

## **Rise of the helicopter nanny as parents hire governesses for their teenagers**

Olivia Rudgard – The Telegraph – 7 August 2017

Mary Poppins famously flew away when her clients had learned their parenting lessons. But for many families - including one of the nation's best-known broadcasters - the nanny now stays on into the children's teens and beyond.

Fiona Bruce has revealed that Clare, her family's nanny, is still employed even though her children are now 15 and 19.

She's one of many high-powered parents who are increasingly hiring nannies to care for their children into their teens.

"Helicopter parents" supervise their child through every stage of life - but some of them now delegate this role to a new breed of supernanny.

The BBC star told the Daily Mail: "I'm working a lot and my husband works a lot, too, and it's really important for me that someone is in the house when Mia comes in from school."

Top agencies say parents who work long hours want someone not just to care for their child, but to help them with their homework, teach them how to behave - and even go to parents' evening for them.

Louise Taylor, of Kensington Nannies said: "I have a client at the moment in north London and her boys are 16 and 12, and she was saying she'd probably need a nanny until the 12-year-old gets to 16 or 17.

"Her job is so pressured, she's got to travel for a week on end, and if there's a parent meeting someone has got to go.

"We see it more with those who don't have extended families which is very common in London because there are so many people here from elsewhere."

An increasing number of families want their nanny to be much more than a daytime carer for young children - for older children, a nanny is expected to be tutor, confidante, PA and governess all rolled into one.

These "Jill-of-all-trades" often become part of the family and stay on well after the traditional nanny's role has ended.

Ruth Reckitt, director of the Elite Nanny Company, said: "I can't recall many cases where there's a stay-at-home mum or one with a part-time job who would have a nanny into their children's teens - it definitely tends to be parents who are either travelling a lot together or dual professional families.

"I would say in the last three to five years we've had more and more requests for children of this age from very busy professional parents.

"The expectation on the nannies and the hours that they want them to do have definitely upped, because they're just so busy.

"With children aged 12 and above, they want someone with a teaching or tutoring background, and some PA skills, so someone who is willing to do not just the children's organising, so swimming lessons and school trips, but also someone who might book flights for the parents or do some background work on places to stay."

Unsurprisingly, traditional nannies often don't have the necessary skills - so former PAs are sought-after by families who expect them to manage everyone's diary.

A practical, resourceful approach is also necessary - the nanny has to be comfortable mopping up teenage tears, checking their charge's homework and dashing to John Lewis for a new microwave.

As a result standards are higher - and the industry is being fed by a steady supply of disaffected teachers from home and abroad, added Ms Taylor.

"We get a lot of Australians and New Zealanders and South Africans who come and do supply teaching, and then think 'this is a bit tough', and in many cases it's a better salary than teaching.

"We also get British teachers - girls and boys who have become disillusioned with the level of paperwork they now have to do," she said.

**Reflection Prompt:**

**What is your reaction to this trend? Can you see the benefits of this sort of arrangement? Explain your thinking.**

**How does the work these modern governesses do compare to the expectations for Jane in *Jane Eyre*?**

Work Cited

Rudgard, Olivia. "Rise of the helicopter nanny as parents hire governesses for their teenagers."

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