

# Now it's Manny Poppins



***Manny about the house***

**Sarah Ebner** meets the parents who prefer a shot of testosterone to a spoonful of sugar

- 1 She may still be a great nanny in the West End musical, but it appears that Mary Poppins is actually out of fashion. According to those in the know, the woman who was 'practically perfect in every way' has a rival: the manny.
- 2 If you've never heard the term, you're a few steps behind in the childcare stakes. For the ignorant, author Holly Peterson is here to shed some light on the issue. As one of the characters in her new book, suitably named *The Manny*, explains: 'It's a manny. M for male nanny. Think of it as the older brother we all dreamt of, but with the patience only money can buy.'
- 3 Peterson first heard about mannies soon after having her third child. She felt that her son, Jack, then three, was being 'squashed' by spending days with his older and younger sisters, as well as his mother and nanny.
- 4 Now it appears that mannies are all the rage and the attractions seem obvious. It's not so much a spoonful of sugar as a shot of testosterone around the house. Mannies play happily in the garden for hours, and seem genuinely interested in sports, *Lord of the Rings*, *Spider-Man* and snails.
- 5 "Boys play differently to women," says Peterson, 42. "The nanny is more of a comforter, while the manny is a 'throw me across the room' kind of guy. They fool around, play football and are happy to run around and around the park. I thought Jack would really benefit from it and he has."
- 6 They may sound like a perfect playmate for any sons you may

have, but what about the girls?  
Peterson thinks a male role model is good for them too. "Mannies have a different attitude," she says. "They see situations in another way."

7 Peterson's book is certainly being published at the right time, as mannies have become increasingly popular in Britain. My Big Buddy, an agency specialising in male nannies ([www.mybigbuddy.com](http://www.mybigbuddy.com)), was recently launched in London. And Gumtree ([www.gumtree.com](http://www.gumtree.com)), a website used by working parents to look for childcare, reports that searches for 'male' or 'male nanny' have gone up sevenfold in the past few months.

8 With increasing numbers of single parents, as well as older fathers who might struggle to run around a football pitch, mannies may well fill a gap. But one recent survey suggested another reason for the rising demand. In an apparent blow against sisterhood, almost 80 per cent of mothers admitted that they felt threatened by attractive female nannies, while 94 per cent said they would consider a male nanny instead.

9 Craig Smith, 20, works as a nanny for Alison and Michael Goff in Sevenoaks, Kent. Craig looks after the Goffs' three sons, from three to ten years old. "I couldn't imagine doing the same thing every day," says Smith, who explains that he always wanted to work with children. "Every day is different and really

rewarding too." Smith describes his three charges as 'sporty and boisterous' and much of his time is spent in joining them in different sports activities. He plays 'a lot' of football with all three, but he also attends mother and toddler clubs with the youngest.

10 "My friends are builders, carpenters and electricians. They laughed their heads off when I told them what I was going to do. But when I say that I've been playing in the garden, they're a bit jealous."

11 He is sure that he got the job because the children are boys, but Alison Goff insists that's not true. "People assume that because I have boys, I wanted a male nanny, but he was the best person I interviewed," she says. "I admit I've been surprised to see how the kids are happier with him, perhaps because he loves the rough and tumble and is physically fit and active. If you have three boys, it's no good having someone who wants to plait hair and paint fingernails."

12 Holly Peterson would agree. Then again, she seems to have it all – the book deal, the investment banker husband, and even a nanny and a nanny. But for those of us in the real world, choosing the perfect child-carer might never be the same again.

*The Manny* by Holly Peterson (HarperCollins) is available for £10 plus £1.25 p&p. To order, call Telegraph Books on 0870 428 4112.

- 1p 10 What was Holly Peterson's **main** reason for hiring a manny according to paragraphs 2 and 3?
- A She followed the advice of her older brother who already had a manny.
  - B She needed a real-life example for a character in her book.
  - C She thought her son needed more male company.
  - D She wanted to follow the latest trend.
- 2p 11 Geef van elk van de volgende beweringen aan of deze juist of onjuist is volgens de alinea's 4 tot en met 6.  
*Omcirkel achter elk nummer 'juist' of 'onjuist' in je uitwerkbijlage.*
- 1 'Mannies' gaan vaak wat te wild met kinderen om.
  - 2 Het lijkt duidelijk waarom 'mannies' opeens zo in de mode zijn.
  - 3 Meisjes hebben meer aan een 'nanny' dan aan een 'manny'.
  - 4 'Mannies' willen alleen maar spelen met de kinderen en zijn daardoor minder geschikt dan 'nannies'.
- 1p 12 Which of the following is **not true** according to paragraphs 7 and 8?
- A Mannies are a great addition to families without a dad.
  - B Mannies tend to make older dads have doubts about themselves.
  - C Traditionally, people preferred nannies to mannies.
  - D Women often see a manny as a good alternative to a beautiful nanny.
- 1p 13 Welk deel van de zin in alinea 9 geeft aan dat Craig Smith niet alleen maar 'jongensdingen' doet met de kinderen in zijn oppasgezin?  
*Citeer (= schrijf over uit de tekst) dit deel van de zin in je uitwerkbijlage.*
- 1p 14 According to paragraph 10, what was the **first** reaction of Craig Smith's friends when they heard about his new job?  
They were
- A extremely disappointed.
  - B highly amused.
  - C quite envious.
  - D rather amazed.
- 1p 15 Why did Alison Goff decide to employ Craig Smith in the first place, according to paragraph 11?  
She chose him because
- A her children preferred him to the others.
  - B he was recommended to her by other people.
  - C she had only boys in her household.
  - D she thought he was the most suitable candidate.

---

#### Bronvermelding

Een opsomming van de in dit examen gebruikte bronnen, zoals teksten en afbeeldingen, is te vinden in het bij dit examen behorende correctievoorschrift, dat na afloop van het examen wordt gepubliceerd.