Who takes care of your child after your maternity leave?

Description

Infant care, domestic helper or a babysitter?

About 2 months into my maternity leave, my husband and I knew that we needed to start looking at caregiving options that would allow me to go back to work when Nate reached 4 months of age.

As much as I loved spending time with my baby, it didnâ??t make much financial sense for me to stay home and be Nateâ??s full-time caregiver, especially given my earning power. Doing household chores and cooking arenâ??t stuff that I particularly enjoy, either. So for those reasons, we decided it would be better to engage external help.

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Most Singaporean parents usually opt for either one of 4 choices:

1. Send their child to infant care
2. Get grandparents to look after
3. Hire a stay-in domestic helper
4. Hire (or send) their child to a nanny / babysitter

We deliberated over the different options for quite some time and these were our main concerns:

	Costs (monthly)	Remarks
Grandparents	$0	May hinder babyâ??s English language development May not do as much educational activities Will be extremely tiring for them, given their age No social interaction with other babies
Infant care	$900 â?? $1,800 (*after working mother subsidy)*	Falls sick often May need to take leave to look after when sick Must rush down after work to pick up baby Need to still do night duties (less energy for work the next day)
Domestic helper	$580 â?? $700	Not sure if trustworthy, may ill-treat baby in our absence Baby might become overly clingy to the helper No social interaction with other babies Will have to live with a stranger in our house
Babysitter	$800 â?? $1,200	Not sure if trustworthy, may ill-treat baby in our absence May not do much educational activities

*Accurate as of August 2019. Other online articles that I had initially read quoted lower prices, but I did not manage to find such low rates when I enquired directly with the various infant care centres near us, several babysitters and maid agencies. Note that for domestic helpers, $580 usually refers to fresh hires with little to no experience, based on current market rates.

Obviously, each option had its pros and cons.

All of our grandparents are working, except my dad (whoâ??s too old and sickly to take care of Nate, anyway), so the first option was simply not a choice we could make. The babysitter contacts that we had were all not available to take care of Nate, so we were down to choosing between infant care or a domestic helper.

In the end, we chose the latter.

When we considered the money involved, the costs of an affordable infant care centre vs. hiring a domestic helper worked out to be almost the same. There was, however, one big difference.

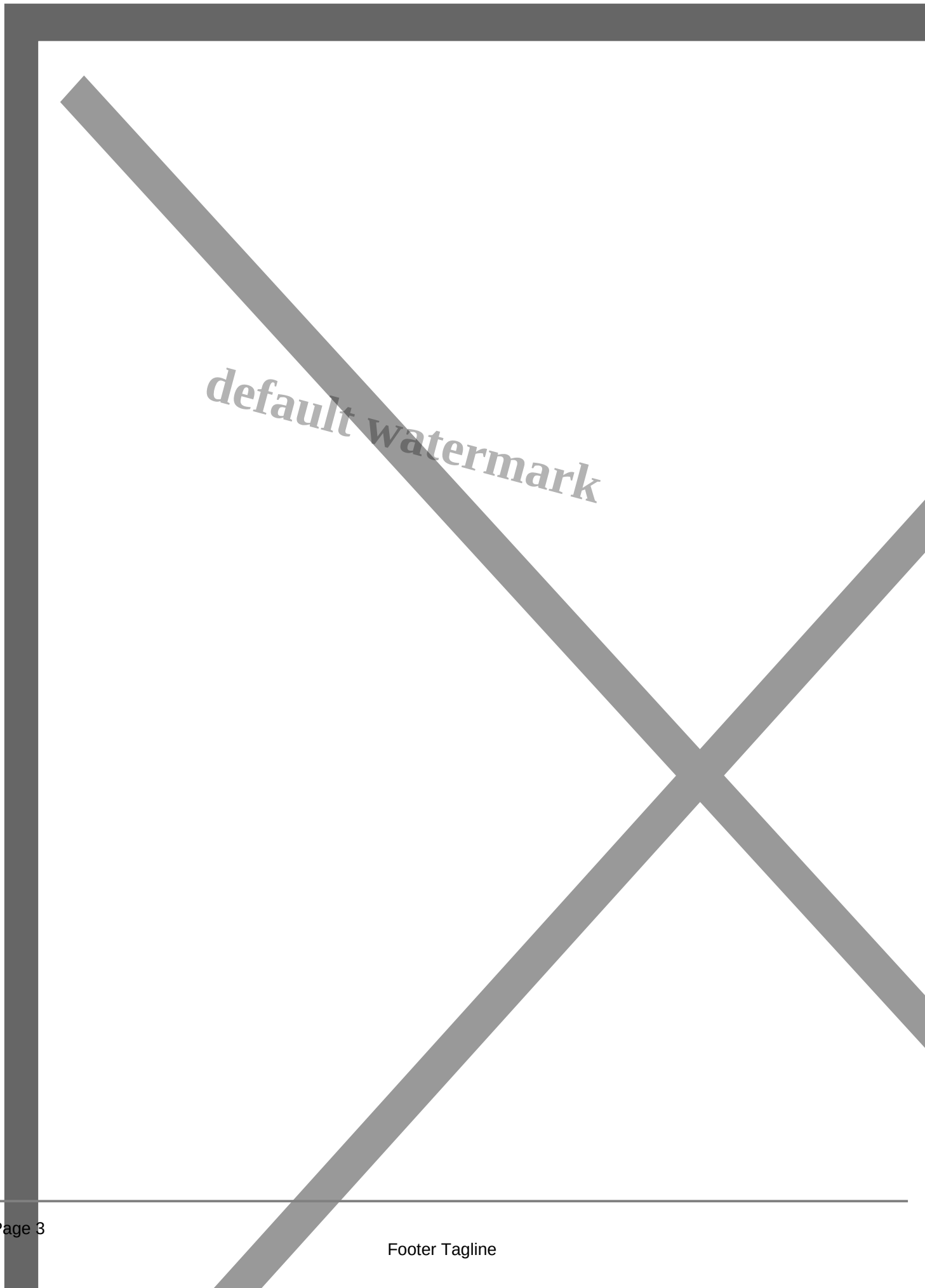
With infant care, we would need to not only take care of Nate at night *(which means I needed to stop teaching tuition as a side gig, since my husband works till 11pm),* but also potentially take leave from work to look after him when he falls ill.

On the contrary, if we could hire a good helper and entrust Nate in her care, we would be able to:

- Expose him to someone who speaks good English
- Get her to read books to Nate, and go through other educational activities planned by me
- Go out to work and earn more income
- Have someone cook healthy meals for Nate
- No longer have to worry about doing household chores after work and on weekends

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As such, the choice was clear, and we hired a Filippino helper through an agency. It doesnâ??t really matter which agency you use (just avoid the ones with numerous bad reviews online), as itâ??ll be more important to interview several shortlisted helpers before you find a suitable match. In our case, we approached 4 agencies and obtained 8 helper profiles, selected 3 to interview, and that was how we found our current helper.


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Nate is always happy whenever â??Auntyâ?• is arou
It has been about 5 months since our helper joined us, and it has reaffirmed our decision that hiring her was the best decision weâ??ve made for Nate thus far. Not only is she experienced, it is clear that she genuinely loves spending time with our baby; they are always having lots of fun and laughter together!
In terms of costs, weâ??re currently paying this every month:

- $700 salary
- $60 MOM levy
- $200 for marketing and food expenses

This $960 spent is the highest line expenditure in our household thus far, but it is worth every single cent as it has freed up our time and energy to go to work and grow our income.
What caregiving option did you choose and why? Let me know in the comments below!

With love,
Dawn

Category

1. Family
2. Pregnancy

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