"They are not my children to post": Examining Non-Parental Sharenting Practices in In-Home Childcare

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Abstract

Taking and sharing photos is a common aspect of caregiving, often used to document and share the care-recipient's milestones. Although extensively studied in the context of 'sharenting', where parents share photos of their children, these practices also extend to other caregivers, including paid professionals such as nannies and babysitters. Despite the prevalence of photo taking and sharing, there remains a limited understanding of the complexities and dynamics of these behaviors within professional caregiving contexts. Examining these practices is essential to understanding the unique privacy implications of non-parental figures taking and sharing photos of children. We conducted 15 semi-structured interviews with parents and in-home childcare workers in the U.S. to explore how they perceive caregivers' taking and sharing photos of children in their care. Our findings reveal misalignment and limited negotiations among parents and childcare workers regarding taking and sharing photos–exacerbated by underlying assumptions, power imbalances, and blurred personal-professional boundaries. These dynamics significantly shape these practices, and result in internal turmoils among both parents and childcare workers. We conclude with implications and recommendations for future research for fostering better communication and sanctions in context of non-parental sharenting.

1 Introduction

Taking and sharing photos of children is central to modern caregiving; it allows preserving precious memories [18, 35], documenting childhood milestones [4, 24, 34], and nurturing social connections [10, 68]. Yet these practices pose significant risks to children's privacy and digital safety. Prior research has primarily examined photography practices within the context of 'sharenting', where parents share photos of their children. These studies have explored how parents document and share memories to support record-keeping of children's milestones [34, 35]. Various studies have examined parental motivations around sharenting [36, 48, 65], and the impact of such sharing on children [38, 69].

Although parents have been the focus of prior work, there is growing recognition that *non-parental* caregivers—grandparents, educators, coaches, babysitters, and other trusted adults—take and share photos of children in their care, too [6]. Acknowledging the diverse ways in which these digital practices could manifest raises critical concerns about the online safety of children under the supervision of individuals other than their parents. Often, these individuals are caregivers within the child's social circle, such as extended family members or friends. Some studies have explored these socially-connected caregivers' practices around taking and sharing photos of children; for example, grandparents' sharenting habits, which they dub "grandsharenting" [51, 62, 63].

Other times, however, photography and sharing practices involve *professional caregivers*, like nannies, babysitters, teachers, camp counselors, or coaches, who provide care in a formal or employment capacity. As an example, a recent study shed light on sharenting practices among elementary school teachers [22]. However, there remains a limited understanding of these practices within professional caregiving contexts—particularly the motivations, norms, privacy concerns, and interpersonal negotiations involved when professional caregivers take and share photos of children they care for. Beyond protecting children's privacy, further exploration of this topic will shed light on nuanced dynamics between parents, professional caregivers, and children—particularly, how their interests, autonomy, and concerns around taking and sharing photos intersect and co-exist.

In this paper, we aim to investigate the norms and impli-

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cations of taking and sharing photos in professional caregiving contexts. Specifically, we study the context of in-home childcare workers, as they occupy a unique position—while their relationships with children and employer can be deeply personal and intimate, they are also employed professionals, creating a blurred boundary between social and professional contexts. Thus, we ask:

- What are the practices and underlying motivations around taking and sharing photos within in-home childcare?
- How do parents and in-home childcare providers navigate privacy boundaries and preferences around taking and sharing photos of children in their care?
- What challenges and tensions emerge from these practices, impacting the privacy and autonomy of those involved?

To answer these, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 15 participants: 8 parents and 7 in-home childcare providers in the U.S. Our findings reveal a misalignment between parents and childcare workers regarding each other's perspectives on sharenting practices. While some sought to mitigate this through limited communication and inexplicit negotiations, underlying assumptions and significant power imbalances complicated the situation for most of our participants. Additionally, we found that the blurred boundaries within childcare work became particularly pronounced around taking, sharing, and management of photos, leading to internal conflicts among both parents and childcare workers.

Our contributions are three-fold: (1) We re-conceptualize sharenting as a broader continuum of practices, focusing on who does it (professional caregivers) and how it is carried out (taking, sharing, and managing photos); (2) We offer empirical understanding of privacy negotiations across stakeholders within professional sharenting contexts; and (3) We offer recommendations for designing technologies to foster transparent communication around emerging issues related to children's digital safety.

2 Background & Related Work

We review literature on pervasive photography, photography and sharenting, and collaborative privacy decision-making.

Privacy and Pervasive Photography. The rise of digital photography, combined with the ease of sharing photos online, has significantly changed how individuals document and share their lives. As these practices become pervasive, concerns around privacy have subsequently increased [20, 56, 61, 66]. Prior studies have examined perceptions, concerns, and privacy management in the context of pervasive photography across a wide range of users from teenagers, young adults, to older adults [15, 56]. Besides individual preferences, studies have also investigated shared privacy expectations surrounding photos [31, 49, 57, 66]. Rashidi et al. investigated how college students navigate privacy concerns related to being photographed and shared online [56].

Pervasive photography often leads to conflicts that arise when privacy boundaries are violated or tested [50, 56, 57, 66]. Prior research has thus examined the privacy protection workarounds and sanctions in case of privacy conflicts and turbulence [56, 57]. Common techniques include direct sanctions, like verbal confrontations, and indirect and invisible sanctions to maintain strong-tie relationships while managing privacy boundaries [57, 58, 62]. While these studies offer a comprehensive view of privacy management in the context of pervasive photography, they address a broader audience. Our study specifically focuses on children, recognizing that their limited agency and understanding of digital privacy places the responsibility of managing their digital footprints on their parents and other trusted caregivers.

Photography and Online Sharenting. Digital photography has become integral to modern caregiving, with parents increasingly documenting children's milestones [34] and everyday activities [33, 35]. Digital tools like KidCam and BabySteps have been designed to support parents in record-keeping of their children's milestones [33, 35, 67]. Beyond photography, *sharenting*—the practice of sharing photos, videos, or other information about one's child on social media—has been widely studied. A research study found that 82% of parents engage in sharenting [17]. They share for various reasons, including seeking community support [10, 18, 24, 36, 48], archiving memories and milestones [4, 36, 48], showcasing their parental identity [4, 16, 48], discussing challenges [18], and advocating for child-related causes [64, 65]. Despite its benefits, sharenting also poses significant risks to children, both online and offline. Minkus et al. highlighted the potential for identity theft, noting how children's sensitive information could be exploited when combined with other public records [46]. Additionally, sharing embarrassing content could result in offline harms such as bullying [5, 53, 64]. While some forms of sharenting are accepted, others are more contentious, with parents varying in their approaches—some engaging freely, others practicing mindful sharenting, and some actively opposing it [65, 72]. On the other hand, children, as they grow older, express discomfort with sharenting—with embarrassment being a primary concern [38].

Sharenting Beyond Parents. While much of the existing literature on sharenting focuses on parents, the practice extends to other caregivers. A recent article expanded the definition of sharenting to include non-parental caregivers such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, educators, and coaches, highlighting that sharenting is not solely a parental practice, but one that involves a wider circle of caregivers [6]. In particular, studies have focused on the role of grandparents in sharenting, also referred to as "grandsharenting." Prior work has documented behaviors such as creating social media profiles for grandchildren [62] or "unknowingly" sharing baby bump photos, ultrasounds, and birth announcements [32, 73]. Staes et al.

found that grandparents' engage in sharenting to inform others about their grandchildren's development, confirming their role as grandparents, and express pride [51, 62]. However, these practices can create inter-generational tensions as these may conflict with parents' established norms [43, 62]. The issue of consent manifolds in grandsharenting with added questions around ownership [32, 43, 62]. As children grow, their involvement in digital decisions further complicates these dynamics [43, 62]. Besides grandparents, studies have examined sharenting by other caregivers such as teachers [22, 41]. Cino and Vandini [22] found that parents often experience discomfort and a loss of control when teachers share their children's images, since they lie outside the family. This highlights an understudied topic: how parents navigate sharenting behaviors by those outside immediate family. In our work, we extend this understanding by examining sharenting in professional caregiving, through the case of in-home childcare providers.

Collaborative Privacy Decision-Making. Privacy concerns extend beyond the individual, often emerging within groups, organizations, and communities [9, 21, 31, 45, 74, 75]. Navigating privacy in these settings is challenging, requiring a balance of diverse, often conflicting needs due to misaligned individual and collective privacy expectations. Lincoln et al. highlighted tensions between the desire for autonomous decision-making and the interdependent demands in co-owned data [42]. These tensions particularly surface within interpersonal relationships. Akter et al. showed how developmental changes within adolescents, power imbalances and conflicts within family values, introduce additional layers of complexity, advocating for family-centered approaches to support parent-teen collaboration on privacy [2].

Beyond personal relationships, privacy conflicts can also occur in organizational settings due to different governance structures, and broader tensions around power, control, and distribution of responsibility [8]. Negotiation emerges as a critical mechanism for addressing these conflicts [9, 57]. Prior work has examined human-led negotiations and sanctions in case of multi-party privacy conflicts. Rashidi et al. highlight how individuals engage in both direct and indirect negotiations—for instance, explicit verbal agreements to set rules for co-owned data, while non-verbal cues for unspoken expectations [57, 58]. Scholars have designed digital tools to help facilitate collaborative privacy decision-making [3, 21, 59, 70]. Niksirat et al. designed a mediator chatbot that encourages consent collection, enables users to explain their points of view, and proposes solutions to finding a middle ground [59]. We draw on these to investigate the unique privacy-related expectations, challenges, and negotiations in the inherently-collaborative context of professional caregiving.

3 Methods

Our qualitative study, took place between June-Oct 2024 in the U.S. We sought to develop an understanding of prevalent norms, perceptions, and negotiations that occur between parents and in-home childcare providers regarding taking and sharing photos of children in their care.

Study Recruitment. We recruited (1) in-home childcare workers including nannies and babysitters (CWs) and (2) parents who have hired in-home childcare workers (past or present). We advertised our study on Facebook, X, LinkedIn, and via our personal and professional networks. Interested individuals completed a screening survey that inquired about their role and perspectives on taking and sharing photos of children in in-home childcare settings. Eligible participants were then contacted via email to schedule interviews. We stopped recruitment once cross-cutting themes emerged across both parents and CWs, and no new insights emerged.

Participants. We interviewed 15 participants: 8 parents and 7 in-home childcare workers, all based in urban areas across the US. Parent participants were women ages 31–43 with 1–3 children; CW participants included 5 women and 2 men ages 23–41 with 4-20 years as nannies or babysitters. See appendix for detailed participant demographics (Appendix A.1). Because CWs drew on experiences across multiple families over the years, their accounts referenced children of many ages rather than a single child at a fixed age, from infancy to preteen years. As a result, we inferred children's developmental capacities contextually from parents' and CWs' anecdotes of how children expressed, or did not express, their preferences around photo-taking.

Semi-Structured Interviews. Interviews each lasted approximately 45 minutes and were conducted over Zoom. Parent interviews centered around their social media use, childcare worker taking and sharing photos, and privacy negotiations and broader expectations. CW interviews covered their responsibilities, taking photos as part of work, sharing practices, and how these have been discussed or negotiated at their workplace. The complete set of interview questionnaires can be found in Appendix A.2. We conducted pilot interview with 2 participants (1 parent, 1 CW) to refine our protocol. These pilot interviews yielded rich data, and thus were included in our final analysis.

Data Analysis. With participant's permission, we collected approximately $\sim$14 hours of audio recordings and detailed notes from 15 semi-structured interviews, which were anonymized and transcribed. We analyzed the data using reflexive thematic analysis [12, 19], following an iterative, inductive approach. The first author coded all transcripts, and the research team met regularly to review codes, resolve disagreements, and refine the codebook collaboratively. We conducted multiple rounds of open coding, rigorously discussing

and refining codes such as "inexplicit conversations," "nanny contracts," "conversational consent," and "transient nature of childcare work." These were then clustered into overarching themes, including "taking photos as a form of work," "overlaps between personal and professional lives," and "different sharing modalities." We ensured analytic rigor and trustworthiness through iterative team discussions, memoing, and reflexive writing.

Ethics Statement. This study was approved by our University's Institutional Review Board. We obtained informed consent prior to participation, and revisited consent throughout the study to support ongoing, voluntary participation. Given the sensitive nature of discussing workplace and family photo-sharing practices, we minimized risk by (1) intentionally not recruiting parent–CWs from the same caregiving relationship, (2) allowing participants full autonomy over what details they shared, and (3) anonymizing transcripts and removing any identifying details. All collected data were stored securely on university server. Participants received a $25 USD Amazon gift card for their participation.

Limitations. Our findings are not intended to be generalizable but offer in-depth, contextual insights. While we interviewed a relatively small sample (n=15), our analysis prioritized meaning sufficiency—focusing on analytic richness over rigid saturation thresholds [13]. Prior work suggests that while saturation may occur around 12 participants, recurring patterns often emerge with as few as six [25]. Moreover, rather than aiming for within-group saturation, our goal was to surface cross-cutting patterns across both parents and CWs, which our combined sample of 15 participants adequately achieved. Lastly, we did not interview children, as our RQs focused on parent' and CWs' practices. Lastly, while children's influence on these practices surfaced in interviews, understanding children's perspectives warrants further investigation.

4 Findings

Our study uncovers rich insights into non-parental sharenting behaviors that occur in childcare-settings. We present four key findings: precursors to sharenting (i.e., photography) (§ 4.1), sharenting behaviors beyond social media (§ 4.2), norm establishment and negotiations (§ 4.3), and blurred boundaries that complicate non-parental sharenting (§ 4.4).

4.1 Precursors to Sharenting

While sharenting mostly focuses on the sharing of children's photos, understanding practices leading up to it is important because they shape what ultimately gets shared, by whom, and under what conditions. Our interviews revealed that photography is a common practice within in-home childcare for diverse reasons. While seemingly informal, these practices often amount to additional work for CWs, creating potential tensions with their routine caregiving responsibilities.

Photo-Taking Practices. The act of taking photos is deeply integrated into the daily caregiving routines of in-home CWs.

Capturing memorable moments: Aligned with prior work on parental sharenting, we found that photography serves many similar purposes for in-home CWs—such as documenting important milestones and preserving the everyday moments that hold sentimental value. Several CWs recalled taking group pictures during spontaneous moments as a way to capture the connections they had formed with the children. CW4 said they take pictures *"They have lots of pets and I bring my dog to work too. So if we're having a cute, cuddly moment together, I'll take a selfie together."*

Parents' request: While some CWs take photos out of their own habit and keen-ness, many do so at parents' requests, and sometimes even at the children's request. Both parents and CWs noted that parents love receiving photos of their children, especially when they are doing something fun. These feelings stem from a sense of guilt within parents around missing out on important moments of their children's lives.

Particularly for younger children, the act of photography also coincides with developmental milestones, making these practices more important and meaningful. This is particularly true for CWs providing care for younger children, who are likely to witness important milestones, such as a child's first crawl, first steps, or first experience with solid foods. CW1 emphasized the importance of documenting these milestones, as they are not just important to parents, but also personally rewarding for the caregivers to witness. She said, *"I would take more pictures of kids that were a lot younger...The baby that I cared for specifically, she was hitting really awesome, like cool-to-watch milestones that time."*

Shared understanding of appropriateness: Given that photography is a pervasive practice within childcare, most of the CWs have developed a shared understanding of what moments are appropriate to capture and which are considered off-limits. For instance, capturing children in their vulnerable moments—either undressed or while in crisis—is specifically thought of as inappropriate. Despite this shared understanding, a few of the parents recalled a past instance where their nanny took inappropriate pictures and shared it with them. Specifically, P1 said, *"Once a friend babysat my kids, she took pictures of them when they were in the tub naked together [...] I was surprised that she took those pictures–even though it was just for me, and it was not on social media, it was weird."*

Photography as Labor. For many CWs, taking photos extends beyond capturing fun moments—it becomes a form of labor shaped by parents' explicit expectations.

Explicit documentation expectations: We found that some parents request CWs to not only take spontaneous and candid pictures, but also task them with daily requests to document

children's activities that could facilitate the creation of photographic compilations. CW5 shared,

> "The mom explained that she does photobooks of children to show their development and activities. She directly asked me to take a photo of her children each day and send it to her [...] I try to take a picture of each of them every day. I then text it to her." (CW5)

In some cases, the responsibility extends further, with CWs themselves being asked to create physical photobooks, as described by CW6: *"I have a photo book of summer '20 with the kids, and it's mostly all the pictures I took and then some pictures that the parents took of me with the kids."*

Explicit digital archiving expectations: Beyond physical documentation, we found that some CWs are also expected to maintain digital systems for archiving and sharing these photos. While many simply text the images, some parents require them to navigate more complex digital documentation organization systems, such as shared albums or dedicated photo-specific email accounts. CW7 shared his experience of using Apple Photos for documentation: *"I've tried to make albums. I have an Apple phone, so it connects their faces. I've tried to make an album to share with their parents, but it just takes so much time and I get distracted. I haven't really come up with a good situation."* Despite the extensive efforts and time involved in creating and maintaining these archives, the work is often invisible and goes unacknowledged as labor. Parents, too, find themselves struggling to keep up with this documentation. P1 reflected on the challenges, saying, *"In the day-to-day business of being a mom, I never had the time to archive things... I wish when she stopped being our nanny, I would have gotten the photos."* Despite this, CWs are expected to perform this invisible labor without any additional compensation or consideration for the time it requires.

Balancing Photo-taking Labor with Childcare Work. CWs frequently share photos as a way to provide updates to parents, but this practice increasingly takes on a form of surveillance of the CW.

Creating an atmosphere of surveillance of the CW: Parents often request regular photo updates to stay informed about their children's activities during the day. As CW6 mentioned, *"Generally at the start of employment they'll ask me to send them pictures and updates throughout the day."* This expectation goes beyond simple communication; it establishes a routine where photo-sharing becomes intertwined with how care work is monitored. P5 described, *"It was common for her to take pictures of the children during the day and send it to us through a messaging app."* Some care platforms unintentionally reinforce this surveillance dynamic by requiring photos to be uploaded within a specific timeframe of the babysitter starting their duty. CW3 recalled,

> "When I first moved here, I worked for a company called Poppy; it was basically like Uber for nannying. Those jobs specifically told us to take a picture within the first 30 minutes and send it to the parents. So I feel like that is when I got in the habit of doing that." (CW3)

Documentation as proof of work: This form of imposed surveillance redefines what is seen as the "right way" to perform caregiving—normalizing the need for real-time updates. CWs internalize these expectations, often feeling compelled to take and send photos frequently, regardless of whether it is requested in their current positions. The pressure to continuously provide photo updates also leads to stress, as CW6 noted, *"I honestly worry about not sending them. I get anxious and I worry that parents think that I'm slacking off or not doing a good job for the day."* This feeling of needing to prove their involvement through photos subtly transforms caregiving into a task where documentation plays a central role in evaluating their performance.

Documentation as self-affirmation: While the practice is framed as a way to reassure parents, it also serves as a way through which workers begin to derive validation. CW2 shared, *"Usually, they send a heart emoji, a thank you, or they say they appreciate what I do...it's very rewarding."* This feedback loop reinforces the idea that regular photo-sharing is not just about communication but also a way for CWs to affirm their value to employers, eventually shifting how care work is performed and monitored.

Tension between phone use and childcare work: Additionally, the expectation to take photos also creates a tension around phone use in childcare work, which is typically discouraged or deemed as unprofessional. Yet workers find themselves needing to use their phones frequently to click photos, a dilemma CW3 recalled navigating:

> "I didn't wanna use my phone at work whatsoever, but the kid was dressed up in her little princess dress and really wanted me to take her picture. And it's not appropriate to be on your phone, but at the same time... let's take a picture of the little princess we got here. Eventually I just learned to double check with the parents before I take the picture." (CW3)

We also saw how parents often set conflicting messages around phone use, discouraging it in principle but expecting regular photo updates. As P5 pointed out, *"I do say it'd be great if you're not using your phone a lot... but if you need to reach us, you can text us."* In some cases, parents go as far as providing CWs with new phones specifically to ensure higher-quality photos. CW1 shared, *"She (nanny friend) didn't have a great phone, so they wanted to help her out with that... so they could get nice pictures in return."* This adds an additional layer of pressure, as workers are now not only responsible for

documenting the children's activities, but also balancing their phone use with expectations around photo quality alongside their routine caregiving duties.

4.2 Privacy Implications of Different Sharing Modalities

Our findings reveal that the ongoing discourse around "sharenting" has led to a shift in perceptions and attitudes among parents. While sharenting is often discussed in relation to social media, we found that it manifests through diverse forms of visibility, persistence, and recipient control—each carrying distinct privacy implications in non-parental contexts.

Evolving Perceptions of Sharenting. Sharenting among parents is a socially-constructed and learned practice.

Norms and expectations to sharent: Many parents feel compelled to share photos of their children on social media because it seems like an expected norm. P7 mentioned creating Facebook accounts for her children, explaining *"I thought I had to do that—it was part of being a parent, documenting your kids' pictures."* This sense of obligation to "sharent" is particularly felt by first-time parents, whose sharenting practices are heavily influenced by observing other parents and experienced caregivers. P1 reflected,

> "I am a mom, I should be a person with all of the power. [My nanny] knew more about babies than I knew—I was a first time parent, she knew more than I did. If she took pictures of my kids all the time and this was my first time having a kid, there's a little bit of that power, you know? You assume everything they do is kinda normal." (P1)

Awareness of sharenting harms: We also observed growing criticism around sharenting. Many parents, reflecting on their past practices, shared they were less mindful of the risks involved in sharing their children's images online. This shift in perspective and negative media discourse has even led some parents to go back and delete all photos of their children from social media. P2 shared,

> "I came across a documentary which was regarding how kids images are used on trafficking websites... the effect of that documentary was quite strong. So the existing photographs that I had of her...I deleted all of that." (P2)

Consequently, some parents have become overtly cautious, avoiding public photography or sharing images of their children altogether. While some withheld consent for daycare providers to take or release photos, others recalled requesting bystanders to delete unintended photos of their children. CWs shared similar views, seeing public social media sharing as something to avoid.

Diverse Sharing Behaviors. We observed diverse types of sharenting happening within childcare work. These sharenting behaviors are determined by factors such as visibility, persistence, trust, and control over what gets shared, as well as the provider's relationship with the parents (Table 1).

Level of Visibility: CWs share photos of children both privately and publicly. *Private sharing* is the most common approach, involving controlled and restricted audiences. This takes two forms: individual sharing, like sending a child's photo directly to a friend through private messaging, and group sharing, such as posting in a private family group. Parents generally feel more at ease with individual private sharing, especially when they know the recipient. *Public sharing*, on the other hand, involves sharing content with a broader unrestricted audience–such as public Facebook group or Instagram account. Aligned with prior studies, both parents and CWs view public sharing as inappropriate, citing concerns around identity theft and misuse for training algorithms.

Level of Persistence: Persistence is another key factor shaping CW's perceptions and behaviors around sharing. *Persistent sharing*–where photos remain accessible until manually removed (such as posts on Facebook and Instagram)–is met with greater apprehension from parents, likely influenced by growing concerns around social media. In contrast, *non-persistent sharing*, where content disappears after a set number of watches or a period of time (e.g., Instagram stories, BeReal), is seen as a safer mode of sharing. These platforms provide higher privacy controls, as CW1 noted: *"I could see if someone took a screenshot of it, I was in control of who could see it and because it expired after 24 hours."* We observed that non-persistent sharing is particularly common among younger CWs, such as high school or college students.

Mode of Sharing: Our findings revealed three distinct methods of sharing. The most common is *direct sharing*, where photos are sent directly to recipients–transferring to their device through text messaging. Another common approach is *display-only sharing*, where content is shown in-person on the owner's device without actual transfer. Some CWs adopt this as a precautionary measure, accepting it as akin to face-to-face interactions. More concerning, however, is *secondary sharing*, where photos are re-distributed after initial sharing. This includes forwarding photos to others, publicly or privately. Parents are particularly wary about this, as it indicates a loss of control over their child's photos.

Recipient: Another factor shaping CWs' sharing behaviors is parents' familiarity with the recipient. Sharing photos with *known recipients*—someone the parents were familiar with—is generally met with greater comfort, especially when their social circles overlap with the CWs. In contrast, sharing with *unknown recipients*—those unfamiliar to the the parents—raises significant concerns. Parents express an increased sense of discomfort, largely due to the perceived lack of control when the recipient falls outside their trusted social network.

Category	Type	Description	Examples	Risk
Visibility	Private	Shared with a limited, controlled audience.	Private messages, group chats (e.g., WhatsApp).	Low
	Public	Accessible to a broad, unrestricted audience.	Public Facebook posts, open Instagram accounts.	High
Persistence	Persistent	Content is available until manually removed.	Facebook or Instagram posts.	High
	Non-persistent	Disappears automatically after a set time.	Instagram Stories, Snapchat, BeReal.	Low
Mode of Sharing	Direct	Actively sent to specific recipients.	Text messages, social media DMs.	Medium
	Display-only	Shown without transferring ownership.	Showing photos on a phone without sharing files.	Low
	Secondary	Content shared beyond its original recipient.	Forwarding received photos.	High
Recipient	Known	The sender is familiar with the recipient.	Sharing within trusted circles (family, friends).	Low
	Unknown	The recipient is not known to the sender.	Sharing in public forums or with strangers.	High

Table 1: **Dimensions of Non-Parental Sharenting and Associated Privacy Risks.** The assigned risk levels are indicative of typical patterns observed in our data; In practice, privacy risks are shaped by how these dimensions interact. For instance, public sharing with unknown recipients and persistent visibility poses higher privacy risks than direct sharing with known individuals.

4.3 Norm Establishment and Negotiations

Given the different ways photo-taking and sharing manifest in in-home childcare, parents and CWs must collaboratively set privacy norms for these practices. Establishing these in professional in-home childcare is a complex process shaped by indirect exchanges, unspoken understandings, and quiet negotiations. Although parents often hold clear expectations, they are hesitant to articulate them directly to CWs, instead relying on subtle cues and informal negotiation strategies. We now explore the negotiation strategies used by both parents and CWs, examine the factors behind these communication gaps, and highlight how children themselves shape these practices.

Explicit Negotiations. Privacy negotiations between parents and CWs occur through both explicit and implicit interactions, with the latter being more prevalent. We begin by discussing instances of explicit communication and negotiations, then turn to the more common subtle, implicit exchanges that shape practices around taking and sharing photos.

Employment contracts: Parents and CWs rarely engage in discussions around taking and sharing photos. When they do, they do so primarily through employment contracts. Reading through the contract for her previous role, CW1 shared, *"There was a confidentiality clause and a social media clause... it says the nanny understands no photos of the employer, their dependents, or any person in association with the employer shall be allowed to be shared on any social media."* Here, we see that the contract frames digital privacy narrowly–limiting it to the act of sharing, overlooking concerns around photo-taking completely. Even within sharing, its scope remains limited to social media, ignoring other sharing channels. Some contracts also consider other forms of PII, as CW6 noted: *"There's a social media clause that says I won't share plans for the day, information about location and pictures of the kids on any social media without prior approval from the family."*

When asked about contract creation, most participants described using generic narrowly-scoped templates available online—with only minor modifications to suit their needs. Notably, even sample contracts provided by the U.S. Department of Labor primarily address social-media sharing [52]. While social media guidelines are present in contracts, they are rarely reiterated or emphasized upon while hiring. Only a few CWs recalled parents initiating discussions on social media sharing. In practice, these contracts serve as flexible rather than strict guidelines. For instance, CW4 shared that despite having a "no social media sharing policy" in contract, the employer later allowed it. Thus, as parent-CW relationships deepen, the initial contractual boundaries often soften, demonstrating that the mere presence of these guidelines does not dictate how they are applied in practice.

CWs establishing boundaries: Besides formal contracts, approaches to setting boundaries around taking and sharing photos vary widely. While most parents didn't recall having explicit conversations about photo-sharing early on, a few nannies recalled taking the initiative to ask how parents wanted updates and in what form. CW5, a seasoned nanny, described asking for permission on the first day. She said, *"I try to establish boundaries beforehand. After doing this for so long, you just know what to ask for during the interview."*

Implicit Negotiations. While social media sharing guidelines are included in employment contracts, specific expectations around taking and sharing photos are rarely explicitly discussed, leaving these conversations to unfold informally.

Subtle cues: CWs often rely on subtle cues from parents to gauge their preferences. A parent expressed their stance indirectly to CW7, saying, *"You know? We don't post a lot. You can, but we don't post a lot"*. Similarly, CW6 highlighted the vague and implicit nature of these conversations, saying, *"I've talked about it with parents, like social media generally before, and they've shared that they personally don't really share images of their children online."* Thus, CWs develop an understanding of these unspoken boundaries gradually, not through contracts but through experiences. This ambiguity may lead workers to interpret permissions within what they

described as **"umbrella of permissions."** One CW, for instance, explained that although she has general approval to share on social media, she hasn't explicitly sought permission to share photos privately with her own family:

> "I have had permission from their parents to share them on social media and I feel like sending a text message to my mom is so much drastically...less than that. Like, it's not social media, but I'm still sharing it to someone—but it's only one person, whereas anyone could see it on social media. So I feel like it's under the umbrella of permission that they've given me, but I haven't explicitly said, 'Can I send this photo to my mom,' and maybe I should." (CW3)

Pre-screening profiles of CWs: While navigating these ambiguous privacy boundaries, parents and CWs use alternative methods to gauge a sense of each other's preferences. Some parents take the initiative of "vetting" CWs' social media profiles before hiring. This informal pre-screening allows them to gauge the worker's general social media sharing habits and see if they align with their preferences. Similarly, the CWs also browse through their employer's social media to gauge their usage patterns. CW3 said, *"I just try to be mindful coz the mom doesn't post anything on social media intentionally. So I try to be mindful that not everyone wants everything posted on social media."*. Parents also consider CWs' broader personal values and perspectives on childcare, seeking individuals whose values aligned with theirs. P5 explained that trust is built less through explicit guidelines and more through understanding the worker's care philosophy, saying, *"It's more about getting to know them and... their values."*

Courtesy notification of sharing: A few CWs casually inform their employers after sharing photos within their own social circles. CW2 noted, *"I make sure the parents see the picture first. After I've shown it to my mom, I follow up with the parents to let them know I shared it with them...I've never had any issues. I try to be really conscious of keeping kids private."* These are mostly instances where the recipients knew the employer well and the CW skips seeking permission. Overall, it was common for CWs to take silence or familiarity as a sign of implicit approval—what one CW also described as an "umbrella of permissions." These might be too expansive and go what beyond what parents might deem appropriate. However, such silent misalignments might surface and reveal severe privacy turbulence in case something goes wrong.

Reasons for Limited Negotiations. Our findings highlighted several factors contributing to the limited negotiations between parents and CWs around photo-taking and sharing.

Shared assumptions: A key reason is the assumption held by parents. As P2 put it, *"I think they're not allowed."* As many parents hire CWs who have previously worked in daycare centers, they assume the CWs are already trained to not share photos of children. As P5 described,

> "I knew that they had done background checks. I knew that they had really strict standards about how they interact with children. I trusted the process and training they had been through. And the standards at the childcare center would influence how they would care for children in the home. I think also because I'd known them for a long time personally, through the childcare centers, I felt comfortable." (P5)

Trust: Moreover, parents often trust their CWs more if they came through prior daycare or longstanding personal connections. As P8 shared, *"One [of our babysitters] is a close family friend, so I know their parents very well, and I've known this child since they were younger."* Prior familiarity fosters greater trust in their values and behaviors, with parents assuming they would act appropriately without the need for explicit guidelines.

Social barriers: The people-pleasing nature in childcare industry also makes it harder for both parents and CWs to explicitly discuss any strenuous or sensitive topics. As P6 explained,

> "Childcare workers are such a precious commodity <laugh> that you want your childcare workers to be happy. And I also think there's kind of a culture of indirectness. A lot of people here aren't very direct. So I think it's a combination of those things, at least from the parenting side, of why someone might not be really direct or verbalize what they want." (P6)

CWs are similarly anxious about the possibility of disappointing their employers. Building a good relationship with employers is a core tenet, leading CWs to avoid any controversial discussions. Moreover, in-home childcare work sometimes operates in an "under-the-table" setting, limiting employers' agency in imposing conditions or rules. P2 shared,

> "It was almost like a cash job or like a job under trust. I have friends who hired official nannies that were charging much higher...like a full-time, 40hr job. I think they had more contracts and documents that were associated with photography and things like that. So those are more official nannies. This was more a one-off, I didn't have any conversations." (P2)

Such unique working conditions often reverse power imbalances, making parents hesitant to impose rules or set clear privacy boundaries. Overlapping social circles and longstanding connections further blur personal-professional boundaries, fostering an understanding built on unaddressed assumptions. CW5 shared, *"My employers are pretty relaxed...they know my mom...so I feel like they would be okay with it, but it isn't something that I've explicitly asked them."* Intimacy, thus, leads to blurred boundaries and tensions in seeking consent, similar to the dynamics of grandsharenting [32, 43, 62].

Negotiations with Children. While much of the privacy negotiations around taking and sharing photos occur between

parents and CWs, we found that children are sometimes involved in these discussions as well.

Obtaining consent: Many parents emphasized the importance of obtaining children's permission before taking their photos. They view it as their responsibility to safeguard their child's privacy until they are developmentally capable of understanding consent. At the same time, some parents described actively teaching their children about consent by modeling it in everyday interactions, including when taking photos. As a result, seeking consent from children often takes the form of *conversational consent*–an informal yet intentional practice of asking for permission, while also explaining the act and intent behind taking a photo. P5 shared an example,

> "I'll say, may I take a picture of this to send to your grandparent? We are having more conversations about... is it okay if I do this or send the picture to so and so."(P5)

P3 added, *"And if she'll say, no, I don't want my picture taken, I respect that."* Such type of verbal negotiation also reflects an attempt towards instilling agency in children over their digital activity. For CWs, similar negotiations are at play. Many acknowledged that while they have not been mindful of seeking children's consent in the past, they have grown more intentional over time. CW3 reflected on this: *"Around picture-taking, I try to be more thoughtful about it. I mean, now I would ask a three-year-old to take their picture, but I wasn't really thinking about those things before."* Here, we see that negotiating consent with children is more of an evolving, conversational practice. Some CWs also noted that younger children often showed limited understanding around photo-taking and sharing. For instance, CW1 recollected, *"They never questioned who I was sending it to... they were too young to care."*

Child-initiating sharenting: These negotiations aren't limited to adults seeking consent; interestingly, children also initiate requests to be photographed. CW2 shared a memory from an older caregiving relationship, saying, *"they (the kid) looked over my shoulder and wanted me to put a filter on their face."* In another example, CW3 recalled, *"The first year I started nannying, I had the sassiest little three-year-old. She was like, 'Ms. [name], take a picture of me,' and she just posed and did the diva hand. I was like, okay, I'll take a picture."* While some saw these moments as harmless, others questioned the implications of fulfilling the child's request. Thus, children are not always passive subjects in photo-taking but could be active participants who sometimes initiate these practices, requiring CWs to navigate yet another layer of negotiation. The relationships CWs share with children also greatly impact their comfort in taking these photos.

Growing developmental understandings: Many CWs noted that their level of comfort with taking children's photos changes over time, particularly as they grow older. CW4 said, *"When they were younger, I would whip out my phone and take a picture of a cute moment. But now, I ask them first if I can take their picture to send to their parents."* This shift often emerged once children started voicing refusal or expressing discomfort. For instance, CW2 described one of the children as *"very private... he doesn't love having his photo taken."* Therefore, privacy negotiations around photo-taking and sharing extend to children and are rarely straightforward. Instead, they unfold in small, everyday moments shaped by children's own desires, boundaries, and a developing sense of what privacy means to them. Additionally, these accounts show that children are not full negotiating actors in the way parents or CWs are; their role is much more *emergent and evolving*—shown through acts of requests, refusal, and moments when they are too young to even understand being photographed.

4.4 Boundary Crossings And Overlaps

The blurred lines between personal and professional roles in in-home childcare require CWs to navigate complex decisions around managing the photos they take. We will now discuss how CWs handle photo management and deletion, navigate tensions around overlapping ownership of memories, and balance personal autonomy with privacy considerations.

Management and Deletion of Photos.

Unstructured management: For many CWs, managing photos they take of children in their care is an unstructured process. While some photos are shared with parents and then deleted, others linger on the CWs' devices indefinitely. As CW1 explained, *"I would text 'em to their parents and then sometimes delete them, and sometimes they would stay not for any particular reason, but that I just didn't get around to deleting them."* Thus, there is no universal strategy to managing these photos—some keep them for sentimental reasons, others out of convenience, and many simply have no defined approach. Additionally, these photos serve as fleeting reminders of their time with the children, offering moments of nostalgia. CW2 noted, *"I haven't devised a way of handling them... I just have them in my gallery and I go to them whenever I feel like I wanna laugh or wanna feel good."* Certain photos carry deeper emotional meaning than others, as CW2 further reflected, *"I have some special ones that I've kept for long."*

Deletion of photos: Some CWs tie their retention of photos to their period of employment, almost treating deletion as part of the transition out of a family's life. In an extreme scenario, CW6 recalled:

> "When I resigned, I was ordered to delete every photo I had ever taken of the children. So I had to go back over five years of work, through every device that I'd had over that time and delete every single photo of the children that I had taken... you spend years taking care of a child, and then suddenly it's like you were never in their life." (CW6)

This indicates parents' assertion of ownership over the photo management and deletion, despite the meaning it held for the worker. For other CWs, deletion is a personal choice rather than an imposed requirement. The act of deletion is not just about management, but it also signifies a closure–almost reinforcing the transient nature of their role in the child's life. Moreover, we observed that parents rarely articulate their expectations around photo management. Many assumed that the photos would eventually be "forgotten" or "deleted,"

> "I guess I sort of assume that they would lose interest in the photos and it would just get lost in their stored photos somewhere. And maybe they would look at it 10 years later and think, oh, they were so cute and little, but I don't think that they would be using it actively." (P5)

Assumptions like the one above reveals a disconnect—while parents view these digital traces as passive and insignificant, they carried a deeper meaning for CWs—these were traces of their labor, relationships, and memories. Thus, the absence of explicit guidelines around photo management leads CWs to navigate unspoken expectation around erasure on their own.

Memory Ownership and Personal Expression. For many CWs, caregiving is more than just a job—it weaves into their personal lives. As a result, documenting through photos isn't solely about the children, but also about capturing moments that reflect their own memories and lived experiences.

Blurred sense of ownership: This overlap of personal and professional spheres sometimes leads to blurred ownership of memories. CW3 recalled,

> "I threw a birthday party for my dog and I invited all the kids. So I took pictures of the kids playing with my dog and posted an album on my Facebook profile...That was like my personal moment, and my way of sharing pictures with everyone who went to the party...It's not like trying to use the kids' content, I was just trying to document." (CW3)

Here, what might seem like an overstep of professional boundaries was, in reality, a reflection of the blurred social-spheres of CWs and the employer families. CW1 similarly described how her birthday often coincided with her summer babysitting gigs, meaning she received birthday gifts from the children she cared for: *"Some kids would make me really cute gifts... I would take them home, put them in my little memory bin. Pictures of them with the gifts or of the actual gifts felt more like...for me 'cause it's about me, I guess."*

Documenting and sharing as a way of life: For some CWs, taking and sharing photos is an instinctive and a core part of their lives, rather than a deliberate act of privacy boundary crossing. P1 reflected on their nanny's habit around taking photos, *"My nanny loved being photographed–she took a lot of pictures of her life, so it was natural for her to take pictures of my kids."* For others, sharing glimpses of their life serves as a way to stay connected with their friends or family.

Negotiating privacy boundaries: Yet some experienced nannies practice this with extra caution and a consideration for the family's and child's privacy boundaries, as CW5 said, *"I don't share photos of the children. I've shared photos of the dog at work, garden at work, but I never show or share anything that is something where people can discern where I work or who I work for or compromises the privacy or the safety of the family."* Similarly, recognizing these complexities, some CWs intentionally seek alternative ways to preserve memories while respecting boundaries—e.g., non-visual ways, such as journaling memories instead of taking photos. Others practice selective digital sharing, avoiding identifiable details while still engaging in their own memory-keeping. CW6 recalled,

> "We went strawberry picking once. I took a picture of a big box of freshly picked strawberries and posted it, but no information about where we had picked or who I had gone with. So I think that's probably as close as I would get to the intersection...There's never any defining features or information that could affect the safety of the family." (CW6)

Here, we see an intentional negotiation of privacy boundaries. Rather than forgoing personal documentation entirely, many CWs find alternative ways to preserve their experiences without compromising children or family's privacy.

5 Discussion

Our study offers insights into the evolving landscape of digital documentation in caregiving contexts. Photo-taking and sharing in non-parental contexts go beyond simple documentation, reflecting deeper dynamics around labor, privacy, and power. We re-conceptualize sharenting as a broad continuum, explore the emerging role of children in privacy negotiations, and discuss ways to foster transparent communication around photo-taking and sharing in non-parental contexts.

Re-Conceptualizing Sharenting. Sharenting has been traditionally understood as a narrowly-scoped phenomenon: the sharing of children's photos on social media by their parents [10, 17, 39]. While this framing has been instrumental in highlighting children's online privacy and safety risks [7], it oversimplifies what is, in reality, is much more complex.

Sharenting as a continuum: Sharenting is not a singular act, but rather a broad, multifaceted practice that unfolds across a continuum. It begins with photography, progresses through private sharing, and sometimes extends to public sharing, with various other practices (e.g., public non-persistent sharing, display-only sharing) unfolding between these stages. Importantly, sharenting extends beyond parents, and when professional caregivers engage in it, blurred personal-professional

boundaries further complicate these distinctions. Viewing sharenting as a continuum shifts focus from public sharing alone to the entire lifecycle of a photo [56]. At the start, the act of taking a photo—often dismissed as trivial or harmless—already raises critical questions about consent and ownership in non-parental contexts. When that photo is shared, it may be shared in myriad ways, with varying modalities, levels of visibility, levels of persistence, or recipients.

Conceptualizing sharenting this way challenges traditional privacy perceptions in sharenting—e.g., the idea that private and ephemeral sharing are less risky than public and persistent sharing, respectively [11]. Public sharing may feel less intrusive if it is ephemeral, whereas even private sharing can lead to unintended consequences when the recipients forward or store indefinitely. Going further, our findings reveal that even types of sharing not typically seen as "sharing" constitute these practices. For instance, display-only sharing, where photos are shown but not transferred, was perceived to be safer by some as it does not involve transfer of control. Thus, sharenting should not be narrowly defined by public social media sharing but seen as a continuum of practices that could unfold in diverse contexts. Researchers must use this broader lens to examine the range of sharenting behaviors that unfold and their associated privacy risks.

Dual loss of control: The risks associated with sharenting—loss of control and issues of consent—become particularly pronounced when non-parental caregivers sharent. Here, the loss of control occurs at a dual level, felt both by parents and children [22]. Our study unveiled that power imbalances between parents and CWs, along with the lack of explicit guidelines around photo-taking and sharing in caregiving contexts, complicate non-parental sharenting risks and practices.

Future implications: Further study is needed on non-parental sharenting behaviors and their consequences on both parents and children. HCI and usable security & privacy (S&P) researchers should examine sharenting practices within diverse non-parental contexts. For instance, future research could ask: What formal policies and informal practices exist in childcare institutions for photographing and sharing children's images? On the policy side, emerging legislation around sharenting has till date been centered on parents and/or legal guardians [40]. There is an opportunity to expand the way legislators approach sharenting to ensure digital safety and protection in case of non-parental sharenting. For example, legislation should address what happens if non-parental caregivers monetize sharenting with or without consent [44]. Finally, our findings also directly speak to existing childcare photo-sharing platforms (e.g., FamilyAlbum, TinyBeans, PhotoCircle). These systems need to account not only for parents but also for CWs who may be an integral part of a child's life. Platforms could add features that let parents grant, adjust, or revoke CWs' access, enable parents and CWs to jointly reflect on shared photos, and introduce reflection nudges that help families surface and incorporate children's own preferences around how their photos are taken or used.

The Role of Children in Privacy Negotiations. Children's autonomy and agency are increasingly recognized as critical factors in discussions about privacy and consent [27, 28]. Although much of the existing work on sharenting focuses on parental decision-making, our findings highlight that children actively participate in privacy negotiations. While adolescents and teens often disapprove of parents engaging in sharenting [29, 38, 53], the perceptions of younger children—especially those lacking the developmental capacity to fully grasp privacy implications—remain understudied.

Conversational consent. A key finding was the practice of *conversational consent*. This boundary-regulation practice not only respects children's emerging autonomy, but also models consent as an essential social practice. Parents and CWs adapt their consent-seeking behaviors based on children's developmental capacities [71]—as children evolve from relying on their parents for privacy mediation to independently asserting their needs [26]. Moreover, contextual factors such as the setting of a photo, the child's relationship with the photographer, and the child's personality also complicate these negotiations. Ethical and legal frameworks concerning children typically differentiate between *consent*—implying full understanding and voluntary agreement—and *assent*, which reflects a child's affirmative participation without full comprehension [26]. We argue that conversational consent occupies an intermediary space between the two, creating opportunities for gradual autonomy and active learning. It offers children the space to explore, reflect, and construct their own understanding over time [47, 54]. Future research could investigate alternate methods for seeking and communicating digital consent beyond verbal negotiation. For instance, how might visual, interactive consent-seeking mechanisms be designed to better align with children's cognitive abilities? Integrating such methods into school curricula may offer a promising approach to cultivating digital consent literacy. Yet this process is complicated by the structural inequalities embedded in the household. Children may model authority and consent through hierarchal dynamics they observe, learning privilege as parents unilaterally manage photo-taking with CWs [37]. Thus, we argue that their emerging agency doesn't unfold in isolation, but within both personal privacy preferences and class-based power relations. At the same time, our findings highlight unresolved tensions between children's rights to privacy and CWs' interest in memory-keeping—conflicts that conversational consent alone cannot resolve.

Children as emerging stakeholders. Our findings also point to the role of children in privacy negotiations in caregiving contexts. While parents and CWs carry most of the formal responsibility, children influence these practices in more emergent ways. Parents often act as gatekeepers to their child's digital identity, sometimes delegating these decisions to the

CWs or involving the child to varying degrees. In contrast, CWs navigate overlapping personal-professional boundaries, along with balancing their personal autonomy with parental expectations. Finally, children, as they developmentally mature, shift from heavy reliance on adults to active participation in privacy-related decision making—through spontaneous refusals, enthusiastic posing, or requests. While this points towards a three-party negotiation, our findings primarily capture negotiations between parents and CWs, with children's emerging influence within these negotiations. Children's informed consent in sharenting contexts remains an unresolved issue, with no clear threshold age for when children can meaningfully agree to having their images shared [65]. In line with this, our participants did not point to specific ages, but instead relied on contextual cues about children's maturity, their relationship with the adult, and the specific situation when deciding whether and how to involve children in decisions. Future research should investigate the explicit role children play, how these three-party negotiations unfold as children's developmental agency evolves, and how children could be more actively involved in these privacy negotiations.

Rethinking Contracts and Improving Communication. Our findings reveal that traditional approaches to managing privacy boundaries surrounding photo-taking and sharing fail to capture the evolving complexities of in-home childcare.

Re-imagining contracts: Both formal contracts and informal verbal-understandings are typically established at the outset, before mutual trust develops. Yet as relationships evolve, so too do expectations around taking and sharing photos, rendering these one-time agreements increasingly misaligned. We propose re-imagining these contracts as living documents [1], revisited regularly to reflect evolving trust, privacy boundaries, and even children's developing agency. Approaches similar to dynamic consent models [14] could be used for initiating regular conversations around consent. Additionally, instead of framing consent agreements primarily as restrictive measures, we urge to view these as mechanisms for collaborative boundary-setting between parents and caregivers.

Fostering difficult conversations: Privacy negotiations in caregiving were often constrained by the discomfort surrounding these conversations. Power imbalances, the people-pleasing nature of childcare work, and the intimacy made it difficult for both parents and CWs. As a result, privacy expectations remain assumed and unarticulated, resulting in internal turmoils when these unspoken norms are violated. Future research could explore digital interventions to scaffold these often-uncomfortable conversations—that facilitate structured, effective ways to navigate privacy expectations. One possibility is envisioning technology as a mediator [59, 60], akin to a relationship counselor. In this, technology could act as the "enforcer" [30], introducing prompts or nudges that externalize this negotiation process. Similarly, care platforms or agencies could serve as intermediaries, integrating consent and boundary-setting tools in hiring and onboarding processes to ensure that privacy expectations are explicitly discussed.

Designing for temporal boundaries: Lastly, we identified challenges around the management of photos, particularly once a caregiving role ends. Parents often assume that CWs will delete photos once employment ends, while CWs may keep them for sentimental reasons. Drawing on similar work on romantic partnerships [23, 55], future research in HCI and usable S&P could explore ways to design for temporal privacy boundaries in parent–CW relationships. What happens to digital artifacts after a caregiver leaves? Designing for such temporal boundaries could involve structured offboarding processes, co-managed digital archives, or leveraging alternative forms of memory preservation beyond photos and videos.

6 Conclusion

Our study challenges the conventional understanding of sharenting, revealing that it extends beyond parents and unfolds across a continuum of practices. Through 15 interviews with parents and in-home childcare workers, we show how photography is woven into caregiving—not just to capture milestones and memories, but also as an additional labor and an implicit surveillance tool. In non-parental contexts, sharenting takes many forms—photography, private sharing, public sharing, and various other practices in between. Yet privacy norms remain largely unspoken, shaped by subtle cues, assumptions, and quiet negotiations rather than clear agreements. Children, too, sometimes assert their own agency, further complicating these dynamics. With no explicit guidelines on photo-taking and management and blurred personal-professional boundaries, childcare workers are required to navigate shifting parental expectations while balancing their work, autonomy, and sense of self.

Our findings call for a broader conversation on sharenting—one that moves beyond parents to recognize the role of non-parental caregivers. We make three key contributions. First, we reframe sharenting as a continuum of practices, not just about who engages in it but how it takes shape in daily caregiving. Second, we show how children are not passive subjects but active participants, influencing the often unspoken, negotiations between parents and caregivers. Third, we offer concrete recommendations for re-imagining contracts and designing policies and technologies that bring transparency to these negotiations while addressing the temporal boundaries of professional caregiving. We hope this work sparks conversations about non-parental sharenting—a complex, multi-faceted practice—one that not only introduces unique risks to children's digital safety, but also demands centering the experiences and autonomy of those who engage in it.

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A Appendix

A.1 Participant Demographics

See Table 2 and Table 3.

A.2 Interview Questionnaires

A.2.1 Interview Questionnaire for Parents

1. Which gender do you identify with, and what are your preferred pronouns?

ID	Gender	Age	Race	# Children
P1	Woman	39	Pacific Islander	2
P2	Woman	35	Asian	1
P3	Woman	35	White	2
P4	Woman	34	White	2
P5	Woman	43	White	2
P6	Woman	33	White	3
P7	Woman	31	White	2
P8	Woman	41	White	2

Table 2: Detailed Demographics of Parent Participants

ID	Gender	Age	Race	Exp	Role
CW1	Woman	23	White	7	Ex-nanny
CW2	Man	33	African American	4	Babysitter
CW3	Woman	29	White	7	Nanny
CW4	Woman	31	White	5	Nanny
CW5	Woman	41	White	20	Nanny
CW6	Woman	33	White	6	Ex-nanny
CW7	Man	33	African American	5	Nanny

Table 3: Detailed Demographics of CW Participants

2. How old are you?
3. What is your race or ethnicity?
4. Where are you currently located?
5. Do you have children? If so, how many, and what are their ages?
6. Could you describe how social media fits into your daily life?
7. Do you share photos or videos about your child within your social circle? (e.g. with family and friends)
8. Do you share photos or videos about your child on social media?
9. Do you have any privacy concerns when posting about your child on social media?
10. Have you ever hired an in-home childcare provider such as a nanny, babysitter, or au pair for your child?
11. How comfortable are you with your childcare worker(s) taking photos or videos of your child?
12. How comfortable are you with childcare workers storing photos or videos of your child on their personal devices?
13. Do you have any specific rules or expectations regarding how childcare workers should handle photos or videos of your child on their personal devices?
14. Have there been any instances where the childcare provider shared photos/videos of your child with someone outside your family? (e.g., with their family members, with their friends, etc.)
15. What types of content do you find acceptable for childcare providers to share about your child with someone outside your family?
16. Have there been any instances (that you're aware of) where the childcare provider shared photos/videos of your child for professional purposes?
17. Can you recall a situation where you found yourself in disagreement with the content posted by your childcare workers or discovered content that had been posted by them without informing you?
18. Has your childcare worker ever posted about your child on social media?
19. How comfortable are you with your childcare worker sharing photos or information about your child online? With whom? If not, why?
20. Are you connected with your childcare provider on any social media platform? Where? And in what capacity?
21. Can you recall a situation where you found yourself in disagreement with the content posted by your childcare workers or discovered content that had been posted by them without informing you?
22. What rules or guidelines would you expect your childcare worker to follow while taking photos or videos of your child?
23. How did you communicate/discuss rules around sharing of your child's photos/videos with someone outside your family with your childcare worker?
24. How did you communicate/discuss rules around social media sharing with your childcare worker?
25. How does your childcare worker typically inform you regarding their sharing activity involving your children?
26. How do you expect childcare workers to safeguard the privacy of your child when sharing their photos/videos with someone outside your family or on social media?
27. How does the relationship between you and your childcare provider influence your comfort level with them sharing content about your child with someone outside your family or on social media?

A.2.2 Interview Questionnaire for Childcare Workers

1. Which gender do you identify with, and what are your preferred pronouns?
2. How old are you?
3. What is your race or ethnicity?
4. Where are you currently located?
5. Could you tell me a bit about your work as a childcare worker?
6. Could you describe how social media fits into your daily life?
7. How often do you capture photos or videos of the children you care for?
8. Are there any general rules or things you keep in mind while taking photos or videos of the children?
9. How do you typically handle photos or videos of the children on your personal device?
10. What are your thoughts on sharing photos/videos about the children with others apart from their parents?
11. How do you navigate privacy concerns when sharing photos/videos of the children within your social circles?
12. What are your thoughts on sharing photos or information about the children online?
13. How do you navigate privacy concerns when sharing content about the children on social media?
14. Do you obtain explicit consent from the parents before sharing content about their children within your social circles or on social media? If yes, how do you seek this consent?
15. How does your relationship with your employers influence your decision to share content about their children within your social circles or on social media?
16. Have you discussed social media sharing policies with the par-

ents?

17. Could you recall a situation where the parents expressed concerns regarding the content you shared about their children on social media? How did you address the situation?
18. Could you describe or recall a situation where you faced dilemmas related to sharing content about the children on social media? How did you resolve it? Have you ever hesitated before posting?
19. What do you typically do with the photos or videos of the children on your personal devices/social media when you leave the position?
20. If you do not share photos or videos of the children, why not? Have you seen other nannies doing it? What have you observed within your social circles?