

DO YOU NEED—AND CAN AFFORD—A LIVE-IN TUTOR?

A new service may be a life- and sanity saver for harried Pinoy parents everywhere

For mere mortals like you and me, the very idea can be unsettling, even pretentious.

"Are we Brangelina?" you say. "I'd really like to, but wouldn't it be too much?" you wonder. "I really, really want to, and I badly need this but who am I kidding?" you sigh. "Can we even afford it?" you moan, seriously considering the idea.

In the pre-pandemic world, sure, your concerns—and let's face it, hang-ups—may be valid. Unless you're part of the One Percent, this kind of service is something you wouldn't even have considered in a million years.

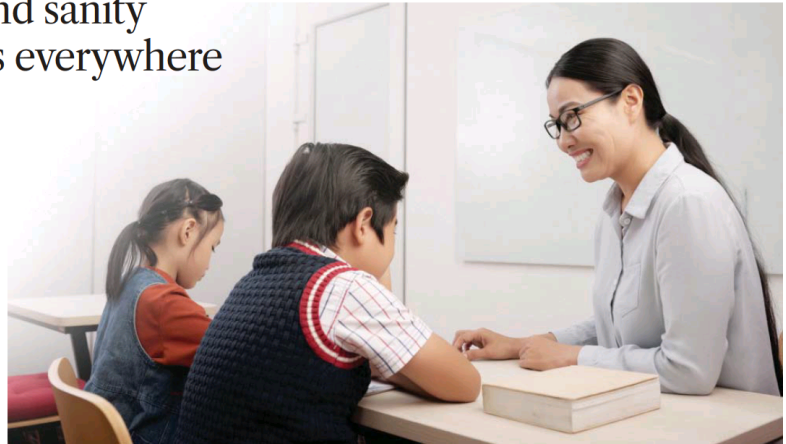
But the world has changed and, along with it, your needs and wants and, okay, your patience threshold. You're navigating this strange, new world and you're frankly overwhelmed by the ever-shifting demands on your time, on trying to learn new skills, on managing an entire team remotely.

There is, frankly, little space for some other things in your life—and that includes holding your children's hands as they too try to deal with a new setup in school.

Wouldn't it be lovely if somebody could help you out with the kids, like, say, a tutor? But, wait that's not possible, because you would never allow strangers in your home at this time. So what about online tutors—but wouldn't it be more of the same? Having to step in when your child cannot understand the teacher—and then the tutor—would just mean double the stress for you.

Ikon, a regional recruitment company with offices throughout Asia catering to healthcare, technical, and hospitality industries, just moved in to fill this gap in the market by offering live-in tutor services.

"Yeah, but we're not celebrities shooting films in the middle of an exotic locale where we need to bring our children," you think. Maybe not, but today's situation



ENHANCED EDUCATION Ikon's program caters to clients whose children need hands-on supervision, supplying them with the most qualified in-house teachers

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KRIZETTE CHU

has overwhelmed many working parents, and a service like this may just be what you need in this challenging period.

The company's Teacher Placement program is being offered at a time when the world moves toward a more digital approach to education. "This setup will allow parents to get the support of highly qualified, experienced, and discreet teachers to assist in their child's curriculum in school," Paolo Martel, the managing director of Ikon, tells *Manila Bulletin*

Lifestyle. "This will supplement the school's online classes and help build a conducive learning environment in the safety of their homes."

Through its local recruitment arm, Ikon taps qualified candidates across the Philippines to be able to provide for the overwhelming demand for great teachers.

Paolo, whose background in recruitment is corporate, got the idea after a business partner asked if he could use his skills to find them a teacher for their family. "Considering

the current pandemic, I felt this project would fill a void. It also reminded me about other setups abroad, where families hire an in-house educator to teach their children and travel with them in some cases," he adds. "My team and I reviewed existing models abroad and we came up with a program, which we based on what we felt the market needed. Thankfully, as we have previous experience sourcing teachers for international clients, we already had candidates in our pool." **B-7 ▶**

◀ B-8 DO YOU NEED...

The program is specific and caters to clients whose children are at the ages where hands-on supervision is most necessary—in nursery and primary schools between the ages of three and 10. Paolo shares, "This is for parents who wish to recreate an organized classroom setup while enjoying the safety of their own homes."

Considering the teachers will live with the client's family, Ikon has put in place rigorous selection and vetting process. "The screening process is consistent and totally transparent," he shares. "This includes conducting an aptitude test as a systematic and unbiased means to determine a candidate's abilities. This way, we are able to share with our client how the selection process was conducted." Over 10 years in the business have fine-tuned the company's ability to select from the cream of the crop, with super exhaustive background checks, but with a full pandemic raging, yet another safeguard has to be put in place. The chosen teachers undergo a medical exam and swab test for Covid-19 before they are placed in the client's homes.

TEACHER
FINDER
Managing
director of
Ikon, Paolo
Martel



And then there's the matter of making sure client and teacher live.

"Finding a suitable teacher is highly dependent on the preference of the client as well as the teaching approach used in the child's school, may it be traditional or progressive," says Paolo. "One of our first clients provided us with a heartwarming testimonial saying that this program allowed her to restore her relationship with her kids. There are instances when a child may respond to a parent and a teacher differently, which is why some parents would prefer to let a teacher take on the role. In some cases, parents have to be at work and they need someone to guide their child, especially during this transition to a digital learning approach."

Everything about this program is tailor-made to the client's requirements or preferences. Part of the initial process is to have an interview session with the clients to understand what their requirements are, for Ikon to find a suitable match.

The teachers are as protected as clients. Clients are required to prove that they can provide comfortable accommodation and food for the teacher.

So, now that you're convinced, here's the question you've been asking in your head—can you afford this? This, after all, seems like service for high net worth individuals like celebrities who live an itinerant lifestyle.

While it's not cheap, it is also not overpriced. Are the services something non-Hollywood celebrities can afford?

"We do not want to limit as to who can have access to this service," says Paolo. "Just to give you an idea, the monthly salaries of teachers we deploy range from ₱50,000 to ₱100,000 depending on the credentials and experience. It may look high but if you compare it to the hourly rate of tutors, the rate is competitive. For example, a tutor's rate of ₱800 per hour at four hours per day would cost around ₱64,000

in a month. As compared to hiring a private teacher, who can spend more hours with the child, and be available and can assure safety, the price is not unreasonable."

Interested (because you're at your wit's end)? Here are a few pointers from Paolo on how you can screen possible live-in tutors:

How to screen teachers for your child:

1 Identify the educational requirements of your child. This is an important step to build the ideal credentials or skill set you'll look for in a teacher. You need to consider the school's curriculum, teaching approach, and platforms used, your child's performance, areas for improvement, as well as other skills you may want your child to learn.

2 Check for the teacher's credentials. Ask about training, experience, and references. It is important that the teacher is a licensed professional or has expertise in the subject being taught. It would also be good to learn more about her relationships with colleagues and previous employers.

3 Do not simply rely on the CV. You may get a little personal and ask questions like what made them consider being a private teacher and how this experience will fit into their career goals. You may include questions on family, living arrangements, plans, etc. to give you an idea if there could be potential issues or conflicts in the setup during the employment.

4 List and explain your house rules. List down your family's requirements and be as granular as you can, to identify the setup that will work best for you. By explaining this during the interview, the teacher will have an idea of the living arrangement she may get into, which will open discussions that will help gauge if such setup will work for both parties.

5 Hire a professional. Finding the right teacher for your child may not be as easy as it seems. Getting help from an experienced recruitment team will alleviate the extensive process of sourcing, recruiting, and onboarding. Let Ikon do the work and guide you through the whole process of finding the right candidate to fit your requirements.