they did not want to be stay-at-home mothers. Their discontent about staying at home was similar to that reported by Mary Blair-Loy in her book, *Competing Devotions: Career and Family among Women Executives* (2003). Blair-Loy found the most common complaint amongst executives who decided to leave their careers to care for children was feelings of boredom and isolation. These sentiments are akin to the feelings expressed by this study's participants, who reported feeling unhappy, bored, and inefficient when they stayed home all day with their children.

**Mother's belief that working makes her a better mother.**

Nearly half of participants (5 of 11) believed that working made them better mothers. This belief bolstered their decision to work. Their reasons given for why working helped them become better mothers included: they placed great effort into setting up periods of “quality time” with their children when they were home, they felt that they had more patience with their child(ren) when they are not home all day, These women are essentially saying that when they were able to have their working selves, they were able to be more present as parents than if they were solely in the role of mother.

Rosalind Barnett has written extensively about the positive effects of women working and therefore having “multiple roles.” Barnett wrote that despite “considerable systematic research indicating that, on average, employment has positive effects” (Barnett, 2004, p.158), there is still a general belief that maternal employment negatively affects marriages and children. Research has consistently found that women with multiple roles experience less depression and anxiety than women with fewer roles (ibid., p. 160). As one example, Barnett cites a longitudinal study published in 1989 by Wethington and Kessler in which they found that women who increased workforce participation showed lower levels of depression and anxiety, whereas women who decreased workforce participation showed increased levels of depression and anxiety.

Although the present study’s participants readily and comfortably expressed their positive feelings about work, there were also moments of hesitation and doubt that revealed inner conflict regarding the decision to work. In her recent book entitled, *The Unfinished Revolution: How a New Generation is Reshaping Family, Work, and Gender in America* (2010), Kathleen Gerson writes about women she terms “self-reliant,” who eschew the necessity of marriage and feel comfortable relying on themselves to be the

primary breadwinner and possibly the only parent. Although participants in the present study were not single parents and only one was the primary breadwinner, Gerson's discussion resonates with the sentiments expressed by them.

Making motherhood consistent with carving out personal space clashes with the widespread and persistent concern that children suffer when their mothers work (even though decades of research have failed to show this). Self-reliant women may not dispel these worries, but they do not acquiesce to them. Social disapproval may leave them feeling uncomfortable, but it does not dictate their strategies. (Gerson, 2010, p. 145)

Although Gerson does not name this "uncomfortable" feeling, the women in this study describe it as guilt. Guilt is the result of working despite internalized (yet disproven) beliefs that mothers should stay home.

**Mother's feelings of guilt related to working and leaving children with nanny.**

All of the participants mentioned feelings of guilt related to their decision to work and leave their child with a nanny. Four mothers reported feeling guilty about their decision not to stay-at-home with their children. Some mother expressed guilt about how their working affects their relationship with their children. Many focused on what they were "missing out on" while they were at work. Most mothers also spoke of a continuous feeling of guilt related to the lesser amount of time spent with their children compared to the amount of time they imagined they would spend with them as stay-at-home mothers.

These pervasive feelings of guilt are inextricably linked to the commonly held belief that women are *supposed* to be their child's primary caregiver because that is better for their children. Some women experience this guilt more palpably than others, and it influences their maternal self-esteem as well as their relationship with their nanny. And yet, the research that explores the impact of maternal employment on children's academic achievement and emotional adjustment does not support these beliefs.

For instance, Suzanne Bianchi's research has focused on maternal employment and specifically the amount of time working mothers spend with their children. She writes:

...given the effort that has been devoted to searching for negative effects of maternal employment on children's academic achievement and emotional adjustment, coupled with the scarcity of findings (either positive or negative), it would appear that the dramatic movement into the labor force by women of childbearing age in the United States has been accomplished with relatively little consequence for children. (Bianchi, 2000, p. 401)

Despite the academic research supporting women's decision to work, women still feel guilty. Penelope Leach, a British psychologist who has written numerous books on childhood and childrearing, recently led a qualitative study on childcare, resulting in her 2009 book entitled *Child Care Today: Getting it Right for Everyone*. Leach speaks about this belief that mothers should stay home and how it clouds the general discourse regarding childcare, as well as women's feelings and decisions. Leach writes, "We are still looking at it backward, treating the sole mother care that was typical of white middle-class families for a generation after the Second World War as a gold standard

against which to measure (and decry) today's child care...it is difficult to imagine a less useful mind-set" (Leach, 2009, p. ix). Despite the research supporting women's decision to work after motherhood, and their steadily increasing numbers over the last several decades, some mothers continue to be haunted by the belief that staying home is preferable for children.

If one makes the assumption that most women who are making the transition to parenthood and who are deciding whether to stay home or return to work are not delving into the scientific literature on childcare, then from whence does this notion that staying home is better for children? In Robert Drago's 2007 book entitled *Striking a Balance: Work, Family, Life*, he writes about the societal norms that govern our expectations of others and ourselves, and "which carry penalties for those who deviate from the rules" (Drago, 2007, p.7). One of the norms he describes is called the motherhood norm, "a society wide belief that women should be mothers, and perform unpaid family care and low-paid care for others in need" (ibid., p.7). This notion of a motherhood norm is useful in understanding the guilt working women experience. Drago writes that individuals' responses to new circumstances, in this case motherhood, are often guided by societal norms, even if their values differ from these norms. This then sparks a woman's internal conflict which produces feelings of guilt. One mother in this study said, "So the guilt is that I'm hiring someone to watch my children where I feel that that's - that's what I should be doing. You know, I should be home with 'em..." This belief that a mother *should* be home contributes to her feelings of guilt, despite the values that tell a mother that her decision to work is healthy for herself and her child. These values keep her working despite the guilt.

Most women also reported feelings of guilt that were focused on feeling torn between time and energy spent on work versus on their children. (The contribution of separation anxiety is discussed shortly.) They felt they were missing out on activities and experiences with their children while they were working, yet they also felt guilty about not doing more at work when they were spending time with their children. Participants described a general feeling of imbalance and stress. Leach obtained similar results in her qualitative study, finding that more than half of the mothers in her study were “ambivalent or anxious about their overall situation and lifestyle. Those who felt their work/home balance was not ideal would all have preferred fewer hours at work and more at home with the baby” (Leach, 2006, p.498). In the present study, participants were not asked if they preferred fewer hours at work. However, none of the participants mentioned this as a possible solution to their feelings of guilt or general feeling of imbalance. Their descriptions of guilty feelings were expressed more as a feeling that was simply part and parcel of working and having young children. In other words, the women in the present study indicated that the mere fact of working and being apart from their children incurred guilt, irrespective of number of hours at work.

This phenomenon is best understood in the context of the caregiving system, a goal-corrected system that is reciprocal to the attachment system. Whereas the attachment system focuses on the child’s relationship to her mother, the caregiving system is organized around protecting and caring for the child. When the caregiving system is intact, then the mother is naturally and powerfully inclined to be near and to protect her child. This theory was initially, but preliminarily, outlined by John Bowlby in his book *Attachment* (1982), and then further explored by Carol George and Judith

Solomon. They write that:

With regard to the caregiving system, internal or external cues associated with situations that the *caregiver* perceives as frightening, dangerous, or stressful *for the child* should activate the caregiving system. These situations include, but are not limited to, separation, threats to the child or child endangerment, the child's verbal and nonverbal signals of discomfort and distress, and direct signals for approach or retrieval from the child. (Solomon & George, 1999, p. 330)

First on their list of situations that should activate the caregiving system is a mother's separation from her child. They also write that an oft overlooked aspect of both the attachment and caregiving systems is that both depend on "continual and active monitoring and assessment of the environment" (ibid., 331). If the caregiving system requires constant monitoring of the child's environment, then it makes sense that a mother's separation from her child would activate the caregiving system and cause her to feel guilt – especially if the separation is her choice. This notion helps explain why the women in this study experienced feelings of guilt as a result of separating from their children in order to work.

### **Mother's thoughts on time management.**

Participants expressed a common sentiment that they have very little time, and that they work hard to manage their schedules and be involved parents despite working. Their efforts to organize their time were often described as stressful. In general, efforts to organize time and to insure time with their children also helped participants feel positive about their mothering. The work of Suzanne Bianchi and colleagues have found

that because mothers today spend less time doing housework than did their mothers, and because women incorporate their children into their own leisure activities more than in generations past, maternal “employment has not decreased the quality – and perhaps not even the quantity – of time invested in children” (Bianchi, 2000, p.403). The women in this study who describe their diligent efforts to carefully organize their time so that they are involved and attentive to their children supports Bianchi’s claims that working women today are as involved as their unemployed predecessors.

### **Mother’s thoughts on how working affects her children.**

The mothers in this study were not unified in their thoughts on how their employment affects their children. As mentioned earlier, some felt that working makes them better mothers, implying a positive impact on their child(ren). Other mothers, however, expressed concern that their decision to work negatively impacted their children. One mother worried that her child’s developmental delays were perhaps a result of her working and not being his sole caregiver, while another mother felt badly that her child was not involved in more extra-curricular activities as a result of her working.

### **How having nanny affects mother’s feelings about herself as a mother.**

Participants were asked the following question: “How has your evolving relationship with your nanny affected your idea of yourself as a mother?” Five mothers reported that having a nanny affected their maternal self-esteem by making them feel insecure and that their nanny is a better caregiver. The most striking example of this was

the mother who worried that her infant son believed the nanny was his mother. Three mothers said that having an experienced nanny was reassuring to them and increased their feelings of confidence as a mother – but two of the three also found that their competent nannies functioned as critical outside observers causing them to doubt themselves as mothers. This perception of mothers illustrates how having a nanny may affect a mother’s sense of her skill and worth as a mother. Four mothers answered this question by saying that having a nanny made them feel guilty that they are not home with their child(ren). If we infer that the four mothers who said they feel guilty also feel decreased maternal self-confidence, then nine of eleven participants experienced decreased maternal self-confidence as a result of employing a nanny. This inference is plausible because feelings of guilt are the result of believing that you are either doing something you shouldn’t, or that you are in some way not adequate. Therefore, the experience of having a paid caregiver that the mother can compare herself to increases the mother’s feelings of guilt and anxiety about being an adequate provider of care. This can be further understood in the context of the caregiving system that was outlined previously in the section on guilt. The mother’s caregiving system gets activated by hiring an alternate caregiver who is providing the attention and protection that the mother instinctively feels she should provide. As the caregiving system becomes activated, the mother experiences self-doubt and guilt.

## **Domain 2: What is the nature of mothers’ relationships with their nannies?**

### **Hiring a nanny.**

The mothers in this study could all afford to hire a nanny, and all believed that a

nanny was preferable to center-based daycare. Some participants felt more comfortable leaving their child in their own home and liked the flexibility that having a nanny would provide -- for example, if their child became sick.

Most participants found their nannies through word of mouth, although one mother used an agency and another placed an ad online. The mother who had used an agency decided, after a string of “terrible” nannies, that this was the least reliable method of finding a nanny. Most mothers checked their nanny’s references, but were also strongly influenced by their gut reaction to an applicant.

Nearly all participants said that they imagined their nanny would be, among other things, “loving” and “reliable.” This concurs with Leach’s similar finding that “all parents wanted care providers to be ‘warm and loving’” (Leach, 2009, p.72). The responses beyond these more common sentiments varied, with one mother hoping for a nanny who would “be an extension of myself,” and another looking for someone who could urge her child to reach developmental milestones. Three participants reported having no pre-conceived ideas of what they were seeking in a nanny. These mothers reported feeling anxious about impending motherhood. Returning to work was a given for them, and they simply did not imagine what their nanny would be like before employing one.

### **The adjustment to having a nanny.**

When speaking about the adjustment to having a nanny, participants spoke first and foremost about the anxiety they experienced as a result of not yet fully trusting their nanny. Participants also spoke about the newness of having a stranger step into the

intimate role of caring for their child and spending the day in their home. One participant said that she very quickly formed a bond with her nanny because of this forced intimacy, whereas others focused more on the anxiety they experienced. In her research, Leach found that “anxiety about the trustworthiness of care providers in general is widespread among parents and often fanned by alarming media stories” (ibid., p. 71). This study corroborates Leach’s findings, but also found that participants were experiencing anxiety about separating from their baby, which contributed to the stress felt by mothers who were making the adjustment to having a nanny.

#### **Mother’s anxiety about separating and leaving child with nanny.**

At the same time that mothers are building trust in their nannies, they are also becoming accustomed to separating from their child. Maternal separation anxiety is understood to be “an unpleasant emotional state tied to the separation experience: it may be evidenced by expressions of worry, sadness, or guilt” (Hock, 1989, p.794). Three mothers in this study expressed having very low maternal separation anxiety and reported feeling very little stress or discomfort when they first left their child with a nanny. All three linked their high level of comfort to the trust they held in their child care situation. Two of the three mothers were self-conscious about their *lack* of anxiety, and expressed some concern that the interviewer would think they were a “bad mom” for not feeling more discomfort. McBride and Belsky’s (1988) study on maternal separation anxiety found that a moderate level of anxiety was healthy, and that mothers with very low levels of separation anxiety may have difficulty becoming attached to their infants. Anecdotally, the quality of their recollections of being mothered for two of the women in

this study with low separation anxiety were generally plastic and shallow in comparison to other mothers in this study. This suggests a possible connection between the quality of a mother's caregiving experience and her ability to attach to her child – which would in turn lead to low maternal separation anxiety.

Eight participants described feeling a high level of maternal separation anxiety, marked by feelings of acute anxiety, stress, and worry. Most of the eight women reported that the process of leaving their child improved significantly over time, but the initial period of adjusting to regular separation was quite difficult. Several mothers remembered crying after leaving their child, and doubting their decision to work. In contrast, there were also several participants who experienced increased separation-related stress as their children grew out of infancy. They found that as their children became more aware of their mother's leaving, they exhibited more distress at separation which, in turn, was more upsetting for the mother. The findings in this study corroborate McBride and Belsky's findings in which they found that working mothers' levels of maternal separation anxiety decreased over time (McBride & Belsky, 1988). This is a logical outcome because as mothers develop trust in their relationship with their nanny, and as their child becomes accustomed to their mother leaving to go to work, anxiety should decrease. The decrease in maternal separation anxiety over time by the mothers in this study, all of whom were committed to their careers, is also supported by the research of DeMeis, McBride, & Hock (1986) who found that separation anxiety decreased significantly for mothers who wanted to work, but not for mothers who worked but preferred to stay home.

In Leach's article on childcare before six months of age, she also found many

mothers experienced separation anxiety. The level of stress in these women was “notable” to Leach because they also had very positive attitudes toward their work. Likewise, in the present study, every participant felt positively about their work, and there was no apparent relationship between work enjoyment and level of maternal separation anxiety. It was also unclear whether there was a relationship between the quality of mother’s relationship with her own mother and her experience of maternal separation anxiety. Instead, there was a relationship between maternal separation anxiety and child’s level of stress as a result of mother leaving. The children who exhibited decreased stress over time had mothers who experienced decreased separation anxiety over time, and the reverse was true for mothers who, over time, had increased levels of separation anxiety.

#### **Negotiating the line between employee and family.**

Nearly every participant spoke about the relationship with her nanny and the often blurred line between employee and family. Three mothers made a conscious decision to maintain a more professional relationship with their nannies because they were concerned that problems can arise when one becomes too friendly with the nanny. Another three participants described exactly this problem: difficulties arose after they had developed a relationship with their nannies that had a family-like closeness. Mothers of nannies who asked for extra money or help with specific financial crises felt compelled to help out, but then felt taken advantage of and guilty. A common solution to this problem was for mothers to create more boundaries in their relationship with their nanny in order to feel less vulnerable.

The most obvious element that distinguishes a nanny as an employee, and not a family member, is that a nanny is paid. Four participants said their least favorite thing about employing a nanny was how much it cost. Money is a meaningful element in the mother-nanny relationship, especially when a nanny asks for an advance on her raise, or for financial help in the midst of a crisis. The participants who discussed the cost of employing a nanny said they accepted it as a significant expense that would decrease as their children reached school age. However, one participant revealed a feeling that can emerge for some employers when she said, “You know, we’re friendly, but then I have to pay her (Interview 3, 304).” What is ultimately an employment relationship often has an intimate family-like quality because nanny is in one’s home and caring for one’s child.

More than half of participants said they did not like being in the role of boss with their nanny. They felt they quickly formed a close bond with their nanny, and because of the tricky balance between viewing the nanny as family member versus employee, they found it challenging to be in the role of boss. In her 1995 book, *Other People’s Children: An Intimate Account of the Dilemmas Facing Middle-Class Parents and the Women They Hire to Raise Their Children*, sociologist Julia Wrigley chronicled her research on the relationship between middle-class women and their domestic help. She found that:

Professionally skilled as they may be, most parents have no experience at directing an employee in their own home. While they have advantages of money and power, they have to learn how to translate these into effective personal control of a caregiver. This can be daunting for some new employers...the domination of domestic employees by their middle-class employers – can be

problematic for individuals and does not take place without effort. Getting the labor they want from the employees they want can be a fraught and difficult process. (Wrigley, 1995, p.76).

The uneasiness women felt being in the role of boss was related to several different factors. Some women were uncomfortable asserting their own needs, especially when they felt a special kinship with their nanny. In her book, *Doméstica* (2001), Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo also explores the reluctance of American women to view themselves as employers. She writes that when employers are reluctant to view themselves as employers, it can have serious consequences for the employee:

When well-meaning employers, who wish to voice their gratitude, say, ‘She’s not just an employee, she’s like one of the family,’ they are in effect absolving themselves of their responsibilities – not for any nefarious reason but because they themselves are confused by domestic work arrangements. Even as they enjoy the attendant privilege and status, many Americans remain profoundly ambivalent about positioning themselves as employers of domestic workers. These arrangements, after all, are often likened to master-servant relations drawn out of premodern feudalism and slavery, making for a certain amount of tension with the strong U.S. rhetoric of democracy and egalitarianism. Consequently, some employers feel embarrassed, uncomfortable, even guilty.” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001, p. 11)

A majority of participants were also concerned that if they were to engage in conflict with their nanny (a possible result of embracing the role of boss and treating nanny more like an employee), they would risk jeopardizing the relationship between

their child and nanny. They were concerned, for example, that if nanny became angry at the mother, this negativity would spill over into the nanny's relationship with the child. This concern thus impacted the way mothers chose to negotiate conflict with nanny, as well as their feeling that despite being unsatisfied by aspects of how nanny does her job, she must make allowances in order to preserve the nanny relationship.

### **How mother negotiates conflict and confrontation with nanny.**

Most participants reported disliking conflict in general, and made efforts to avoid conflict with their nannies. They would decide not to tell their nanny when something was bothering them for fear of upsetting them or "rocking the boat". Those women who preferred to avoid conflict found it easier to voice a concern to their nanny when they believed it was in their child's best interest: For example, asking a nanny not to speak on the cell phone while driving with the child, or insisting that a nanny give a child medicine despite the child's protestations.

In addition to disliking conflict in general, many participants feared that there would be a residual effect on their child. They worried that if nanny felt angry towards mother, then she would "take it out on the kids," or start looking for a new job. This finding suggests a feeling of fear experienced by mothers who depend on a nanny to maintain their work-home balance, which then leads to a feeling in mothers that that they must do what is necessary to preserve a positive, conflict-free mother-nanny relationship.

Nearly every mother spoke about what they will accept, as well as what they believe they must do, in order to preserve their relationship with their nanny. After developing a trusting relationship, and after the nanny and child have formed a close

bond, mothers begin to feel locked into the relationship. They fear losing that nanny and having to hire a new nanny who may not be as trustworthy, and they do not want to disrupt the child's bond with nanny. Two of the eleven participants had similar situations after giving birth to their second child, in which they did not feel their nannies were capable of caring for an infant and a toddler, so they hired a second nanny instead of firing the nanny they already knew and trusted. The thought of starting over with an entirely new nanny was so objectionable that they accepted their first nanny's limitations and hired a second.

The nanny behaviors that bothered participants most included arriving late in the morning, unsatisfactory cleaning effort or ability, and lack of availability to work more hours. They viewed these qualities as bothersome, but not enough to sever the relationship. One participant was unusually reluctant to terminate a nanny, despite the negative impact it had on her relationship with her own mother.

Eight mothers reported feeling they must do certain things in the service of maintaining the relationship with their nanny, such as concede to requests for money, or simply be thoughtful about the nanny. For example, one mother never complained to her nanny about being late every day because she did not want to risk getting her upset. Another mother felt that because her nanny did such a good job caring for her daughter, that she was obliged to consent when her nanny would ask for advances on her salary. Similar findings were reported by Wrigley (1995), who wrote that, "even the most loyal employers, who care deeply about their employees, do not forget that in offering aid [to their nanny] they are also cementing ties that can help their children (p.90)". These gestures by mothers appear to be important for maintaining these good-enough

relationships with nannies and between nannies and the children. Leach writes that aspects of a child's development may be negatively affected when adults are not stable. Increased aggression and less cooperative play are sometimes associated with changes in caregiver. Leach's findings thus support mothers' decisions to preserve imperfect relationships with nannies.

Participants also maintained relationships with nannies because they were aware of the upheaval that it would cause in their own lives. This underscores their dependence on nanny. A nanny's reliability and dependability allows a mother to pursue her career. Two participants were comfortable being dependent on their nanny, whereas five participants found it difficult and uncomfortable to be "at their mercy." Wrigely's research also noted the impact that dependence can have on the mother-nanny relationship. She found that dependence can contribute to a mother's feeling of obligation to nanny. It is one of many factors that contribute to the careful and deliberate dance done by a mother in the service of maintaining the mother-nanny relationship.

The flipside of this dance was discussed by Hondagneu-Sotelo. The mother's perspective of feeling obligated or pressured to help meet her nanny's needs is considered an act of manipulation. Hondagneu-Sotelo suggests that when employers give (clothing, money, advice, guidance) to their domestic employees, "such gestures encourage the domestic employees to work harder and longer, and simultaneously allows employers to experience personal recognition and validation of themselves as kind, superior, and altruistic. Maternalism is thus an important mechanism of employer power" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001, p.11). The mothers in this study did not

profess to helping their nannies for manipulative reasons, but one can see how the line between giving a nanny extra money in order to make sure she stays in the job can easily get blurred with more manipulative intentions.

### **Mother's feelings of trust in nanny.**

Participants' thoughts and feelings related to the issue of trust permeated every interview. Trust is at the heart of any mother-nanny relationship, and levels of trust impact mother's feeling of fear, anxiety, and desire for control. As was discussed earlier in this chapter, the beginning of the mother-nanny relationship is powerfully influenced by the trust building process. All mothers except one reported trusting their nanny. The husband of the mother who did not trust her nanny worked from home, so she was able to maintain her relationship with her nanny because her husband functioned as a sort of human nanny cam.

Although nearly every participant said they trusted their current nanny, there were significant differences in how trust was maintained. For example, there were some participants who instinctively trusted their nanny. They observed a loving relationship between their child and nanny, and this was enough to maintain the mother's feeling of trust. Two mothers installed nanny cams in order to observe and monitor their nannies and children while away from home. One mother told her nanny about the cameras, and the other kept the cameras a secret. In both cases, though, the mothers felt more comfortable and more trusting because of the cameras. Several mothers said they like to occasionally surprise their nannies by coming home early so as to get a direct sense of what goes on at home when their nanny isn't expecting them. For example, one mother

returned home early one day and surreptitiously observed her nanny taking a walk with the baby. The nanny was engaged in a friendly conversation with a man that was unknown to the mother. This bothered the mother enough to speak with her nanny about only having social engagements with individuals who are known to the mother. Other mothers reported popping in early and being relieved to find that their nanny was attentively playing with their child. Thus, mothers varied in their method or means of maintaining trust, but it was an important aspect of every mother-nanny relationship.

The caregiving system, like the attachment system, is triggered by fear. (Slade, 2011) In the caregiving system, when a mother is fearful that there is potential danger or risk to her child, then she reacts by seeking contact with her child and doing what is necessary to provide protection. If she is hiring an alternate caregiver to do this work, then she must trust this person to provide appropriate care or her caregiving system will become activated. Solomon and George write that “as long as the mother is satisfied that her child is safe, she is free to pursue other goals while continuing to monitor the infant and the environment to determine when her care will be needed again.” (Solomon & George, 1999, p. 338) In other words, as long as the mother is satisfied that her child has a competent and caring nanny, she is free to pursue other goals, namely her career. Trust, therefore, functions as the intermediary between the mother and the nanny and helps maintain equilibrium in the caregiving system. A mother’s effort to maintain trust is actually an effort to maintain the caregiving system.

Attachment research has confirmed that a woman’s experience of being mothered and her adult attachment status contribute to her caregiving system (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Solomon & George, 1999; Slade, et al., 1999; Aber, et al, 1999). This, in

turn, affects her ability to trust her nanny. In addition, attachment systems become activated and often re-oriented as a result of significant life events - in this case, after the birth of a child. (Simpson, et al., 2003; Wilson, et al., 2007) Anxious and avoidant adults tend to cope with the transition to parenthood less effectively than secure individuals. Highly avoidant individuals are likely to have difficulty during the transition to parenthood as a result of their aversion to caregiving. (Rholes, et al., 2006) Participants in this study were not given a measure of adult attachment, however, they were asked a number of open ended questions regarding their current relationship with their mothers, as well as their memories of their mothers when they were growing up. When looking at participants individually it is possible to see the connection between a mother's experience of being mothered and her relationship with her nanny, in general, as well as specifically around the issue of trust.

One mother in this study stood out as having a particularly trusting working relationship with her nanny. She felt emotionally close to her nanny and considered her to be part of the family. She appreciated that her nanny could be a competent third caregiver, and throughout her interview she did not express feeling mistrust towards her nanny. This same mother gave thoughtful and nuanced narrative responses to questions about her mother. She had definite gripes specifically regarding her mother's devotion to her career, but spoke coherently about how she and her mother had reached a mutual understanding and how as a mother this participant felt very close to her own mother. In this example it appears that this mother's healthy, so to speak, relationship with her own mother helped her have a trusting relationship with her nanny.

Several mothers put a lot of energy and effort into controlling and micromanaging

their nannies' day. The mothers who felt compelled to control their nannies would tell them what activities to do and when to do them, for example, what to feed their child, and when to go to the park. In contrast, the less controlling mothers allowed their nanny to make these decisions. Three mothers reported calling home throughout the day and asking their nannies for detailed accounts of their child's day. This level of control helped these mothers feel more trusting of their nannies. As one woman stated, "So with the way that I've structured things, I don't really have trust issues."

Wrigley (1995) writes that it is virtually impossible to control one's nanny since mothers cannot truly know what goes on in their absence. Mothers have tangible evidence of whether or not the house has been cleaned, but since a nanny's care of children is largely unsupervised, and because young children are not yet able to talk, nannies are free to be as attentive as they please. "Despite employers' efforts to supervise and motivate caregivers, they cannot really know what caregivers do with their children all day, much less control it (Wrigley, 1995, p. 77)." Although Wrigley's perspective is realistic, the mothers in this study who preferred a higher level of control reported that it helped them establish a greater sense of trust. Thus, they may not have actually controlled the nannies' behavior, but at least they felt they were doing their best, and that brought increased trust and stability to the caregiving system. The actual level of control they were able to exert was not measured in this study; such measurement would be an interesting subsequent step in researching mother-nanny relationships.

The consequence of lacking trust is increased fear and anxiety in the nanny. Fear and anxiety are what activate the attachment and caregiving systems, and it thus makes

sense that deficient trust is toxic to the mother-nanny relationship. Eroded trust was central to every instance in which mothers fired previous nannies. Once a mother had determined her nanny was untrustworthy, mothers felt they had no choice but to fire the nanny. For example, one mother learned by watching her nanny cam that her child was being seriously neglected and then immediately fired the nanny. This same mother had employed several nannies who proved to be untrustworthy, and then found that her past experiences made it more difficult to trust a nanny in general. This mother was an outlier in that she had hired a number of very unreliable nannies. In thinking about what makes her different than other participants in the study, the one thing that stands out is that she professed to having a “respectful and professional” relationship with her nannies. She had no interest in becoming friendly with her nannies, and one can wonder if this lack of interest in getting to know her children’s caregiver(s) led her to make poor hiring decisions. This mother was the youngest of seven children and notably, her description of her own mother lacked warmth and love. Instead she said her mother “set the rules and “managed the children.” One can hypothesize that this mother’s experience of business-like mothering influences her desire to have professional and business-like relationships with her nannies, which in turn affects the quality of caregivers she employs.

One participant who had fired a nanny she no longer trusted said, “they’re alone with your baby...you’re trusting them with your life basically is what it comes down to (Interview 4, 191).” This statement highlights the importance of trust in the mother-nanny relationship, and how poignantly feelings related to trust can be experienced by mothers. It is the keystone of the mother-nanny relationship, because without it, the

relationship, and the caregiving system, is no longer stable.

**Mother's feelings of jealousy and resentment towards nanny.**

Feelings of jealousy and resentment towards nanny were not as prevalent as was anticipated. During the interview, six mothers, more than half the sample, mentioned feelings of jealousy. They said they were jealous of the time their nanny spent with their child(ren) and of the close bond their nanny had with their child. The jealousy concerning time was always expressed in terms of the mother feeling that she was missing out on activities with her child. The jealousy around time was always expressed in terms of the mother feeling that she was missing out on activities with her child. This is likely related to feelings of guilt that the mother has chosen to work. Two mothers felt jealous when their child would seek comfort from the nanny in the mother's presence, but were able to quell these feelings by reassuring themselves that it was healthy for their child to be attached to the nanny. When a follow-up question was posed at the end of the interview, four participants said they never felt jealous of their nanny. While it is possible that these four women were using denial to protect themselves from feeling jealous, they seemed to genuinely appreciate and foster a positive relationship between their child and nanny. For example, when asked on follow-up if she ever felt jealous of her nanny, one mother's response was, "No. I love that my kid loves her." In general, none of the participants were consumed by feelings of jealousy to the point that it significantly impacted their relationship with their nanny. Perhaps the open-ended interview did not adequately tap into mothers' feelings of jealousy and maybe a more projective approach would have yielded higher reports of jealousy.

**Mother's feelings of anger and frustration with nanny.**

Most mothers reported occasionally feeling anger and frustration towards their nannies, the reasons for which varied considerably. Several participants mentioned that their nanny's lack of housekeeping ability and/or efforts angered them, and others were resentful when their nanny arrived late. If her nanny arrives late it affects the mother's schedule. It also highlights the business aspect of the relationship because the nanny is getting paid for that time. One mother reported that if her nanny arrives late, then she comes home late to make sure she gets all of the time she has paid for. The mothers who were bothered by their nanny's tardiness did not directly complain to their nanny about it, which is perhaps why participants described it as a festering frustration. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, participants in general avoided conflict with their nanny largely out of concern that it would impact the nanny's relationship with the child(ren). Additionally, participants found it easier to complain to their nanny when it was an issue that directly related to their child's well-being and safety, and lateness does not fall into this category. Mothers were thus left to absorb their frustration, or, in the case of the mother who returns home late when her nanny is late, handle the situation with passive aggression.

Five mothers reported feeling angry when their nanny acted like she knew better how to care for the child better than the mother. One mother fired a nanny who acted like she knew more about parenting and didn't always heed mother's requests about how to care for the child. Another mother trusted her nanny's caregiving ability, and despite feeling frustrated and angry, tolerated her nanny's superior attitude. This is an especially

sensitive dynamic because it taps into a mother's feeling that she is not spending enough time with her child, or that she is not a good enough mother. As was discussed earlier in this chapter, a mother's decision to work is often fraught with feelings of guilt which are the result of straying from societal norms, as well as activation of the caregiving system. When a nanny acts like she knows the child better than the child's mother, or when a child shows preference for the nanny, it is a direct confrontation to the mother's caregiving system. The nanny is diminishing the mother's importance which is very arousing to the mother because her primary role in the context of the caregiving system is to be attentive to and protective of her child. Therefore, when a nanny is perceived as usurping the mother's role, the mother can, as is true in these examples, become angry. The interview data does not explore the feelings beyond anger, but it is likely that these feelings are defending against more poignant feelings, such as jealousy and self-doubt.

**Mother and nanny are a parenting team.**

Four mothers felt that their nanny functioned as a parenting teammate. Several mothers said they will consult with their nanny on childrearing decisions because they respect that she knows a lot about their child(ren). Excluded from this group of mothers who sought childrearing advice from their nannies were the mothers who exerted a great deal of control over their nanny by giving her detailed instructions about what to do with the child and required a lot of feedback regarding what happened while the mother was at work. This finding makes sense because the mothers who were very controlling were also less trusting of their nanny. Therefore, their efforts to control their nannies were an effort to maintain trust. In comparison, the mothers who believed their nannies were

teammates in parenting had higher levels of trust and thus allowed them more decision making freedom. Anecdotally, the two mothers who were most controlling also had two of the most high-pressured jobs in the sample.

Five participants expressed their appreciation for how difficult their nannies' job can be, and more than half of participants expressed gratitude for their nannies' help with housework. Interestingly, a nanny's ability to take good care of the children was a given, but as was mentioned earlier, effort and ability to do housework was not. Therefore, housework could be either a source of frustration for mothers or a reason for sincere gratitude. Several mothers appreciated that their nanny's help with housework allowed them to have more time with their children when they came home from work.

#### **Mother's feelings about nanny's personal life.**

Participants were not asked questions specifically intended to elicit thoughts on ethnic, cultural, or socioeconomic differences between themselves and their nannies, but nevertheless the subject emerged with more than half of participants. Several participants mentioned a language barrier making it difficult to communicate with their nanny. Only one mother mentioned socioeconomic differences between herself and her nanny, and interestingly, this same mother was the only one who felt she paid her nanny too much. She and her nanny had disagreed about a pay raise, which resulted in the mother agreeing to pay her nanny more than she would have liked. Perhaps this dispute made this mother more sensitive to the possibility that her nanny perceives her as wealthy, and thus to their socioeconomic differences in general. However, instead of feeling empathy regarding her nanny's financial situation, or feeling guilt that she is in a much higher socioeconomic

level, the mother felt anger. One way to explain this phenomenon is to look at it in terms of projective identification. Instead of allowing herself to feel the guilt and general discomfort that would make sense given her situation, she projects these negative qualities onto her nanny. She thus feels angry at her nanny and thereby protects herself from her self-directed negative feelings.

In his exploration of Whiteness and the nature of racism amongst those people who identify as White, Neil Altman writes about the ways in which “guilt and ‘badness’” are projected onto others. Grounded in a Kleinian perspective, Altman writes that “we struggle to find a way to preserve our loving relationships in the face of our destructiveness and to live amid the contradictions in our nature and the overwhelming nature of our experience. When we cannot manage these contradictions and this excessiveness, we try to rid ourselves of the badness by expelling it, throwing it out (projecting) onto other people” (ibid., p. 440). In speaking about the therapeutic relationship, Altman proposes that guilt and shame in regards to privilege and unequal societal power structures can produce “blind spots.” This dynamic translates to the mother-nanny relationship, for it is likely that the notably small number of mothers who commented on socioeconomic differences is a result of such blind spots. The mothers in this study were able to protect themselves from feelings of guilt and shame by constructing a blindness that shielded them from experiencing feelings of guilt and discomfort.

More than half of participants mentioned their nanny’s personal life and family, with many expressing sympathy for their nanny’s undocumented status, or estrangement from their children. One mother allowed her nanny to use her computer to Skype her

children that lived in another country. Another mother who worked as a lawyer awkwardly “remembered” that she had planned to try and assist her nanny with her immigration situation. Her nanny was a documented worker in the United States, but her children were living in El Salvador with their grandmother and she was unable to obtain a visa from El Salvador to visit them. In recounting her nanny’s situation, this mother said

...so I have always said that, you know, when she’s with us for a couple of years, um, you know, because I have a bleeding heart, I would think ... would give my right arm so she could see her kids ’cause it kills me; but I would actually consult with an immigration lawyer, um, and actually find out if there’s a way to do it. Um, I’ve actually -- I have asked around, because she’s been with us now -- we actually just reached the two-year mark. Um, so it's on my list of things to do is to consult with an immigration attorney and find out if there’s a way... (Interview 8, 175)

This mother’s comment that she has “a bleeding heart” sounds somewhat disingenuous considering the length of time that her nanny has worked for her. Trying to help her nanny with her immigration concerns was “on her list of things to do,” but until she was being interviewed for this study, it seemed that it fallen off the list.

Because the racial, class, and power divisions are so stark in the relationship between mother and nanny, it is interesting to note that the mother described in the previous paragraph is not unique in her ability to ignore or be blind to some of the more gross inequalities, specifically that she is able to raise her children while the woman whom she hires as a nanny cannot. Monica McGoldrick shares her personal journey of becoming more racially aware in her chapter in *Re-Visioning Family Therapy* (2008). In

her conclusion she writes that:

“Many white people say that they cannot let themselves be very conscious of racism or they get overwhelmed by guilt and shame. They feel that they will have to give up everything before their lives will become congruent with notions of ‘liberty and justice for all.’ And so denial becomes an easier approach. They move away from the issues, which is very easy for us whites to do, because our society is so very segregated that we can generally live our lives quite oblivious to our connectedness to people of color. We can walk away and pretend these issues do not relate to us. We can do this as long as we do not think about who cares for us when we are sick, needy, old, or on vacation or who makes our shoes, our clothes, and the home products that keep us comfortable. (McGoldrick, 2008, p.111)

The denial McGoldrick speaks of was prevalent in every interview conducted for this study. McGoldrick focuses on racial differences, but for the mothers in this study, the salient dimensions of difference also included class, education, and immigration status. The glaring lack of discussion among participants regarding these differences speaks to the blindness and denial that protects them from feelings of shame and guilt.

Two mothers said they preferred not to know the details of their nanny’s personal lives thus offering that they preferred to construct a protective “blind spot.” The first mother wanted to protect herself from feeling that she was obligated to try and help her nanny with stressful situations, and the second because it increased her anxiety about the possibility that nanny might have to quit her job. Only one mother considered her nanny’s traumatic past, specifically the experience of leaving her children in her country

of origin (a circumstance common among the nannies discussed in this study), and the possible impact of this trauma on her nanny's ability to be a loving caregiver to her children.

There appears to be an intersection between a woman's blindness to privilege and the caregiving system. For example, the two mothers who admitted they prefer not to know about their nanny's personal life are deciding to be blind in order to maintain equilibrium in the caregiving system. As mentioned, only one mother considered how the act of leaving one's child in another country would affect her ability to be a caregiver. One would have to assume that the act of intimately caring for another woman's children while she cannot even see her own children would, at the very least, be difficult and painful. The mothers who were blind to such thoughts protected themselves from activating the caregiving system. To consider her nanny's experience would potentially create anxiety in the mother around her nanny's ability to be a loving and adequate provider of care.

#### **Triangulation and husband's relationship with nanny.**

Three mothers described their husbands' relationship with nanny as very limited, with the mother often acting as a go-between. The mothers were typically the primary employer, and two women specifically addressed their feeling that they had to occasionally protect their nanny from their husband's disapproval. Similar to the ways in which mothers struggled with how and when to bring up conflictual issues with their nannies, they also put energy into managing potential conflicts between their husbands and nannies out of fear that it may have an impact on the nannies' relationship with the child or her decision to stay in the job.

**Domain 3: The Relationship Between Mother and Her Own Mother.**

In response to several open ended questions that asked participants to describe their own mothers, the majority of participants (8 of 11) reported feeling that their mothers were not supportive enough, available enough, or involved enough with their grandchildren. While the feeling that they cannot rely on grandmother was prevalent, participants differed in their reaction to this reality. Some mothers reported this matter-of-factly, and others were hurt and upset that grandmother was not more available or involved. The two participants who stood out as being most positive about their mothers were both intending to relocate in the months after the interview to live closer to their parents. This is noteworthy because almost all of the mothers who were dissatisfied with grandmother lived close enough so that there was a real possibility that if she were willing, she could be helpful. Thus, the two women who were planning to relocate had been living far away from their families of origin, so there had not been the same opportunity for grandmother to be supportive and helpful. Additionally, as both of these mothers anticipated their upcoming moves, they were expecting that they would be able to rely on grandmother for support. What these two groups have in common is the fact that having little family support, due to physical distance or lack of interest or availability on the part of grandmother, creates greater pressure and dependency on the mother-nanny relationship.

The nature of the interview questions did not allow for assessment of adult attachment status, and thus, it was not possible to ascertain whether or not there is a relationship specifically between adult attachment classification and relationship

with nanny. However, it was possible to look generally at a participant's sentiment about her mother (also referred to here as 'grandmother'), and then look at how this related to her relationship with her nanny. In looking at all of the interviews individually, links between a mother's relationship with her own mother and her relationship with her nanny were identifiable, though clear trends did not emerge across interviews. For example, many participants felt disappointed in their mothers' lack of interest and ability to be good grandmothers. However, this influenced a mother's relationship with her nanny in several different ways. One of these mothers spoke of her nanny as being a sort of replacement mother/grandmother figure to herself and her children. Her nanny was of a similar age to her mother, and was reliable and loving - qualities that her mother lacked. Another participant plainly reported that her mother was unavailable to her as a child and continued to be unavailable as an adult. However, instead of expressing dissatisfaction with her mother, she instead focused her frustration on her nanny saying she wasn't "more available" to her. Another mother was angry at her mother for being unhelpful, but acted this out with her nanny with whom she had a resentful and remote relationship.

To explore this transitive relationship more deeply, we can look at the participant (Mother 10) who experienced the most anxiety and mistrust in her relationship with her nanny. Mother 10 also reported the most inconsistent, but also idealized, impression of her mother. Her husband worked from home which was the only way she could trust a paid caregiver. She didn't let her nanny take her child on walks because, "I'm scared of losing my son. You know, I like her. I don't

know. At the end of the day, if something happened to him, I don't know what I would do. I think I can trust her, I think so, but..." (Interview 10, 244) When asked to describe her mother, she initially responded by speaking about her "bad temper" and how she believes that, as the eldest of five, she had a "tougher time" than her siblings. However, she later says that when she became a mother herself, her mother assisted her during childbirth and visited for over a month. She then realized that she "could not ask for a better mom." Her feelings towards her mother had become idealized. Mother 10 was going to move back to her country of origin several months after our interview to live on the same block as her parents, and her mother was going to be her son's new nanny. This scenario suggests that Mother 10's belief that her mother is the ideal caregiver impedes her ability to trust her nanny.

This brief example highlights the way in which there is a relationship between participants' feelings about their own mothers and their relationships with their nannies. Mikulincer and Florian (1998) found that the transition to parenthood was affected by a mother's attachment style. Mothers who were classified as anxious-ambivalent or avoidant experienced more psychological distress than secure mothers. Anxious-ambivalent individuals were also unable to accurately evaluate how threatening or uncontrollable a situation is, and therefore exaggerated and reacted with high levels of emotional distress (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998). Though Mother 10 did not complete a measure of adult attachment, her narrative can be looked at through an attachment paradigm, much the same way a therapist might listen to a patient with an ear for attachment related narratives. In

her article on the clinical implications of attachment theory (2000), Arietta Slade discusses the ways in which clinicians can use attachment theory to make sense of patient narratives. She writes that:

...secure or highly reflective patterns of language and thought indicate the presence of an internalized other who can contemplate and contain the breadth and complexity of the child's needs and feelings. By contrast, the incoherence, disruptions, inconsistencies, contradictions, lapses, shifts in person, and irrelevances of insecure language and thought imply breaks in the caregiver's capacity to respond to the child's needs for care, comfort, and containment. (Slade, 2000, 1157)

As shown in the present study, Mother 10's narrative reveals the inconsistencies, insecure language, and contradictions that suggest insecure attachment, and her attachment status subsequently has a relationship to her role as a caregiver. As Mikulincer & Florian noted, "insecurity in attachment may hinder mothers' abilities to successfully cope with parenthood and, therefore, may serve as a valid diagnostic indicator of difficulties in fulfilling the maternal role" (Mikulincer & Florian, 1998, p. 158).

The mother's relationship to her nanny appears to be caught in a sort of interstitial space: the relationship between the mother and her attachment figures. A mother's experience of being mothered and how she has processed her memories of being mothered affect her relationship with her nanny. In a sense, the nanny relationship can function as a sort of analytic third. The analytic third is created by the unconscious lives of the patient and therapist, often producing enactments in

the treatment (Ogden, 2004). If we translate this notion of the analytic third to the relationship between a mother and her own mother, the nanny appears to function as a metaphorical analytic third. In other words, the attachment related “noise” that exists for the mother can get acted out with her nanny. In the present study, this pattern could be found in nearly every interview.

When looking across participants to ascertain whether there was a pattern regarding maternal separation anxiety and mother’s relationship to her own mother, none was found. Maternal separation anxiety was a factor that varied across participants, but based on the information offered in the interviews, it was not clearly connected to either mother’s trust in nanny or mother’s relationship with her mother.

#### **Domain 4: What is mother’s understanding of the nanny’s relationship with the child(ren)?**

Participants universally reported positive and loving feelings between their nanny and their child(ren). They recounted stories of nannies going above and beyond the standard level of care which they interpreted as their expression of love and caring for their child(ren). Participants also described their child(ren)’s attachment to nanny. Two mothers reported that their child uses the term “mommy” interchangeably between mother and nanny. Another mother of an infant worried that her child was so attached to nanny that he would think his nanny was actually his mother. There were two mothers who articulated some doubt regarding the authenticity of their nanny’s positive feelings, and

notably, these same mothers also had the most difficulty trusting their nannies.

Four participants reported that their child behaves differently with the nanny than with the mother. Examples varied, with some reporting that their child knows s/he can “get away” with more when with nanny, and others in which the child was more compliant when with the nanny.

Despite the prevalence of mothers who appreciated and supported their child(ren)’s close relationship with nanny and vice versa, there were six mothers who made statements which spoke to feelings of ambivalence about the child-nanny relationship. As was discussed previously, these mothers occasionally experienced feelings of jealousy which were often related to feelings of guilt that the mother was, in a sense, hiring a proxy to maintain the caregiving system. These same mothers also made statements in support of a close nanny-child relationship, which thus points to the conflict experienced by some mothers. They want their child to feel close to nanny because that would be optimal caregiving, but they also may feel threatened by this very closeness because it emphasizes the guilt and anxiety that was discussed earlier in this chapter.

### **Clinical Implications**

The women interviewed for this study are representative of the increasing numbers of women, after the birth of a child, who choose to continue to work. They are utterly committed to their new role as mother, but they are also committed to their careers. In order to continue working, they hire a domestic caregiver, a nanny, to be their proxies while they are away. A mother’s relationship with her nanny can be powerful and often stressful because it taps into the mother’s sense of herself as a mother. de

Marneffe (2004) wrote that "...our sense of being good mothers *depends* on providing good care for our children, and on taking their well-being to heart, feeling it to be inextricable from our own. The problems presented by the run-of-the-mill unpredictability of child care land us, over and over, smack-dab in the middle of this significant, troubling domain" (de Marneffe, 2004, p.149). As clinicians we strive to help patients with this "troubling domain" and in so doing, we must understand that the mother-nanny relationship lies amidst a complicated web of feelings, relationships, and patterns of relating.

It is important for clinicians to be aware of their own beliefs regarding women's decisions to work. Despite the large numbers of women who return to work after becoming mothers, more traditional societal beliefs about mothering are still very much intact in our culture and may influence a clinician's thinking. Another challenge for clinicians is to maintain awareness that the subject of mothering and issues surrounding childcare could potentially be met with resistance depending on the clinician's personal experiences with work/family balance.

To varying degrees, every mother in this study experienced psychological stress related to her relationship with her nanny. There are often real concerns regarding the quality and reliability of the nanny; however, clinicians should also listen for underlying themes related to a number of topics including: work/family conflict and the struggle to achieve balance, guilt regarding the decision to work, and issues around trust, fear, and jealousy.

As this study has explored, thinking about attachment patterns and relationships can be useful in understanding how to best help women who are struggling with these

issues. Exploring a woman's thoughts about her own mother and her experience of being mothered can help clinicians understand the salient issues for her patient and in turn help patients better understand why certain aspects of the mother-nanny relationship can be especially troublesome.

This increased understanding on the part of the clinician and patient can help reduce feelings such as anxiety, jealousy, and mistrust. In addition, when women are first negotiating a new relationship with a nanny, they have also very recently experienced childbirth and the transition to parenthood. Thus, the mother-nanny relationship may exacerbate and/or mitigate symptoms of postpartum depression, for example, and other feelings associated with this significant life event. In Arietta Slade's review of de Marneffe's *Maternal Desires* she writes:

“relative to other aspects of human functioning, psychologists truly understand very little about parenthood and about parental experience despite the fact that most adults describe parenthood as among the defining experiences of their lives and that, as clinicians, we know that the psychopathology of parenting is at the heart of so many of our patients' difficulties.” (Slade, 2005, p. 401)

This study helps clinicians expand their thinking about the transition to parenthood which will in turn help them to more effectively understand and treat their patients.

### **Limitations of the Current Study**

The chief limitation of this study was the small sample size. Patton (1990) maintains that using a relatively small sample size allows for in-depth exploration of specific phenomena, which held true in this study. However, although this study fulfilled

its goal and revealed much about the experiences of the participants, because of the limited sample size, results from this study cannot be generalized to a larger population of women and their relationships with their nannies. Another limitation of the small sample size is that women of diverse backgrounds, including women of color, unmarried women, and lesbian women were not represented in the sample. In addition, this sample was comprised of women who chose to work and could afford to hire a nanny. It is likely that the results would have been different for women who experienced greater financial pressure to work without the personal desire to further their careers. However, for the purposes of this study, the homogeneity of the sample was actually helpful in determining trends precisely because the sample size was so small.

This study also relied on volunteers, making one wonder about the motivation of the participants. Perhaps the women who were willing to participate had an overly stressful or poignant experience of their relationship with their nanny and were therefore more interested in sharing their stories. Conversely, they may have been more conflicted than other women, and agreed to participate in the research in order to have an opportunity to talk about and further understand their experience. It was clear that the participants as a group were eager to tell their story to an interested and supportive listener.

Geographic location, specifically suburban Florida, was another limiting factor. When this study was first conceived of, I was living in New York City and had access to large numbers of women who worked and employed nannies. Presumably, recruiting participants through word-of-mouth and the use of online message boards would have yielded greater numbers and allowed for more diversity or homogeneity of participants. The original intention was to recruit a sample of only first time mothers with children less

than 9 months of age in order to learn from women who were experiencing the nanny relationship and separation from their child more acutely. When it became clear that it was becoming very difficult to find enough women who met these demographic criteria, the requirements were changed to include women who had multiple children, as long as their youngest child was still being cared for by a nanny.

Another limitation of this study is that all of the data was collected, coded, and interpreted by one person. As was mentioned previously, every effort was made to be impartial and self-reflexive during each step of the process, however, multiple coders would have added to the interpretation of this data.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Findings presented in this chapter suggest that exploration of the mother-nanny relationship can offer valuable insights to a number of topics including the transition to parenthood, the caregiving system, adult attachment, and maternal separation anxiety. There exists a large body of literature on these topics, however, how these relate to the mother's experience of her relationship with her child's caregiver has been ignored. There have been a few sociological publications that examine this relationship, but the field of psychology has not yet sufficiently explored this subject.

The aforementioned limitations guide the recommendations for future research. A qualitative approach was critical in eliciting significant themes and is ideal for exploring a woman's thoughts about her experiences as a mother, a professional, and her relationship with her nanny. However, a larger sample would improve the ability to discern patterns

and trends in the narrative data. Future research would benefit from the administration of the AAI – Adult Attachment Interview. It would be interesting to ascertain whether it is possible to make clear conclusions regarding the relationship between Adult Attachment status and the mother-nanny relationship. This would require a much larger time commitment from participants, which could pose recruitment problems.

Another recommendation is to conduct longitudinal research in order to assess change in the mother-nanny relationship over time. Hypothetically, a mother's experience of the mother-nanny relationship is most intense when her first born child is an infant. It would be interesting to evaluate the change and likely decrease in affective intensity over time. It would also be valuable to further assess whether there is a difference in a mother's experience of leaving her first child with a nanny versus leaving subsequent children.

Although this study increases our understanding of motherhood and the mother-nanny relationship, further research would benefit the increasing numbers of women who hire a nanny so that they can continue to work.

### Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview

1. Tell me about how you found and hired your nanny.
2. Can you describe your nanny and your relationship with her?
3. When you think about your nanny, what comes to mind?
4. Can you describe yourself?
5. Can you describe yourself as a mother?
6. Can you describe your own mother?
7. Can you describe your mother, as she is a mother?
8. Tell me about an important incident that took place involving you and your nanny.
9. Tell me about a time when you had a different experience.
10. What went into your decision to hire a nanny?
  - A. Probe: did you feel you had a choice?
  - B. Probe: Did you want to work or need to work?
11. How did you imagine your nanny would be?
12. Before hiring a nanny – did you have thoughts about how it would impact your son/daughter?
13. Since hiring your nanny have your thoughts on how it impacts your child changed?
14. Can you tell me a little about your son/daughter’s temperament?
15. How does your son or daughter react to separations?
16. Tell me about your son/daughter’s relationship with your nanny.
17. Tell me how you feel about your nanny. What are the most positive feelings you have, and what are the most negative feelings?
18. How has your evolving relationship with your nanny affected your idea of yourself as a mother?
19. Can you tell me how you feel when you leave your son or daughter to go to work?
20. What was your mother like when you were growing up?
21. What is your relationship with your mother like now that you are a mother?
22. Is there anything about your nanny that concerns you?
23. How do you think your nanny feels about your child?
24. Describe a typical day for me when your nanny is working for you.
25. Do you have thoughts about how your relationship with nanny will end?
26. Can you tell me a little bit about the process of leaving your child with your nanny each day. Has this changed over time? Describe some of the emotions you feel when you’re away from your child.
27. Is there anything about your relationship with your nanny that has surprised you?

***Follow-up questions about trust, guilt, dependency, and jealousy if nothing emerges naturally.***

28. Do you ever have feelings of guilt related to employing a nanny? If yes – can you tell me about that? Can you tell me about a time when you felt guilty?
29. How trusting to you feel of your nanny? Can you tell me more about this? Can you tell me about a time when your trust in your nanny faltered?

30. What is your least favorite part about employing a nanny?
31. Do you ever feel jealous of your nanny? Can you tell me more about this? Can you tell me about a time when you felt jealous?

**Appendix B: Demographic Information Questionnaire**

1. Name:
2. Address:
3. Phone #:
4. email address:
5. D.O.B.
6. Relationship Status: (married, divorced, single, live with father of child)
7. Years with father of child:
8. If married, for how long:
9. If not married, how long have you lived with father of your child:
10. Level of education completed
11. Major Field of Study
12. Occupation during pregnancy
13. How many years at that job
14. Were you a manager or director?
15. How many did you manage/supervise?
16. If you were a supervisor, would you say your experience was positive?
17. Did you feel effective as a supervisor?
18. How many hours did you work a week before becoming pregnant?
19. How invested in your career were you prior to becoming pregnant? (not at all, not very, somewhat, very, extremely)
20. How many years did you work in your occupation before pregnancy?
21. Before having your baby, did you plan to return to work?

22. If yes, how many hours did you plan to work?
23. While pregnant, when did you plan to return to work? (baby >3 months, between 3-6 months, between 6-9 months, between 9-12 months, older than 12 months)
24. Did your plans to return to work change when your baby was born?
25. If you returned to work or school, how old was your baby? (baby >3 months, between 3-6 months, between 6-9 months, between 9-12 months, older than 12 months)
26. How many hours a week do you work or go to school?
27. How many hours a week does your child spend alone with your nanny?
28. How did you find your nanny?
29. How many nannies did you interview?
30. How many nannies have you employed?
31. How long has your current nanny worked for you?
32. How old is your nanny?
33. Does she have children of her own? If yes, how old are they?
34. Did your nanny work in childcare prior to working for you?

## **Appendix C: Tables of Themes**

### **Theme 1: Balancing Mom's Needs with Nanny's Needs**

- q1: mom hopes nanny will see she can't meet mom's needs
- q1: mom felt torn between 2 nannies and made decision that best suited her needs
- q1: mom tries not to ask nanny to stay late
- q1: p mom feels nanny takes advantage of her
- q1: mom tries to rearrange nanny's schedule to get later hours
- q1: mom wonders about having a live-in who is more available for her
- q1: mom is open with nanny about her needs
- q3: mom wants next nanny to meet her needs more
- q1: mom is not satisfied with nanny b/c she pays a lot, but doesn't get her needs met
- q1: nanny has "own life" so mom has to rush home from work
- q1: nanny has own life and can't give mom as much time as wanted
- q1: nanny has own life and can't give mom as much time as needed
- q1: mom feels conflicted between her own needs and nannys needs
- q1: feels negative when nanny wants to leave early
- q1: mom's schedule was impacted by nanny's schedule
- q1: mom knows nanny is sensitive and doesn't want to upset her with confrontation
- q1: mom is disgruntled that she keeps nanny for her kids, but her needs aren't met

### **Theme 2: Becoming a Mom has Increased Respect for Mother**

- q2: mom respects how mother raised kids and that mother never complains
- q2: becoming a mom has helped her understand mother
- q2: mom respects how much work childrearing was for mother
- q2: mom understands mother's challenges more now
- q2: mom respects mother's choice to stay home b/c it's a hard job
- q2: mom thinks mother taught her a lot about being a mom
- q2: mom and mother respect each other as mothers
- q2: mom identifies her mothering style with her mother's
- q2: mom respects mother a lot

### **Theme 3: Child's Positive Feelings for Nanny**

- q4: child will sometimes choose nanny over mom
- q4: child has good relationship with nanny
- q4: kids love nanny
- q4: kids are happy with nanny and respectful of her
- q4: kids sometimes see nanny more than mom
- q4: child discusses nanny when she's not there
- q4: kids love nanny like a grandma
- q4: kids "adore" and "respect" nanny
- q4: sometimes kids ask for nanny before mom
- q4: sometimes kids call mom nanny's name
- q4: daughter calls nanny "Mommy"
- q4: kids missed nanny a lot when she was fired
- q4: child is happy with nanny
- q4: child likes to snuggle with nanny
- q4: kids don't have separation issues with mom b/c they know nanny so well
- q4: child sometimes prefers nanny which is hurtful to mom
- q4: mom didn't like that child called nanny 'mama'
- q4: nice for mom that daughter loves nanny
- q4: when child cried about nanny leaving, mom thought they have a healthy bond
- q4: mom was happy when child cried for nanny because that meant they had good relationship
- q4: there is a lot of love in relationship between nanny and child

#### **Theme 4: Child's Relationship with Nanny is Different Than with Mom**

- q4: child speaks spanish with nanny
- q4: daughter knows nanny1 will let her "get away with more"
- q4: child is different with mom than with others
- q4: child tries to get away with things with nanny1
- q4: nanny sometimes "gets better results" from child
- q4: child would do opposite of what nanny would say and was not easy to get along with
- q4: child behaves better for nanny
- q4: child eats better for nanny

#### **Theme 5: Child had Difficulty Separation from Mom**

- q4: daughters had separation anxiety
- q4: child would cry when first left with nanny
- q4: took six months for child to adjust to mom working
- q4: child2 cries a lot when dad and child1 leave in morning
- q4: child1 used to cry at separations but mom believes it represented "secure attachment"
- q4: with eldest mom worked at home and daughter "screamed" when mom started to work out of home
- q4: child had difficulty separating from parents
- q3: when child cried about nanny leaving, mom thought they have a healthy bond

#### **Theme 6: Child had Difficulty Easy Time Separating from Mom**

- q4: kids don't have separation issues with mom b/c they know nanny so well
- q4: child usually separates easily from mom and dad
- q4: kids usually separate easily
- q4: baby was left with nanny at very young age so it was never new to her
- q3: in past kids cried very little and felt "self-assured" at home with "little anxiety"
- q4: mom feels it's easier to separate when child is young
- q4: child doesn't react to separations
- q4: both children react well to separations
- q4: separation for daughter is easy

#### **Theme 7: Cost of Having Nanny**

- q1: mom is not satisfied with nanny b/c she pays a lot, but doesn't get her needs met
- q1: mom bought nanny2 car to pick up child
- q1: it's expensive to have nanny
- q3: cost of 2 nannies was temporary to get through the year
- q1: least favorite part about having nanny is paying her
- q1: mom's least favorite part about having nanny is cost
- q3: mom feels lucky that she has the means to have 2 nannies
- q3: it's difficult (financially) to have 2 nannies, but parents made choice to do that
- q3: 2 nannies is the price they pay for "sanity"
- q1: nanny1 asked for raise and was displeased with very small raise she received
- q1: p mom feels angry that nanny wants more money when she's "like family"
- q1: mom doesn't like paying someone who feels like a friend
- q1: p mom seems angry about nanny's salary and amt. of hours worked
- q1: mom thought money wouldn't be such an issue because nanny is like family
- q1: mom is "frustrated" that she pays for 2 kids, but 1 is in school

### **Theme 8: Cultural and Socioeconomic Differences Between Mom and Nanny**

- q1: nanny only speaks Spanish
- q1: mom is speaking to the economic difference between her and nanny
- q3: mom sometimes is resentful of nanny's immigrant status
- q1: mom gives nanny1 benefit of the doubt b/c of language barrier
- q1: nanny was shocked that mom ever had roommate
- q1: cultural differences impact how mom thinks nanny perceives her
- q1: language barrier maintains boundaries in relationship with nanny
- q1: mom worries language barrier will make confrontation be less "gentle"
- q1: mom and nanny have totally different backgrounds but become close b/c of child
- q1: p mom is uncomfortable about economic differences

### **Theme 9: Feelings of Fear in the Mother-Nanny Relationship**

- q1: mom is "scared" when nanny has a surprise for her.
- q1: mom is scared of losing her son
- q3: mom hears scary stories about other bad nannies
- q3: mom worries about not being happy with another nanny
- q1: scary for mom before 2nd baby was born and she had problem with nanny
- q1: mom is concerned that nanny will get sick or need to leave
- q1: something bad happening to child is always in the back of mom's mind
- q1: mom is scared of nanny getting deported
- q3: mom heard "too many" stories about bad nannies and having 2 felt "safe"
- q1: hiring an unknown nanny is "scary"
- q3: fear of something bad happening
- q1: husband is desperately hoping nanny will move with them
- q1: idea of firing nanny1 was too stressful - so hired additional nanny
- q3: q4: mom is scared child doesn't know her
- q3: mom is anxious about changing nannies - especially when she hears about "nanny disasters"
- q1: p fear that nanny will leave because her life is complicated
- q1: mom is concerned about nanny's age and health
- q3: mom worries about kids safety when they're with nanny
- q4: mom doesn't let nanny take child outside
- q1: mom has fear that illegal nanny could kidnap her child
- q1: installed nanny cams to build trust
- q1: mom doesn't want to test nanny's trustworthiness
- q1: having husband at home protects child from bad nanny
- q1: mom's "anguish" led her to install hidden cameras
- q1: mom doesn't question nanny about something for fear of offending nanny

### **Theme 10: How Having Nanny Impacts Mother's Feelings About Herself as a Mother**

- q3: nanny is reassuring to mom and makes her feel more confident as a mom
- q1: when mom was between nannies she "felt like a real mommy"
- q3: nanny is reassuring to mom and makes her feel more confident as a mom
- q3: mom feels bad when nanny does things better than her
- q3: nanny sometimes fxns as a doubting superego for mom
- q3: mom thinks having nanny negatively affects her maternal self confidence
- q1: mom feels that having nanny makes her doubt herself more than needed
- q3: mom wonders how having nanny will affect relationship with child
- q1: mom feels nanny has taught her to be a better mom by example
- q1: mom feels that she can learn from nanny

### **Theme 11: How Having Nanny is Helpful to Mother and Family**

- q3: 2 nannies is the price they pay for "sanity"
- q1: nanny makes family life easier
- q1: nanny has removed stress of childcare from mom's life
- q1: mom is surprised with how much nanny does for her
- q1: nanny takes care of husband and mom
- q3: mom thinks it's better for kids if house runs smoothly with help than frantic mom with no help
- q1: family is happier because they have nanny
- q1: by doing laundry and housework nanny facilitates mom being the mom she hoped she would be
- q1: nanny was supportive of mom when 2nd and 3rd children were born
- q1: nanny runs the house
- q1: nanny takes care of house
- q3: 2 nannies provide stability, comfort, and freedom to work

### **Theme 12: How Mom Hired Nanny**

- q1: found nanny through word of mouth
- q1: parents had a good feeling about nanny when they interviewed her
- q1: mom was comforted by fact that nanny previously worked for friend
- q1: mom hired nannies through agency
- q1: nanny was found through a friend/network of domestic help
- q1: mom found next nanny in park
- q1: nanny is an illegal distant relative
- q3: mom didn't want another nanny from same agency after crib incident
- q1: mom asks nanny about her background in interview
- q1: I checked for her references
- q1: nanny was referred by word-of-mouth
- q1: nanny hired through word-of-mouth
- q1: nanny had references
- q1: when mom used agency a lot of the nannies were "terrible"
- q3: difficult to find nanny
- q1: gut feelings went into mom's decision to hire this nanny
- q1: current nanny hired word of mouth
- q1: found nanny through craigslist
- q1: nanny came with great recommendations
- q1: mom found nanny through word of mouth
- q1: if you find nanny who is goodhearted and works hard it works out
- q1: tested nanny for 1 week before hiring

### **Theme 13: How Mom Negotiates Issue of Money with Nanny**

- q1: nanny1 asked for raise and was displeased with very small raise she received
- q1: p mom feels angry that nanny wants more money when she's "like family"
- q1: mom doesn't like paying someone who feels like a friend
- q1: mom and nanny had different ideas about pay
- q1: mom doesn't like dealing with financial arrangement with nanny
- q1: nanny was talking to other nannies about salary
- q1: mom began to feel uncomfortable giving nanny extra \$
- q1: mom explained to nanny1 she can't pay more b/c she doesn't meet all mom's needs and therefore they need extra nanny
- q1: mom has stopped giving nanny \$ to help solve her problems.
- q1: mom became resentful of giving nanny extra \$
- q1: p mom feels guilty about not wanting to pay nanny more
- q1: \$ issues have made mom a little suspicious of nanny
- q1: difficult to talk about salary with nanny

q1: downside of being very friendly is nanny will ask for money in advance

#### **Theme 14: How Mom Thinks her Relationship with Nanny Impacts Nanny's Relationship with Kids**

q1: mom feels like how she treats nanny will impact nanny's care of child  
 q1: mom worries that if she criticizes nanny, nanny will be in bad mood around kids  
 q1: mom felt she and nanny had to have good relationship "for sake of children"  
 q1: mom "loves" the way nanny cares for children, so tried to avoid confrontation

#### **Theme 15: How Mom Thinks Nanny Perceives Her**

q1: cultural differences impact how mom thinks nanny perceives her  
 q1: nanny was shocked that mom ever had roommate  
 q1: nanny used to be "resentful" of mom  
 q1: mom wonders what nanny really feels about her  
 q1: mom thinks nanny perceives her as blunt and harsh  
 q1: nanny tells others she looks up to mom  
 q1: mom thinks nanny thinks mom is too lenient with child  
 q1: mom thinks nanny now sees how hard mom works to support family

#### **Theme 16: How Much Control Does Mom Want over Nanny**

q1: mom likes to know the details of child's day  
 q1: mom wants to get a lot of information about what happens when she's away  
 q3: if mom gave up responsibilities, she would give up right to comment on things  
 q1: I give her a lot of freedom  
 q3: it's about "mom" that she doesn't give nannies more responsibility  
 q1: mom told nanny she wants to know everything  
 q1: mom told nanny she needs to know every detail of day with child  
 q3: mom doesn't give nannies more responsibility b/c that's "not the kind of person she is"  
 q1: mom could give nannies more responsibilities, but she doesn't.  
 q3: relinquishing control would "take away something she values as far as self-esteem and identity"  
 q1: p mom doesn't trust nanny's judgment and intelligence so she tells nanny what to do.  
 q1: mom would check on nanny by surprising her at home  
 q1: mom calls home throughout day  
 q1: mom can listen to what's going on at home from work  
 q3: if mom is at home she can observe nanny  
 q3: mom feels the structure she imposes on nannies prevents her from having trust issues  
 q1: mom calls nanny a couple times a day to get detailed report  
 q1: mom watches nanny and child at home from work  
 q1: mom checks in with nanny often because she's not smart

#### **Theme 17: Husband's Relationship with Nanny and Triangulation**

q1: husband is desperately hoping nanny will move with them  
 q1: nanny never talks to mom as much as to husband  
 q3: husband wants mom to complain to nanny but mom won't  
 q1: mom is more invested in keeping nanny than dad  
 q3: husband is much less involved than mom and nanny  
 q3: husband is mediator with nanny  
 q3: mom worries about dad getting frustrated with nanny to point of firing her  
 q3: husband and nanny have lengthy, intimate conversations  
 q1: husband often drives nanny home  
 q3: husband believes it's woman's role to manage nanny  
 q3: when dad criticizes nanny mom feels like he doesn't appreciate her  
 q1: husband never confronts nanny  
 q3: mom and husband agree on what bothers them about nanny  
 q1: husband wants mom to complain to nanny but mom won't

q3: mom feels she has to defend nanny when dad complains about her  
 q3: nanny is very loving towards husband  
 q3: mom thinks husband and nanny's relationship is "strange"  
 q1: p mom doesn't like nanny to be critical of husband  
 q1: mom defends nanny to husband  
 q3: husband wants no involvement in paying or managing nannies  
 q1: mom protects nanny from husband's disapproval  
 q3: mom feels nanny is her "territory" and she has to defend her  
 q3: mom gets frustrated when husband has issue with nanny but wants mom to intervene  
 q1: mom communicates dad's complaints to nanny  
 q1: nanny complains about husband to mom

### **Theme 18: Maintaining Boundaries in Relationship with Nanny**

q1: language barrier maintains boundaries in relationship with nanny  
 q1: live-in nanny has her separate space  
 q1: nanny becomes part of your "intimate life"  
 q1: privacy issues with nanny concern mom  
 q1: mom avoids getting involved in nanny's personal problems  
 q1: mom didn't want live-in nanny to intrude on time with husband  
 q1: mom and nanny are not friends  
 q1: mom avoids getting involved in nanny's personal life  
 q1: mom feels nanny has the right balance of involvement in family  
 q1: live-in nanny goes out every night  
 q1: live-in nanny likes time to herself  
 q1: live-in nanny keeps door locked  
 q1: nanny purchased papers to return to U.S. - but mom doesn't know details  
 q1: mom didn't want to know about nanny's visa issues  
 q1: mom decided to stop asking nanny about her problems in order to protect herself  
 q1: mom doesn't want to get too involved in nanny's life, despite friendliness  
 q1: mom didn't expect nanny would need her as much as she does  
 q1: mom is now generous, but sets limits  
 q1: mom is careful not to share too much about her life with nanny b/c it's a working relationship  
 q1: mom looked for live-in nanny who wouldn't be too intrusive  
 q1: mom feels it's positive that nanny doesn't overstep her role

### **Theme 19: Mom's Anxiety about Separating and Leaving Child with Nanny**

q4: hard for mom to separate with older kids who express discontent  
 q3: when child cried at separation it was very difficult for mom  
 q3: mom cried every morning when leaving baby with nanny  
 q3: when mom had bad nannies she would feel "terrible" leaving kids  
 q3: sometimes feels sad when leaves child in morning  
 q3: harder to leave child as he gets older  
 q3: it was easier for mom to leave 2nd child with nanny b/c she had done it with 1st  
 q1: in beginning it was hard to leave child with nanny  
 q3: it's hard for mom to see son cry, but she believes part of it is manipulative  
 q3: child's developmental stage has made separation easier on mom  
 q3: over time leaving child has gotten easier  
 q3: when mom is separated from child she feels longing  
 q3: mom's feelings about separating from kids varies  
 q3: mom feels the separation from her child  
 q3: mom misses baby when he's with nanny  
 q3: mom finds it painful to leave kids when they are upset  
 q3: mom finds it difficult to separate from child in the morning  
 q3: leaving child when crying was "the worst feeling in the world.."  
 q3: as child got older, mom stopped worrying about leaving with nanny

q3: harder for mom to say goodbye than child  
 q4: leaving crying daughter was "the saddest thing"  
 q3: leaving kids for business trip was torture, but now is okay  
 q3: mom worries about what she's missing out on when away from child  
 q3: mom had just gone back to work and mom felt anguish about leaving babies with new nanny  
 q3: mom felt "guilt" take over when daughter cried at separation  
 q3: length of time mom's away makes her feel insecure  
 q3: when child was young mom worried about leaving child with nanny  
 q3: mom is sad about leaving son to go to work  
 q3: once mom was at work, she focused on work, not baby  
 q3: mom found first weeks back at work hard  
 q3: once at work, mom was fine and didn't make frequent calls home  
 q3: mom asked herself if it was "worth it" to work when she left daughter crying  
 q3: mom wanted to work, but felt anguish all the time  
 q3: having hidden cameras was a "lifesaver" for mom  
 q3: when mom leaves in a.m., sometimes feels guilt  
 q3: when mom leaves in a.m., sometimes feels guilty for abruptly leaving  
 q1: mom was resentful towards nanny b/c she felt guilty about leaving kids  
 q1: nanny cams helped mom feel comfortable to return to work  
 q3: easier for mom to leave kids when they're older  
 q3: easier for mom to leave kids when they're older b/c they understand more  
 q3: as kids aged it became easier for mom to emotionally handle kids crying at separation  
 q3: mom felt constant urgency to get home to baby

### **Theme 20: Mom's Appreciation for Nanny's Job**

q1: nanny does "a lot for what I pay her"  
 q1: p mom demeans the job of a nanny  
 q1: mom thinks nanny's job is exhausting  
 q1: mom makes sure to thank nanny in morning  
 q1: when home, mom is aware of nanny needing a break

### **Theme 21: Mom's Assessment of Herself as a Mom**

q3: mom is attentive to child and feels she has learned over time to anticipate child's needs  
 q3: mom believes her role is to teach her kids, not defend them  
 q3: mom is loving and caring  
 q3: mom is multitasking when with kids  
 q3: mom is in love with her kids  
 q3: mom stresses good manners and sets a lot of rules  
 q3: mom feels she needs to work on setting limits with child  
 q3: I think overall I'm a good mom..  
 q3: mom is loving with kids and not strict  
 q3: mom wants balance between caring for kids and spoiling kids  
 q3: mom is very affectionate with children  
 q3: mom is controlling and likes to control as much as possible with daughter  
 q3: I think I'm a good mom  
 q3: mom is the disciplinarian  
 q3: mom was nervous about handling 2 young kids  
 q3: mom didn't realize her kids would be "center of universe"  
 q3: I think I'm caring  
 q3: mom is adoring of child  
 q3: mom tries to be a consistent and strict parent  
 q3: wants to be mom, not friend to child  
 q3: mom is very loving  
 q3: I hope I'm a good mother  
 q3: "I think I'm an okay mom"

q3: mom lets kids "get away with murder"  
 q3: thinks she's a "good mom"  
 q3: mom plays well with child  
 q3: p mom worries she's not a good mom  
 q3: mom is insecure about relationship with child  
 q3: mom loves spending time with kids  
 q3: mom feels she's a better mom when she works  
 q3: mom puts her child first the way mother did  
 q3: mom puts kids first and her life revolves around them  
 q3: mom feels pressure to be perfect mom  
 q3: mom loves playing with child  
 q1: p mom seems a little embarrassed that she never had a hard time leaving child

### **Theme 22: Mom's Belief That She Should Be at Home**

q3: believes it's good for kids if mom stays home  
 q3: mom feels guilt about choosing to work instead of being home  
 q3: mom wants to try to stay home but isn't "there yet"  
 q3: mom feels guilty that she's hiring someone to do what she should be doing  
 q3: having nanny makes mom feel guilty b/c mom feels it would be better if she were happy about being at home

### **Theme 23: Mom's Belief That Nanny is Better Than Daycare**

q4: mom did not want child in childcare  
 q3: mom didn't want daycare b/c it's not as flexible if child is sick  
 q3: mom didn't feel daycare was an option for childcare  
 q3: mom feels less guilty about leaving kids because she has nanny  
 q1: mom preferred nanny to daycare b/c more social interaction and cleaner  
 q3: babies should be home.  
 q3: mom felt better leaving child at home in own house  
 q1: mom looked into daycares but thought a nanny would be better for daughter

### **Theme 24: Mom's Belief that Working Makes her a Better Mother**

q3: mom thinks it's better for kids if house runs smoothly with help than frantic mom with no help  
 q3: mom feels she's a better mom when she works  
 q3: sometimes I think I'm a better mom and a better wife for going to work  
 q3: when mom was on maternity leave, she was doing housework and the kids "are just there"  
 q3: mom feels working helps her create quality time with kids when home  
 q3: mom thinks her work and time restraints help her "keep boundaries" with kids  
 q3: mom has shorter fuse when home with kids all day  
 q3: mom thinks working makes her a better mother  
 q3: mom believes working regulates her behavior towards kids  
 q3: mom thinks kids would get less attention if she stayed home with them  
 q3: mom feels day is better for her and child when she goes to work

### **Theme 25: Mom's Disappointment in Mother as Grandmother and Support to Mom**

q2: inlaws are more helpful than mother  
 q2: mother is "super-busy" and not available to help with childcare  
 q2: mom isn't helpful when she visits  
 q2: mother doesn't play with grandkids  
 q2: mother is not naturally affectionate like mom  
 q2: mom and mother have had "falling out" and sometimes don't talk for 1 month  
 q2: mom gets angry at mother and warns her that lack of effort no will impact future relationship with grandkids  
 q2: mother does not "jump in" and offer childcare help  
 q2: mother is not sensitive to mom's wishes as a mother

q2: mom tries to understand mother's lack of interest in grandkids  
 q2: mom "can't count on" mother for anything  
 q2: mother is "not very good" with kids  
 q2: as a mom, mom can't rely on mother a lot  
 q2: mother won't visit kids when nanny is there  
 q2: mom feels mother is unsafe with children  
 q2: mother has great time with daughter, but it's on mother's terms  
 q2: mother is not natural with kids  
 q2: mom hires babysitter when mother visits  
 q2: mother is not "high energy jump in grandma"  
 q2: mom feels bad that mother isn't better with kids  
 q2: there is tension b/c mom wants mother to be more involved as grandma  
 q2: mother lives in miami but Mom doesn't "count on her"  
 q2: mom can't take care of all grandchildren b/c she gets too tired  
 q2: p mom doesn't think visiting grandkids is a priority for mother  
 q2: mom feels its "hard" for mother to help b/c she's older and has "her things to do"  
 q2: mom expected mother to be "there" for my kids but she's opposite  
 q2: mom doesn't expect much (help) from mother  
 q2: mom feels mother is not available to her  
 q2: p mother says she's interested in kids, but reality is different  
 q2: mother "rarely" calls children. "strange relationship"  
 q2: mom's relationship with mother since becoming a mother is "Terrible"  
 q2: mother is less involved with child than mom expected  
 q2: mother isn't helpful when she visits  
 q2: mom experiences mother as unsupportive.

### **Theme 26: Mom's Disapproval of How Nanny Interacts With Children**

q4: previous nanny would laugh with kids but never talk with them  
 q4: mom doesn't like when nanny is too lenient with child  
 q4: nanny didn't converse with daughters  
 q4: mom is concerned that nanny's feelings for child are disingenuous  
 q4: mom is aware of how nanny's moods and actions impact child

### **Theme 27: Mom's Effort to Manage Nanny and be in Role of Boss**

q1: idea of firing nanny1 was too stressful - so hired additional nanny  
 q1: mom explained to nanny1 she can't pay more b/c she doesn't meet all mom's needs and therefore they need extra nanny  
 q1: mom could give nannies more responsibilities, but she doesn't.  
 q1: mom doubts whether she should delegate certain tasks  
 q1: nanny1 has flexibility because nanny2 is there for backup  
 q3: mom is "driving the ship" when she's home  
 q1: giving nanny jobs other than child care led to better relationship  
 q1: nanny 1 doesn't drive, so nanny2 can help pick up child from school  
 q3: mom feels in general she is bad at managing "help"  
 q1: mom decided to keep nanny1 as comfortable baseline and hire 2nd nanny instead of firing nanny1  
 q3: mom coaches nanny how to discipline child  
 q1: mom gives nanny2 higher level tasks than cleaning  
 q1: mom hates managing and confronting nanny with issues  
 q1: was uncomfortable to be "the boss" after forming friendship with nanny  
 q1: mom's least favorite part about employing nanny is when she has "to be a boss"  
 q1: mom doesn't like managerial aspect of having nanny  
 q3: mom is uncomfortable in role of boss  
 q1: mom asked nanny if she's happy  
 q1: mom needed nanny2 because nanny1 can't multitask  
 q1: mom works around nanny1's limitations

q1: mom feels nanny is not imaginative and mom helps nanny schedule her day with kids

**Theme 28: Mom's Effort to Spend Time and be Involved Despite Working**

q3: relinquishing control would "take away something she values as far as self-esteem and identity"  
 q3: mom puts her child first the way mother did  
 q3: mom puts kids first and her life revolves around them  
 q3: mom feels working helps her create quality time with kids when home  
 q3: mom likes to connect with daughter over simple things like packing her lunch  
 q3: mom formerly left work for 1 hour everyday and picked up daughter from school  
 q3: mom bathes children because she feels it's her job  
 q3: wants to show child she comes first but mommy can also do other things  
 q3: when mom could, she scaled work back to 2 days  
 q3: not doing carpool, etc. would be "giving up too much"  
 q3: mom has chosen not to work full-time and wants her daughter to know she comes first  
 q3: with 3rd child she lives close to work and goes home to breastfeed  
 q3: all the moms on PTA work  
 q3: despite working mom is very involed with school activities  
 q3: mom tries for family dinners, but 2x a week kids eat with nanny  
 q3: mom makes dinner for them to eat together and traded bath for dinner  
 q3: after work mom is totally dedicated to kids  
 q3: mom doesn't give up doing some household chores because she "wouldn't feel good about herself as a mom"  
 q3: for important things like drs. apptments, kids needs come first  
 q3: mom wants to be with kids, not with friends  
 q3: mom thinks being there for daily events shows them you're primary caregiver  
 q3: mom makes all of child's food herself  
 q3: mom feels picking up kids is her responsibility  
 q3: mom schedules a lot of time alone with her child  
 q3: mom takes them "everywhere" and does everything "a mother would do"  
 q3: mom thinks her efforts at being involved in daily activities has made daughter "secure"  
 q3: mom wants to advance career and also be very involved with kids  
 q3: mom wants kids to remember her as involved and central  
 q3: mom never had to deal with child crying for nanny b/c she works so hard to be primary caregiver  
 q3: job is flexible so allows her to put family first  
 q3: mom feels she's succeeded in being primary caregiver, but is "crazy" as result  
 q3: mom believes it's important to take her kids to activities  
 q3: mom wants to be involved "on every level"  
 q3: mom believes it's important to be there for daily events like bedtime  
 q3: mom doesn't want to miss child's developmental milestones  
 q3: mom wants to be actively involved in childcare  
 q3: mom's guilt has gotten worse over time b/c she wishes she had more time with kids  
 q3: mom feels guilty and that her time when not working should be devoted to children  
 q3: mom wanted child to see her as primary caregiver  
 q3: mom thinks if she's primary caregiver changing nannies won't be as traumatic  
 q3: mom "appreciates" that she needs time for herself, but this still creates guilt  
 q3: mom carved out "quality time" with child

**Theme 29: Mom's Feeling That She's Missing Out on Things With Children**

q3: mom worries about what she's missing out on when away from child  
 q3: mom doesn't want to miss child's developmental milestones  
 q3: sometimes mom wishes she could "spend the day" with her son  
 q3: mom doesn't like missing out on things with child  
 q3: mom feels guilt about missing out on things with child  
 q3: mom feels guilt about not doing more with kids

**Theme 30: Mom's Feelings About How Nanny Affects Mom's Relationship with Children**

- q4: child sometimes prefers nanny which is hurtful to mom
- q3: mom is anxious about changing nannies - especially when she hears about "nanny disasters"
- q3: mom is scared child doesn't know her
- q3: mom wonders how having nanny will affect relationship with child
- q1: mom feels nanny has taught her to be a better mom by example
- q1: family is happier because they have nanny
- q1: by doing laundry and housework nanny facilitates mom being the mom she hoped she would be
- q3: mom felt "guilt" take over when daughter cried at separation
- q3: mom had just gone back to work and mom felt anguish about leaving babies with new nanny
- q3: length of time mom's away makes her feel insecure
- q3: when child was young mom worried about leaving child with nanny
- q3: mom feels she's a better mom when she works
- q3: mom puts kids first and her life revolves around them
- q3: mom thinks her work and time restraints help her "keep boundaries" with kids
- q3: mom schedules a lot of time alone with her child
- q3: mom takes them "everywhere" and does everything "a mother would do"
- q3: mom thinks her efforts at being involved in daily activities has made daughter "secure"
- q3: mom wants to advance career and also be very involved with kids
- q3: mom wants kids to remember her as involved and central
- q3: mom never had to deal with child crying for nanny b/c she works hard to be primary caregiver
- q3: mom doesn't like missing out on things with child
- q3: mom feels guilt about missing out on things with child
- q4: kids ask mom not to return to work after she picks up from school
- q1: mom can cut corners on childcare because nanny helps her
- q3: mom feels "lucky" b/c child is responsive to her, not just nanny
- q3: mom didn't miss major developmental milestones
- q3: mom thinks other moms don't make effort to be "primary caregiver"
- q4: mom worries that son doesn't know who she is
- q3: mom doesn't feel a nanny replaces a mother
- q3: mom did not have thoughts about how having nanny would impact child
- q3: mom believes that a solid relationship with child will not be undermined by nanny
- q3: mom hates that she must tell her child she can't do something b/c of mom's work
- q3: mom doesn't want to deprive son of activities because she works
- q3: mom feels guilty that she doesn't do more daily care for kids
- q3: mom feels guilty when her job impacts her son's activities
- q3: mom felt guilty because child's distress was a result of her choice to work
- q3: mom feels guilt that she should be only one "impacting" child
- q3: mom worries that having nanny will cause loss of "special relationship" with child
- q3: mom tries to be logical and not jealous that nanny and kids formed good relationship
- q3: husband reassures mom that nanny won't replace her, but it still "hurts"
- q3: when kids ask for nanny instead of her and do fun things with nanny, mom feels "hurt"
- q3: mom has feelings about child's preference for nanny, but it doesn't make her want to stop working
- q1: mom likes that nanny doesn't drive b/c then kids don't do fun things with nanny
- q1: mom defers to nanny a lot about childrearing decisions
- q3: mom thinks daughter likes that mom works
- q3: sometimes daughter asks mom not to return to work after school pickup
- q3: mom thought it was her fault that child called nanny 'mama'
- q1: mom feels day is better for her and child when she goes to work
- q3: mom thinks daughter is proud that mom works
- q3 q4: when child prefers nanny mom sometimes wonders if she shouldn't work
- q1: mom worried that nanny would replace her
- q4: mom is scared child doesn't like being with her

q4: mom wants child to associate good experiences with her, not nanny  
 q4: mom is scared child doesn't know her  
 q4: p mom was resentful of nanny for being close to child  
 q4: mom is scared child likes nanny more than her  
 q3: kids get more attention with nanny than with mom  
 q3: mom thinks about impact of nanny "everyday"  
 q1: mom has learned how to play with child from watching nanny  
 q1: mom has learned from nanny to follow child's lead in play and not just teach

### **Theme 31: Mom's Feelings About Nanny's Life and Nanny's Family**

q1: nanny has "own life" so mom has to rush home from work  
 q1: nanny has own life and can't give mom as much time as needed  
 q1: nanny has own life and can't give mom as much time as wanted  
 q1: mom feels conflicted between her own needs and nanny's needs  
 q1: p fear that nanny will leave because her life is complicated  
 q1: mom has stopped giving nanny \$ to help solve her problems.  
 q1: mom didn't want to know about nanny's visa issues  
 q1: nanny purchased papers to return to U.S. - but mom doesn't know details  
 q1: mom decided to stop asking nanny about her problems in order to protect herself  
 q1: mom doesn't want to get too involved in nanny's life, despite friendliness  
 q1: mom didn't expect nanny would need her as much as she does  
 q1: nanny has complicated personal life  
 q1: nanny needs to pick up her own kids while working  
 q1: nanny had family emergency and had to go to peru  
 q1: nanny often has financial problems  
 q1: mom likes nanny who has her own kids b/c this gives her experience  
 q1: nanny left kids in El Salvador to work in US  
 q1: mom feels bad for nanny b/c of her situation with her own kids  
 q1: nanny has 3 kids of her own  
 q1: mom thinks the way nanny was brought up affects how nanny will bring up children  
 q1: mom questions nanny's judgment about personal finances  
 q1: nanny has not seen her kids since they were babies b/c she can't get a visa  
 q1: nanny's children are in Peru  
 q1: mom respects that nanny came to US to provide her kids with better education  
 q1: mom wonders how nanny can love her children when nanny has left her own to work  
 q1: nanny got married unexpectedly for immigration purposes  
 q1: nanny has own life with responsibilities  
 q1: mom is aware that her kids are same age as nanny's kids when she left them  
 q1: a lot of nannies have left their children to be nannies  
 q1: breaks mom's heart that nanny can't go back to visit her kids in El Salvador  
 q1: nanny doesn't have a lot of family in U.S. and mom is supportive  
 q1: mom has plan to consult immigration lawyer for nanny after few years of employment  
 q1: mom bought webcam for nanny so she can talk to her kids in Peru  
 q1: mom didn't like that nanny didn't share about herself b/c nanny is so involved in hers  
 q1: mom expends a lot of energy being thoughtful of nanny

### **Theme 32: Mom's Feelings of Aggression and Anger Towards Nanny**

q1: mom is not satisfied with nanny b/c she pays a lot, but doesn't get her needs met  
 q1: feels negative when nanny wants to leave early  
 q1: p mom feels angry that nanny wants more money when she's "like family"  
 q1: p mom seems angry about nanny's salary and amt. of hours worked  
 q1: mom became resentful of giving nanny extra \$  
 q1: mom was angry at previous nanny for being late  
 q1: "everything works" but there are days mom wants to "strangle" nanny  
 q1: mom "blacked out" on what led up to firing nanny

q1: mom wants to "strangle" nanny1 when tasks take a long time  
 q1: mom has her "guard up" with nanny when they're together  
 q1: mom was "so angry" after realizing crib incident  
 q1: mom was "really mad" at nanny1 for not giving child medicine  
 q1: mom's frustrated that nanny sticks too closely to cleaning routine  
 q1: mom and nanny are "very short with each other"  
 q1: nanny is always 5 minutes late, so mom gets home 5 minutes late  
 q1: feels negative when mom realizes it's just a job for nanny  
 q1: frustrates mom that nanny doesn't try to figure out where things in house go  
 q1: causes mom considerable stress when nanny is late  
 q1: bothers mom that nanny is a little late every day  
 q1: angers mom when nanny acts like she knows son better than mom

### **Theme 33: Mom's Feelings of Anxiety Regarding Nanny**

q3: mom worries about kids safety when they're with nanny  
 q1: mom is concerned about nanny's age and health  
 q1: mom decided to stop asking nanny about her problems in order to protect herself  
 q3: mom wanted to work, but felt anguish all the time  
 q3: having hidden cameras was a "lifesaver" for mom  
 q1: mom decided to keep nanny1 as comfortable baseline and hire 2nd nanny instead of firing nanny1  
 q3: mom worries that having nanny will cause loss of "special relationship" with child  
 q1: mom was frantic when nanny lost child  
 q1: mom worried that she would feel guilty if something happened to child  
 q4: over time, mom stopped worrying about impact of nanny on child  
 q1: mom wasn't comfortable taking risk of hiring completely new nanny  
 q1: mom didn't want the "trauma" of hiring a new nanny  
 q1: was anxious about having nanny  
 q1: you don't know who you're getting, even with agency.  
 q1: mom was anxious about leaving child with nanny  
 q3: mom worried b/c she saw disciplinary problems in children with nannies  
 q4: mom worried about how nanny would negatively affect child  
 q1: dad working from home reduced mom's anxiety  
 q4: mom worried that nanny would mistreat child  
 q1: when mom felt she needed nanny, relationship faltered which increased anxiety  
 q1: makes mom anxious to be dependent on nanny  
 q1: mom is anxious when nanny comes late  
 q1: mom countered anxiety by thinking about nanny's childcare experience  
 q1: mom has never caught nanny doing something  
 q1: p mom is anxious that something bad could happen with a nanny she doesn't know  
 q3: mom felt anxiety and doubt which led to installing cameras  
 q1: mom felt it would have been easier if she had more time to get to know nanny  
 q3: mom worries when she hears stories about kids calling nanny mommy  
 q1: mom is concerned about nanny's ability to handle two kids  
 q1: with first baby mom was anxious and wanted hovering nanny  
 q1: mom worries about keeping nanny happy so she won't look for new job

### **Theme 34: Mom's Feelings of Dependence on Nanny**

q1: mom's schedule was impacted by nanny's schedule  
 q3: mom's work depends on nanny coming to work  
 q1: when mom felt she needed nanny, relationship faltered which increased anxiety  
 q1: mom is anxious when nanny comes late  
 q1: makes mom anxious to be dependent on nanny  
 q1: mom is comfortable depending on nanny  
 q1: having family support reduces dependence on nanny  
 q3: mom felt pressure not to take time off from work which increased pressure on nanny relationship

q1: mom is dependent on nanny who has own family and responsibilities  
 q3: mom likes having people to depend and rely upon  
 q3: if mom lost nanny, mom would be affected, not dad  
 q1: being dependent on nanny is a given for mom.  
 q3: if mom works then it's harder to assess nanny and "you're at their mercy"  
 q1: mom likes the interdependence in relationship with nanny  
 q3: mom feels she's at nanny's mercy b/c she needs them to work and "lets things slide"

### **Theme 35: Mom's Feelings of Generosity Towards Nanny**

q1: mom feels conflicted between her own needs and nannys needs  
 q1: mom is now generous, but sets limits  
 q1: mom makes sure to thank nanny in morning  
 q1: when home, mom is aware of nanny needing a break  
 q1: mom has plan to consult immigration lawyer for nanny after few years of employment  
 q1: mom bought webcam for nanny so she can talk to her kids in Peru  
 q1: mom wants nanny to feel at home  
 q1: mom is always thinking about nanny's wellbeing  
 q1: mom lets nanny know she's appreciated  
 q1: mom is thinking about future employment opportunities for nanny  
 q1: mom used to give nanny extra \$ for nanny's expenses  
 q1: mom helped pay for nanny's English classes  
 q1: mom is generous with nanny  
 q1: wants to help nanny find new job  
 q1: mom wants nanny to feel well-treated  
 q1: mom or husband often drive nanny home  
 q1: mom has helped nanny get extra jobs  
 q1: mom's natural instinct was to help nanny  
 q1: mom gave nanny car  
 q1: mom would take nanny in as part of family if she moved to TX  
 q1: mom tries to be good and generous so nanny will be happy

### **Theme 36: Mom's Feelings of Guilt**

q1: p mom feels guilty about not wanting to pay nanny more  
 q1: mom was resentful towards nanny b/c she felt guilty about leaving kids  
 q3: when mom leaves in a.m., sometimes feels guilty for abruptly leaving  
 q3: when mom leaves in a.m., sometimes feels guilt  
 q3: mom feels guilt about choosing to work instead of being home  
 q3: mom feels guilty that she's hiring someone to do what she should be doing  
 q3: having nanny makes mom feel guilty b/c mom feels it would be better if she were happy about being at home  
 q3: mom feels guilty and that her time when not working should be devoted to children  
 q3: mom feels guilt about missing out on things with child  
 q3: mom feels guilt about not doing more with kids  
 q3: mom feels guilty when her job impacts her son's activities  
 q3: mom felt guilty because child's distress was a result of her choice to work  
 q3: mom feels guilty that she doesn't do more daily care for kids  
 q3: mom feels guilt that she should be only one "impacting" child  
 q3: mom feels guilty that she doesn't spend enough time with kids  
 q3: mom feels guilty if she doesn't call child when he's with nanny  
 q3: mom feels guilty about work when with kids, and guilty about kids when at work  
 q3: mom tries to build in time for herself, but it's a source of guilt  
 q3: mom feels guilty that nanny bathes kids  
 q3: mom's guilt never goes away and she wonders why husband doesn't have it  
 q3: to mitigate guilt mom tells herself it's okay to have nanny and that she's still raising her children  
 q3: mom doesn't understand why husband doesn't feel guilt

q1: mom feels feelings for nanny were impacted by guilt and mother  
 q3: mom is struggling to cope with guilty feelings.  
 q3: mom feels her guilt has decreased as time goes by  
 q3: mom feels guilty that nanny is illegal  
 q1: mom feels guilty about letting nanny go  
 q3: mom feels guilty that dad drives child to school, though he doesn't complain  
 q3: mom doesn't feel guilt related to employing nanny  
 q3: mom feels guilty when she's impatient with children  
 q1: mom attributes initial problems with nanny to her own feelings of guilt  
 q1: mom would have some guilt associated with firing nanny, but doesn't impact her decisions  
 q3: p mom feels guilty when nannies mistreat kids  
 q3: mom "Absolutely" feels guilt related to employing nanny  
 q3: husband is able to balance work, social life, and career without guilt  
 q3: mom feels guilty that when she leaves child it's not heart-wrenching  
 q3: mom feels guilty about not wanting to stay at home

### **Theme 37: Mom's Feelings of Jealousy/Resentment Regarding Nanny**

q4: child sometimes prefers nanny which is hurtful to mom  
 q4: mom didn't like that child called nanny 'mama'  
 q3: mom has feelings about child's preference for nanny, but it doesn't make her want to stop working  
 q3: husband reassures mom that nanny won't replace her, but it still "hurts"  
 q3: when kids ask for nanny instead of her and do fun things with nanny, mom feels "hurt"  
 q3: mom tries to be logical and not jealous that nanny and kids formed good relationship  
 q1: mom likes that nanny doesn't drive b/c then kids don't do fun things with nanny  
 q3: mom gets jealous of time nanny spends with kids  
 q3: mom gets jealous of nanny's time with kids  
 q1: mom says she's not jealous of nanny being better than her at certain childcare tasks  
 q3: mom doesn't feel jealous of nanny  
 q3: mom has never felt jealous of nanny  
 q1: mom was upset that nanny got to spend time with daughters  
 q3: mom worked "round the clock" and was always resentful that nanny had more time with kids  
 q3: b/c mom can go home throughout day she's not resentful of nanny  
 q3: sometimes mom felt jealous of "special connection" between nanny and child  
 q4: mom tries not to take child's preference for nanny personally  
 q1: mom never feels jealous of nanny b/c she's happy about their relationship  
 q4: mom is jealous of nanny when child chooses nanny over her  
 q3: q4: mom didn't like that child called nanny 'mama'

### **Theme 38: Mom's Feelings of Trust in Relation to Nanny**

q4: mom doesn't let nanny take child outside  
 q1: mom has fear that illegal nanny could kidnap her child  
 q1: having husband at home protects child from bad nanny  
 q1: mom doesn't want to test nanny's trustworthiness  
 q1: installed nanny cams to build trust  
 q1: mom's "anguish" led her to install hidden cameras  
 q1: tested nanny for 1 week before hiring  
 q1: \$ issues have made mom a little suspicious of nanny  
 q1: mom calls home throughout day  
 q1: p mom doesn't trust nanny's judgment and intelligence so she tells nanny what to do.  
 q3: if mom is at home she can observe nanny  
 q3: mom feels the structure she imposes on nannies prevents her from having trust issues  
 q1: mom would check on nanny by surprising her at home  
 q1: mom watches nanny and child at home from work  
 q1: mom can listen to what's going on at home from work  
 q1: mom calls nanny a couple times a day to get detailed report

q1: mom checks in with nanny often because she's not smart  
 q3: having hidden cameras was a "lifesaver" for mom  
 q1: nanny cams helped mom feel comfortable to return to work  
 q4: mom is concerned that nanny's feelings for child are disingenuous  
 q1: mom defers to nanny a lot about childrearing decisions  
 q1: mom countered anxiety by thinking about nanny's childcare experience  
 q1: mom has never caught nanny doing something  
 q3: mom felt anxiety and doubt which led to installing cameras  
 q1: p mom is anxious that something bad could happen with a nanny she doesn't know  
 q1: mom felt it would have been easier if she had more time to get to know nanny  
 q3: if mom works then it's harder to assess nanny and "you're at their mercy"  
 q1: p mom doesn't want to find reason to fire nanny  
 q1: She's the most trustworthy per..  
 q3: mom is thankful that her level of trust is high because it allows her to work  
 q1: mom will catch nanny doing things she's asked her not to do  
 q1: mom feels nanny has earned her trust, which is difficult to earn  
 q1: I have total, I totally trust .  
 q1: p mom didn't trust agency after crib incident  
 q1: mom trusted nanny so let her drive kids  
 q1: she's the most trustworthy person  
 q1: mom trusts nanny to make food choices for child  
 q1: mom immediately trusted nanny b/c she knew nanny's son  
 q1: mom lets nanny drive her children  
 q1: you trust your nanny "with your life"  
 q1: mom appreciates how much she trusts nanny  
 q1: need for nanny to drive kids overrides concern  
 q3: mom thinks other women who believe their nannies do what they would do are fooling themselves  
 q1: mom can't pinpoint why she doesn't trust nanny  
 q1: p mom doesn't want to be distrustful of nanny  
 q1: mom leaves kids with nanny for the weekend  
 q1: mom didn't want to tell nanny about cameras b/c news could spread to future nannies  
 q1: spending time at home with nanny builds trust  
 q1: mom doesn't worry about how nanny treats kids  
 q1: mom feels distrustful of nanny  
 q1: mom feels like you never really know nanny  
 q1: mom lets nanny drive 1/2 mile to park  
 q1: nanny never drives kids b/c mom doesn't trust  
 q1: mom thinks she catches nanny in little lies  
 q1: once you have moment of doubt, trust begins to erode  
 q1: mom is very trusting of nanny  
 q3: mom doesn't trust anyone but herself to pick up her kids from school  
 q1: mom feels she could leave nanny with kids for "a month"  
 q1: mom does not trust nanny completely  
 q1: b/c of previous neg experiences with other nannies, mom takes nanny's words with a grain of salt  
 q3: mom bathes and feeds older kids but trusts nanny to care for all 4  
 q1: the "idea of starting all over when I have two people that I trust is really horrible"  
 q1: mom wonders if nanny is "fooling her" but knows she is mistrustful of people  
 q1: mom trusts nanny "implicitly"  
 q1: sometimes nanny's story is inconsistent which makes mom distrustful  
 q1: mom likes having a third person she can trust and learn from  
 q1: most positive is nanny is trustworthy and kids love her  
 q1: nanny is trustworthy  
 q1: nanny isn't proactive about taking care of house  
 q1: mom thinks nanny2 is young and can make immature decisions  
 q1: mom trusts nanny "wholeheartedly" and considering her "family" helps this  
 q1: mom is happy with nanny's problem-solving skills

q1: mom is confident in nanny's care of child  
 q1: mom feels comfortable with how nanny takes care of kids  
 q1: mom feels confident about how nanny takes care of kids  
 q1: mom had nanny who was supposed to call mom and wouldn't causing trust issues  
 q1: mom didn't trust prev nanny's judgment  
 q1: p mom didn't trust fired nanny  
 q1: took time off work to be home with nanny and build trust  
 q1: at first, mom watched nanny "like a hawk"  
 q1: mom felt like she needed time with nanny to build trust  
 q1: p after mom speaks about lack of trust, she flips to talking about nanny's strengths  
 q1: p mom rationalizes to protect herself from feeling distrustful of nanny  
 q1: mom wanted a trustworthy and honest nanny

### **Theme 39: Mom's Thoughts on How Relationship with Nanny Will End**

q1: mom does not think about how relationship with nanny will end  
 q1: when mom's needs change, employment situation will change for nannies  
 q3: mom's needs will change in several months  
 q3: mom felt "anguish" when former nanny left and mom had to use agency  
 q3: mom is thinking a lot about her future needs and how to arrange and schedule nannies  
 q3: mom knows nothing is forever and accepts that libby will eventually need new nanny

### **Theme 40: Mom's Thoughts on How Working Affects Her Child**

q1: mom feels day is better for her and child when she goes to work  
 q3: child doesn't do many afterschool activities b/c mom works  
 q3: important to mom that daughter sees her work  
 q3: mom feels guilt about missing out on things with child  
 q3: mom feels guilt about not doing more with kids  
 q3: mom feels guilt that she should be only one "impacting" child  
 q3: mom feels guilty about work when with kids, and guilty about kids when at work  
 q3: mom feels guilty and that her time when not working should be devoted to children  
 q3: mom feels guilty if she doesn't call child when he's with nanny  
 q3: mom remembers mother always working and will leave that for her kids, too  
 q3: mom thinks daughter is proud that mom works  
 q3: mom thinks daughter likes that mom works  
 q3: mom thinks her efforts at being involved in daily activities has made daughter "secure"  
 q3: mom thought a lot about how hiring nanny would impact child  
 q3: mom thought it was her fault that child called nanny 'mama'  
 q3: mom wanted child to see her as primary caregiver  
 q3: mom wants kids to remember her as involved and central  
 q3: mom wants to be actively involved in childcare  
 q3: mom will always wonder about nanny's impact on child  
 q3: mom worried that child's delays were related to having nanny  
 q3: mom worried that working would make her "less good" b/c mother worked so much  
 q3: sometimes daughter asks mom not to return to work after school pickup

### **Theme 41: Mom's Thoughts on Nanny vs. Daycare**

q1: mom looked into daycares but thought a nanny would be better for daughter  
 q1: mom preferred nanny to daycare b/c more social interaction and cleaner  
 q3: Babies should be home  
 q3: daycare forces babies to have schedule  
 q3: mom felt better leaving child at home in own house  
 q3: mom never considered any childcare options other than nanny

### **Theme 42: Mom's Thoughts on Relationship with Nanny Ending**

q1: mom's needs will change when kids get older so she's not going to worry about nanny leaving

- q1: mom's plan is to keep nanny at current salary but with reduced hours when kids go to school
- q1: mom is not that concerned about nanny leaving for different job
- q1: mom is sad thinking about nanny not working for her in future
- q1: mom plans to have nanny "around" through their "teenage years"
- q1: mom predicts nanny won't want to move with them
- q1: mom says she doesn't think about how relationship with nanny will end
- q1: mom says she doesn't want to spend time worrying about nanny leaving
- q1: mom sees nanny's low energy level as affecting longevity of relationship
- q1: mom thinks a lot about how relationship with nanny will end
- q1: mom thinks about needing nanny less in future
- q1: mom thinks about relat. with nanny ending
- q1: mom thinks ahead to when her childcare needs will change
- q1: mom thinks that nanny might have to leave for Peru again without much warning
- q1: mom would be very upset if she lost nanny
- q3: mom thinks if she's primary caregiver changing nannies won't be as traumatic

### **Theme 43: Mom's Thoughts on Time Management**

- q3: mom "appreciates" that she needs time for herself, but this still creates guilt
- q3: mom carved out "quality time" with child
- q3: mom feels like bath time is special and if she didn't work, she would do it
- q3: mom feels rushed when she leaves in the morning
- q3: mom feels she has zero time
- q3: mom feels she has zero time b/c she's either working or with kids
- q3: mom feels working helps her create quality time with kids when home
- q3: mom is busy and takes on too many responsibilities
- q3: mom is hardworking and juggles 4 kids and work
- q3: mom is juggling 100 things at a time
- q3: mom is overwhelmed by schedule in morning, not guilt about leaving kids
- q3: mom is struck by daughters perception of her as being too busy and forgetful
- q3: mom spreads herself too thin
- q3: mom struggles to squeeze out time for work
- q3: mom wishes she had more time with kids
- q3: since mom has so little time she has to manage her time very carefully

### **Theme 44: Mom and Nanny are Parenting Team**

- q1: mom and nanny work as a childrearing team
- q1: mom defers to nanny a lot about childrearing decisions
- q1: mom envisioned nanny to be "extension of herself" regarding childcare
- q1: mom feels that she can learn from nanny
- q1: mom had to coach nanny on how to be firm with children
- q1: mom is happy nanny prepares good food for kids that mom cannot prepare
- q1: mom likes having a third person she can trust and learn from
- q1: mom likes having the support of nanny in childrearing
- q1: mom likes that nanny has mothering experience and asks for advice
- q1: mom takes nanny and both kids out for errands
- q1: mom treats nanny as "equal"
- q1: mom tried to educate prev nanny about appropriate child rearing skills
- q1: mom wanted a nanny that would follow mom's lead in being forceful with kids
- q1: nanny and mom work as a team
- q1: nanny is a childrearing teammate
- q3: mom coaches nanny how to discipline child
- q3: mom feels she can learn from nanny
- q3: mom has balance of "sharing ideas" about childcare with nanny
- q4: mom respects nanny's knowledge of child

### **Theme 45: Mom Does Not Have Difficulty Separating From Child**

- q1: p mom seems a little embarrassed that she never had a hard time leaving child
- q3: as kids aged it became easier for mom to emotionally handle kids crying at separation
- q3: easier for mom to leave kids when they're older
- q3: easier for mom to leave kids when they're older b/c they understand more
- q3: in morning mom doesn't wish to stay home
- q3: maternal separation was not difficult for mom
- q3: mom feels "perfectly fine" leaving daughter in morning
- q3: mom feels guilty that when she leaves child it's not heart-wrenching
- q3: mom felt relieved to leave home for work
- q3: mom is happy to give kids to nanny on Monday
- q3: mom is overwhelmed by schedule in morning, not guilt about leaving kids
- q3: mom never had hard time leaving kid
- q3: p mom is a little embarrassed when admitting she likes to go to work
- q3: p mom is uncomfortable admitting lack of separation anxiety
- q3: somedays mom is glad to leave kids and go to work
- q3: sometimes it's easier to go to work
- q3: sometimes leaving for work can be a relief for mom
- q3: when mom leaves in a.m., sometimes feels relief

### **Theme 46: Mom Does Not Want to be Stay-at-Home Mom**

- q3: having nanny makes mom feel guilty b/c mom feels it would be better if she were happy about being at home
- q3: it's tough to be at home all the time
- q3: mom believes stay-at-home moms are inefficient
- q3: mom could stay at home only if she had nanny also
- q3: mom could stay at home, but "wouldn't be so happy"
- q3: mom does not want to be stay at home mom
- q3: mom doesn't think she could be a stay-at-home mom
- q3: mom doesn't think she could stay at home
- q3: mom feels day is better for her and child when she goes to work
- q3: mom feels guilt about choosing to work instead of being home
- q3: mom feels guilty about not wanting to stay at home
- q3: mom is "not one to be home all the time"
- q3: mom is "type of person that can't be stuck at home all day long"
- q3: mom is unsure if she could be stay at home mom
- q3: mom is unsure whether she could "stay home"
- q3: mom says she could cut back and stay home if necessary, but she prefers to work
- q3: mom thinks she's much more efficient than stay-at-home moms
- q3: mom wants to try to stay home but isn't "there yet"

### **Theme 47: Mom Does Feels Conflicted/Torn Between Work and Kids**

- q3: when child prefers nanny mom sometimes wonders if she shouldn't work
- q3: difficult to balance work and home life
- q3: hard for mom to "split" herself between kids
- q3: mom's guilt has gotten worse over time b/c she wishes she had more time with kids
- q3: mom feels a lot of guilt about not doing more at work
- q3: mom feels a lot of guilt about working long hours
- q3: mom feels distracted by home when at work and vice versa
- q3: mom feels evenly split between desire to work and stay home
- q3: mom feels guilt about choosing to work instead of being home
- q3: mom feels guilt about missing out on things with child
- q3: mom feels guilty about work when with kids, and guilty about kids when at work

q3: mom feels guilty and that her time when not working should be devoted to children  
 q3: mom feels she can't accomplish things when home with kids  
 q3: mom feels she can't achieve everything she'd like at work b/c of motherhood  
 q3: mom feels she has zero time b/c she's either working or with kids  
 q3: mom feels torn between work and kids  
 q3: mom felt constant urgency to get home to baby  
 q3: mom gets frustrated when child should be asleep and she needs to work  
 q3: mom wants to advance career and also be very involved with kids  
 q3: strive for balance between work and motherhood  
 q3: when leaving in am, "ambivalence between getting relief and guilt"  
 q3: when mom is busy with other things, she's not "really there" with kids  
 q3: when mom is with kids she is worrying about other things

#### **Theme 48: Mom Feels Threatened by Nanny's Close Relationship With Nanny**

q1: mom likes that nanny doesn't drive b/c then kids don't do fun things with nanny  
 q1: mom worried that nanny would replace her  
 q3: when child prefers nanny mom sometimes wonders if she shouldn't work  
 q4: child sometimes prefers nanny which is hurtful to mom  
 q4: mom didn't like that child called nanny 'mama'  
 q4: mom is scared child doesn't know her  
 q4: mom is scared child doesn't like being with her  
 q4: mom is scared child likes nanny more than her  
 q4: mom tries not to take child's preference for nanny personally  
 q4: mom wants child to associate good experiences with her, not nanny  
 q4: p mom feels hurt when child chooses nanny over her  
 q4: p mom is conflicted about how she feels when kids ask for nanny before mom  
 q4: p mom rationalizes why child prefers nanny sometimes  
 q4: p mom was resentful of nanny for being close to child

#### **Theme 49: Mom Felt She Had No Choice But to Go Back To Work**

q3: husband's business doesn't earn money so she has to work  
 q3: husband's job is dependent on mom's job  
 q3: mom could not choose to stay home with child  
 q3: mom did not have a choice to stay home b/c they needed the money  
 q3: mom had to return 6 weeks after baby was born in order to get salary  
 q3: stopping work and career training was not an option

#### **Theme 50: Mom is Unsure That Nanny Cares for Child**

q1: it is a job for nanny  
 q1: mom believes "it's just a job" for a lot of nannies  
 q4: mom is unsure how nanny feels about child  
 q4: nanny loves kids, but it's a job  
 q4: p unsure about nanny's feelings for son

#### **Theme 51: Mom Supports Child Having Close Relationship with Nanny**

q1: mom keeps nanny b/c she's great with kids  
 q1: mom keeps nanny because of relationship she has with kids  
 q1: mom kept 2nd nanny b/c son was attached to her  
 q1: mom never feels jealous of nanny b/c she's happy about their relationship  
 q1: most positive is nanny is trustworthy and kids love her  
 q3: when child cried about nanny leaving, mom thought they have a healthy bond  
 q4: mom doesn't feel resentful of nanny's close relationship with child  
 q4: mom doesn't want relationship between nanny and child to rupture  
 q4: mom kept 2nd nanny b/c son was attached to her  
 q4: mom likes that daughter feels close to nanny and calls her "mommy"

q4: mom thought it was good when she had to pry daughter off nanny  
 q4: mom wants child to have good relationship with nanny  
 q4: mom wants kids to have relationship with nanny  
 q4: mom was happy when child cried for nanny because that meant they had good relationship  
 q4: mom wasn't jealous when child cried for nanny  
 q4: nice for mom that daughter loves nanny  
 q4: when child cried about nanny leaving, mom thought they have a healthy bond

### **Theme 52: Mom Tries to be Different Than Mother**

q2: mom did not learn how to be a mom from mother  
 q2: mom feels she sees mother's flaws and tries to be different  
 q2: mom has learned how not to be like mother  
 q2: mom tries to be more loving than her mother was  
 q3: mom feels she is much different parent than mother  
 q3: mom thinks she's a hands on mom compared to her mother

### **Theme 53: Mom Wants and Likes to Work**

q3: at first work was want, but now it's more of a need  
 q3: I needed to start working  
 q3: in morning mom doesn't wish to stay home  
 q3: loves being a mom but gets satisfaction from work  
 q3: mom chose to work  
 q3: mom could stay at work forever if nanny didn't leave early  
 q3: mom doesn't need to work so "excessively," but she loves it  
 q3: mom enjoys work  
 q3: mom feels confident and secure in pursuing work  
 q3: mom feels that once she got law degree she had to use it  
 q3: mom felt relieved to leave home for work  
 q3: mom had a choice to work or not  
 q3: mom has a lot of professional goals  
 q3: mom is happy to give kids to nanny on Monday  
 q3: mom knew she would return to work and never considered anything else  
 q3: mom likes job  
 q3: mom likes that she gets to go be "me" and miss child a little  
 q3: mom likes to get out of house and work  
 q3: mom likes to work and doesn't feel she can be "just a mother"  
 q3: mom looks forward to work on monday, and being with kids on Friday  
 q3: mom loves job  
 q3: mom moved to Florida for career opportunity  
 q3: mom says she could cut back and stay home if necessary, but she prefers to work  
 q3: mom wakes up excited to go to work  
 q3: mom wants to work  
 q3: p mom is a little embarrassed when admitting she likes to go to work  
 q3: p mom is conflicted about liking work and leaving child  
 q3: somedays mom is glad to leave kids and go to work  
 q3: sometimes it's easier to go to work  
 q3: sometimes leaving for work can be a relief for mom  
 q3: sometimes mom is happy to "get out of the house"  
 q3: sometimes mom is happy to "get out of the house" and go to work  
 q3: when mom went back to work it was more want than need  
 q3: work is something mom has for herself

### **Theme 54: Nanny's Positive Feelings for Child**

q1: nanny adores sonq1: nanny loves children like they're her own  
 q3: mom likes that nanny adores kids and puts a lot of effort into caring for them

q4: mom is surprised that nanny is attached to children  
 q4: mom thinks nannies "love" her kids  
 q4: mom thinks nanny loves child and is proud of her  
 q4: mom thinks nanny loves her kids - a little  
 q4: mom thinks nanny loves kids as her own  
 q4: nanny adores child  
 q4: nanny adores kids  
 q4: nanny and daughter are very close  
 q4: nanny calls over weekend to see how kids are if they were sick  
 q4: nanny cares about child  
 q4: nanny has "taken over" son as if he was hers  
 q4: nanny is "warm" with child  
 q4: nanny is attached to baby  
 q4: nanny is attentive to child's feelings  
 q4: nanny liked that child called her mama  
 q4: nanny loves kids  
 q4: nanny loves kids, but it's a job  
 q4: nanny loves son as if he was her son  
 q4: nanny missed child terribly when she returned to her country  
 q4: nanny threw party for child  
 q4: nanny used her own money to buy gift for child  
 q4: nanny went out of her way for child  
 q4: there is a lot of love in relationship between nanny and child

### **Theme 55: Nanny and Housework**

q1: by doing laundry and housework nanny facilitates mom being the mom she hoped she would be  
 q1: mom's frustrated that nanny sticks too closely to cleaning routine  
 q1: mom asks nanny to cook dinner some days  
 q1: mom doesn't like that nanny doesn't clean up  
 q1: mom gives nanny2 higher level tasks than cleaning  
 q1: mom had better relationship with nannies who had household jobs other than childcare  
 q1: mom likes to come home to a clean house  
 q1: mom likes to come home to a clean house and dinner  
 q1: mom thinks that nanny for baby should have other responsibilities while baby naps  
 q1: mom wants live-in to pitch in around house  
 q1: mom wants nanny to be willing to manage house  
 q1: nanny cares for house when child is at school  
 q1: nanny cleans kids' uniforms at home as a surprise  
 q1: nanny doesn't clean house well  
 q1: nanny helps mom a lot by doing housework and laundry  
 q1: nanny is great with kids but not at housekeeping  
 q1: nanny isn't proactive about taking care of house  
 q1: nanny manages home  
 q1: nanny runs the house  
 q1: nanny started cooking for family when mom's son was born  
 q1: nanny takes care of house  
 q1: p bothers mom that nanny isn't good housekeeper  
 q1: p mom feels bad that she gets annoyed at nanny for not cleaning well  
 q1: wanted nanny to take care of the house  
 q3: mom thinks nanny is lazy about cleaning up

### **Theme 56: Negotiating Conflict With Nanny**

q1: confrontation with nanny is easier for mom when in child's best interest  
 q1: felt uncomfortable for mom to confront nanny, but she was glad she did it  
 q1: mom "walks on eggshells" around nanny

q1: mom and nanny are "very short with each other"  
 q1: mom confronted nanny and nanny was not defensive  
 q1: mom doesn't like to be confrontational with nanny  
 q1: mom doesn't question nanny about something for fear of offending nanny  
 q1: mom doesn't tell nanny she's bothered by something  
 q1: mom fears confrontation in general but with nanny, too  
 q1: mom finds it difficult communicating with nanny about kids, etc.  
 q1: mom hates managing and confronting nanny with issues  
 q1: mom is afraid that if she "nitpicks" nanny will leave  
 q1: mom is afraid to insult nanny and "rock the boat"  
 q1: mom is not comfortable asking nanny to come on time  
 q1: mom is unsure how to talk to nanny about things she wants nanny to do differently  
 q1: mom knows nanny is sensitive and doesn't want to upset her with confrontation  
 q1: mom knows she should bring up gripes with nanny, but is uncomfortable doing so  
 q1: mom let's feelings towards nanny build up for too long  
 q1: mom told nanny "this cannot happen again" and nanny improved  
 q1: mom tries to avoid confrontation with nanny  
 q1: mom tries to avoid confrontation with nanny unless very important  
 q1: mom tries to prevent misperceptions with nanny  
 q1: mom typically doesn't express frustration to nanny  
 q1: mom wants to address her frustration with nanny  
 q1: mom wants to resolve frustration with nanny  
 q1: mom wishes she and nanny had "better relationship"  
 q1: mom worries language barrier will make confrontation be less "gentle"  
 q1: nanny and mom "walk on eggshells" around each other – respectful  
 q1: nanny is always 5 minutes late, so mom gets home 5 minutes late  
 q1: nanny said she was glad mom confronted her about seeing friend while working  
 q1: p mom is passive with nanny  
 q1: p mom is uncomfortable acknowledging that nanny disobeyed her  
 q1: p mom is uncomfortable confronting nanny about little things  
 q1: p mom is uncomfortable telling nanny how to discipline kids  
 q1: p mom lets frustration with nanny build up  
 q1: sometimes mom wants to express her frustration with nanny  
 q1: wants nanny not to use cellphone when driving but doesn't ask

### **Theme 57: Negotiating Line Between Employee and Family**

q1: "it's hard, because she's not quite a family member, she is an employee; but it's - she's in your home. It's very difficult."  
 q1: "tricky negotiation" between friend and employee  
 q1: at first mom was uncomfortable having nanny in her house  
 q1: b/c nanny lives in home it complicates employment relationship  
 q1: b/c nanny takes care of child, you form a close bond  
 q1: b/c you leave child with nanny you develop immediate bond  
 q1: difficult to talk about salary with nanny  
 q1: downside of being very friendly is nanny will ask for money in advance  
 q1: feels negative when mom realizes it's just a job for nanny  
 q1: immediate "intimacy" b/c nanny is live-in  
 q1: maybe nanny's a little too family with us in asking for things  
 q1: mom's least favorite part about employing nanny is when she has "to be a boss"  
 q1: mom believes "it's just a job" for a lot of nannies  
 q1: mom considers nanny family  
 q1: mom didn't expect nanny would need her as much as she does  
 q1: mom didn't like that nanny didn't share about herself b/c nanny is so involved in hers  
 q1: mom doesn't like managerial aspect of having nanny  
 q1: mom doesn't like paying someone who feels like a friend

q1: mom doesn't like to think about how it's a job for nanny  
 q1: mom doesn't want to get too involved in nanny's life, despite friendliness  
 q1: mom feels like she and nanny are friends and consults nanny on childrearing decisions  
 q1: mom feels uncomfortable because it's "a job" for nanny  
 q1: mom had different nanny briefly who treated her more like an employer  
 q1: mom has personal relationship with nanny  
 q1: mom is careful not to share too much about her life with nanny b/c it's a working relationship  
 q1: mom is surprised by how much nanny depends on mom's family for stability  
 q1: mom is surprised that nanny is "part of the family"  
 q1: mom is surprised that she feels "so close" to nanny  
 q1: mom likes to know her nanny and have it be two-way street  
 q1: mom looked for live-in nanny who wouldn't be too intrusive  
 q1: mom loves nanny and loves that she has let us into her family  
 q1: mom thinks if mom cares about baby she should also care about parents  
 q1: mom thinks of nanny like family  
 q1: mom thought money wouldn't be such an issue because nanny is like family  
 q1: mom trusts nanny "wholeheartedly" and considering her "family" helps this  
 q1: mom wanted nanny to care about her and the baby, not just baby  
 q1: mom wants nanny to be in her family's life after nanny stops working  
 q1: mom wants nanny to be part of family  
 q1: mom would take nanny in as part of family if she moved to TX  
 q1: nanny enters mom's room in morning to get babies  
 q1: nanny feels like part of the family  
 q1: nanny has taught mom about her childhood  
 q1: nanny is like part of the family  
 q1: nanny is not "part of the family"  
 q1: nanny is not a "friend"  
 q1: nanny lives with mom's uncle  
 q1: nanny loves feeling part of the family  
 q1: nanny shares a lot about her life with mom  
 q1: nanny tells mom that she likes to be part of family b/c she doesn't have family in us  
 q1: p mom feels angry that nanny wants more money when she's "like family"  
 q1: wants nanny to be treated like family  
 q1: was uncomfortable to be "the boss" after forming friendship with nanny  
 q1: when there's time, mom and nanny discuss personal things  
 q1: mom finds fine line between friend and employee  
 q3: mom feels problems arise if you become too friendly with nanny  
 q3: mom hasn't gone out of her way to make nanny comfortable  
 q3: mom is uncomfortable in role of boss

### **Theme 58: Problems with Nannies Who Were Fired**

q1: fired nanny acted like she knew better than mom  
 q1: fired nanny did things mom asked her not to do  
 q1: fired nanny didn't want to help around house  
 q1: fired nanny was leaving baby unattended  
 q1: former nanny wanted more involvement in family than mom wanted  
 q1: former nanny was not proactive about her job  
 q1: mom caught 1 nanny on camera who left child in crib for 6.5 hrs  
 q1: mom caught nanny talking doing something she had asked her not to do  
 q1: mom didn't trust prev nanny's judgment  
 q1: mom fired nanny after she let kid run away  
 q1: mom fired nanny b/c she spoke back and they argued  
 q1: mom fired nanny b/c she worried child's delays were result of her care  
 q1: mom fired nanny b/c wasn't working out  
 q1: mom fired nanny who wouldn't talk right before she went on maternity leave  
 q1: mom fired nanny year prior to interview, then rehired her

- q1: mom had nanny who was supposed to call mom and wouldn't causing trust issues
- q1: mom saw nannies reacted slowly and she worried
- q1: mom thinks firing was a result of them insulting each other
- q1: mom thought nanny who left child in crib was "sick" and "crazy"
- q1: mom was upset by prev nanny's behavior with child
- q1: nanny did not take responsibility for actions - instead made excuses
- q1: nanny didn't make mom feel comfortable
- q1: nanny disregarded mom's parenting instructions
- q1: nanny lost child when she ran ahead on way home from school
- q1: nanny pretended she had great day with child and lied
- q1: nanny was a liar regarding leaving child in crib
- q1: p mom didn't trust fired nanny
- q1: previous nanny only did it b/c she was new to country but didn't like it
- q1: previous nanny was lazy
- q1: previous nanny wasn't motivated or ambitious

### **Theme 59: The Adjustment to Having a Nanny**

- q1: at first mom was uncomfortable having nanny in her house
- q1: at first, mom watched nanny "like a hawk"
- q1: b/c nanny takes care of child, you form a close bond
- q1: b/c you leave child with nanny you develop immediate bond
- q1: mom became more comfortable with nanny over time
- q1: mom felt it would have been easier if she had more time to get to know nanny
- q1: mom felt like she needed time with nanny to build trust
- q1: took time off work to be home with nanny and build trust
- q3: mom is now comfortable having nanny live with her
- q3: surprising how quickly an utter stranger assimilates into your life

### **Theme 60: What Frustrates Mom About Nanny**

- q1: bothers mom that nanny is a little late every day
- q1: causes mom considerable stress when nanny is late
- q1: feels negative when nanny wants to leave early
- q1: frustrates mom that nanny doesn't try to figure out where things in house go
- q1: mom gets frustrated with nanny when mom feels she could be more helpful
- q1: mom is "frustrated" that she pays for 2 kids, but 1 is in school
- q1: mom is bothered that live-in nanny locks door to her room
- q1: mom is disgruntled that she keeps nanny for her kids, but her needs aren't met
- q1: mom is frustrated that nanny can't handle two kids
- q1: mom is frustrated that nanny doesn't care about improving her English
- q1: mom thinks nanny2 is young and can make immature decisions
- q1: mom wants to address her frustration with nanny
- q1: mom wants to resolve frustration with nanny
- q1: mom wishes nanny was a little smarter
- q1: mom would prefer live-in who would work at night so couple can go out
- q1: nanny's bad moods make others uncomfortable
- q1: nanny cooks but family doesn't like her food and nanny is resistant to change
- q1: nanny says she'll pay mom back but then doesn't
- q1: nanny1 doesn't enforce rules as strongly as mom would like
- q1: nanny1 lets daughter get away with too much
- q1: p mom feels bad that she gets annoyed at nanny for not cleaning well
- q3: mom thinks nanny is lazy about cleaning up

### **Theme 61: What Mom Feels She Must Do in Order to Keep Nanny**

- q1: mom expends a lot of energy being thoughtful of nanny
- q1: mom feels "stuck" with this nanny, but frustrated

q1: mom feels she must give nanny what she wants because she's great with child  
 q1: mom felt she and nanny had to have good relationship "for sake of children"  
 q1: mom is afraid that if she "nitpicks" nanny will leave  
 q1: mom is afraid to insult nanny and "rock the boat"  
 q1: mom is going to ask nanny to move to TX with them  
 q1: mom isn't crazy about live-in, but would do it to keep nanny  
 q1: mom tries to be good and generous so nanny will be happy  
 q3: idea of firing nanny1 was too stressful - so hired additional nanny  
 q3: mom would keep nanny and pay more for sake of consistency

### **Theme 62: What Mom Wanted Her Nanny to be Like**

q1: mom envisioned nanny to be "extension of herself" regarding childcare  
 q1: mom had no preconception of how nanny would be  
 q1: mom had no preconception of how nanny would impact child  
 q1: mom imagined nanny would be playful  
 q1: mom imagined nanny would push child towards goals  
 q1: mom looks for nanny who will be fast/quick  
 q1: mom needs nanny to drive  
 q1: mom thought about pros and cons of different nanny characteristics before hiring  
 q1: mom wanted a nanny that would follow mom's lead in being forceful with kids  
 q1: mom wanted a trustworthy and honest nanny  
 q1: mom wanted kids to have a happy nanny  
 q1: mom wanted nanny for baby who spoke better English  
 q1: mom wanted nanny to care about her and the baby, not just baby  
 q1: mom wanted nanny who could problem-solve and have commonsense  
 q1: mom wanted nanny who she knew or knew of, and Hispanic  
 q1: mom wanted nanny who would focus on kids and play with them  
 q1: mom wants nanny to be in her family's life after nanny stops working  
 q1: mom wants nanny to be part of family  
 q1: mom wants nanny to be willing to manage house  
 q1: mom had no preconception of how nanny would be  
 q1: when hiring nanny, kids were priority  
 q1: with first baby mom was anxious and wanted hovering nanny  
 q1: mom wanted live-in to be available at night so she can have freedom  
 q3: mom didn't expect to have a young attractive nanny  
 q3: mom didn't have nanny as child, and never thought of one before this nanny  
 q3: mom imagined nanny would love children and be helpful  
 q4: mom didn't have preconception of how nanny would be  
 q4: mom thought about pros and cons of different nanny characteristics before hiring

### **Theme 63: What Mom Will Accept to Preserve Nanny Relationship**

q1: "the bigger the rift with my mother, the closer I am to my nanny"  
 q1: bothers mom that nanny is a little late every day  
 q1: friends tell mom nanny should be able to handle two children  
 q1: idea of firing nanny1 was too stressful - so hired additional nanny  
 q1: it's a hassle that nanny doesn't drive  
 q1: it takes an hour to drive nanny home at night  
 q1: mom's needs aren't being met by nanny  
 q1: mom's plan is to keep nanny at current salary but with reduced hours when kids go to school  
 q1: mom "loves" the way nanny cares for children, so tried to avoid confrontation  
 q1: mom "walks on eggshells" around nanny  
 q1: mom accepts that nanny may have to leave anytime for Peru  
 q1: mom believes 1 person could do the job of her 2 nannies  
 q1: mom checks in with nanny often because she's not smart  
 q1: mom chose to work with nanny rather than fire nanny after bad incident

q1: mom didn't feel nanny1 could take care of 2 kids  
 q1: mom doesn't like that nanny doesn't clean up  
 q1: mom feels nanny doesn't give her enough time  
 q1: mom feels nanny is not imaginative and mom helps nanny schedule her day with kids  
 q1: mom hired nanny despite possibility it would be short term  
 q1: mom hired nanny2 to live-out and help nanny1  
 q1: mom is disgruntled that she keeps nanny for her kids, but her needs aren't met  
 q1: mom is not comfortable asking nanny to come on time  
 q1: mom isn't crazy about live-in, but would do it to keep nanny  
 q1: mom keeps nanny b/c she's great with kids  
 q1: mom keeps nanny because of relationship she has with kids  
 q1: mom kept 2nd nanny b/c son was attached to her  
 q1: mom kept nanny1 b/c it was good for mom, not out of guilt towards nanny  
 q1: mom needed nanny2 because nanny1 can't multitask  
 q1: mom thinks another nanny could handle two kids, but not this nanny  
 q1: mom thinks that nanny might have to leave for Peru again without much warning  
 q1: mom tries to avoid thinking about problems with nanny  
 q1: mom works around nanny1's limitations  
 q1: mom worries about keeping nanny happy so she won't look for new job  
 q1: nanny has borderline personality tendencies, but good with kid  
 q1: nanny is great with kids but has personality issues  
 q1: nanny is great with kids but not at housekeeping  
 q1: p fear that nanny will leave because her life is complicated  
 q1: p mom rationalizes to protect herself from feeling distrustful of nanny  
 q3: idea of firing nanny1 was too stressful - so hired additional nanny  
 q3: mom feels she's at nanny's mercy b/c she needs them to work and "lets things slide"  
 q3: mom kept nanny1 b/c she didn't want to "upset apple cart"

#### **Theme 64: When Nanny Acts Like She Knows Best**

q1: angers mom when nanny acts like she knows son better than mom  
 q1: fired nanny acted like she knew better than mom  
 q1: former nanny gave mom advice she didn't want  
 q1: former nanny had attitude towards mom that she knew better than mom  
 q1: mom didn't want nanny who was going to tell her how to mother  
 q1: mom feels nanny does what she wants to do, despite mother's requests  
 q1: nanny can speak condescendingly to mom  
 q1: nanny crosses "invisible line" and defies mother's decisions at times  
 q1: nanny disregarded mom's parenting instructions  
 q2: fired nanny acted like she knew better than mom

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