

## Finding childcare in summer months

By Kristen J. Duca

With summer right around the corner, it is not too early to think about childcare alternatives, especially considering your busy life doesn't end with the school year.

Nannies and sitters need breaks too, but parent need not fret. Sometimes a little vacation is good for all — the family appreciates the childcare provider more, and the provider realizes her strong bond with the family. Work, social obligations, and activities never stop, so when your child's caretaker needs a well-deserved break from your family, you need to be prepared with arranging backup childcare.

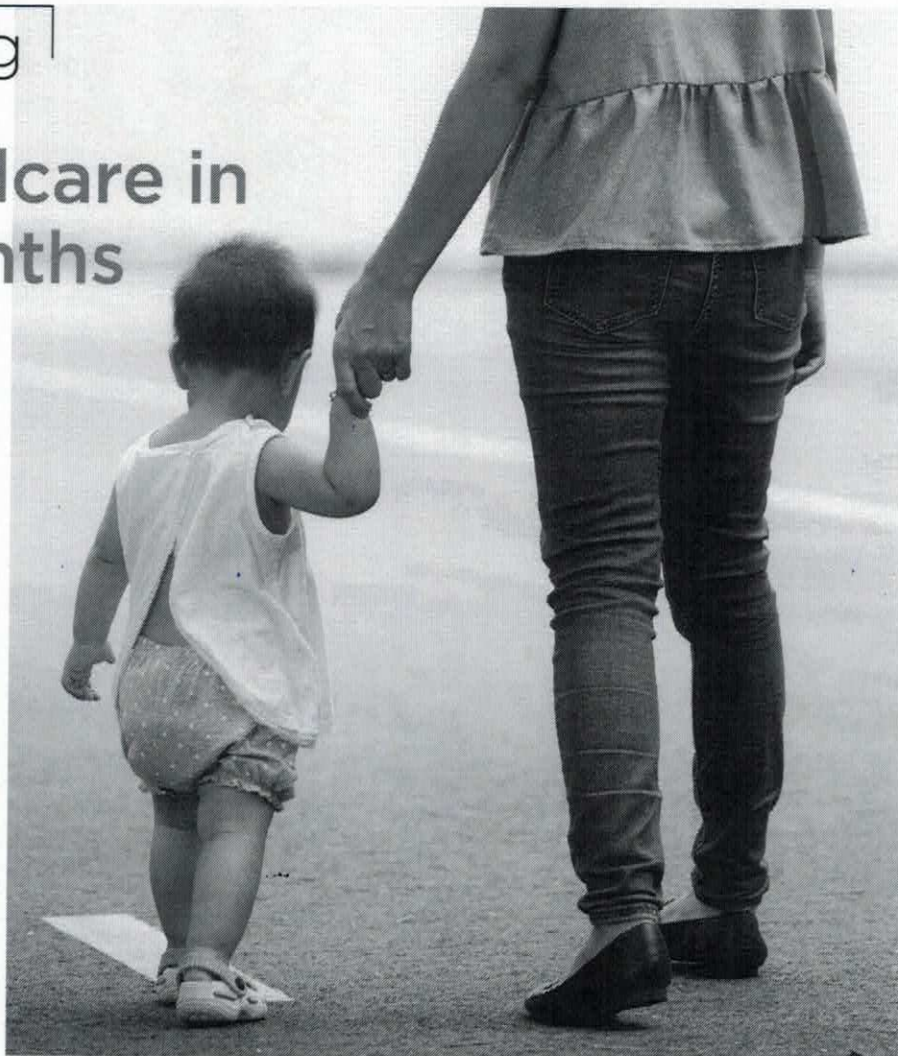
Respect your childcare provider and let her know far in advance (if possible) when you will be on vacation or taking a day off and do not need her to work. Ask her to give you the same courtesy of advance notice regarding the days she needs off. Remember, you and your childcare provider are a team, and if backup childcare is necessary, you need to be prepared.

Some families work with their childcare providers to coordinate vacation schedules, so either limited, or no backup, childcare is needed. Of course, this may be ideal, but not practical in every situation.

Your first thoughts may be "nobody is around" in the summer months, but take a step back, breathe, and tap into your network (that which you have been building since your child was born).

There are myriad childcare options in the summer months for your family to ponder together. These examples below are creative solutions to your summertime childcare needs that will enable your family to continue your routine in a safe, efficient, and seamless manner without disruption:

**1. Family members.** You may not have wanted to hit up grandma or grandpa or your child's favorite aunt during the school year, but summertime is a great season to reach out for extra help from those who share your genes. Keep in mind that it is okay to ask family members for help with your child. But be aware of what assistance you are asking for, and make sure it is reasonable. If a family member does not feel comfortable accepting monetary compensation from you, then find another way to express your gratitude



— possibly with gift cards, event tickets, restaurant certificates, and so on.

**2. School teachers.** Many are looking for extra cash during the summer months and are more than happy to see your children outside the formal classroom setting. Your child will beam when his beloved teacher enters your home. Many times school teachers have flexible summer schedules that enable them to be "on call" for families when babysitting requests arise.

**3. Camp counselors.** These workers who are typically high school or college aged may be able to help with your child during pre-camp drop-off and post-camp pick-up hours. Parents usually structure the time a camp counselor spends with their child by suggesting or putting out a few different play-based activities or projects for them to work on together. Most formal camp programs have already vetted the counselors who work with the children, but it doesn't hurt to further check into their credentials, training, and backgrounds before you reach out to them as possible caretakers for your child.

**4. Nannies of friends.** Take advantage of your friends who leave town in the

summer months by offering their nannies an opportunity to make additional money by working extra hours with your family. Be clear upfront about what you expect the nanny to accomplish each day with your child, as it may vary from what your friend has them do. Typically, a nanny's responsibilities may include assisting your child with feeding or grooming, as well as transporting them to classes, parties, day camps, social functions, and appointments.

Just remember, thinking about your summertime childcare needs starts with you, and it is never too early to plan for your family. A multitude of summertime childcare possibilities exist for you to consider. You are in the driver's seat and can choose the path that best fits your family's needs and remain sane in the process.

*Kristen Duca and her husband are the parents of two girls in New York City. She has worked in the financial services industry for more than two decades. Duca is the author of "Ultimate Nanny: How to Find, Interview, and Manage the Most Important Person You Will Ever Hire – Your Child's Nanny" available on amazon.com. She blogs at ultimatemama.com.*