

Babysitter Safety

There are certain do's and don'ts when it comes to babysitting. In addition to "sitting" with the children, these are a few of the things your babysitter should know and remember as a Safe Sitter.

Safety Tips

1) You should post "The Super Sitter's Very Important Phone Numbers" by the telephone and explain the importance of the phone numbers to the babysitter before you leave. Include numbers such as

- Where parents will be
- Nearby friend or relative
- Children's doctor
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Poison Control Center
- Hospital
- Child Id Cards for each child

2) Show the babysitter through the house or apartment and point out where the items she will need are located, such as the children's clothing or playthings.

3) Always tell the babysitter where the emergency exits are located. Tell the babysitter that in a case of a fire to first get the children out of the house without stopping to phone. Then tell her to take the children to a neighbor. Next, she should call the fire department, and then call you to let you know where she and the children are.

4) Tell the babysitter to keep the youngsters safe by preventing accidents. Tell the babysitter where the potential hazards are, such as electrical outlets, appliances, and exposed heating elements. Also make sure that all medicine, bleaches and household cleaners are securely locked up.

5) Make sure the babysitter knows that stairs can be dangerous for youngsters. Tell her to keep a curious toddler from playing on or around them. Running or horseplay on stairs can lead to falls, particularly if the youngsters are wearing socks or other "slippery" footwear. Remember, too, that stairs are not meant to be a storage area. Anything placed on the stairs can become an obstacle to fall over.

6) If there is a gate across the stairway, tell the babysitter to make sure it is kept latched. Babies in carriages, walkers or strollers should never be left unattended, especially in an area around stairs or ramps -- whether indoors or out. A malfunction of the carriage's safety brake or a sudden movement by the child could put it right over the edge. If you do not have a gate, place a barrier of some kind in front of the stairway that a child cannot climb over. Accordion-style gates with large V-shaped or

diamond-shaped openings should not be used since they can entrap a child's head, causing strangulation. A gate with a straight top or small V's and diamond-shaped openings is safer. Make sure pressure gates are firmly in place and can't be dislodged by the child.

7) Tell the babysitter to caution the child about the dangers of glass doors or windows. A child running or riding on a bike could easily go through the glass. Be sure they keep toys, scatter rugs and other articles that could cause someone to slip or trip away from these areas. If the babysitter is caring for a particularly active child, place a large chair or other piece of furniture in front of the glass area for safety's sake. Large, colorful decals at eye level for both children and adults can make glass doors safer.

8) If you plan on having the babysitter change the baby's diapers, make sure to tell her to have everything within immediate reach so she won't have to step away from the infant even for a second. Tell the babysitter that if she is not constantly watching the baby, babies can roll over and fall from changing tables or other high places. Have diapers, pins, etc., next to the babysitter so the baby is under constant supervision.

9) Make sure to tell the babysitter to never open the door to strangers. If there is a question about someone at the door, tell the babysitter to call you to check with you about the person.

10) Make sure your babysitter is Red Cross CPR Certified "even if your sitter is a preteen/teen Red cross has a class just for babysitters.

11) Ask your babysitter for his or her Red Cross babysitter handbook. If they have one they should have it with them at all their sitter jobs.

The Babysitter's Training Handbook

The Babysitter's Handbook can help you learn about the responsibilities involved in being a good babysitter. Use the handbook when taking the Babysitter's Training Course and then take it with you whenever you baby sit. The handbook contains information and fun activities to help you learn about.

Leadership

How do you have fun with the kids--but stay in control? Find out the best ways to negotiate, settle arguments, and encourage positive behavior.

Basic Care

Feeding and diaper changing can be kind of messy. Learn how to handle these situations, and other babysitting basics, like a pro!

STOP! Think Safety

Learn how to find a safety-related problem, remove or limit it, then report it.

Safety and Safe Play

Recognize how to guide children in safe play. Learn to choose toys and activities that are age-appropriate and safe.

Basic First Aid

Every babysitter needs to know what to do if an accident happens. Get straight-forward advice on how to manage everything from scrapes and bruises to life-threatening emergencies.