



Children's Health

Selecting a Baby-Sitter

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

ASSESS YOUR NEEDS

- Are you willing to trust a teenager, or are you looking for someone more mature?
- Can you afford a professional baby-sitting service?
- Do you need someone for a few hours or overnight?



GET REFERRALS

- Ask other parents who they use and who they would recommend.
- Ask them where they have had success finding a list of sitters.

EXPERIENCE COUNTS

- Find out what kind of training or experience the prospective sitter has. Some communities offer baby-sitting courses for teens that include: basic first aid, home safety, accident prevention, what to do for choking and how to feed and diaper infants.

AVAILABILITY IS KEY

- Do you need an occasional sitter or someone to stay every Friday night?
- Do you need overnight care or care for just a few hours during the day?
- Can you provide transportation for the sitter?

WHAT'S THE COST?

- What's the hourly rate?
- Does the rate match what people you know are paying?
- Does this person have an overnight rate?

TRY THE SITTER OUT

- After interviewing the person, offer to pay for an hour of baby-sitting to play with your child while you're around.
- Do the sitter and the child respond well to each other?
- Does this person initiate play with your child?
- If the sitter is relaxed and self-assured, you probably will be, too.

CLEANLINESS IS IMPORTANT

- Does this person practice good personal hygiene?
- Does this person smoke?

TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS

- Always listen to your instincts; they're usually right. If you don't feel comfortable with the sitter, don't use her.

TIPS TO KEEP YOUR CHILD AND SITTER SAFE

- Have the sitter arrive a half hour before you leave. Show him or her all exits, how windows and doors are locked, where first aid supplies are and alternate escape routes from the home.
- Leave a list of emergency numbers and a pencil and paper next to the telephone. If your area does not have 911 emergency assistance, be sure to leave the numbers of the nearest police and fire departments. On your emergency contact list, include your name, home address and telephone number along with a telephone number where you can be reached and a telephone number for a neighbor or relative.