

Babysitting Safety

Taking care of young children is a big responsibility. You must protect yourself as well as the children you are watching. Follow this link, [babysitter's information checklist \(PDF\)](#), to make sure you have everything covered.

Choose Jobs Wisely

Know who you are babysitting for. Babysit for people you or your parents know, or for someone you have a reliable personal reference. It's not safe to babysit for strangers.

Leave your parents the name, address, and telephone number of the people you are babysitting for. Also let your parents know what time you expect to be home.

Know when the people you are babysitting for are going to be home. Let them know that you have a curfew and have them call if they are going to be later than expected.

In An Emergency

- **If there is an emergency call 911.** Give the dispatcher your name and tell them you are babysitting. Let the dispatcher know what the problem is and give them the exact address and phone number of the home you are calling from.
- If there is a fire get everyone out of the house and call 911 from the neighbor's house.
- If it is possible call the parents and let them know where you and the children are. Also let them know what has happened. It is important in any emergency to stay calm.

Getting Home Safely

- Prior to leaving call home and let someone know you are on your way home. Make sure that someone is escorting you home. Prior to accepting any babysitting job this should be a condition.
- If the people you are babysitting for won't drive you home or seem too intoxicated contact someone at your home to come pick you up. Never go home alone from a night job. Make sure you pre-arrange with your parents that they will come and get you if you call them (no questions asked).

On the Job Safety

- Before the parents leave, ask for the information on the [babysitting checklist](#). Keep this list near the phone.
- Have the parents show you emergency exits, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers.
- Plan a mental fire drill: find more than 1 way to get everyone out of the house in case of fire.
- Be sure to meet the family dog.
- Establish ground rules with the parents if you wish to use the internet.
- Get approval from the parents if you would like to have a visitor.
- Get the telephone number of where the parents are going.
- If the house or apartment has a security system, learn how to use it.
- Know how to work door and window locks, especially if they need a key.
- Lock all doors and windows and leave an outside light on.
- Check for hazards the children can find such as matches, lighter fluid, electric cords, plastic bags, medication, or anything that might be dangerous.
- Ask parents how they want you to handle phone calls.
- Don't open the door to strangers or tell them you are there alone. Say you are visiting and will deliver a message.
- If the children are sleeping, check on them about every 15 minutes.
- If the children are awake, know where they are at all times and never leave them alone.
- When you are out with the children, don't talk to strangers. If you suspect you are being followed, go to a nearby home, store, or gas station and call the police.
- When you return to the children's home, don't go inside if anything seems unusual (broken window, open door etc.). Go to a neighbor's and call 911.
- If you ever feel uneasy or suspicious, call 911.
- The rules for night time babysitting apply to daytime as well, with a few additions:
 - During the day you might play with the children in the yard.
 - If you are in the back yard, make sure the front door is locked - and vice versa.
 - If you take the children out, make sure you have a house key with you when you leave.
 - Double check all doors and windows are locked before leaving.

