

Babysitters' Guide

Before you accept

Know your employer. Don't accept the Job if you don't know the person calling.

Find out who recommended you for the Job.

Check with your parents and see if they know the family.

Ask for the person's phone number and call back after you've checked.

Be professional

Babysitting is a Job. Be businesslike and explain the days and hours you are available. How much experience you've had (older children, infants, etc.). What you charge per hour.

Try to arrange a visit to the home to meet the parents and children. Make arrangements for transportation to and from the Job. Even if it's only a short walk from your home, an adult escort might be a good idea.

Determine at the outset exactly what you will be doing to earn your fee. Will your duties go beyond baby sitting and into household chores?

Write it down

Parent's name, phone number and address.

Number of children, their names and ages.

Time of arrival at job and estimated length of stay.

Leave your parents a note with the name, address and telephone number of the family for whom you'll be baby sitting and the time you expect to be home.

When you arrive

Get as much information as you can and write it down.

Where will the parents be?

Get the phone numbers of theaters, restaurants or friends the parents will be visiting. What time do they expect to return?

Ask for the name and phone number of both the family doctor and a neighbor or friend. Call 9-1-1 for the police, fire department and poison control center.

Ask instructions on handling incoming phone calls. For maximum security, you should never tell a caller that you're home alone with the children. Explain to the caller that there is an adult at home but they are unable to come to the phone. Then, ask if you can take a message and phone number.

Be sure doors and windows are locked and ask which lights should be left on if you're to stay late at night.

Is there a fire escape, fire extinguisher or second exit?

Ask to be sure

What time is bedtime?

Children's use of the TV, radio or record player.

Find out about diapers, baby bottles, meals, snacks, checking homework, whether or not friends of the children can visit.

While you're there

NEVER open the door to strangers.

Check and lock doors and windows.

Be aware of strange noises, prowlers at the windows, unusual phone calls.

If the child is taking some type of medication, determine the time of the last dosage as well as the time for the next.

If you take the children outside, NEVER talk to strangers. Be extra careful near swimming pools, roads and strange animals.

In case of fire Get the children out of the house immediately, Stay close to the floor to avoid deadly smoke and fumes. Feel doors to see if they're hot. There may be fire on the other side. When everyone is out, go to a neighbor's house and call 9-1-1.

Avoid Accidents Pick up toys or other objects on stairs or in passageways.

Know the location of medicines, cleaning products and electrical outlets, and keep children from them.

If the house is suddenly quiet, check immediately - they could be up to something!

You're a "guest" Don't tie up the telephone with calls to friends. The parents may be trying to reach you.

Don't allow friends to visit.

Stay out of closets, desk drawers and personal papers.

Enjoy only those snacks that you've been offered.

When parents return Tell them about any problems encountered during your stay, either with the children or otherwise.

Give the parents all messages taken during your stay.

If, for any reason, you should feel uncomfortable with the parent who is to escort you home, insist on calling your own parents to make other arrangements.

Babysitting is a lot more than watching small children while their parents are away from home. It's a real job that demands responsibility and full-time attention.

This crime prevention information is brought to you by:

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