

# Baby sitters

## Selecting a baby sitter



Selecting the right sitter to care for your children is one of the most important decisions a parent can make. When considering a teenage baby sitter, parents should look for a teen who shows:

- ♥ Leadership and responsibility.
- ♥ Understands stages of child development.
- ♥ Recognizes safety issues in the home.
- ♥ Knows first aid and infant and child CPR.

Baby sitting is a lot more difficult than simply playing with the children. The sitter must be alert to dangers and keep children safe from harm. The sitter must be prepared to think clearly and act quickly if something goes wrong. ***Whether your potential sitter is your own child or a friend, strongly encourage the teen to enroll in a baby sitter training course.***

## What parents can do

- ♥ Get to know the potential sitter and watch interactions with your children: Is he or she able to move easily from one age-appropriate activity to another?



- ♥ When considering someone from outside your home, meet the sitter's parents. Request the sitter's name, address and telephone number. When you think you have found the right person, check references carefully.
- ♥ Plan to spend at least 15 minutes with the sitter before leaving to discuss the day's activities or concerns.
- ♥ On the first visit, sitters should receive a tour of the house, location of phones, exits, fire extinguishers, first aid supplies etc.

- ♥ When parents return home, sitters and parents need to discuss the day and any concerns either may have, such as the children's behavior or activities and anything out of the ordinary that happened, such as a fall.
- ♥ After the sitter has left, parents also need to check how things went from the children's point of view. Ask if anything made them feel afraid or uncomfortable and if the children would like the sitter to care for them again.

## Other information that should be shared with the sitter includes:

- ♥ Family rules, including disciplinary guidelines.
- ♥ Daily routines such as eating, television, outdoor play limits, and sleeping arrangements.
- ♥ Food preferences and allergies.
- ♥ Emergency contact information: parents, relatives, neighbors and emergency services.
- ♥ Who the children may play with or visit, and whether outings such as a walk to a nearby park are allowed.