

# THE PARK SLOPE PARENTS STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL NANNY SHARE



## **About Park Slope Parents**

*Founded in July 2002 and now in its 8<sup>th</sup> year, Park Slope Parents is a group of more than 3,000 local families dedicated to supporting parenting life in Brooklyn, New York by providing a way to exchange information about parenting issues and living in an urban environment. Our online resources include a public website that houses reviews, parenting advice, and an event calendar and 3 online groups; the “main list” focuses on exchanging information about parenting and community issues, the “classifieds” is a buy/sell/trade group for locally swapping kid gear and finding Nannies, and the “career networking group” helps connect parents to jobs and resources. Offline events include clothing swaps, festivals, music concerts and special events. We also partner with non-profits such as the Brooklyn Family Justice Center to provide donations and services to those in need and sponsor community events such as the Celebrate Brooklyn Concerts and Brooklyn Volunteer Fair. Joining Park Slope Parents requires a membership fee of \$25 and includes a membership card where members receive discounts on more than 100 local products and services (to join click <http://parkslopeparents.clubexpress.com/>). For more information: [www.parkslopeparents.com](http://www.parkslopeparents.com) or contact [susanfox@parkslopeparents.com](mailto:susanfox@parkslopeparents.com).*

# THE PSP STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL NANNY SHARE

A Nanny Share is a creative childcare arrangement, an alternative to hiring a Nanny for one family's child(ren) or sending children to daycare/preschool. With a Nanny Share, two or more families have at least one Nanny who takes care of the children of the families involved in the share. You can have a "full" Nanny Share which means that one Nanny takes care of two families' kids at the same time, without any individualized care (easier to figure out financially, but not always practical). Another option is a "partial" share, when a Nanny takes care of two families' children sometimes individually and sometimes together.

## BENEFITS of a Nanny Share

Although many people think sending kids to daycare/preschool is a cheaper option, it is not always the case. If you factor in school holidays and kid sick days, a Nanny Share can be as or more cost effective than these other arrangements. And, in general, it is considerably less costly than having a full time Nanny for one family. In addition to cost savings, socialization and higher salary for the Nanny are frequently mentioned benefits of the Nanny Share, compared to the full time Nanny. In addition, if there are two families/four parents involved it can be much easier to cover times when the Nanny is sick or otherwise unable to work, since the parents can all take turns taking days off.

For some families, however, the cost savings and practical advantages are not the only reason to choose this arrangement. As one of our members has said, "there are impossible-to-calibrate pluses and joys of having a Nanny share beyond the monetary benefit" including parenting support from the other family, sibling/cousin-like relationships when 'real' family is far away, and the ability to have your child(ren) very comfortable in someone else's home (see verbatim comments below for more on this).

**How much should I expect to pay?** Pay Range is typically \$17-\$22 an hour for 2 kids (\$8.50-\$11 an hour for each family). Full-time rates are generally slightly lower (e.g., \$16/hr for 50hrs/wk) and depend on tenure of work, Nanny's experience, and other situational factors. In our area, when a Nanny is only taking care of one child, the pay for is typically \$13-\$15 per hour.

## DRAWBACKS of a Nanny Share

Even with the benefits, there are drawbacks. Coordinating schedules, negotiating differences in parenting styles, and the question of what to do when one child is sick add to the complexity of making a Nanny Share situation successful. If the Nanny does not work only for you, you may be affected by another family's difficulties and scheduling challenges. In a Nanny Share, your child does not get one-on-one attention from the Nanny (although learning to share attention can be seen as a benefit, particularly if parents are planning on having a second child at some time). Differences in income, job situations, and travel schedules can create stresses and frustrations. Paying on the books can also be much more complicated in this type of childcare situation.

Even with the drawbacks, a Nanny Share may be a great option for your family. Data from the PSP Nanny Survey of Fall 2009 asked people for advice from their personal experience about how to make a Nanny Share work and helped us develop the following **STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO A SUCCESSFUL NANNY SHARE**.

## **STEP 1: BEFORE Considering a Nanny Share**

Make sure you understand the complexities of a Nanny Share. While the cost-savings and improved opportunities for socialization of your child sound attractive, this is not something to enter into lightly. A Nanny Share is a serious commitment between multiple families working with one Nanny. Before you decide on a Nanny Share, think about the following questions:

- Do you want your kids to have a built-in playdate every day, or would you rather they spent more time alone (or with a variety of children)?
- Do you value the "it takes a village approach" or would you rather just have the simplicity of dealing with your own Nanny?
- Are you willing and able to synch up some of the vacations or are your vacation dates inflexible?
- Are you comfortable raising issues when they arise or do you have a tendency to let things stew?
- Do you have a tendency to micromanage and therefore may not be able to let go of day-to-day details with another family?
- Do you want the family you share with to have a child of similar age or different age? (Share families mentioned that both can work).
- Do you want the other child to be the same sex or opposite sex?
- Can you handle your nanny's attention being divided between the children or would you prefer your child get undivided attention?
- How comfortable are you with your child being in another environment which, for the most part, you can't control?
- If you plan on alternating homes or using the other family's home, are you prepared for drop off and pick up?
- How flexible will you be about extracurricular activities?
- Would you prefer to come into an existing Nanny Share situation or would you rather start from scratch with a new family and new Nanny?
- Are you planning on having more children? (If you are starting the Nanny Share with one child, but plan to have more children, be prepared for the additional complication. When you have your own nanny, adding one child is generally not a big deal. In a Nanny share, it is certainly doable, but more complex.)

**Bottom Line...** *This is a great arrangement for people who want all the advantages, not only the financial ones, and who go into it with a clear understanding of the effort involved.*

## **STEP 2: Start by finding a FAMILY, not the Nanny**

***"Similar parenting styles" is the single most frequently mentioned key to a successful Nanny Share.*** As one person said, "Don't think just because it's not you and the other parents spending your days together that it will work out for you to share a Nanny if you don't see eye to eye on all issues regarding your children's care." Spend time with the other family to make sure you are compatible. Consider getting feedback about the other family from others (former Nannies, housecleaners, etc.); the other family may be charming but not a respectful, fair employer. From a few interactions you should be able to gauge the following:

### **Family Chemistry**

- Do you like each other and each other's kids?
- Are your children compatible as playmates?
- Do you communicate well with the other family?

- Do the parents of the other child get along as a couple?

## Parenting Philosophies

- Are you compatible on sleep-training philosophies (Is one child going to be soothed while another will cry until asleep?)
- Do you see eye to eye on screen time (TV watching and computers)?
- What is each family's attitude about treats?
- What is each family's eating style? (Is 'on the go' okay or would you rather have sit down meals for your kids? Does all food need to be organic or not? Are desserts never ok, or occasional treats fine?)
- What are your beliefs about vaccinations (and could these beliefs affect your decision to have a Nanny Share with a family with different beliefs)?
- Do you see eye-to-eye on child-proofing, kinds of play toys, etc.?
- What are your beliefs about discipline? Sharing? Are your views compatible?

## Day to Day

- Do you live near each other?
- Are your homes set up well for a nanny share? (Bear in mind a top floor walk up for a nanny with 2 babies can be challenging, and you'll need to have space for 2 kids to nap, etc. There are probably creative solutions for space challenges, but they are important to keep in mind.)
- Are your schedules more or less in sync? (vacations, work hours, etc)
- Do you agree on where the child care should occur (Home A, Home B, some time at each)?
- What is the environment like where the children will sleep and play?
- How often does each family want the kids to be outside? What kind of weather does each family feel is appropriate for outside play?
- Do you care if they nap at home or on the go?
- Do the nap schedules need to synch up?
- How important are things like music classes or tumbling classes? (If families have different disposable income for such things it could be an issue).
- How will you accommodate napping away from home?
- Do any of the children have special needs (dietary, emotional, learning, developmental, etc)?

**Bottom Line...** *If your gut says the other family is not a good fit, don't do it just to save money. If you want to do this and you're willing to keep trying, there is a family out there compatible with yours. Don't just settle.*

## **STEP 3: WRITE UP (and Talk Through) the Details**

***If the families seem to "fit," the next step is working out the nuts and bolts.*** Draw up a contract (including a budget) between you and your share partner with all the potential caveats (leaving the share, vacations, children's illness, Nanny's illness etc). State your "must haves" up front. The write up should include specifications for the following:

- How will you split the time at each family's home?
- How will you accommodate different schedules?
- What happens if one of the children is ill?\*
- How will you coordinate paying the Nanny? (Make sure you're in agreement about on/off books issues.)
- Who will be responsible for transporting children from one home to the other?

- How will you coordinate weekly expenses and supplies, including diapers, wipes, formula, food, etc?
- Will you need special equipment, such as a double stroller or portable crib? (Having proper gear is mainly an issue when the kids are babies.)
- What will happen in the event of one family's' need to end the share? (e.g., loss of job, moving, etc). No one wants to be left in the lurch.
- Will the families provide petty cash to the Nanny? How will/can it be spent?
- How will you handle extracurricular activities/classes if the other family is not interested in participating?
- What additional perks will you provide the Nanny (Metrocard, snacks, etc.) and how will you coordinate?
- How will you handle communication with the Nanny? Will there be one point person, or will both families speak to the Nanny about changes together? (Any "policy directives" for the nanny should be coordinated between the families so the nanny is not getting conflicting messages. It's less important that there be ONE PERSON to speak with nanny than ONE VOICE, agreed upon by both families.)
- How will you handle over-time, especially if only one family needs the Nanny to stay later?
- What are the holidays you have in common? Not in common?
- What kind of trial period will you have to make sure it works?
- Is this a 'full' Nanny Share (Nanny only takes care of multiple children together) or are there times when the Nanny takes care of one child at a time? Questions specific to this case include:
  - § Will you have some days that are 'potential share' days if someone needs extra hours due to work? (If so, you may have a 'priority family' so there is one person who can get priority in case of a sick child.")
  - § In cases when there are some Nanny Share hours and some individual hours, how will the two families figure out weekly pay for the Nanny? (Some people have a spreadsheet that they use to enter the information).
  - § What is the minimum weekly pay that the Nanny can expect to take home?
  - § Which parent gets "priority" in case of a sick child?
  - § How will you figure out paying for holidays? If only one family uses the Nanny on Mondays, for example, more holidays will fall in that family's time.

**Bottom Line...***If the details are in writing you'll both be clearer on what you want. That way you can avoid a later "but I thought..." which can lead to bad feelings and difficult situations.*

**\*NOTE: How do people handle the situation when one child is sick?** Some consider it like a daycare situation and the parents of the sick child find other arrangements. Others decided that it depends on the illness; colds with runny nose are fine, but fever and vomiting are cause for separation. Yet other people allow the Nanny to take care of both children, assuming that it's highly likely that both kids have already been exposed to the sick child's illness.

#### **STEP 4: Find the Nanny**

People are mixed as to whether to interview the Nanny together or separately. For situations where both families are starting from scratch, it's probably best for both families to interview the nanny together. Regardless of how you decide to do it, when doing reference checks each family should speak with the references. It is important for both parties to hear feedback on the Nanny.

NOTE: If you are coming into a situation where another family has a Nanny already there may be a power differential in terms of comfort level with the Nanny and routines that are pre-existing. This is not to say coming into a pre-existing condition will not work (and they surely do), you just need to state your expectations up front.

Ask potential Nannies questions specific to the Nanny Share (see also the Nanny Interview Questions on the PSP website):

- What is your past experience with caring for multiple children, the same age or different ages?
- How have you dealt with (or would deal with) napping issues?
- Are you comfortable hosting a play date with an additional child?
- Are you comfortable having more than one employer? The employers need to avoid giving contradictory directions, but the Nanny will still have to be comfortable communicating with both sets of parents on basic things like how the day went, how the kids got along, whether lunch was eaten, etc.
- At what age of children do you feel comfortable taking two children to classes or other organized activities?
- How comfortable are you in taking two children on outings?.
- How have you handled socialization issues if the two children weren't getting along?

After each interview, discuss:

- What are the things that each of you think are the Nanny's strengths? Weaknesses?
- What are your concerns about the Nanny?
- Will the Nanny be able to juggle the demands of two children simultaneously?

***Bottom Line...***Both families have to feel super-confident in the Nanny choice.

### **STEP 5: NURTURE the Nanny Share**

Once the decision has been made, the trial period has been met, and the Nanny Share is in full swing, you're not all done. Like any relationship, this arrangement requires maintenance to make sure it continues as smoothly as possible. Here are some guidelines to nurture the Nanny Share:

- **Good communication is by far the most crucial part of having a successful nanny share!** Keep the communication with your share family flowing. Emailing and texting can be a less-intrusive, less confrontational way of handling things and gives the other family a chance to think about things before making a decision. (Emails are also a great way to have a paper trail as well).
- Have realistic expectations. The beginning of a Nanny Share is a transitional period, not unlike a new day-care situation. There will be kinks to work out, and it will take time for the kids (and parents) to fall into a routine.
- Be respectful of both the other family and the Nanny. Be prompt at pick-up, don't talk down the other family's parenting style to the Nanny (go to the source if you have issues), and don't criticize a child's behavior in front of the children.
- Make sure the Nanny is happy, and help in any way to make sure that she likes the relationship.
- Keep a monthly calendar with key dates (doctors' appointments, play dates) and location. Make sure all the parents in the share and the Nanny have an up-to-date copy of the calendar. This will help keep everyone more organized and able to plan personal schedules better.
- Have monthly or quarterly meetings to make sure that things are going well and to modify things that need to be worked on.

***Bottom Line...***If either family or the Nanny is unhappy it will influence (and perhaps jeopardize) the whole arrangement.

The benefits to having a Nanny Share go beyond just cost savings to a more “village” approach. While your experience might not be one in which your Nanny Share family becomes like ‘real’ family, there may be surprising benefits you didn’t figure you’d have. As one long-time Nanny Share mother indicated:

“In our Nanny share I will tell you that we are now staying together not because there are any financial savings anymore (in fact there aren't), but because our families and kids are so close that it's difficult to imagine separating. Here are some of the PROS: the families get to know each other and each other's kids intimately; the kids are completely comfortable at each other's homes, and will clamor for sleepovers at very young ages (each of us was completely comfortable leaving our first-born with the other family when we went to the hospital to birth our second); the ability to share the sometimes isolating experiences of parenthood so closely with another family; if your child is an only child, the wonderful sibling/cousin-like relationships that can develop with the kids from the other family; and even if your child is NOT an only child, the bond that develops between the kids is unique and wonderful; the "family dinner" that can happen even when all the parents work too late to eat dinner with their own kids on weekdays... There are others, but these are the ones that leap to mind.”

MUCH GOOD LUCK in your decisions! Please let us know if you have a success story or advice you'd like to add by sending an email to [feedback\[at\]parkslopeparents.com](mailto:feedback[at]parkslopeparents.com).

## Responses from Survey Participants to the question, “What advice would you give to other people who are thinking about a Nanny share?”

(NOTE: Recurring themes were summarized above but we include them here so you have a broader depth of responses given).

- Find a family that lives very close by. Do the share with kids the same age. **Make sure both sets of parents have similar temperaments (easy going helps A LOT)**. Talk about specifics, sickness, food, petty cash, how the day is spent. If they or you already have a nanny they love that is half the battle.
- Having a Nanny and family who are willing to be very flexible is imperative. We have had to work together as a team, and during one period when the other family was going through financial hardship, we increased our hourly rate temporarily in order to help our Nanny make ends meet. It has been wonderful to give our only child a lot of time for socialization and individual attention, while still affordable for us. Our Nanny loves the arrangement as well, and she is able to earn more money this way!
- Well, we really lucked into our situation. Family A really set it up, and they are good friends of ours from way back and we just went with it, so we didn't have to interview or really make any decisions----and we totally love N and her family and it's obvious the kids love her, too. The only advice I would offer is that the share probably works best with families who have similar parenting styles, which we do with Family A. Some small conflicts have arisen with Family C, nothing major, but that's where the difference lies.
- Draw up a contract between you and your share partner with all the potential caveats (leaving the share, vacations, illness, etc).
- Keep the lines of communication very open with the other family. It helps if both parties are easy-going and not inclined to micromanage.
- Make sure to feel really comfortable with the couple you do the nanny share. **Do not feel shy about honest, open communication**. Make sure that your parenting styles and priorities are very similar.
- It works well if homes are physically close if they will be going back and forth. We bought a double stroller. Close age is working well for us. **Napping can be a bit harder if they are on different schedules**. Similar parenting style and flexibility are probably the most important traits to make it work. We are extremely happy with how ours is going.
- **I would say to carefully consider what will happen in cases of sickness, which occurs quite a lot!** And to communicate often and openly almost every day.
- Feel comfortable to raise issues when they arise- open communication is the key.
- Think long and hard about it. **Parenting styles get more distinct as kids grow older, and that can fracture it. Additionally, get a reference from someone the other parents have employed--our nanny share people are extremely disrespectful to our sitter (leave the apt a mess, don't like when she takes vacation, don't pay her on time, short her on overtime, etc), and I think that would have come out had we talked to their cleaning lady, or former clients, etc.**

- Be very clear about what your expectations are, and have quarterly or bi-annual meetings to discuss how things are going.
- ID your point person with Nanny (should only be one).
- Be straightforward with the Nanny and the other family.
- A good match and connection with the other family is essential. We have been very fortunate to have met another family very similar to us who lives two buildings over. Our schedules work out very well.
- It is a good idea, but the personalities of the families need to match.
- It's best when one or both families have a work-from-home/stay-at-home parent--or one with a flexible schedule. It's easier when at least one of the families can work around a more rigid work schedule for the other.
- Communicate effectively with all parties. Think about potential issues up front. Talk frequently and address issues openly and honestly. **If your gut says it's not a good fit, don't do it just to save money.**
- Just make sure both families are on the same page about schedules, days off for the Nanny, children's activities, playdates, etc. It's like any relationship - you have to compromise and be flexible at times!
- If you have the right Nanny it is great for children!
- It's important to make sure the schedules match for each family and that logistically, you agree to either have the Nanny 100% at one house or another OR share houses. **If the Nanny stays 100% at the other family's house, it's harder for the other family to assert their needs or preferences.**
- It is terrific!! The kids get socialized. The Nanny has a way better job. It is more fun for her. And it is more affordable for me.
- Make sure you work out in advance what to do if one child is sick. Also, be sure your parenting styles are similar and **be up front if your family has special beliefs like about not vaccinating your child**, etc. so everyone is clear before the share begins.
- Make sure that your parenting styles are similar, hire your Nanny together, and **be flexible!**
- Having similar values and parenting styles is key. You also need to make sure the Nanny is happy with the situation. And it's a huge help to live nearby each other. We're all only a few blocks away from each other.
- It only works if you have comparable schedules. Arrange all paid holidays and vacations at the beginning.
- It really helped that we knew the other family really well, and that our kids have been friends for a long time. What is unexpected (though we should have predicted it) is that our boy/girl four year olds are not getting along -- different temperaments and boy/girl interests.

- Find the right couple and be friends!
- Pick a family who has similar values to you so that you can work things out when there are disputes. Remember that in some ways kids in shares are like siblings, so you have to make sure it's not all fighting and no love built between them or it might become abusive.
- Be willing to spend time negotiating with the other family about extracurricular activities, and be flexible. For example, I wanted my child to take a language class on a day when the kids were together, so I offered to pay for the second kid, as a sibling, to go as well since that class was not a priority to the other family.
- If you are doing a share, every program you sign up for, every membership you buy, Museums, Gym, etc, add the extra kid and your nanny to your membership so that the nanny can take both kids anytime without you. I recommend the Natural History Museum because it is open on Mondays when almost everything else is closed. If it won't cost you extra, always add the extra kid, that really helps with flexibility.
- Obviously communication is key. Writing up a contract is helpful. Since both of our share situations have been with friends we have had good luck with communication.
- It's worked out really well for us, but you need good communication with all families involved and with the Nanny.
- It is complicated and requires that you have a good relationship with the other family/families. It can work but it is a lot more difficult than hiring your own Nanny to work out of your home, but the cost savings makes it worth it. For our family doing the share was cheaper than daycare and in my opinion better since she only takes care of 2 children and they get out and go on playdates all the time. Now that we have a 2nd child it is becoming logistically too complicated so I need to find a different child care solution.
- **Flexibility is a must and seek out creative solutions and arrangements.** For instance, our Nanny walks our share family child home one day per week. This is a plus for them not to have to pick-up, and allows our nanny to end her day a bit earlier.
- Choose a share family that you "click" with. This is important as you will need to be in regular communication and should feel comfortable approaching them.
- Remember that you and your share family are co-creating guidelines and boundaries for your children's' care-- stay in constant touch! **We've found that texting and emailing work great, but we do phone calls too and in-person chats during drop-off/pick-up.**
- For ease of drop-off/pick-up and morning/evening routine, choose a share that is very close by or at least on your commuting path.
- **State your "must haves" up front. If there are things very important to you, that you are not willing to be flexible on (e.g., absolutely no TV, or must return home for naps), that should be stated upfront so that there are no surprises and everyone's expectations are met.**
- Do consider a share with a same-age child AND a younger/older child. We have had both and there are great benefits (and some minor drawbacks probably) to both. Same-age children make for a neat share b/c they are in similar development stages and it's sort of like a built-in, daily playdate, but this can be harder for a Nanny (especially when both are learning to walk!).

An age-gap in a share also works well, in my experience. It is more akin to a sibling relationship, where both children have differing needs developmentally and I think it is positive to have children exposed to junior and senior buddies! Some may think that it is not as stimulating for the older child in a share though. I think as long as the Nanny does not regularly limit any activities for either child (and otherwise does not let the age-gap stand in the way of a fun, productive day of exploring/learning/playing/snuggling), then it is just fine. My child is the older child in a share with an infant it is working beautifully, in my opinion. And, better than my opinion, our Nanny claims that this age split is easier than two toddlers (which was our previous share)!

- Be prompt for pick-up. Not only is this professional courtesy to your Nanny, but when you share, a late pick-up can disrupt the evening routine/plans of the host family.
- **Make a previous agreement that states what happens when the children are sick, paid holidays and vacations, and the hourly rate in every instance.**
- Lots of patience with the other families. Avoid confusion by establishing very clear rules for scheduling, how to pay the sitter, etc.
- It takes a lot more work than hiring your own sitter, but there are many benefits beyond the obvious cost & socialization. For example, the support of the other family. You can often come to better decisions than you would alone.
- Be clear about arrangements about what you will do if either child (or the Nanny) should become ill.
- Just do it -- it has been such a fantastic thing for our family. **But pay close attention and trust your gut when interviewing both the other family and the Nanny.** It works best when you and the other family are very much in line, philosophically, and are both good communicators, because you will have to hash out lots of little details. **It also works best when your Nanny really wants a share (ours prefers it strongly to caring for a single child) and has lots of energy and love to go around. Also be as generous as you can with your Nanny, because she's working very hard. And if an issue arises, call a conference and get all three parties in the same room.** We exist without a written contract, but we do circulate a list of holidays at the top of the year so everyone is on the same page. Another thing that has helped us, I think, is that one of the families uses the share for their second child, so we don't have two sets of first-time parents. Having one family more relaxed and seasoned has helped keep all of us sane. But after trying this, I couldn't imagine not sharing. It just makes so much sense on so many levels.
- Discuss schedules and leaves of absence -- out of town work, in advance.
- Make sure the times are compatible for both families and the nanny can handle both kids.
- Do it. But make sure your values and parenting style is in tune with the other family. **Be prepared to be flexible with schedules and make compromises to keep everyone happy.**
- Do all interviews together. **Start interviewing early and come up with a set of questions together.** Have a contract between the two families detailing things like what to do in case of illness, vacations, time off, etc.

- It can be a great arrangement, as long as all the logistical details are hammered out ahead of time and you have a very clear knowledge of families' parenting styles, needs, expectations, etc.
- Make sure the parents of both families get along, are flexible, and share similar style and attitude about parenting and childcare. **Also, ensure that the Nanny is both comfortable and competent with two children.**
- Make sure **all families are on the same page.**
- Make sure you and the other family share parenting values **and are able to communicate well.** Things like: what are the kids eating? How much do you want them to be outside? Do you care if they nap at home? Do the nap schedules need to synch up? Are you willing to try to synch up some of the vacations? Do you like each other and each other's kids? Do you value the "it takes a village approach" or would you rather just have the simplicity of dealing with your own Nanny? Do you want your kids to have a built-in playdate every day, or would you rather they spent more time alone?
- Make sure the Nanny and the two families are all on the same page with regard to logistics, **but manage the financial matters (e.g. rate, raises, etc.) separately from one another.** One thing that has been an issue is participating in classes that cost money. If the other family can't pay for the class, then our solution has been to pay for the other kid's class as his birthday gift, so that our daughter can go.
- **Start by finding a family rather than by finding a nanny!!** Interview the candidates separately. It gives you twice as much of an opportunity to make up your mind about a particular candidate. It also helps to start ironing things out with regards to logistics with the partner family.
- **If you're paying on the books, split the workload amongst all involved family members, not necessarily by quantity but rather by strength. e.g., one of us is a lawyer and drafter the contract; one of us is an organization freak and thus keeps track of all paperwork; one of us is a rules and regulation guru and makes sure we're on track with all the necessary filings.**
- Regardless of whether you're paying on or off the books, develop a budget to make sure you're all on the same page. When it works, it's just GREAT!
- It's incredibly important that you are compatible with the other family and want the same things for your children's care if the children will be cared for together. **Don't think just because it's not you and the other parents spending your days together that it will work out for you to share a Nanny if you don't see eye to eye on all issues regarding your children's care.**
- Different ages have worked well for us, and the other family is in our building, so easy to pickup/drop off if the Nanny or one family is running late.