

# Choosing A Sitter

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Having someone look after your children for an afternoon or evening is an important event for them and for you. Here are some tips to help you choose the right person.

A sitter should be responsible, competent and mature enough to make the right decision in an emergency. It is also important that the sitter likes children.

Get to know the sitter. Find out how much experience a potential sitter has. Ask questions like "Can you change a diaper?" "Can you make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich?" "What would you do if there was a fire?"

Check a potential sitter's references. Talk to other parents who have hired the sitter.

Ask questions like "How did the sitter talk to your children?" "Did the sitter follow your rules?" "Was the sitter reliable, polite, honest, friendly?"

Visit the sitter's home. If the sitter is a teen, talk to the parents. People often care for children the way they have been cared for, so talking to the sitter's parents can give you a good idea of what the sitter will be like.

You and the sitter should establish a clear understanding of what form of discipline is acceptable.

## **Ask yourself the following questions:**

- ◇ Is this person old enough to care for my children? (Newborns and toddlers generally require older teens with more experience)
- ◇ Am I comfortable with this person?
- ◇ Are my children comfortable with this person?

If there is concern in any of these areas, you may wish to reconsider using the sitter.

## **Sitter's Checklist (Post a list with this information near your telephone).**

- ⇒ Your name, address, and telephone number
- ⇒ Where you can be reached, including telephone number
- ⇒ Telephone numbers of police department, fire department, ambulance, doctor, neighbor and relative
- ⇒ People who may be let into the house
- ⇒ Important information (special needs, diet, medication, etc.)



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