

# The Woodland NANNY

Take time to slow down, stop and smell the flowers.

**Q** Tell me a little bit about your journey into childcare

**A** When I was in school, I had to do a two-week placement. I ended up at a local preschool. I loved it, it was one of the best experiences I had in school, and it shaped who I am professionally. They allowed me to do small group work with the children, and I loved seeing the light bulbs turn on in children's minds. It showed me how I influenced and inspired their little minds. That experience led me to work with children.

It's just a beautiful thing, isn't it? To be able to help a child learn something that could potentially shape them as a person. It is just so special and there's no other job like that.

**Q** Why did you choose nannying as opposed to any other kind of childcare?

**A** When I first started, I worked in a nursery but wanted to see what other avenues of childcare were out there, what else I could achieve in this sector. I came across nannying and saw it as an opportunity to work closely with just a few children. I fell in love with being a nanny as I could focus all my energy on the children, their learning and play experiences.

**Q** Are you an Ofsted-registered or an unregistered nanny?

**A** As an Ofsted-registered nanny. I use the EYFS to support the child's learning and development, follow their interests and plan their next steps, but it's all in my head, rather than having to be written down. For me, this is quicker and more effective.

Words: Emmy Benjamin, The Woodland Nanny Images: Shutterstock



## Q What are the benefits of being Ofsted registered?

**A** The benefits for families are they can claim tax-free childcare if they use a registered nanny. Of course, being registered means that I get inspected. When Ofsted inspects registered nannies, they focus on the safeguarding aspect, so I must have up-to-date paediatric first aid, insurance, and car insurance. It reassures parents and carers to know that Ofsted will be checking on these things and it validates that I have a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, can keep their children safe and provide them with a stimulating environment.

## Q Why 'The Woodland Nanny'? What inspired your approach?

**A** When working with a family previously, I started taking the child to Nature Tots, a forest school session in a local woodland. I could see how much it was benefiting the children at the session. It was amazing to see how engaged they were and how much learning was going on, outside in

such a calming, beautiful environment. I also recognised the benefits in myself; I felt so relaxed and calm in that environment.

This inspired me to develop my ethos. I wanted all the children in my care to benefit from such environments and from there The Woodland Nanny was born. Outdoor learning has fully influenced all aspects of my practice as a nanny.

I love being outdoors and it is where I am my best self. I believe it is where children are their best selves as well - happy, engaged, calm and regulated.

I'm a part of a local team of nannies and I offer an opportunity for the other nannies to join me in the woods, where we provide learning activities and experiences for the children. It's fantastic to show others how valuable outdoor learning experiences are.

Some studies show children are spending significantly less time outside, and I feel like I need to try and change that, even if it is just for the children and families I support.

## Q Who or what has inspired you?

**A** My boss, Leyla, who is the founder of nanny company I work for is my inspiration. We've been working quite closely to ensure nannies have high standards and access to opportunities for their own learning. Getting to know her has renewed my zeal for nannying. Being a nanny can be difficult and lonely, with very little support. Being part of a team and being able to meet other nannies has made my job so much more enjoyable and easier.



## Q What outdoor spaces do you use?

**A** As a nanny, I feel like the world is my classroom. We spend a lot of time in our local woodland, and I have my favourite spot. We also visit local parks and nature reserves often using bird hides to observe the wildlife.

Nature has a natural calming effect on everyone, not just children. We hear a lot about children struggling with their behaviour and managing their emotions, but when you take them outside in the woodland and it's like all their anxieties and struggles melt away, supporting them to be confident, calm and regulated. It is also important to allow children space for their emotions. If they are upset,

acknowledge and validate their feelings, give them space to feel their emotions, and support them to talk about it.

As a nanny I feel that I have freedom to be able to take children to different places, offer different experiences and visit loads of different green spaces and woodland areas. **CP**



## Resources

- If you've been inspired by Emmy's love of the outdoors, but struggle to know where to start, then look no further than PACEY's bite-sized learning developed with The Wildlife Trusts. The courses Connecting with nature in the early years and Overcoming barriers to connecting with nature outdoors will get you outside with the children you care for.

**Find them in The big wide world theme!**

- @thewoodlandnanny  
PACEY members  
Outdoor play (England):  
[bit.ly/4jbQK8o](https://bit.ly/4jbQK8o)
- Outdoor learning and the curriculum for Wales:  
[bit.ly/3DMsQkA](https://bit.ly/3DMsQkA)

