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# Long Island

## The evolution of nanny surveillance

BY LAUREN TERRAZZANO  
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February 15, 2007

Talk Back: Post a comment

Some parents use cameras, surreptitiously tucked into desk clocks, stuffed animals and houseplants. Others use blogs or affix license plates to their strollers, so passersby can e-mail the plate number to a watchdog Web site if they see any wrongdoing.

In the world of nanny surveillance, technology has evolved in recent years to make it easier for people to to keep an eye on the person who cares for their most precious possessions: their children.

Tuesday's arrest of a North Woodmere nanny after a camera caught her abusive behavior on tape underscores the popularity of such scrutiny. On Long Island, where more two-parent households are working, the need is growing, experts and parents say.

"It would be impossible to have a nanny without it these days," said John Stevens of Jericho, who has used a nanny camera for the past several years. Two years ago, the camera caught his nanny sleeping on the job while she was supposed to be watching his two children, now 3 and 9. She was promptly fired. Using a camera surveillance system from Plainview-based Nanny Check, Stevens said it gives his wife and him peace of mind.

"Nanny surveillance has definitely picked up," said Craig Erkus of Plainview, the company's owner. And not just with camera surveillance.

Jill Starishevsky, a New York City prosecutor of child abuse and sex crimes, founded howsmynanny.com last year

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after she spied two children being ignored by their nanny in a Manhattan park. For \$50, she will send parents a mini license plate they can affix to a baby stroller.

Passersby can log on to her Web site and punch in the plate's code if they see something bad -- or good. She said she believes it's less invasive than a camera, and the business has taken off not only on Long Island, but from Canada to California as well.

A popular blog, isayournanny.blogspot.com, also invites people to report less than stellar behavior by giving a time and a place, even if they don't know the identity of the caregiver.

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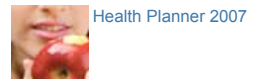
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