



People Profile

Erin Carroll-Manning

Erin Carroll-Manning has over 25 years of childcare experience and is the founder of Gentle Giraffes, a Massachusetts based full-service newborn care agency. Erin is a trained Master Newborn Care Specialist (NCS), a trained Postpartum Doula (PPD), a Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST), and a lactation support specialist. She is also trained in Respectful Care for Newborns, Infants and Toddlers.

How did you get involved in the nanny industry, and what is your current role?

I have always felt the draw of children for as long as I can remember. The first encounter that I vividly remember was when I was about five years old and was drawn to an infant and a toddler. I was so at peace spending time with them. I really wanted to be there. After that, whenever infants were around, I would always gravitate toward them.

Because of my rapport with infants and toddlers, my family thought I would go into teaching. They were right to an extent. Although I did not go down the traditional path, I do teach and guide children as well as parents now.

My first paying childcare position was as a mother's helper for our neighbor when I was eleven. She needed support with her two children, who were six months and three years old at the time, while she got things done around the house and studied for her nursing degree. This is where it all began. I then did as most do in this industry: babysit for date nights and take summer family nanny positions throughout junior high and high school. I loved every minute of it.

Many of us end up trying our hands in several other industries before coming back. I did this as well. I also fell into being a full-time nanny thanks to a friend who gave my name to one of her office mates needing support for her four children. From there I never looked back.

This career has been such a blessing to me. There have been many times I have wanted to up and leave, but something always keeps me here. I spent a good part of my teen years as a nanny before I started to really educate myself in child development and get into the professional side of the industry. I knew at that point I was not turning back. I also knew I needed more to help support families. The more families I worked with during the mom's maternity leave, the more I was noticing they lacked support, even with me being there. I was there for the toddler and other siblings, but not for the mom or the newborn.

That's how I became a master newborn care specialist and newborn sleep specialist, to name a few hats I wear while also owning a pregnancy and postpartum agency in New England today.

How has the industry changed since you became involved?

I feel the industry has gotten stronger in many ways. It's great to see more nannies standing up for themselves as well as doing their research. I love how many are asking about continuing education, how to handle a challenging day, and the amount of love that nannies give each day.

As I have been one of those who fell into this industry and never left, I started out with no education in child-rearing or raising children in general. Facebook groups really didn't exist when I got my start, and the nanny community was not as widespread as it is now.

How did you get to where you are today?

It's going to sound so cliché, but it's true. Hard work, determination, and vision got me to where I am. Along with that, I have taken the time to attend many workshops and trainings, pick people's brains, and learn to stand up for what I believe in, even if I'm the only one standing. At the end of the day, it only takes oneself to make truly powerful change.

With that, nothing mentioned came without a price. I have sacrificed a lot over the last ten years or so to get to my position. I have had to do a lot of work on myself to heal energetic karma that blocks me from tapping into my full potential. That continues and always will.



Healing my traumas and karmas is a lifelong process. I have had to retrain my mind and my thinking to have an abundant mindset and always know every hurdle is a lesson to make me stronger and that strength will support me in my journey. If I didn't have challenges, I would not know how to manage them when others are faced with the same or how to navigate the ship through rough seas. Life is all about lessons that heal us and make us stronger for the next rocky road.

Some of the biggest challenges I faced came from personal relationships within the nanny community. As in any group or collaboration, there will always be disagreements or the parting of ways, but there are several circumstances involving friends and mentors that really shook me to the core and even broke my heart.

Nevertheless, all that has made me stronger, more resilient, understanding, confident, and determined to keep walking the path I have followed—after shedding a few million tears and repairing my shattered heart, of course.

None of those things ever turned me away from my goals. They have only shown me where I need to turn to continue down the path I am meant to go. Though much sadness, pain, and insecurity have come out of those hurdles, way more joy, peace, education, and change have come from them. I would not change the path at all if I had to do it again.

Ultimately, I am where I am because of my determination, hard work, and vision. I continue to strive to bring support and joy to families during some of their most tender and vulnerable times.

Where do you see yourself in five years?

This is a great question. I see myself still working in this industry but on a much larger scale. I see myself bridging the gap between so many

other professions that support pregnancy, birth, newborns, postpartum care, and beyond. I see myself and my company offering a full spectrum of support to families, be it one-on-one support, group support, or beyond. I'm a firm believer that the more education and information people have earlier, the more empowered and confident they will be about their pregnancy, birth, and postpartum time.

That's not all I see. Having worked so hard to be where I am, I deserve more time with my husband and the chance to foster that relationship. I see us spending more time together, traveling, doing some business adventures together, and really building the rest of our lives. We have both spent a lot of time healing our inner turmoil and putting lots of effort into our careers over the last ten years. It's our time to enjoy what we have built and will continue to build.

What is your best advice for nannies?

My best advice for nannies is to heal your inner emotional turmoil and educate yourself on emotional development from birth to ten years old.

I see far too many nannies—and people in general, for that matter—who are not healthy emotionally and blame others for how they feel. This makes me so sad because if they are like this, how can they support, guide, and teach the next generation to develop healthy emotions? What we put out there is what children will mimic. How we speak or care for children will be taken with them for life, even if they are just a few days or months old. Children develop most of their healthy emotions in their first three to four years. This time determines how secure they feel within themselves and the world around them. This is where secure attachments are started. Then there is a whole slew of ways to further in each age and stage of development. Therefore, I suggest nannies take classes on healthy emotional development.

When we spend ten to sixty-plus hours with children each week when they are so vulnerable and impressionable, they look to us to learn and develop. We all want them to grow up being solid, happy humans who help foster a better world. I firmly believe this can truly only happen if the caregiver has healthy emotions but also understand how brains and feelings develop. Taking classes and trainings in this will only support them in guiding these little people to be the best versions of themselves they can be.

What do you like best about your job?

The best part about this industry is the children. I love when I see their faces light up because I walked through the door or because they just accomplished something they have been working so hard on. I especially love those smiles that are "just because." Children really are the light of the world. They truly love everyone and everything. They bring me peace and comfort.

Teaching and guiding are a very close second. I absolutely love to educate people on whatever I personally can educate them on. I love educating parents, nannies, and others in our industry. I get excited to answer questions in Facebook groups and help our industry along in any way I can to make it a better one for us all and for years to come.

What do you like least?

The least favorite part of it for me is marketing. Marketing dos and

don'ts change so quickly that I can never keep up with what is needed for this algorithm or that. Transitioning from text to videos has also been challenging. I have been learning to step out of my comfort zone, but this has been the hardest part for me.

What is your educational background?

My educational background is a little eclectic, but it has helped me in this industry in many ways. I have never been the type for traditional learning, although I do love to learn.

After high school, I took a good five years off before heading to community college. I started down this route as I believed this was the best way for me to learn and better myself at the time. I received an associate's degree in business with a concentration in hospitality management along with several certifications in the hotel industry. I enjoy setting up and organizing events and parties, which has served me well in the nanny industry, especially in family's homes when they had parties. But it also has helped me organize International Nanny Training Day over the past five years. I then went off to a local four-year college that specialized in hospitality management and culinary arts. I did not graduate, as life took hold of me at almost thirty years old, and I got married and started that chapter of my life. I nannied all through this time and just continued to do so and never looked back.

It wasn't till I was in my early thirties that I started to really look into ways to educate myself on child development and different ways to support families. Since then, I have done my best to keep abreast of new findings and teachings for all things related to newborns and child development.

How do you give back to the nanny community?

I organized International Nanny Training Day for five years. I have organized other trainings in Massachusetts as well. I have testified before the state senate regarding the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights. My inbox has been and is always open to anyone looking for help and support. I'm always willing to help anyone and everyone, be it for a conference or for a single person. Others who work for a different company than mine, reach out to get their questions answered. I will not turn people away, and I will always recommend what I believe to be the best, be it workshops, trainings, classes, and so forth. The more we can support each other, the better our industry becomes. We can all learn from each other and never turn someone away when someone asks for help or support.

Biggest nanny industry myth?

That all we do is play all day.

What is the one thing you'd like parents who employ nannies to know?

The more you show your nanny appreciation, respect, and understanding, the more they will do for you and, more importantly, for your children.

Anything else you want us to know?

Never stop believing in yourself and in what you have to offer to families. Your special talent, spark, or quirkiness is exactly what that right family is looking for.