

# All the Children

By Alexis Reich

I feel so blessed to have worked with such wonderful children across Europe as a nanny. I wanted to express a bit about every child I have worked with. Of course, no document could comprise every magical experience I have had with the children I have worked with; however, such a narrative can give the reader more information about my duties and approach with the children I have served over the years as a nanny. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed writing it. I look back at my work with these wonderful children with most fond memories.

## *The Netherlands*

**Hannah** was nine months old when I first arrived as her nanny. We were close. I adored her. She was a special little one. She was eating soft foods but still taking a bottle now and then when I met her. Her parents were impressed with my work especially in the fact that Hannah rarely cried when with me. Hannah knew I was not mommy or daddy but she came to know that she could depend on me for her needs and that I would not let her down. It was my pleasure to be with her during the rapid developments that would follow. I worked with her quite a bit with her first steps and encouraged and assisted her with walking at 10 months. We spent a lot of time outdoors when weather permitted. I loved taking her and her siblings to the park. With my watchful eye and protecting her out of her sight, I allowed her to climb and slide and swing. I was very watchful and careful yet I did not want her to see this. I tried to foster independence in all her physical efforts and achievements. I praised her when she had successes. Though I loved holding her and giving her affection, I also wanted to encourage her to play with her things and spend some time out of my lap. Her independence was important to her and essential due to the fact that I had to do certain things for her and her siblings that could not be done had I carried her around all the time. I gave her all the love and attention she needed while at the same time encouraged her to play while I prepared meals; did laundry for the children or attended to her brother and sister. I attended to Hannah's every need. I changed her, fed her, bathed her, dressed her, played with her and gave her lots of love and affection. She was precious to me.

**Nathan** was 2 and a half when I first arrived as his nanny. He was a cute little boy and full of energy. He was all "boy" and loved the outdoors. He loved riding in the bicycle cart that was pulled behind the nanny's bike and playing in the park. He loved puzzles and other creative activities. Nathan liked to compete with his older sister and always wanted to make sure that he did not miss anything that she might be doing. He was very close to his older sister. I read to Nathan and generally spoke English to him encouraging responses from him. I walked him to school and retrieved him from school several days per week. I prepared all his meals with the exception of dinner. Nathan was a very bright little boy who spoke both his mom's German as well as his dad's Dutch. After being with me, he spoke some English. We had a lot of fun playing, doing activities and much more.

**Lisa** was almost 4 when I first arrived as her nanny. She was a delightful little girl. She was highly independent. She wanted to do everything for herself. I have always thought it important to allow a child to express her independence, with guidance of course. Lisa was very dominant amongst her younger siblings. She had a caring "mommy" side when it came to her brother and sister. She loved music. The family had a guitar that she insisted I play while singing songs to her. I walked her to school with her brother several days per week. The baby always went with us in her stroller on our trips to school. Sometimes the weather was a bit inclement but we always dressed warm for the Dutch weather, going on our walks and bike rides regardless. The nanny bicycle was a sight to behold. It pulled a small bike trolley that housed Lisa and Nathan

with a baby seat just behind me. All four of us were happy as clams in that nanny bike vehicle! Lisa was very intelligent and loved to be read to and sang to. She picked up English quickly. Her mother told me that it was cute to hear her speak English with an American accent. I took her to ballet once per week. She was a delightful little girl.

### *Stuttgart Germany*

**Stefanie** was five when I worked with her for a summer as her nanny. She was a smart little girl who loved to talk. While I worked in the kitchen or otherwise, she would come to me wherever I was to talk to me. Sometimes it was in German though I would respond to her in English. We were close. Stefanie did not like waking up in the morning. Her mother, prior to my coming, was having major problems getting the kids up and ready for school in the mornings. I was determined to make those mornings go more smoothly. On the night prior, I asked Stephanie and Jennifer to pick out their clothes for the next morning. They promised that there would be no change of mind the next morning. Stefanie always needed a bit of assistance and encouragement getting dressed which I provided. I usually carried her sleeping, with her head on my shoulder until we arrived at the breakfast table. I prepared their breakfast while we had our top of the day chat. I put the girls on the bus in the morning and retrieved them with lunch waiting for them when they returned. Stefanie loved to help me in the kitchen. Mostly she just wanted to hang close and talk. Her mother spoke of how she talked about me quite a bit when I was away. She was a wonderful child.

**Jennifer** was eight when I worked with her for a summer as her nanny. She was a middle child and seemed to be having some problems with it when I first met her. I spent a lot of time building her self-esteem. She was a beautiful little girl but did not feel as though she was. I encouraged her in every way to assure that she would become more confident. She was a positive and happy child. She was very mature in so many ways for her age. She loved outside play and always knew she could depend on me to play with her no matter how strenuous the activity! She was very athletic and I kept up with her! Jennifer loved fashion. When I first arrived, the girls' room needed a facelift as far as organization went. I cleaned their room, put everything in order and straightened up their closets so the girls could better access their clothes. I also laundered and folded all the children's clothing. Upon Jennifer's arrival from school, I always helped her with her homework. Afterwards, we always went outside to play on the playground and went for long walks. Jennifer was a beautiful and delightful child.

**Patrick** was 10 when I worked with him for a summer as his nanny. He was a very independent boy who insisted he did not need anyone to care for him. I gave him his space but with guidance. He had some behavioral issues that were manageable under my care. He mostly wanted love and attention and never went wanting while I was around him. His mother said he responded well to me. I repaired his bike when it was broken. There were things he and I could do together that made him happy. He did not want any assistance in the morning. I made his breakfast and lunch. I was there for him in any way he required. With all the children, I spoke English with them and read to the little one. Patrick was a sweet boy.

### *Munich Germany*

**Marie** was 7 when I arrived as her nanny. I drove her to all her activities such as ballet and riding. Marie was very independent which I encouraged. She was not a child who loved the outdoors. She was quite content staying inside and doing various creative activities with me or alone. She loved her computer and her school work. I always let her know that we could go to the park or outside but Marie was usually not interested. She was the youngest with two older sisters quite older than her. I attended certain of her ballet recitals. It was an honor and very wonderful to watch her dance. I also attended a few of her riding events. Marie was too young to have a horse past a little pony that she looked so cute on. On many occasions, I stayed past with Marie and would put her to bed when her mom was out. Sometimes Marie was very

serious while at other times, she wanted me to ride her on my back! She loved to play. I would spend hours playing with her sometimes after I was off the clock. Her mother was in the other room during some of those times and would always tell me how much she appreciated my extra attention playing with Marie who really needed that in her life. I picked out and read books in English to Marie. I recall Marie as a very serious yet, at times, playful little girl. She was incredibly intelligent and a delight to serve.

**Luisa** was 11 when I arrived as her nanny. She insisted she did not need a nanny and I respected that. She was a very thoughtful little girl. She loved learning English with me and would often practice it with me. I took Luisa to riding. She owned a laptop and often asked for my assistance working on it. Luisa loved her rabbits which I cared for while the family was away for the entire month of August each year. Luisa often brought her friends over – one of which had an American mom just like Luisa's mom. I had a good rapport with all of her friends. We had a lot of English conversations. Luisa was a thoughtful girl. She always made a point of hugging me goodnight if I was attending to the girls after hours while their mom was out. She was a precious and wonderful child.

**Clara** was 12 when I arrived as her nanny. She was quite independent but loved to ask me for anything she needed. It was a pleasure to have more advanced conversations with Clara. Her English level was very good. I took her to riding as well as sports activities. I attended some of her sports competitions which meant a lot to Clara. She grew up overnight and went off to boarding school at 13. We all missed her very much when she went away. Clara loved skiing along with her sisters. I drove her and her sisters to Austria for skiing where I experienced the most wonderful Christmas celebration in my life. Clara was a very intelligent girl who loved to joke with me. Most of the time, the joke was on me! I loved her sense of humor. I helped her with school work and also assisted her with her laptop.

### *Paris France*

**Lizzy** was 3 when I arrived as her nanny. She was a delightful and intelligent child. This was a sole care position that suited me just fine. Lizzy looked to me for everything. Her mother was a very busy person with her work that kept her from home quite a bit. Her work involved travel and more. I was there to care for Lizzy and never minded the long hours. Lizzy loved ballet, dress up, gymnastics, going to the park and eating at outdoor restaurants! She liked creative activities at home. She loved to sing with me! We had a lot of fun singing all over Paris during our outings. I was especially close to Lizzy because we were together always. I attended to her every need with the exception of dinner and a few other duties that were attended by the other servants. I insisted on tending and organizing Lizzy's room. I also liked for Lizzy and I to go into the kitchen and prepare our own breakfast and lunch each day. Lizzy was a funny and adorable little girl. She was six by the time I left. It was time for school and she needed a nanny less and less.