

# Nannygate: real or nonsense? <sup>[1]</sup>

Letters to the Editor

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## EXCERPTS

**Re: 'Nannygate' is a sad excuse for a political scandal, Opinion Dec. 4**

'Nannygate' is a sad excuse for a political scandal, Opinion Dec. 4

How can Kate Jaimet ramble on for a half-page and not even touch on the real issue?

It's not about the household rules. It's not about taxpayer's money or what other CEOs make. It's not about what Pierre Trudeau or Brian Mulroney or Stephen Harper did. It's about Justin Trudeau's clear and often-stated mantra that wealthy people — like himself and Harper — don't need financial support to raise their children.

Adding fuel to the fire is the Liberal theme of "making the rich pay a little more."

Call it hypocrisy, bad optics or just plain bad judgment, but "Nannygate" could have been nipped in the bud by immediately chalking it up to an administrative oversight. That would have presented Trudeau with the opportunity to re-enforce his high-minded electoral parlance by saying, "Like I've said repeatedly — the wealthy do not need financial help in raising their children."

Instead, his issues management team, like Kate Jaimet herself, has perpetuated "Nannygate" and helped to feed the narrative that arrogance and entitlement lurks beneath the Trudeau veneer.

*-Don Mustill, Markham*

Your editorial wasted a half page over nothing. The new PM would gladly pay for nanny expenses. It's not his decision to bind future PM's. Save your ink for something important.

E.J. Hutchison, Toronto

I absolutely agree with Kate Jaimet's article. Child care is much more important than a good chef, or any other household chore. And nannies should definitely be paid more. As a society we tend to downgrade the value and importance of this job, and thus it is poorly paid.

Society also tends to complain when educators ask for better pay or working conditions, yet these requests make education better for students as well as teachers. We say we value our children above all else, yet society regular complains, devalues, and obstructs the work involved in raising happy, healthy, intelligent, kind adults.

*-Fernanda Caranfa, Woodbridge*

It is certainly possible to justify Mr. Trudeau's decision on the child care issue. But you really have to jump through some convoluted hoops to claim that Mr. Trudeau's motivation is to "oblige Canadians to consider how much support is required to make high public office possible for women and men with young families or for single parents."

It is more likely that Mr. Trudeau felt entitled to charge the cost to the taxpayer in the same way that he felt entitled to charge fees for charitable speaking engagements.

*-Jonathan Household, Niagara on the Lake*

Trudeau has enormous responsibilities. Why do we carp about paying for the caretakers of his children? The amount of travelling he and his wife face demands that we pay for lessening any stress we can for them in their daily lives. He deserves our support. The sniping from

Conservatives about this is no surprise. It demeans them.

*-June Conway Beeby, Kingston*

Since “Nannygate” involving our new First Family, numerous articles written by generally partisan newspapers have argued themselves into a tizzy, mentioning such variables as the extraordinary responsibilities of the prime minister’s household, the controversial role of the stay-at-home spouse, the Trudeaus’ decision to have two instead of just one caregiver (as if somehow, principle could be justifiably or unjustifiably violated by the degree of transgression), comparison to similar childcare supplements enjoyed, with great public outcry, by past premiers (it’s okay to be unprincipled, as long as you are not alone), and the latest (and my personal favourite) – that personal perks of the PM can rightly be extracted from the public policy that he himself has created.

Quite frankly, it appears to me that all of these convoluted arguments can be clarified by a few simple “yes or no” questions.

1. Did Justin Trudeau say that he would take childcare benefits out of the hands of the rich and into the hands of the poor? Yes.
2. Were his comments qualified by considering the subjective “busy-ness” or the “gravity of professional responsibilities” of the families implicated? No.
3. Do the Trudeaus have responsibilities that are arguably of greater importance than most Canadians? Probably. Ok - yes.
4. Are the Trudeaus unable or ill-equipped to pay for their own childcare which they need? No. (In other words, they are not poor).
5. Therefore, should the Trudeaus pay for their own childcare? Yes (whether it be one or two nannies, no matter what deceptive, alternate name you give them).
6. Should Canadians Care? I do.

And as for your editorial’s distinction between “public policy” and “personal perks” in attempt to justify Trudeau’s hypocrisy (which, in your editorial’s confounding opinion, is not hypocrisy if you put it that way), has Canadian governance been now reduced to this?

I am scarily reminded of George Orwell’s scathing political allegory, *Animal Farm*: “All animals are created equal. But some animals are more equal than others.”

*-Carol Lee Kim, Aurora*

Prime Minister Trudeau obviously understands the costs involved in freeing up his and his wife’s time to devote to his work. I don’t begrudge the fact that he gets the added benefit of nanny costs.

He should, however, apply that knowledge to help Canada’s working families, who need the government to contribute from the public purse to create actual child care places at reasonable cost. Giving cash to certain families does not provide child care places.

As well, he should amend the Income Tax Act to allow working parents to claim all their child care costs as a tax-deductible expense – child care costs are an essential cost of earning income. With so many parents in the work force, it is long past time to review public policy affecting them.

*-Linda Silver Dranoff, Toronto*

Let’s hold on a second before we call Trudeau’s tax-funded nannies a move for women. I agree that all parents find childcare a major obstacle in achieving their financial and career dreams (such as a wannabe female PM). That’s why we need a universal system.

But what’s changed under Justin? His female nannies still can’t send their children to university on \$13 an hour. A feminist PM would know that childcare is worth every cent that other federal workers earn.

Probably more. Let’s start at \$28 an hour.

*-Stephen Stadelmann, Toronto*

We all new that it wouldn’t take Justin long to belly up to the taxpayer’s trough, but never thought it would be this soon. Funny how, before the election, the wealthier class didn’t need to be subsidized by the less fortunate, but after the election the Prime Minister forgot what he said. What else is going to slip his memory?

*-Jim Wannamaker, Belleville*

I hopefully assume that these two nannies are Canadian citizens. If not, why couldn’t two Canadians be found, to be on the “public dime.”

*-John Purvis, Colborne*

So who is supposed to be taking care of young children when Trudeau and his wife Sophie are representing us (Canadians), meeting the likes of Queen Elizabeth?

Let us please be more realistic over this issue.

-Mimi Khan, Toronto

C'mon folks, let's get our priorities straight. Why doesn't the media scream as loudly over the doubling of the Conservative's battleship building contract from \$15 billion to \$30 billion as they are over the prime minister's nanny expenses?

-Al Yolles, Toronto

-reprinted from Toronto Star

**Region:** Canada <sup>[2]</sup>

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